

Conference Paper

'Sapi Perah' or 'Kuda Beban': Cultural Values in Indonesian Proverbs Associated with Horse, Cow, Buffalo, and Donkey

Ni Ketut Mirahayuni and Susie Chrismalia Garnida

Universitas 17 Agustus 1945, Indonesia

Abstract

Proverbs, a short well-known saying in figures of speech or symbolism, seem to have stood the test of ages for their usefulness in modern society. Proverbs have been found to serve people well as a significant rhetoric force in both oral and written communication, from friendly chats, powerful political speeches, and religious sermons to lyrical poetry, best-seller novels, and the influential mass media [7]. Proverbs reveal an awareness of the human condition and human flaws that make their distant voices ring with clarity, humor, wit, and insight [1]. This paper reported a study of cultural values Indonesian proverbs associated with horse, buffalo, cow and donkey. The purpose is to identify how these animals are culturally perceived and used in transferring wisdom, acceptable and favourable manners and moral conducts. The data comprise 80 Indonesian proverbs using any of the four animals in their expressions, gathered from various printed and electronic sources. The study found that proverbs using these four animals are used to show both positive and negative human attitudes. Positively, they illustrate the values of self-motivation, hard-work and devotion to duty, truthfulness, dependability, well-adjustment, fairness and justice. Negatively, they exemplify foolishness, arrogance, hypocritical attitude, inherent wickedness, unfavorable attitude towards opposite sex, over-excitement and being in a dilemmatic situation. The study shows that such values have been orally taught and transferred within the context of familiar daily objects and situations in the chiefly agricultural cultures. The proverbs mainly function to convey advice on acceptable attitudes, manners, and moral conducts.

Keywords: figurative language, Indonesian proverbs, cultural values

1. Introduction

Interests on proverbs have emerged as proverbs have been used to communicate the value of wisdom to guide people in their social interactions throughout the world. Proverb is generally identified as a short well-known saying that expresses an obvious truth and often offers advice. Like other types of figurative languages, proverbs involves figures of speech or symbolism and is used to describe somebody or something by means of comparison to other object or person. In [7] observes that proverbs

Corresponding Author: Ni Ketut Mirahayuni and Susie Chrismalia Garnida; email: nmirahayuni@yahoo.com

Received: 1 March 2017

Accepted: 27 March 2017

Published: 12 April 2017

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

© Ni Ketut Mirahayuni and Susie Chrismalia Garnida. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the LSCAC Conference Committee.

 OPEN ACCESS

contain “everyday experiences and common observations in succinct and formulaic language, making them easy to remember and ready to be used instantly as effective rhetoric in oral or written communication” ([7]: xi). Also, proverbs “fulfill the human need to summarize experiences and observations into nuggets of wisdom that provide ready-made comments on personal relationships and social affairs” ([7]: 2). Proverbs are unique in the manner of how wisdom and norm are passed on to younger generation. In [1] states that proverbs reveal “an awareness of the human condition and human flaws that make their distant voices ring with clarity, humor, wit, and insight” ([1]: 47).

Proverbs have stood the test of time for they have not lost their usefulness in modern society. Proverbs have served functions as significant rhetoric force in in both oral and written communication, from friendly chats, powerful political speeches, and religious sermons to lyrical poetry, best-seller novels, and the influential mass media ([7]: 2). Proverbs contain a lot of common sense, experience, wisdom, and truth. Proverbs are found in every culture and are used in various contexts. Similarity in meaning or value occur accross different languages. For example, Indonesian proverb “*Malu bertanya, sesat di jalan*” (“he who is reluctant to ask for direction will surely be lost in his way”) have similar meaning to the English proverb “*he who hesitates is lost*”, and the English proverb *to cry over spilled milk* contains the same meanin as the Indonesian proverb *nasi sudah menjadi bubur* (literally, rice has turned into porridge). Mieder further observes that proverbs that are used appropriately becomes an effective formulaic strategy of communication.

