



Idioms in the Yoki Berampu Songs Lyrics PakPak Boang Language

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Abstract. This study investigates idiomatic expressions in the song lyrics of Yoki Berampu, a regional singer who uses the Pakpak Boang language. Idioms are essential in communication as they convey meanings that cannot be interpreted literally and reflect cultural values. However, idioms in regional songs are often difficult to understand, especially for those outside the cultural context. This study aims to identify the types of idioms and analyze their meanings. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, with data collected through document analysis of eighteen selected song lyrics. The findings reveal 39 idiomatic expressions, consisting of 7 pure idioms, 12 semi-idioms, and 20 literal idioms. Each type demonstrates different levels of semantic transparency, where pure idioms are highly abstract, semi-idioms relate to sensory experiences, and literal idioms convey meanings more transparently. These expressions are used to represent emotions, social values, and cultural identity. The study implies that idiomatic expressions in regional songs function not only as linguistic elements but also as a medium for preserving cultural identity and conveying complex meanings.

Keywords: Cultural Identity; Idiomatic Expressions; Pakpak Boang; Semantic Analysis; Song Lyrics.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays a fundamental role in human communication, enabling individuals to express ideas, emotions, and social interactions in everyday life. One important aspect of language is idiomatic expression, which refers to groups of words whose meanings cannot be interpreted literally from their individual components (De Stefani & De Marco, 2019). Idioms are closely related to semantic studies because they reflect figurative meaning shaped by cultural and social contexts (Tobbi, 2024). As stated by Fernando (1996), idioms function as culturally bound expressions that require contextual understanding rather than literal interpretation.

Idioms are widely used in daily communication as a means of expressing ideas in a more implicit and nuanced way. Their meanings are influenced by the speakers' cultural background, environment, and shared experiences within a speech community (Sarwar & Arslan, 2024). Therefore, idioms not only serve as linguistic elements but also represent cultural identity and collective values. In regional languages, idioms become an important component in preserving local wisdom and cultural heritage, as they contain meanings that are deeply rooted in the traditions of the community (Setiawan, 2024).

However, the existence of regional languages in Indonesia is currently facing significant challenges due to language shift. The increasing dominance of the Indonesian language, especially among younger generations, has led to a decline in the use of local languages in everyday communication (Setiawan, 2020). This phenomenon threatens the sustainability of linguistic elements such as idioms, which are often the first to disappear when

a language is no longer actively used. Previous studies have shown that the loss of idiomatic competence is an early indicator of language decline, as speakers gradually lose the ability to produce figurative and culturally rich expressions (Hansdóttir, 2024).

This condition is also evident in the Pakpak Boang language spoken in Subulussalam City. The use of this language among younger generations has decreased in various social contexts, including family, education, and community interactions (Alimin & Fajri, 2020). As a result, important linguistic features such as idiomatic expressions are at risk of being lost if not properly documented. Considering that idioms reflect the cultural identity and worldview of the Pakpak Boang community, efforts to preserve and analyze them are highly necessary (Yulsafli, 2016).

Songs can serve as an effective medium for documenting and preserving idiomatic expressions because they naturally reflect the language used in daily life. Folk songs, in particular, often contain rich linguistic elements that represent cultural values and social experiences (Manalu & Abidin, 2023). Yoki Berampu, a regional singer from Subulussalam, uses the Pakpak Boang language in his songs, making his works a relevant source for linguistic analysis. The idioms found in his song lyrics provide valuable insights into how language and culture are interconnected within the Pakpak Boang community.

Previous studies have examined idioms in various regional contexts, such as Javanese, Sasak, Sumbawanese, and Lampung languages. These studies generally focus on identifying types of idioms and interpreting their meanings in different linguistic and cultural settings. However, research on idiomatic expressions in the Pakpak Boang language, particularly in song lyrics, remains very limited. This indicates a research gap that needs to be addressed, especially in terms of documenting and analyzing idioms as part of regional language preservation.

Based on this gap, this study aims to identify the types of idioms and analyze their meanings in the lyrics of Yoki Berampu's songs. This research is expected to contribute to the field of semantics and regional language studies by providing a deeper understanding of idiomatic expressions in the Pakpak Boang language. Furthermore, it also serves as an effort to document and preserve local linguistic elements, thereby supporting the sustainability of regional languages as part of Indonesia's cultural heritage.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Idioms are an essential component of language that reflect figurative meaning and cultural context. Linguistically, idioms are defined as groups of words whose meanings cannot be interpreted literally from their individual components (Sufa & Maisyarah, 2026). According to Fernando (1996), idioms function as semantic units with meanings that are often opaque and culturally bound. Similarly, Chaer (2009) and Keraf (2010) emphasize that idioms deviate from general linguistic rules and require contextual interpretation rather than grammatical analysis. This indicates that idioms are not merely lexical combinations but also represent conceptual and cultural meanings embedded within a speech community (Meso, 2023).

