

Metaphors in Indonesian and Acehnese proverbs of similar meanings: Semantic and cultural analyses

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ABSTRACT

Metaphors are vital in proverbs because they reflect the relationship between language, meaning, and the speakers' culture. Proverbs often capture shared societal values and worldviews, and metaphors within them serve as linguistic features to conceptualize and communicate life experiences. This research aimed to compare the use of metaphors in Indonesian proverbs (IPs) and Acehnese proverbs (APs) with similar meanings to explore how cultural differences influence metaphorical choices in language. This qualitative descriptive study collected data on IPs and APs from literature and 10 informants who are native Acehnese speakers, aged 50-60 years, with extensive knowledge of APs. The data were analyzed using semantic theory rooted in Geeraerts' Prism Model (2002) and Levi-Strauss's cultural theory. The analysis reveals that several IPs and APs with similar meanings utilized the same metaphorical reference domains, such as objects, plants, animals, spatial actions, and states, indicating a shared conceptualization of life experiences between Indonesian and Acehnese societies. However, some variations of metaphor types were employed in terms of space, plant, water, and animal, indicating their attribution to cultural differences and geographical factors. This research emphasizes the relationship between language, culture, and societal mindsets. It shows the importance of preserving proverbs as a cultural heritage that reflects local wisdom and cross-cultural conceptions of life experiences. The comparison of metaphors in Indonesian and Acehnese proverbs highlights how cultural and environmental factors shape metaphorical expressions, implying that proverbs preserve local knowledge and values while reflecting the diversity of regional identities within Indonesian society.

Keywords: Acehnese proverbs; cultural analysis; Indonesian proverbs; metaphors; semantic analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are a rich reflection of societal culture and norms, offering an understanding of the values, beliefs, and worldviews of those who use them (Hamilton, 1947; Rahman, 1971; Usman, 2021). According to Sotvaldieva (2020), proverbs capture life experiences and thoughts, often providing moral teachings and guiding human relationships. Ermita (2012) asserts that these relationships define spiritual processes tied to human nature,

temperament, behavior, and other psychological aspects. They emphasize the integral role of proverbs in shaping human interactions.

Proverbs are traditionally defined as fixed expressions that convey perceived truths or wisdom derived from lived experiences (Mansyur & Suherman, 2020). Sudaryat et al. (2019) describe them as figurative expressions that commonly employ comparison or metaphorical language to convey their moral messages. This use of figurative

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language has long fascinated anthropologists, linguists, and philosophers because it uniquely comprehends how cultures conceptualize and communicate their values and beliefs (Duranti, 1997). Benedek et al. (2014) further explain that metaphors, a key feature of proverbs, serve as cultural schematics that simplify and generalize ideas while reflecting a society's worldview. Levi-Strauss (as cited in Duranti, 1997) posits that while human beings share fundamental similarities, cultural differences arise from adaptations to specific environmental conditions, often reflected in linguistic expressions such as metaphors. This perspective informs the current research, which compares the use of metaphors in Indonesian proverbs (IPs) and Acehese proverbs (APs). Although both types of proverbs share the same geographical location, distinctive customs, and traditions have led to differences in how metaphors are used in those proverbs. By analyzing these similarities and differences, this research seeks to uncover how cultural variations influence metaphorical choices, thereby enriching the understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and societal norms.

In this context, Indonesian proverbs reflect the broader national culture, representing shared values and norms across the archipelago. However, Acehese proverbs, rooted in the local Acehese language and culture, offer a distinct perspective shaped by regional history and traditions. While both types of proverbs share some commonalities due to their Malay cultural roots, the metaphors they employ highlight the unique adaptations to local customs and societal structures in Aceh.

Despite extensive research on proverbs across cultures, such as comparisons between Malay and Chinese proverbs (Ahmad et al., 2015; Dani, 2005) and between Japanese and Sundanese proverbs (Kadir et al., 2022), little attention has been paid to the use of metaphors in Indonesian and Acehese proverbs. Most studies have focused on the literal meanings of proverbs (Kurniawan, 2018), leaving a gap in understanding how metaphors function within these expressions to reflect cultural differences. Existing research on specific types of metaphors, such as animal (Kastri, 2022; Yuldashev, 2020), plant (Kinanti & Rachman, 2019; Thamrin & Suhardi, 2020), water (Yolanda et al., 2023), state (Afriansyah & Zakiyah, 2022), and color metaphors (Lapasau, 2018), further draw attention to the need for a focused analysis of metaphorical similarities and differences across culturally distinct yet linguistically related proverbs. This study aims to answer the following research question: How are the metaphor types in Indonesian and Acehese proverbs with similar meanings constructed semantically and culturally?

The research applied Geeraerts' Prism Model (2002, as cited in Langlotz, 2006) for semantic

analysis, which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how meanings are structured and interrelated in language. This model was chosen for its ability to capture the connection between denotative and connotative meanings, thus making it particularly suitable for analyzing metaphorical language. Additionally, Levi-Strauss's cultural theory (Hull, 2020) was employed to examine how cultural frameworks shape metaphors because it offers a structuralist perspective on the relationship between cultural systems and linguistic expressions. Combining these two frameworks allowed for a holistic analysis of the metaphors in proverbs and links the linguistic and cultural dimensions.