Many attempts have been made to formulate the proper definition of proverbs. In [7] for instance has collected and reviewed various definitions of proverbs from Aristotle to the present time. Based on his studies, Mieder Mieder’s came up with the definition of proverbs as follows, “A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation. In ([7]: 3; also in (Mieder, 1985): 119 and (Mieder, 1993): 24.

The present study focuses on Indonesian proverbs involving four domestic animals: horse, cow, water buffalo and donkey. Horses are large land mammal notable for its speed, strength, and endurance. Horses are able to travel long distance with great efficiency and to survive on a poor nutrient diet, high-fiber grasses. Throughout the human history and civilization, horses have been the most important domesticated animals. They have been used as means of transportation, enabling human mobility, and in agriculture, warfare, and sport. Nowadays, people in some countries still use horses to do work. Horses are also used for racing, games, and pleasure riding.

Unlike horses, cows are known as a source of fresh milk, cream, cheese, and butter and meat. Interestingly, a number of gods in mythology are attributed as the god of cattle. The god Apollo is renown as the god of agriculture and cattle. Hermes was also

the god of commerce, and the protector of traders and herds. Cows also appear in the representation of the images of god and goddesses. Some god and goddess in the Greek mythology are depicted as having cow head, even as a god or goddess with cow face. Hathor in Egyptian mythology was often represented as *a star-studded cow or as a woman with a cow's head*. Isis, the Egyptian goddess of love and gaiety was represented as human in form wearing the horns of a cow. Cows are pictured as the carriage furniture e.g. as bed carriage in Egyptian tombs of King Tutankhamun. In Indian mythology, the sacred cow Nandini serves as the vehicle of Lord Shiva. In Indonesian rural areas, cows have been used traditionally in agricultural work, particularly for ploughing the field, but nowadays this practice has been replaced by machines. A similar function has been given to water buffalos. In some traditions where cow's meat or beef is prohibited for meal, people raise buffaloes for meat. Donkey has been probably given less tribute compared to its cousins, horses, although in many parts of the world donkeys are used to transport heavy loads .

There are English proverb related to horses, for example "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink", which means "you can't force others to do what's good for them". Horses with an unswayable character that cannot be forced to do things against his/her will. This represents the value of anti-violence. Horses in Indonesian proverbs are associated with both positive values such as hard work, loyalty, as *kuda yang baik tak bercerai daripada pelananya*, which literally means a good horse is never separated from its saddle and the negative one such as *seperti kuda lepas dari pingitan*, which means lik being over excited after being freed from restriction and prohibition.

This study aims to identify the cultural values inherent in Indonesian proverbs associated to horses, cows, buffalo and donkey. Specifically this study examines the positive or favourable, and the negative, or unfavourable, social attitudes, habits or manners that are communicated in the proverbs associated to each of these four animals to represent the characteristics, attitudes and values and the wisdom of the people.

2. Brief Theoretical Overview of Proverbs

Many attempts have been made to formulate the proper definition of proverbs. In [7] for instance has collected and reviewed various definitions of proverbs from Aristotle to the present time. Based on his studies, Mieder Mieder's came up with the definition of proverbs as follows, "A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation. ([7]: 3; also in (Mieder, 1985): 119 and (Mieder, 1993): 24.

Proverbs have been effectively used as strategies for dealing with situations ([7]: 8). Proverbs act as signs for human behavior and social contexts and the meaning

of proverbs is thus very much dependent on the contexts in which they appear. Common proverbs may have multiple meanings that should each be understood only in particular situations. On the other hand, proverbs may express general wisdom without any specific national or ethnic references. Their general use indicates a strong intellectual, ethical and human bond among people across cultures. Consider the following comparison.

English	Indonesian
1. <i>Where there is smoke, there is fire</i>	• <i>Ada api ada asap</i>
2. <i>Barking dogs do not bite</i>	• <i>Anjing menggonggong tidak menggigit</i>
3. <i>Still waters run deep</i>	• <i>Air beriak tanda tak dalam</i>

Mieder also examines that beside proverbs that have complete thoughts that can stand by themselves, there are such subgenres as proverbial expressions, proverbial comparisons, proverbial exaggerations, and twin (binary formulas) which are fragmentary and for the most part metaphorical phrases that must be integrated into a sentence.