Fernando (1996) classifies idioms into three main types: pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. Pure idioms have meanings that are completely non-literal and cannot be inferred from their constituent words. Semi-idioms combine both literal and non-literal meanings, while literal idioms retain meanings that are relatively transparent and closer to their lexical components. This classification is relevant in identifying the level of semantic transparency in idiomatic expressions. In addition, McCarthy and O'Dell Nahdona (2024) categorize idioms into various forms such as similes, binomials, proverbs, euphemisms, and fixed expressions, highlighting the structural diversity of idiomatic language in communication.

From a cultural perspective, idioms are closely related to the social and cultural background of language users. Cacciari & Tabossi (2014) states that idioms reflect the values, beliefs, and experiences of a community, and are often used to convey meaning indirectly, such as giving advice, expressing humor, or criticizing subtly. Senkbeil (2020) further explains that idioms are culture-specific expressions that may not have direct equivalents across languages, making them essential elements in understanding cross-cultural communication. This indicates that studying idioms is not only a linguistic activity but also a cultural exploration of how a community interprets the world.

In the context of media, songs serve as an effective medium for preserving and expressing idiomatic language. Songs naturally reflect everyday language use and often contain figurative expressions that represent emotional and cultural experiences (Muxlisa, 2025). As stated by Labov Bakyt et al, (2025), language variation in songs can reflect broader social changes, while Trudgill Karhunen et al, (2018) emphasizes that language is closely related to social identity. Therefore, analyzing idioms in song lyrics provides insights into both linguistic patterns and cultural values embedded in a community.

Yoki Berampu, a regional singer from Subulussalam, utilizes the Pakpak Boang language in his songs, making his works a significant source for idiomatic analysis. His lyrics contain various idiomatic expressions that reflect local culture, emotions, and social experiences. The use of regional language in his songs also contributes to language preservation, particularly in the context of declining use of local languages among younger generations. Thus, his songs provide authentic data for examining the relationship between language, culture, and identity (Amil, 2025).

Several previous studies have examined idioms in regional languages and song lyrics. Research on Batak Toba song lyrics Munthe et al. (2022) shows that idioms are closely related to social structure and cultural values. Similarly, studies on Melayu Sambas songs Djarot et al, (2025) indicate that idioms function as representations of community perspectives toward social reality. In addition, sociolinguistic research in Subulussalam Manik (2024) reveals that the Pakpak Boang language is experiencing a shift due to the dominance of the national language, although it is still maintained in certain contexts.

However, despite these contributions, there is still a lack of research focusing specifically on idiomatic expressions in the Pakpak Boang language, particularly in contemporary song lyrics. Most previous studies have focused on major regional languages or different dialects, leaving the Boang dialect underexplored. Furthermore, existing studies tend to emphasize classification and meaning without examining the broader cultural function of idioms in preserving local identity.

Based on this gap, this study is conducted to analyze the types and meanings of idioms in Yoki Berampu's song lyrics and to explore their role as cultural representations of the Pakpak Boang community. This research is expected to contribute to semantic studies and regional language preservation by documenting idiomatic expressions that are at risk of disappearing due to language shift.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design to examine the use of idiomatic expressions in Pakpak Boang song lyrics performed by Yoki Berampu. This approach was selected because it enables an in-depth and contextual understanding of linguistic phenomena without relying on statistical analysis. The descriptive qualitative design aims to identify, classify, and interpret the forms and meanings of idioms as they appear in the data (Maisyarah & Sufa, 2026).

The subject of this study consisted of eighteen song lyrics by Yoki Berampu written in the Pakpak Boang language. Meanwhile, the object of the study was the idiomatic expressions found in those lyrics, which were analyzed based on their forms and meanings. The data were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on songs that contain idiomatic expressions relevant to the research objectives.

The primary instrument of this study was the researcher, who played a central role in identifying, classifying, and interpreting the idiomatic expressions. Data were collected through document analysis by listening to the songs, transcribing the lyrics, and identifying idiomatic expressions. The collected data were then recorded and categorized based on idiom classification theories.

The data analysis technique followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was conducted by selecting and grouping idioms based on Fernando's (1996) classification, namely pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. The data were then presented in tabular form to facilitate pattern identification and analysis. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the meanings of idioms based on their contextual usage and cultural significance.

To ensure data validity, this study applied member checking by involving Yoki Berampu as the songwriter and a native speaker of Pakpak Boang. This process was conducted to verify that the researcher's interpretations aligned with the intended meanings within the cultural context. The validation results indicated that the interpretations were consistent with authentic language use.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data collection process, research setting, findings, and discussion. The data were collected through document analysis of eighteen song lyrics performed by Yoki Berampu in the Pakpak Boang language. The research was conducted over a period of approximately two months through stages of listening, transcription, identification, and classification of idiomatic expressions.

A total of 39 idiomatic expressions were identified and classified into three types based on Fernando's (1996) theory: pure idioms, semi-idioms, and literal idioms. The findings are presented in both tabular and descriptive forms to highlight dominant patterns and interpretations.