This study contributes to the fields of linguistic anthropology and cross-cultural communication by investigating the use of metaphors in IPs and APs. It shows the importance of proverbs as carriers of cultural values and norms, further highlighting their role in cultivating intercultural understanding and preserving cultural heritage. Through this analysis, the research aims to deepen our appreciation of how metaphorical language promotes and communicates cultural meaning.

METHOD

The research employed a qualitative descriptive method, which focuses on observing linguistic phenomena within a specific cultural context over a certain period (Mahsun, 2012). This approach was deemed suitable for examining the relationship between metaphorical usage in proverbs and the cultural contexts in which they are embedded.

Data Sources and Collection

Data on Indonesian proverbs (IPs) were gathered from two sources: *Lima Ratus Pepatah (Five Hundred Proverbs)*, published by the Department of Cultural Education (Aman, 1978), and *Figures of Speech, Idioms, and Proverbs*, published by CV Graha Printaa Selaras. Meanwhile, Acehese proverbs (APs) were collected from interviews with 10 carefully selected informants. Following Mahsun's (2012) guidelines, this study selected the informants for the proverbs based on the following criteria: a) Native speakers of Acehese; b) Age range of 50-60 years (ensuring linguistic competence and cultural knowledge while avoiding senility); and c) Lifelong residency in Aceh, ensuring familiarity with Acehese proverbs in their natural cultural context. During preliminary interviews, mastery of proverbs is operationally defined as the ability to recall, explain, and provide context for at least 15 culturally significant Acehese proverbs. Note-taking was employed during the interviews to record the proverbs shared by the informants.

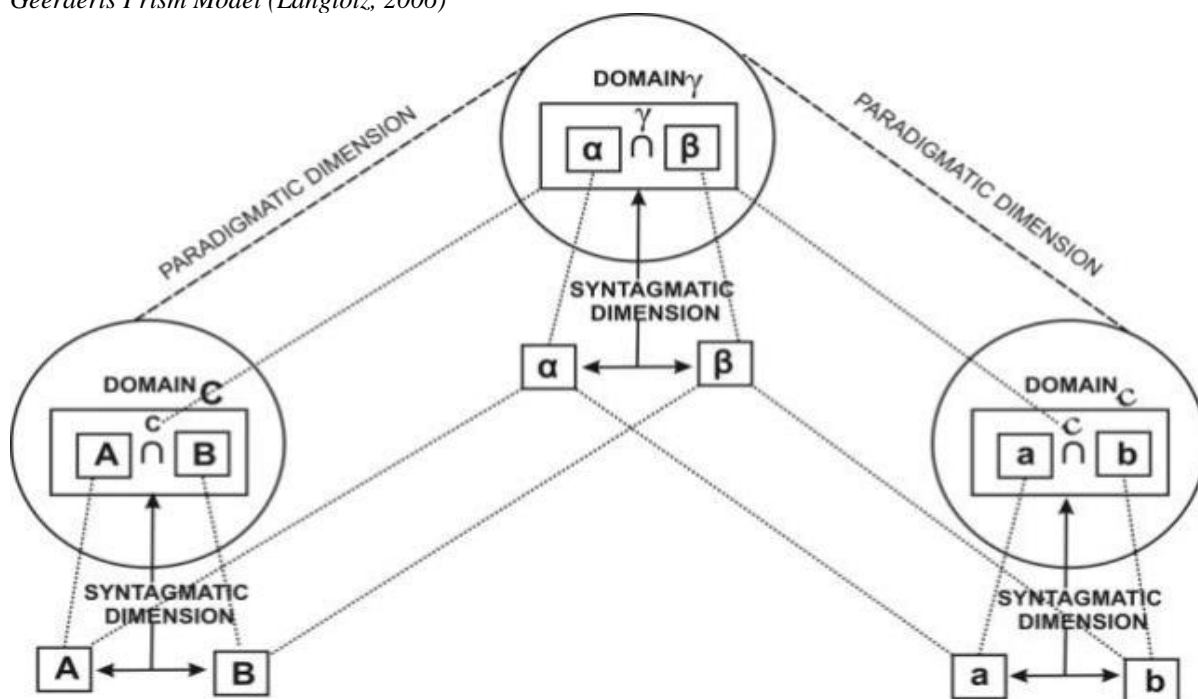
Twenty proverbs were selected from 10 informants, ensuring a diverse representation of perspectives. Subsequently, similar proverbs in Indonesian were identified to match the 20 chosen Acehese proverbs, facilitating comparative analysis of metaphorical expressions across both languages. This approach maintained a balance between cultural specificity and broader linguistic similarities. The collected data were categorized into metaphorical domains: animals, plants, fruits, situations, spatial elements, human anatomy, and actions.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using semantic and cultural theories, employing a contrastive method to compare IPs and APs. This approach allows for the

identification of metaphorical similarities and differences, providing an ethnolinguistic perspective on the two languages. Poedjosoedarmo (1983) affirms the effectiveness of this method for uncovering linguistic and cultural elements by examining metaphorical images based on anthropological insights. Furthermore, the analysis was guided by Geeraerts’s Prism Model (Langlotz, 2006), which conceptualizes metaphorical relationships between source and target domains. This model was adapted for the current research to simplify the analysis of proverbs in the two languages. The prism visually represents how metaphorical domains (e.g., animals and plants) connect to the meanings expressed in IPs and APs (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Geeraerts Prism Model (Langlotz, 2006)



Geeraerts’ Prism Model maps the relationship between Domain Source A and Domain Target A (IPs) and Domain Source B and Domain Target B (APs). The source domains provided the conceptual basis, while the target domains conveyed cultural-specific interpretations. For example, a metaphor in the animal domain may function

similarly in both IPs and APs but reflect differing cultural aspects in the target domains. Thus, a simplified comparative model was created, as shown in Table 1. This framework facilitated the systematic comparison of metaphorical references across these languages.