Proverbial expressions are usually verbal phrases (ex. *to cry over spilled milk*). Proverbial comparisons can be conveniently be divided into two structural groups. The first pattern is as X as Y, as indicated by such simile such as *as swift as the wind* (*secepat kilat*). The second group is based on a verbal comparison with "like" (*seperti/bagaikan*): *to sleep like a lamb* (*tidur seperti orang mati*, 'deep sleep'). Proverbial exaggeration is especially used if one wants to ridicule a person or a situation. Such exaggerations usually describe the extraordinary degree to which someone or something possesses a certain characteristic. There is a great deal of folk humor in these exaggeration, but depending on how and in what context they are uttered, they can take on "a very satirical tone" ([7]: 14). The twin or binary formulas are traditional word pairs that are linked together by alliteration and/or rhyme, such as *sink or swim*, *first come, first serve* (*siapa cepat dia dapat*). While these proverbial phrases neither contain any complete thought or wisdom nor exist by themselves, they are treated as proverbs because they are traditional and metaphorical, and perhaps are more frequently used than actual full-sentence proverbs.

An international classification system of proverbs was created by Matti Kuusi (1914–1998) and subsequently his daughter Outi Lauhakangas, and they proposed 13 main themes, which for the most part represent basic aspects of human life, including: practical knowledge of nature, faith and basic attitudes, basic observations and sociologic, the world and human life, sense of proportion, concepts of morality, social life, social interaction, communication, social position, agreements and norms, coping and learning and time and sense of time ([7]: 16-17). Outi Lauhakangas [6] later identified

a list of over 700 universal [proverb] types and their criteria, with their variants from four main cultural areas: European, African, Islamic, and Asiatic cultures ([7]: 18).

The “easy-to-remember” element in proverbs is primarily contributed by their poetic element. In [1] states that the processing of proverbs begins with the recognition that an utterance is indeed a proverb, and this is primarily the result of its *prosody* which often consists of poetic elements:

1. *A friend in **need** is a friend in **deed*** (repetition and rhyming)
2. *Brain is **better** than **brawn*** (alliteration)
3. *If you lie down with dogs, **[then]** you get up with fleas* (syntactic parallelism and antithesis)

The figurative nature of the expression makes it seem incompatible with the context if the utterance is taken literally. Thus, common cognitive or “thinking” skills are needed here, such as mental recall, comparative thinking, generalizing, symbol recognition and reconfiguration. Then, the implicit associations contained in the utterance are related to the context in which the proverb is uttered. For example, *The early bird catches the worm* (What’s the worm? And what does being early have to do with catching it?). Finally, the *social* dimension or culture emerges when we consider that these expressions may seem inefficient unless they are employed for a purpose that more transparent comments would fail.

In [1] mentions at least four main functions that proverbs do simultaneously: to argue, to give advice, to establish rapport and to entertain. Saying the same advice with proverbs may be considered minimizing the “face threatening” [6] and “telling-off” impression. Thus, the advice *Let sleeping dogs lie* instead of “don’t start trouble”, or the suggestion *strike while the iron is hot* instead of “when you’re ready to do something, don’t hesitate”, or *You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make it drink* rather than “you can’t force others to do what’s good for them” may be more readily acquiesced. This is particularly important in some cases when the speakers intend to show respect to whom they speak.

Beside such a ‘socialization’ function as illustrated above, proverbs may also serve as “the promotion of group solidarity” ([1]: 35). This is achieved by identifying shared referents in everyday interaction. In making reference to shared environments (both physical and psychological), people tend to recognize who belongs in their group and who does not. However, the shared environments do not always hold a constant meaning and must constantly be reconstructed. For example, we may think of a referent such as “dog” as “loyal, fun pet” but in proverb *Let sleeping dogs lie*, this positive idea does not apply and perhaps the idea of some “inherent wickedness” may be taken from there. Proverbs have thus synthesized several social, cultural, and cognitive concerns when they are used felicitously in social interaction.