Findings

The distribution of idiomatic expressions found in the data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Idiom Types in Yoki Berampu's Songs.

| No | Type of Idiom | Frequency | Percentage |
|----|----------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Pure Idioms | 7 | 17.9% |
| 2 | Semi-Idioms | 12 | 30.8% |
| 3 | Literal Idioms | 20 | 51.3% |
| | Total | 39 | 100% |

Based on Table 1, literal idioms dominate the data (51.3%), followed by semi-idioms (30.8%) and pure idioms (17.9%). This indicates that most idiomatic expressions in Pakpak Boang song lyrics retain relatively transparent meanings, although figurative language is still widely used.

In addition, the distribution of idioms across songs varies. Songs such as *Cekhem Dibages Luka*, *PHP*, and *Hiasen Ate* contain a higher number of idioms compared to others. This suggests that songs with stronger emotional themes tend to employ more idiomatic expressions.

Analysis of Idiomatic Expressions

Pure Idioms

Pure idioms are expressions whose meanings cannot be inferred from their literal components. In this study, seven pure idioms were identified. These idioms primarily express deep emotional states such as sadness, inner conflict, and love.

For example, the expression "*Cekhem Dibages Luka*" (smile over the wound) represents hidden suffering behind outward happiness. Similarly, "*Hiasen Ate*" (heart decoration) refers to a loved one who completes emotional life.

These findings indicate that pure idioms function as symbolic tools to convey complex and abstract emotional experiences that cannot be expressed literally.

Semi-Idioms

Semi-idioms retain partial literal meanings but function metaphorically in context. Twelve semi-idioms were identified in this study.

Many semi-idioms involve body parts such as heart (*ate*) and physical actions. For instance, "*Kusapunai tentenken*" (rubbing the chest) represents emotional restraint or patience, while "*Khusakmo hakhapenku*" (my hopes were crushed) expresses disappointment.

These expressions demonstrate how emotional experiences are conceptualized through physical and sensory imagery, making them easier to understand while maintaining figurative meaning.

Literal Idioms

Literal idioms are expressions whose meanings remain transparent and can be understood directly. This study found twenty literal idioms, making them the most dominant category.

Examples include “*Mekhadu nimu kita setia*” (we are loyal) and “*Imbang geluh*” (life partner), which clearly convey meanings without requiring deep interpretation. Although simple, these idioms play an important role in conveying moral values such as loyalty, commitment, patience, and emotional control in relationships.

Discussion

The findings reveal that idiomatic expressions in *Yoki Berampu*'s songs function as an essential linguistic and cultural device for expressing emotional experiences. The dominance of literal idioms suggests that Pakpak Boang song lyrics prioritize clarity and accessibility, while still maintaining poetic expression.

Pure idioms, although fewer in number, demonstrate a high level of abstraction and are used to express intense emotional states such as heartbreak and inner conflict. This supports the idea that figurative language is crucial for expressing emotions that cannot be conveyed literally (Littlemore, 2020).

Semi-idioms act as a bridge between literal and pure idioms by linking abstract emotions to physical experiences. The frequent use of body-related expressions aligns with conceptual metaphor theory, which states that emotions are often understood through bodily experience.

Meanwhile, literal idioms reflect cultural values and social norms within the Pakpak Boang community. These expressions emphasize loyalty, patience, and emotional balance, indicating that language plays a role in maintaining cultural identity.

Compared to previous studies on idiomatic expressions in song lyrics, this study confirms that idioms are not only linguistic features but also serve as cultural representations. The findings highlight that Pakpak Boang idioms are deeply rooted in daily life, emotional experiences, and local wisdom.

Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of semantic analysis and idiomatic studies by providing empirical data on idioms in regional song lyrics.

Practically, the findings can be used as learning material in language and cultural education, particularly in preserving regional languages such as Pakpak Boang. Additionally, this study helps readers and listeners better understand the meanings behind local song lyrics.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study concludes that idiomatic expressions are an essential linguistic feature in Yoki Berampu's Pakpak Boang song lyrics, contributing significantly to meaning construction and cultural representation. A total of 39 idiomatic expressions were identified, consisting of 20 literal idioms, 12 semi-idioms, and 7 pure idioms. These findings indicate that literal idioms are the most frequently used, suggesting that the song lyrics tend to maintain semantic transparency while still incorporating figurative language. Furthermore, the idioms found in the lyrics convey various emotional and social experiences such as love, loyalty, longing, sadness, and resilience, reflecting the cultural values and worldview of the Pakpak Boang community. Thus, idiomatic expressions function not only as stylistic elements but also as a medium for preserving local identity through language.

However, this study is limited to the analysis of eighteen songs by a single singer and applies only Fernando's (1996) theoretical framework. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution and cannot be generalized broadly. Future research is recommended to include a larger corpus of songs, involve different regional languages or artists, and apply diverse theoretical approaches such as pragmatics or sociolinguistics to gain deeper insights into the use and interpretation of idioms. In addition, further studies are encouraged to explore audience perspectives through interviews or surveys, particularly among native speakers, in order to validate and enrich the cultural meanings of idiomatic expressions. This study is expected to serve as a reference for students and researchers in linguistics, as well as to support efforts in documenting and preserving regional languages through contemporary cultural media..

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