Table 1
A simplified comparative model of analysis

Meaning	Indonesian Proverbs (IPs)	Achinese Proverbs (APs)
Domain Target A	Domain Source A	Domain Target B

The analysis was further conducted in four stages:
1. Selection and categorization: IPs and APs with similar meanings were selected and included in the data corpus.

2. Metaphor identification: Metaphors in the selected proverbs were identified and categorized into similar and different types (e.g., animal, plant, action).

3. Domain elaboration: the metaphorical references in IPs and APs were analyzed, focusing on their domains and cultural significance.
4. Interpretation and inference: The findings were synthesized to reveal the relationship between IPs and APs, exploring the cultural and linguistic implications of the metaphors.

This process highlighted the similarities in metaphorical conceptualization across the two cultures and revealed how cultural differences shaped metaphorical choices. The inclusion of Geeraerts' Prism Model (Langlotz, 2006) provided a structured approach to understanding these metaphorical relationships, while Levi-Strauss's cultural theory (Hull, 2020) was used to contextualize the findings within broader anthropological perspectives.

FINDINGS

The analysis of IPs and APs with similar meanings revealed the use of animal, plant, fruit, water, action, spatial, and state metaphors. The comparison of metaphor usage between Indonesian Proverbs (IPs) and Acehese Proverbs (APs) with similar meanings can be categorized into two groups: (1) instances where both tend to adopt the same types of

metaphors and (2) cases where they use different types of metaphors. A more detailed explanation of the comparison of metaphor usage in IPs and APs with similar and different meanings is provided in the following sections.

Shared Metaphor Types in Indonesian and Acehese Proverbs

The analysis reveals that several IPs and APs, which share similar meanings, employ the same metaphors. These metaphors are primarily drawn from animals, plants, states, and actions. Based on the analysis, these metaphors in both APs and IPs convey similar meanings, reflecting a shared mindset and perspective between the broader Indonesian society and the Acehese community in conceptualizing life experiences. This similarity can be attributed to the fact that the Acehese are part of the larger Indonesian society, resulting in cultural intersections. The use of comparable metaphors in both languages shows linguistic proximity and shared cultural foundations, as demonstrated by the common reliance on natural elements and daily activities.

In the following tables, the metaphorical usage in IPs and APs were compared to illustrate the similarities in their source and target domains and further analyze the cultural and contextual implications of these metaphorical expressions.

Table 2
IPs and AP usage of animal metaphors

"The state of an individual who is uncalm or always restless"			
Indonesian Proverb		Acehese Proverb	
<i>Seperti cacing kepanasan</i> 'Like a hot worm'		<i>Lagee glang lam uroe tarek</i> 'Like a worm under the sun'	
Domain Target A¹	Domain Source A	Domain Target B¹	Domain Source B
The state of an individual	<i>Seperti cacing</i> 'like a worm'	The state of an individual	<i>Lagee glang</i> 'like a worm'
Domain target C¹	Domain Source C	Domain target D¹	Domain Source D
Uncalm or always restless	<i>Kepanasan</i> 'hot'	Uncalm or always restless	<i>lam uroe tarek</i> 'under the sun'

Both proverbs suggest a state of agitation or restlessness in an individual. The similarity between the two expressions lies in the use of the same metaphor, specifically involving a worm. Worms are creatures that live underground and are highly sensitive to changes in temperature and environmental conditions. Due to their body structure, worms exhibit slow, limited movement, making them an apt symbol for someone who feels trapped or unable to move freely in certain situations.

The metaphors *Seperti cacing kepanasan* 'Like a hot worm' (IPs) and *Lagee glang lam uroe tarek* 'Like a worm under the sun' (APs) represent the state of an individual in distress, as a worm writhes in pain when it is hot. According to Suyanti (2014), the wriggling of a hot worm serves as a metaphor for restlessness or discomfort. While both proverbs

use the image of a worm, there is a distinction in the source of the discomfort. The *cacing kepanasan* metaphor in Indonesian (IPs) refers specifically to heat, while the *glang lam uroe tarek* metaphor in Acehese (APs) refers to the emotional state of feeling agitated, with *uroe tarek* 'blazing hot day' emphasizing the internal cause of the restlessness.

Culturally, the use of worms in these metaphors is significant, as both Indonesians and Acehese have traditionally lived in agricultural environments where encounters with worms were common, especially during planting and cultivation periods. This close connection with nature influenced the frequent use of natural symbols, such as fauna, to convey cultural messages and values. These metaphors reflect how everyday experiences and the natural world are put together into language and cultural expression.