Because oral forms of expression take on culturally-specific functions that may often hinder successful inter-cultural communication, it should be noted that what is culturally-specific is not necessarily the form itself, but the use to which it is put and the allusions that it involves. Understanding the context, or the immediately preceding discourse and the situation of the participants see ([3]: 35-67), help participants to arrive at common ground by negotiation. To the common ground is also added the background knowledge of the participants, and thus enriching and giving meaning to the ongoing discourse. Nevertheless, proverbs, as a linguistic genre, appear to be quite popular among the various cultures of humanity that many cultures appear to have linguistic expressions that act as proverbs.

3. Method

This study is primarily descriptive qualitative, with the attempts to identify, analyze and explain the phenomena. The data are collected from various sources, including *Kumpulan Peribahasa Indonesia* [4, 5], *Advanced Indonesian-English Dictionary* (Salim, 1990, first edition), *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (1991, second edition), also *Google* search and *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* [8] for Indonesian proverbs with the animal names (*kuda*, *sapi*, *kerbau*, *keledai*) as keywords. The data, comprising 80 Indonesian proverbs, are classified based on the animal names. Then, analysis is conducted by identifying and discussing the intended message, and the positive and negative values or characteristics being carried by the animals in the proverbs.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Positive and Negative Values in Indonesian Proverbs with Kuda, Kerbau, Sapi and Keledai

In general, the four animals mentioned in the proverbs—*kuda* (horse), *sapi* or *lembu* (cow), *kerbau* (water buffalo) and *keledai* (donkey)—have been associated with positive and negative values, attitudes or characteristics of a person. *Horses* are generally associated with positive values or characteristics of someone being strong, hard-working, dependable and enduring, and negative ones such victim of manipulative attitude of others, hypocritical, foolish, and strong (sexual) desires. (Water) *buffaloes* are also associated with both positive values as a well-adjusted person, justice and of right proportion, and negatively as wicked or powerful person, victim of manipulative attitude, foolish, being indecisive, unruly, careless and being in a dilemmatic situation. Cows and donkeys, of which only eight data are found for both, are generally negative, in that, cows are associated with victim of manipulative attitude, and interestingly also

about a bigmouth or boastful person, while donkeys are negatively being referred to as a foolish or dumb person who pretends to be smart.

4.1.1. Values related to horses in Indonesian proverbs

Horses are used in proverbs to suggest positively-valued manners and attitudes as self-motivated, hard working and strong.

1. self-motivation and dependability

Horses are naturally more active and harder to control in comparison with cows or donkeys. It is interesting that a horse is used here., instead of a cow The fact that a horse is more active, and thus more likely to take initiative, may show the tension between being independent and accountable. This proverb, *kuda yang pantas tiada berkehendakan cemeti* ('a diligent horse do not need a lash of a whip'), tells about the value of honesty and accountability, that advises a person (or particularly, a worker,) to develop such an independent, but dependable, attitude that s/he will work properly and seriously even without strict supervision, that one should not develop a hypocritical attitude upon work and responsibility. This self-motivated and accountable attitude is positively valued and well-taught in the society.

2. devotion to duty

Saddle is a leather seat that one puts on the back of a horse or an animal so that s/he can sit on it and ride the animal. It provides comfort of riding for the horse rider but more of an extra burden to a horse. Now, *kuda yang baik tak bercerai daripada pelananya* ('a good horse is never separated from its saddle'). This proverb tells about the value of devotion to duty, that faithfulness in the duty is an expected and favourable attitude.

3. strength

Apart from its beauty, horse is probably most remembered for its power, that the term '*horse power*' is used as a scientific unit of measurement for measuring how powerful an engine is. This feature is both positively and negatively used in proverbs and other expressions.

Positively, it is often used in idioms like *daya kuda* (horse power), *kuda hitam* (unexpected winner in a race or game). The idea of right or proper proportion is implied in the proverb *kuda itu kuda juga, keledai itu keledai juga* (lit. A horse is a horse, a donkey is a donkey, 'the right proportion for everything'). Here a comparison is made between a donkey (the weaker one) and a horse (the stronger one) that a proportional share (of work and responsibility) should be made according to the capability of each. The message is that everything has

its own place, and it will return to it. This proverb teaches correct, acceptable manners, that a person should know his or her own place and duty and not aspire higher place they do not belong to.

Negatively, horse is also used to advise against making someone a victim of manipulative attitude or acts, as in *jadi kuda beban* ('being a packhorse'). Here, a horse is destined to take the loads of others. In another proverb, horse is associated with bad luck, *tuah anjing, celaka kuda* ('people have different luck; one may either be in good luck or bad luck'). Here, the dog is the one that has the good luck while the horse is the unfortunate one. Horse is also associated with henchmen or accomplices, as in *kuda pelejang bukit* ('of a person who is an accomplice of someone').

4. over-excitement

Horse is associated with an over-excitement, excessive freedom to the extent that the attitude is less favourable for it is more likely to be against the norms in the society. A girl who aims for more 'outdoor freedom' is said *seperti kuda lepas dari pingitan* ('being over-excited after being freed from bondage'). While a cheerful, radiant spirit is likened *Anak kuda bulu kasap* (Young colt with coarse hair). Some foolish attitude like being drunk is like *Naik kuda hijau* ('be drunk').

5. dilemmatic situation

Old horses are often considered useless, and their past hard work puts the owner in a dilemmatic situation whether to keep them (with the consequence of regular expense for feeding them but no more work can be assigned to them), or discard them (but s/he will be accused of being unsympathetic and selfish). Thus, the proverb *bagaikan kuda tua: dipekerjakan tak boleh, nak dibunuh sayang* (like an old horse, you can't put it to work anymore, but you do not have a heart to have it killed). This is to describe a situation in which someone who faces a dilemma. Some other common proverbs similar to this meaning are (i) *bagai bertemu/makan buah simalakama; dimakan mati bapa, tidak dimakan mati ibu*; (ii) *bagai memegang buah kepantangan beruk; ditelan mati emak, diludahkan mati bapa*; (iii) *digenggam takut mati, dilepaskan takut terbang*; (iv) *dikatakan mati emak, tak dikatakan mati bapak*.

6. unfavourable (sexual) attitude towards opposite sex

A man who likes to marry many women without bothering himself about working to earn a living is called *jadi bapa kuda* (lit. 'being a horse's father'). Meanwhile, a woman who court a man for a partner, which is considered uncommon as a man is more likely to take the initiative in a courtship, is called *rumput mencari kuda* (literally means 'the grass is after the horse'). This is also represented in other proverb associated with a water source or a well, *perigi mencari timba* which literally means "the well is after the bucket".

7. hypocritical

Horses are also used to illustrate hypocritical attitude. The proverb *senyum kuda* ('sheepish smile') is used to represent someone who looks a bit embarrassed because s/he feels foolish or have done something foolish. Also, more obvious hypocritical attitude is expressed in proverbs like *Bak rasa kuda pula kukuran; Bak ras kuda, pula kukuran; genta saja yang berbunyi, kuda sudah dek gerindin*, and *Roda yang berpaling, kuda sudah digerindin*. These tell about someone who has already gone bankrupt yet still likes to exhibit a luxurious lifestyle. An empty chatter is called *seperti kuda kencing di papan* (lit, like a horse peeing on a piece of a board).

8. impossible wish

Unlike cows and buffalo, horses have no horns. Thus when one makes an impossible wish, making some impossible wish is like *minta tanduk kepada kuda* (lit. asking for horns to a horse). While an unforgiving attitude is compared to *Berbalik-balik kuda tercirit* ('to dig up an old matter').

4.1.2. Values related to buffalo in Indonesian proverbs

Similar to horses, buffaloes are used for transport in the past. Compared to horses that are associated with strength, speed and initiatives, buffaloes are somehow more quiet, reserved but also slow. They represent strength and endurance, as well as for other favorable and unfavorable manners and attitudes in the society. Like horses, buffalos are also associated with both positive and negative attitudes and values.