Table 3
IPs and APs usage of action metaphors

"Once the work is completed, several benefits can be gained"			
Indonesian Proverb		Acehnese Proverb	
<i>Sekali merengkuh dayung, dua-tiga pulau terlampaui</i> 'With one stroke of the paddle, two or three islands are passed'		<i>Sigo tak, dua pat luth</i> 'One strike, two wounds inflicted'	
Domain target A ¹	Domain Source A	Domain Target B ¹	Domain Source B
Once the work is completed	<i>Sekali merengkuh dayung</i> 'With one stroke of the paddle'	Once the work is completed	<i>Sigo tak</i> 'one strike'
Domain target C ¹	Domain source C	Domain target D ¹	Domain source D
Several benefits can be gained	<i>Dua-tiga pulau terlampaui</i> 'two or three islands are passed'	Several benefits can be gained	<i>Dua pat luth</i> 'two wounds inflicted'

IPs and APs share a similar meaning: once the work is completed, several benefits can be gained. Another point of similarity lies in the source domain, which uses action-based metaphors. In IPs, the 'stroke of the paddle' represents an action or effort, while 'two and three islands are passed' implies outcomes that exceed expectations. Similarly, in APs, the phrase *sigo tak* refers to an action or effort, and *dua pat luth* signifies acquiring more significant results from that action.

The use of the paddle and island metaphors in IPs is closely tied to the customs of the Indonesians who live in a super-diverse country comprising five big Islands. Indonesia has a rich history influenced by its numerous traditions from 1,300 ethnic groups (Yuniarni, 2016). Geographically, the country also consists of thousands of small islands scattered across its waters. Boats and paddles were essential means of

transportation, used to convey goods and services between islands. These tools played a crucial role in local communities' daily lives, enabling riverine activities to support their livelihoods. Paddles, defined as poles with a broad blade at one or both ends, were traditionally used to propel boats through water.

In APs, *tak* refers to the act of 'slashing' or 'strike', typically performed using sharp tools such as machetes. This activity is commonly associated with farming practices, including agriculture, plantation work, or forest maintenance. Slashing with a machete is particularly useful for preparing land more efficiently than manual methods. The metaphorical use of *tak* relates to Acehnese activities involving machetes, such as gardening (*ceumeucah*) or environmental conservation (Apriana, 2015).

Table 4
IPs and APs usage of state metaphors

"A man who cannot refuse what has been destined for him"			
Indonesian Proverb		Acehnese Proverb	
<i>Malang tak dapat ditolak, mujur tak dapat diraih</i> 'Misfortune cannot be avoided, and luck cannot be forced'		<i>Menyoe hana raseuki, nyang bak bibi rhöt u luwa</i> 'If it is not our sustenance, even what is in the mouth will spill out'	
Domain target A ¹	Domain Source A	Domain Target B ¹	Domain Source B
A man who cannot refuse	<i>Malang tak dapat ditolak</i> 'Misfortune cannot be avoided'	A man who cannot refuse	<i>Menyoe hana raseuki</i> 'If it is not our sustenance'
Domain target C ¹	Domain source c	Domain target d ¹	Domain source d
What has been destined for him	<i>Mjur tak dapat diraih</i> 'Luck cannot be forced'	What has been destined for him	<i>Nyang bak bibi rhöt u luwa</i> 'What is in the mouth will spill out'

Both proverbs convey a message about a man who cannot reject what has been determined for him while sharing the same source domain, namely state metaphors. In IPs, these state metaphors are denoted by the words, *unfortunate* and *lucky*. Indonesians are profoundly religious people who believe that life is governed and controlled by the Almighty God. In many cultures, the word *malang* refers to 'an unfortunate state', describing situations characterized by sadness, hardship, or loss. This term contrasts with *mujur*, which implies 'luck' or 'success'. The proverbs suggest that life is not always fair, as reflected in the contrast between 'unfortunate' and 'luck'. Moreover, humans cannot

often control or avoid specific problems, which may lead to unfavorable or undesirable circumstances.

In APs, the state metaphors are symbolized by the phrases *hana reseuki* (there is no sustenance) and *nyang bak bibi rhöt u luwa* 'what is in the mouth will spill out'. Unlike IPs, APs does not use two antonyms to symbolize destiny. In the Acehnese worldview, every form of good fortune is symbolized by the word *raseuki* due to a culture deeply intertwined with Islamic values. As Auria (2020) noted, sustenance is believed to be provided by God for consumption. In this context, the word *raseuki* in APs is associated with lips, which are seen as a medium for consuming sustenance.

Therefore, if it is not meant to be, even food that has already entered the mouth through the lips will come back out.

IPs and APs imply that children have a nature similar to their parents. Another similarity is the use of the same fruit metaphors in the source domain. In IPs, the fruit and the tree represent children and parents, respectively. Moreover, in reality, the falling fruit is not far from the tree.

In Indonesian and many other cultures, tree and fruit symbolism is often used to convey specific messages. Trees and fruits are powerful symbols representing various concepts and meanings,

especially in traditional Indonesian culture closely tied to the natural environment. Indonesians have historically relied on agricultural practices, and natural elements like trees and fruits are frequently incorporated into traditional arts, such as paintings, creating a connection to nature. A similar message is conveyed through using coconuts in APs, as the Acehnese have a tradition of producing oil from coconuts. The quality of the coconut largely determines the quality of the oil. Therefore, the better the coconut, the more beneficial the oil. In the same way, good parents would raise well-behaved children.