1. Truthfulness and Adjustment

Buffalo are relatively slow but obedient. In older times, buffalos are often depicted standing in the ricefield with some little birds on it picking fleas on its back, or walking slowly on the quiet roads in the country side on the way back home in the afternoon with a little boy riding on its back and playing a traditional bamboo flute. So the proverbs *Bagai kerbau menanduk anaknya* (a mother buffalo butts her calf) perfectly pictures its gentleness despite its somewhat frightening look.

In some traditional villages, teams of buffalos are employed to help farmers plough the ricefield. Buffaloes are useful and faithful animals. The proverb *Kerbau dipegang tali hidungnya, manusia dipegang pada katanya* (literally means buffalo is held by its rein, a man is taken by his words), which is used to teach about truthfulness and reliability, is based on the positive traits of buffaloes.

Buffalos are also used in proverb to represent one's ability to adapt in different situation or cultures, as in the proverb *Masuk kandang kambing mengembek, masuk kandang kerbau menguak* (to bleat in a goat's fence, to moo in a buffalo's

fence). This flexibility and adaptability are required in multicultural society like Indonesia, in which cultural contact among people from diverse backgrounds of origin and culture is inevitable.

2. fairness and proportional justice

Buffalos are used to signify fairness and proportionality in dealing with people. *Kerbau menanduk kerbau pergi* (when buffalo butts, it must go) is a good advice to deal with people justly, that a wrongdoer must be punished for his/her misconduct. The idea of proportionality is also implied in the proverb *Kerbau kandang emas berpura*, which means to keep or conduct something according to the norms or custom. The opposite is represented in the proverb *Kerbau diberi pelana, kuda diberi berpasangan* which means 'buffalos are saddled, horses are put in pair', which is against the normal custom or uncommon. Having buffaloes being saddled is as uncommon as having horses working in pairs ploughing the field. The idea of fairness is represented in the advise to parents to take good care of their daughter. This wisdom is signified in the proverb *Kerbau jangan dimaling orang, ayam jangan dimusangi*, which means parents should take good care of their daughters.

3. notoriously wicked or powerful person

Buffaloes' strength is often associated with one's presumed inherent wickedness. This is represented in the proverb *Bagai kerbau runcing tanduk*, which means notoriously wicked person. The Strength also represent or power, as represented in *kerbau bertanduk, rotan beronak*, that means great people have their power, common people have their unity.

It is quite likely that a person is falsely accused of committing a As a matter of fact, such a person will be likely to be falsely accused of committing wrongdoings. This is well represented in the proverb *Kerbau tanduk panjang, tiada menanduk pun dikata orang menanduk juga*, which means a buffalo with long horns is more likely to be falsely accused of butting. When dealing with powerful and wicked people, it is advisable that one take extra caution and not to make trouble. This advice is represented in the proverb *Jangan buat kerbau tanduk panjang*. Interestingly, carelessness or uncautious attitude is also described using buffalo in the proverbs *Laksana kerbau, di mana rumput hijau di sana terkam* and *Terambau kerbau karena rumput muda*. Both proverbs contain advice against careless attitude. Uncautious attitude may put someone in a difficult situation that put his life in danger, as in *Menolong kerbau ditangkap harimau* (literally means to help a buffalo [with the risk of] being caught by a tiger).

4. foolish or dumb

Like horses, buffalos are also associated with foolishness. One is advised to be cautious when making frineds with a fool. The proverb *Bermain-main dengan*

kerbau, dilontarnya muka dengan ekor reminds one that that making friends with fools only brings disadvantages. In this context, buffaloes are considered fools and can be detrimental to one's reputation, as in *Seekor kerbau membawa lumpur, semuanya terpalit; Jangan dekat kerbau berkubang, nanti terpercik lumpur* (by one's mistake, all get punishment).

5. victim of manipulative attitude

A foolish man will easily fall prey of other's manipulative acts, as he does the work but others get the fame. This situation is represented in the the proverb *Kerbau punya susu, sapi punya nama, or kerbau sakit, sapi beroleh nama* (someone does the good deed or work, but another person receives the compliments'). Another proverb that signifies foolishness is *Seperti kerbau dicucuk hidung*, which means a foolish person who always do as other's wish without thinking. A person with no wisdom will tend to do thing without much consideration. The proverbs *Membeli kerbau di padang, or Membeli kerbau bertuntun* which means doing things blindly or behave irrationally well illustrates the context. However, a disobedient woman or girl is negatively compared to a herd of obedient buffalos in the fence, *Kerbau sekandang dapat digembalakan, manusia seorang tiada terjaga*. It is easier to control a herd of buffaloes than a person.

4.1.3. Cows and donkeys in Indonesian proverbs

Unlike horses and buffalos that are associated with both positive and negative values, cows and donkeys are more likely to be associated with only negative values. There are only two proverbs using donkey (*keledai*): one is used to refer to an easy method to memorize, *jembatan keledai*, while the other is associated with the idea of pretension, *keledai hendak dijadikan kuda* (foolish person pretending to be smart). The fact that donkeys are not very familiar animals in many Indonesian culture may explain their rare use in proverbs.

Not many proverbs use cows as illustration. Cows (*sapi* or *lembu*) are negatively associated with the idea of someone being manipulated. The expression *sapi perahan* (literally means 'milk cows') as in *Ja memperlakukanku seperti sapi perahan* conveys warning against being manipulated. The proverb represents exploitation of someone for other person's benefit. Cows are associated with big mouth, *Lembu dogol/dongkol* (cows without horns) means a big mouthed person or ex-officer who has no power or authority anymore. A similar meaning is represented in the proverb *Katak hendak menjadi lembu* (a frog desiring to be a cow), that means a poor person who wants to be rich. In this context, cow has positive connotation, symbolizing a rich person. Cows are also used in the idiom *dagang sapi*, to refer to political agreement of different parties for common interest.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

The study on Indonesian proverbs using horses, buffaloes, cows and donkeys has shown that the fixity of proverbs is not as rigid as it was thought to be. Wisdom and favorable attitudes and manners are communicated using allusion to illustrate the situations in which these animals are involved in daily human activities. The positive values are represented in the form of compliments and praise for the favorable attitude that have been performed. In the context of negative attitudes or values, proverbs tend to contain suggestion or advice and warning from the speaker that the listener not to act or behave in the way as being illustrated by proverbs. Variants may also exist in various forms of figures of speech, yet, proverbs are presented in their standard traditional forms to add some common sense to human communication. Even more, there is a trend to deconstruct the original fixed proverbs structure and, by analogy, create a similar structure that needs literal reading (or taking [7] term "anti-proverbs" may enrich the language richness by re-shaping and re-interpreting old-day proverbs into recent contexts.

References

- [1] E. D. Barajas, *The Function of Proverbs in Discourse: The Case of a Mexican Transnational Social Network*, De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin, New York, 2010.
- [2] E. Black, *Pragmatic stylistics*, Edinburg University Press, 2006.
- [3] G. Brown and G. Yule, *Discourse analysis*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983.
- [4] Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, (1991). *Kamus besar bahasa Indonesia*, 2nd Edition. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.
- [5] U. T. Dipo, *Kumpulan peribahasa Indonesia*, Kawan Pustaka, Tangerang, 2004.
- [6] J. L. Mey, *Pragmatics, An introduction*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, 2nd edition, 2001.
- [7] W. Mieder, *Proverbs, A handbook*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 2004.
- [8] R. E. V. Moreno, *Creativity and convention: The pragmatics of everyday figurative speech*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 2007.
- [9] J. Seidl and W. McMordie, "English idioms and how to use them," Jakarta; PT Intermedia, 1980.
- [10] <http://horsehints.org/HorseQuotes>.
- [11] www.phrases.org.uk.