Table 5

IPs and APs usage of fruit metaphors

"The nature of children is similar to that of their parents"			
Indonesian Proverb		Acehnese Proverb	
<i>Buah jatuh tidak jauh dari pohonnya</i> 'The fruit does not fall far from the tree'		<i>Meunan u, meunan minyeuk</i> 'The quality of the coconut is reflected in its oil'	
Domain target A¹	Domain Source A	Domain Target B¹	Domain Source B
The nature of children	<i>Buah jatuh tidak jauh</i> 'The fruit does not fall far'	The nature of children	<i>Meunan u</i> 'The quality of the coconut'
Domain target C¹	Domain source C	Domain target D¹	Domain source D
Similar to that of their parents	<i>Dari pohonnya</i> 'Far from the tree'	Similar to that of their parents	<i>Meunan minyeuk</i> 'Reflected in its oil'

Table 6

IPs and APs usage of spatial metaphors

"Each region or place has its own specific peculiarities or culture"			
Indonesian Proverb		Acehnese Proverb	
<i>Lain padang lain belalang, lain lubuk lain ikannya</i> 'Different fields, different grasshoppers; different pools, different fish'		<i>Laen lhok laen lingkok, laen krueng laen buya</i> 'Different valleys have different ravines, different rivers have different crocodiles'	
Domain target A¹	Domain Source A	Domain Target B¹	Domain Source B
Each region or place has its own culture	<i>Lain padang lain belalang</i> 'Different fields, different grasshoppers'	Each region or place has its own culture	<i>Laen lhok laen lingkok</i> 'Different valleys have different ravines'
Domain target C¹	Domain source C	Domain target D¹	Domain source D
Specific peculiarities or culture	<i>Lain lubuk lain ikannya</i> 'Different ponds, different fish'	Specific peculiarities or culture	<i>Laen l krueng laen buya</i> 'Different rivers have different crocodiles'

IPs and APs imply that each region or place has specific peculiarities or culture. These proverbs are similar in using spatial metaphors in the source domain. In IPs, the spatial metaphors refer to a place (*padang* 'meadows' and *lubuk* 'pond') and animals (*belalang* 'grasshoppers' and *ikan* 'fish'). Meadows are expansive grasslands, free of dense, woody trees, providing habitats for various species of locusts. This contrast symbolizes the idea that each area inhabited by humans has distinct characteristics and culture, just as the depths of a river, home to diverse fish species, signify uniqueness.

Using metaphors like *padang*, *lubuk*, and *ikan* is deeply connected to Indonesian culture and its close relationship with nature. Indonesia, an archipelago of thousands of islands, boasts various geographical landscapes, climates, and natural environments. Rivers and depths are key elements in

daily life. In many parts of the country, rivers serve as traditional transportation routes, facilitating the movement of people and goods. Additionally, certain religious rituals are performed in rivers and ponds, or small lakes used for fish farming, which are a vital source of food.

In APs, a similar message is conveyed using spatial metaphors (*lhok* 'valley', *lingkok* 'ravine', *krueng* 'river') and animals (*buya* 'crocodile'). A valley is defined as a low land between hills or mountains, characterized by various curves, while each river is home to a different type of crocodile. These metaphors emphasize that each region or nation has its cultural specificity. The metaphor of the crocodile is also tied to the Acehnese way of life, as many people in Aceh live near rivers. The riverine community relies on rivers for their livelihoods, using them for activities like washing,

fishing, and transportation. The choice of crocodiles as metaphors is fitting, as these animals are found in Aceh's rivers.

Different Metaphor Types in Indonesian and Acehese Proverbs

Several IPs and APs with similar meanings have different metaphors. Based on the analysis of APs and IPs, the differences in metaphor usage reflect varying cultural, geographical, and lifestyle influences. IPs often employ spatial, plant, and common animal metaphors, while APs use

anatomical, water-related, and culturally significant animal metaphors. These differences reflect each culture's viewpoints and environmental contexts, illustrating how language and metaphors are closely tied to way of life, natural surroundings, and cultural practices.

The following tables compare the use of metaphors in IPs and APs to illustrate the differences in their source and target domains and further analyze these metaphorical expressions' cultural and contextual implications.

Table 7
IPs and APs usage of spatial and anatomical metaphors

"Humans must adapt to their respective environment"			
Indonesian Proverb		Acehnese Proverb	
<i>Di mana bumi dipijak di situ langit dijunjung</i> 'Where the earth is stepped on, there the sky is upheld'		<i>Tajak ube lot tapak, taduek ube lot punggung</i> 'Walk according to the way your feet fit, sit according to the way your buttock fits'	
Domain target A¹	Domain Source A	Domain Target B¹	Domain Source B
Humans must adapt	<i>Di mana bumi dipijak</i> 'Where the earth is stepped on'	Humans must adapt	<i>Tajak ube lot tapak</i> 'Walk according to the way your feet fit'
Domain target C¹	Domain source C	Domain target D¹	Domain source D
Adapt to their respective environment	<i>Di situ langit dijunjung</i> 'There the sky is upheld'	Adapt to their respective environment	<i>Taduek ube lot punggung</i> 'Sit according to the way your buttock fits'

The IPs and APs convey a similar meaning: humans must adapt to their respective environments. However, the proverbs differ in their source domains, with IPs using spatial metaphors and APs using anatomical ones. In IPs, the spatial metaphors refer to the ground (earth) and the sky (environment), symbolizing the human's location and the surrounding space, respectively. This implies that humans should adapt to their surroundings, whether the ground they walk on or the sky above them.

In APs, anatomical metaphors like *tapak* (soles of the feet) and *punggung* (buttock) are used. The soles of the feet, metaphorized as tools for walking, should not exceed their purpose, implying that people should not harm the environment while

engaging in daily activities. Similarly, the buttocks, symbolizing sitting, suggest that humans must respect their limitations and not overstep their capabilities.

Both of these metaphors emphasize the idea that individuals should adjust their behavior, mindset, and actions according to the specific circumstances or surroundings they find themselves in. It highlights the importance of flexibility and resilience in responding to challenges or changes in one's social, cultural, or physical environment. By adapting, individuals can better direct their lives and thrive within their context, making the most available opportunities while respecting the environment and its constraints.

Table 8
IPs and APs usage of plant and animal metaphors

"Other people's actions, but we are the ones who must take responsibility"			
Indonesian Proverb		Acehnese Proverb	
<i>Orang yang makan nangka, kita yang kena getahnya</i> 'Other people eat the jackfruit, but we are the ones who get the sap'		<i>Kameng gle nyang pajoh jagong, kameng gampong nyang keunong geulawa</i> 'The mountain goat eats the corn, but the village goat gets hit'	
Domain target A¹	Domain Source A	Domain Target B¹	Domain Source B
Other people's actions	<i>Orang yang makan Nangka</i> 'Other people eat the jackfruit, but we are the ones who get the sap'	Humans must adapt to	<i>Kameng gle nyang pajoh jagong</i> 'The mountain goat eats the corn'
Domain target C¹	Domain source C	Domain target D¹	Domain source D
We are the ones who must take responsibility	<i>Kita yang kena getahnya</i> 'We are the ones who get the sap'	Their respective environment	<i>Kameng gampong nyang keunong geulawa</i> 'The village goat gets hit'

The data suggests that both the Indonesian and Acehnesse proverbs convey messages about the actions of specific individuals, while others bear the consequences. These proverbs differ in their source domains; for example, the Indonesian proverb uses metaphors referring to jackfruit. The fruit's sap symbolizes a negative consequence that others must endure when someone eats the jackfruit. In essence, the proverb illustrates that while some people may benefit (eating jackfruit), others face difficulties (getting sap) while trying to do the work. Accordingly, in Indonesian culture, jackfruit is commonly eaten and used in preparing traditional dishes, making the metaphor accessible and relatable to the local population. Using jackfruit, the proverb conveys ethical and social responsibility in a tangible, easily understood way.

In the Acehnesse proverb, the metaphors *kameng gle* 'mountain goat' and *kameng gampong* 'village goat' refer to animals. In Acehnesse culture, the *kameng gle* is seen as a mischievous wild animal that damages crops, while the *kameng gampong* is a domesticated animal. These proverbs depict the actions of irresponsible individuals, where the innocent suffer the consequences. In real life, wrongdoers often face punishment or bear the consequences of their actions. However, the reverse could also happen; those who commit wrongful acts sometimes manage to avoid punishment through manipulation (Iqbal & Mulyadi, 2022). The word goat in the proverb reflects the Acehnesse culture, where farming is an essential livelihood, raising cattle, buffalo, chickens, and ducks, and goats being among the most commonly raised livestock.

Table 9
IPs and APs usage of animal and water metaphors, respectively

"Those who do useless work"			
Indonesian Proverb		Acehnese Proverb	
<i>Bagai mengajar itik berenang</i> 'Like teaching a duck to swim'		<i>Bak ie laot peu taboh sira</i> 'Why add salt to seawater?'	
Domain target A¹	Domain Source A	Domain Target B¹	Domain Source B
Those who do work	<i>Bagai mengajar itik</i> 'Like teaching a duck'	Those who do work	<i>Bak ie laot</i> 'To seawater'
Domain target C¹	Domain source C	Domain target D¹	Domain source D
Useless work	<i>Itik berenang</i> 'A duck swimming'	Useless work	<i>Peu taboh sira</i> 'Why add salt'

Though they use different metaphors, the proverbs convey a similar message about people who engage in useless work. The difference in metaphor usage is reflected in the source domains of the two proverbs. IPs and APs use metaphors based on animals and water, respectively. In IPs, the metaphor of the duck is used symbolically. In Indonesian culture, *itik* 'duck' is seen as an animal that naturally learns to swim and no longer needs to be taught. Therefore, teaching a duck to swim is pointless, signaling that teaching an expert wastes time. Indonesians easily understand the duck

metaphor in IPs, as ducks are common daily, making this metaphor relevant and easily relatable.

In contrast, APs uses the symbols of *ie laot* 'seawater' and *sira* 'salt'. Seawater is the source of salt production, so adding salt to the sea would be pointless. This metaphor reflects the Acehnesse respect for the environment and the deep connection between culture and nature. Living in a coastal region with many people working as fishermen, salt is a vital daily element, making the metaphor of adding salt to seawater both culturally significant and easily understood.

Table 10
IPs and APs usage of plant and state metaphors

"Finding alternatives when the primary option is unavailable"			
Indonesian Proverb		Acehnese Proverb	
<i>Tak ada rotan, akar pun jadi</i> 'If there is no rattan, the root will do'		<i>Nibak putoh leubeh get geunteng</i> 'It is better to be precarious (almost broken) than to completely break'	
Domain target A¹	Domain Source A	Domain Target B¹	Domain Source B
Finding alternatives	<i>Tak ada rotan</i> 'If there is no rattan'	Finding alternatives	<i>Nibak putoh</i> 'Instead of breaking'
Domain target C¹	Domain source C	Domain target D¹	Domain source D
When the primary option is unavailable	<i>Akar pun jadi</i> 'Use the root instead'	When the primary option is unavailable	<i>Leubeh get geunteng</i> 'Better to be precarious'

The proverbs suggest finding alternatives when the main option is unavailable, implying that one does not need to surrender to the current situation. The key difference between the two proverbs lies in

their source domains. In IPs, the message is conveyed through plant metaphors, specifically rattans and roots, used as raw materials for various crafts. Rattan is valuable because it is rare, while

roots are more commonly found and can substitute for rattan due to their similar shape. When rattan is in short supply, roots can be used as an alternative.

In PA, a similar message is expressed through metaphors related to the state of being (*putoh* ‘separated, broken’ and *geunteng* ‘precarious’). For example, breaking something up is considered useless because it can no longer be

used. Therefore, being precarious (almost broken) is better than being completely broken. This reflects the forceful nature of Acehese culture, which tends to emphasize that the outcome of a process does not have to be perfect. A slightly damaged object is still considered valid, unlike something completely broken or unusable.

Table 11

IPs and APs usage of state and animal metaphors, respectively.

“A little bad can lead to the destruction of all that is good”			
Indonesian Proverb		Acehnese Proverb	
<i>Karena nila setitik, rusak susu sebelanga</i> ‘A single drop of indigo spoils the whole pot of milk’		<i>Saboh keubeu meukubang, man saboh weue meuleuhob</i> ‘One buffalo playing in the mud makes all the buffaloes dirty’	
Domain target A¹	Domain Source A	Domain Target B¹	Domain Source B
A little bad	<i>Karena nila setitik</i> ‘A single drop of indigo’	A little bad	<i>Saboh keubeu meukubang</i> ‘One buffalo playing in the mud’
Domain target C¹	Domain source C	Domain target D¹	Domain source D
Destruction of all that is good	<i>Rusak susu sebelanga</i> ‘Spoils the whole pot of milk’	Destruction of all that is good	<i>Man saboh weue meuleuhob</i> ‘Makes all the buffaloes dirty’

The proverbs convey a similar message, implying that a small amount of bad can destroy all that is good. However, they use different source domains. In IPs, the metaphor involves plants, specifically indigo, a coloring plant. The word *nila* refers to the deep blue color obtained from the indigo plant (*Indigofera tinctoria*). This color is traditionally used in Indonesian batik, an important part of the clothing culture, with each motif carrying specific meanings and symbolism. A tiny drop of indigo in an enormous milk container can spoil the entire quantity. In these proverbs, indigo represents something negative (bad), while milk symbolizes something positive (good).

In APs, a similar message is conveyed through the metaphor of animals, specifically the *keubeu*, or buffalo. In Aceh, buffaloes are commonly raised, and these animals are known to enjoy wallowing in the mud, which symbolizes something dirty (bad). If a mud-stained buffalo is placed in a pen with others, it is bound to contaminate the whole group. The Acehese’s familiarity with buffaloes helps them better understand the message conveyed in the proverb.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of metaphor usage in Indonesian Proverbs (IPs) and Acehese Proverbs (APs) with similar meanings reveals two primary patterns: (1) instances where both languages adopt the same types of metaphors and (2) cases where they use different types of metaphors. In the context of Levi-Strauss (as cited in Duranti, 1997) cultural theory, which emphasizes how cultural meanings are produced within specific social contexts, these proverbs act as media through which both national and regional identities are expressed and negotiated.

In the first category, where both IPs and APs share the same types of metaphors, we observed the use of similar animal metaphors. For example, the proverbs *Seperti cacing kepanasan* ‘Like a hot worm’ in IPs and *Lagee glang lam uroe tarek* ‘Like a worm under the sun’ in APs, both describe discomfort, illustrating how animal metaphors are used across both languages to symbolize physical distress. This similarity is consistent with previous research that has examined cultural comparisons in proverbs, such as the studies by Arfianty (2023), Hadi and Nurhadi (2018), and Hanindar and Andin (2017), which explored how metaphors in proverbs reflect shared cultural values. The shared use of animal metaphors may be explained by everyday human experiences that exceed linguistic boundaries, as animals often serve as universally understood symbols for various human conditions.

Using metaphors in IPs and APs that share the same type but different referents also shed light on how cultural differences influence the selection of metaphors. A clear example of this can be seen in the spatial metaphors used in both languages. In IPs, the proverb *Lain padang lain belalang, lain lubuk lain ikannya* ‘Different fields, different grasshoppers; different pools, different fish’ is paired with the APs equivalent *Laen lhok laen lingkok, laen krueng laen buya* ‘Different valleys have different ravines, different rivers have different crocodiles’. Both metaphors illustrate the diversity of nature but are grounded in different cultural contexts. In the IPs, the metaphor focuses on meadows and locusts, while in the APs, it uses *krueng* ‘river’ and *lhok* ‘pond’ as referents. This difference in metaphorical imagery suggests that while both cultures recognize nature’s diversity, the choice of metaphors is influenced by each region’s distinct geographical and ecological features. With

its strong maritime culture, Aceh emphasizes aquatic metaphors, while other parts of Indonesia, such as Java, may prioritize land-based metaphors. The choice of metaphors in both languages is thus shaped by the natural environment in which the speakers are embedded.

Furthermore, the study revealed instances where metaphors differed not only in referent but also in type. For example, the proverb *Di mana bumi dipijak di situ langit dijunjung* 'Where the earth is stepped on, there the sky is upheld' (IPs) and the proverb *Tajak ube lot tapak, taduek ube lot punggong* 'Walk according to the way your feet fit, sit according to the way your buttock fits' (APs) both communicate a message about balance and respect for one's environment, yet they use distinct metaphors. The IPs metaphor compares the balance between the earth and the sky, while the APs metaphor refers to the balance between the body and its capability. These differences reflect the unique cultural and environmental contexts of each language. In IPs, the sky and earth metaphor highlights a more universal concept of balance between opposing forces. At the same time, in APs, the body and its strength directly connect individuals' physical and moral resilience. This difference suggests that cultural practices influence the metaphors used in proverbs and their corresponding meanings. These findings align with previous comparative research on metaphors in proverbs, such as Kurniawan (2018), who explored English and Indonesian proverbs, and Kadir et al. (2022), who analyzed metaphors in Japanese and Sundanese proverbs. Both studies found that metaphorical language differences often arise from the speakers' distinct cultural environments and daily practices. Similarly, the present study confirms that cultural and environmental factors significantly shape the metaphorical language used in proverbs.

Moreover, using metaphors in both IPs and APs provides insight into the values and norms upheld by the societies of Indonesia and Aceh. For instance, animal metaphors like 'worm' in proverbs such as *Seperti cacing kepanasan* (IPs) and *Lagee glang lam uroe tarek* (APs) reflect values of patience and calmness during difficult times. These proverbs suggest that societies value emotional resilience and self-control. Likewise, proverbs that use nature-related metaphors, such as *Di mana bumi dipijak di situ langit dijunjung* (IPs), emphasize the cultural norms of adaptation and respect for local environments. These proverbs present the importance of conforming to local customs and traditions. This suggests a deep respect for one's cultural heritage and the natural world.

The use of maritime metaphors in APs, such as *Bak ie laot peu taboh sira* 'Why add salt to seawater?' reflects Aceh's coastal geography and strong maritime economy. This metaphor illustrates the importance of managing natural resources

wisely and efficiently, which resonates deeply with the Acehnese people, whose livelihoods are closely tied to the sea. In contrast, IPs encompasses a broader range of metaphorical expressions related to different aspects of life, from land-based metaphors to social and cultural values, reflecting Indonesia's diverse geography and culture.

These findings align with Levi-Strauss' (as cited in Duranti, 1997) notion that cultural differences arise from adaptations to specific environmental conditions. In this case, the variations in metaphor usage in IPs and APs highlight how the national culture of Indonesia and the regional culture of Aceh are both intertwined and distinct, with the former representing a broader national identity and the latter a localized cultural expression. By comparing these proverbs, the study demonstrates how metaphorical language not only reflects the shared cultural values of Indonesia but also illustrates the unique ways in which local cultures, like Acehnese, adapt language to express their particular environmental and societal realities. This research, therefore, enriches our understanding of how language and culture intersect, illustrating the role of proverbs as cultural mirrors that reflect both the national identity of Indonesia and the regional identity of Aceh, while shedding light on the dynamic relationship between language, culture, and environmental adaptation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, both similar and different metaphors contained in Indonesian and Acehnese proverbs portray the same meanings. The results show instances where both tend to adopt the same types of metaphors and cases where they use different types of metaphors. The different metaphors led to dissimilarities in the customs and habits of both Indonesians and Acehnese. Therefore, the language characteristics of a society are certainly influenced by daily habits and activities. Metaphor usage in proverbs implied the adoption of familiar source domains relevant to the speaker.

This study has several limitations, including its focus on a limited number of Indonesian and Acehnese proverbs, which may not fully represent the diversity of metaphors used across the entire culture in Indonesia. Additionally, the analysis was confined to linguistic comparisons without considering more profound sociocultural influences, such as the role of education, regional dialects, or shifts in modern language use. Such limitations offer the opportunities for further research directions. Future research could expand the corpus to include a broader range of proverbs from different regions and communities within Indonesia and Aceh, incorporating sociolinguistic and ethnographic perspectives. Furthermore, exploring how metaphors in proverbs evolve or how different

generations interpret them could provide a more comprehensive understanding of their cultural significance.

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