



INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR
ON
RELIGIOUS MANUSCRIPTS
IN MULTICULTURALISM FOR A BETTER LIFE
(HUMANITY AND PEACE)

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2015

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ON
RELIGIOUS MANUSCRIPTS IN
MULTICULTURALISM FOR A BETTER LIFE
(HUMANITY AND PEACE)**

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MEANING TRUTH EXPLICATION LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY: A MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION DIMENSION

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Abstract

One of the God's blessings differentiating between human and His other creatures is language; and with language, human can worship the God. The language is blessed to express a meaning. Comprehending a meaning is a human life basic value. Meaning violation is identical with violation of life value which is the beginning of dehumanization.

As a meaning truth expressing device, language has limit, one of which is meaning vagueness. However, with their thought, speakers of a language can avoid meaning vagueness by uttering an intention. Uttering an intention is an explication of meaning truth. Meaning truth explication is a foundation of cross culture communication to build a better civilization. One of ways to explicate meaning truth is through analogical thinking. A lot meanings of philosophical expression can be comprehended through this way of thinking.

1. Introduction

Language philosophy is an ambiguous term. Verhaar (1980:8) refers to two definitions: (1) philosophy about language and (2) philosophy based on language. In the former, language is an object. The language is studied in term of its meaning that results in various sub divisions of sciences of language, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and others. Verhaar proposed a term linguistic philosophy, although in my view it is redundant. In the latter, philosophy is meant based on language. In the case, language is a mean to express philosophy, i.e. language is used to express a truth. Referring to Verhaar's view, language philosophy is equivalent with the philosophy to use a language, which studies how a language should be used (both written and spoken) to deliver a meaning. Thus, in this view of language philosophy, a grammatical sentence may mean nothing, since it does not express any truth. It then leads in a meaningful and meaningless sentence.

Related to comprehending religious scripts, it is important to base on language philosophy as not every meaning in religious scripts is expressed widely. Language of philosophy is very flexible, like a human's tongue uttering words and as flexible as hand writing it. It is very dynamic, as dynamic as human thought. Its flexibility and dynamicity makes some message it contains cannot be comprehended adequately by lay people. The misunderstanding may result in dysfunctional interpretation as some simplification occurs; even a lot people let themselves confused with philosophical meaning of religious scripts. The confusion may result in a hindrance to realize peace based on a universal humanistic value. Thus, a symbolic interpretation based on commonsense and thought is required which if they can be built mutually they will result in

orderly thought to lead a better and meaningful multicultural live.

2. Discussion

2.1 Meaning Dichotomy

From language philosophy dimension, linguists give different view on meaning. Russel and Wittgeintein (in Sumarsono, 2004:32) stated that meaning is an extra linguistic reference, i.e a concrete noun. Thus, if a meaning is failed to be expressed with a text, it can be held by a reference. Russel and Wittgeintein's view is based on Ogden and Richards' (1936) meaning triangle criticized by Ulmann (1977) by stating that the triangle meaning theory is too wide of too narrow in scope. It scope thing outside language also it cannot describe various semantic realization, such as polysemy, homonym, synonym, and others.

A different view of meaning is proposed by Frege (Sumarsono, 2004:28). He stated that it is important to differentiate between meaning and reference. It is important to know that not every concept has reference. In semantic theory, Givon (1984:56) stated that nominal feature is hierarchical, i.e. [ENTITIES, TEMPORAL, CONCRET, HAVING SOUL, HUMAN]. If a noun has semantic feature of [HUMAN], then it will have all feature s on its left. Conversely, if a noun only has a feature on the left [ENTITY], it absolutely does not have features on its right. Based on Givon's (1984) concept, it is important to differentiate between a concrete and an abstract thing. An abstract thing does not have reference, however it still have meaning. Frege stated that meaning shall be explanations or information and shall not be a reference.

Meaning is frequently identified with definition. Definition will differentiate the thing being defined and the one not being defined. Many people fail to define thing. When failure occurs, someone changes definition with a synonym that it results in a circle definition. The definition fails to give informative explanation on meaning of a thing. Thus, meaning vagueness still occurs.

The vagueness results in why many religious text messages cannot be comprehended by public. In this situation, scientists, theologist, and philosophers shall explain meaning which public need to know. Explanation of a meaning is not only required but also important as people's misunderstanding can result in a interpretation disordered which impacts on social disharmony. Correct and adequate interpretation on the religious texts will not only give a dogmatic comprehension but also ease people to them to implement it through thought, words, and unity of thought and action. Correct interpretation of a cultural value is a good way to unity of thought and action. Correct interpretation of a value embodies appreciative ability on cultural diversity.

2.2 Cause and Type of meaning Vagueness

Many people realize that philosophical expressions, particularly that in the religious texts has a very deep meaning. Unfortunately, the awareness has not been balanced with strong interest to comprehend symbolic message of a philosophical expresses. Thus, a lot philosophical messages are not comprehended, even are let to be ignored.

Followers of logical positivism use logic as a base to determine whether a statement is meaningful or meaningless. It can be meaningful if it can be classified into two types of proposition: (1) formal proposition, (2) empirical proposition. Formal proposition is that of logical proposition whose characteristic include the following things: (a) true from restriction based on meaning existing in its symbols; (b) based on a prior experience; (c) has logical certainty, and (d) has terminological meaning whose meanings are on verbal utterances. Empirical proposition shall be verified factually proved based on direct experiences or indirect experiences. If it is used appropriately, empirical and formal proposition is used to avoid ambiguity philosophical language. However, many philosophers combine the use of empirical and formal proposition. Many of them use language inappropriately which disturbs language rule.

This results in the existence of philosophical language vagueness. Therefore, it is suggested that philosophers should use to express required meanings. Apart from the less appropriate use of empirical and formal proposition, meaning vagueness also appeared as the result of language literary features. Literarily, language has vagueness as the result of (a) words' generic characteristic which does not absolutely refer to a single entity but a group; (b) various words having multiple aspects that the meaning is based on context; (c) (c) vagueness of linguistic limit; (d) less acquaintance resulted as the use of less familiar with a word; (e) hidden emotive meaning appears as the result of subjectivity; (f) phonetic factors as the result of pronouncing difference both; (g) un clear context and co text; (h) emotive derivation; diminutive, argumentative, pejorative, and others, and (i) evocative value i.e. associations resulted.

The existence of cause, meaning vagueness can be classified into four groups, including, (1) referential vagueness signed with vagueness of a word reference; (2) meaning inconsistency leading in an ambiguity; (3) insufficient meaning specification as the result of generic word; (4) interpretation is disordered by sentence phonetic structure, grammatical factor, and lexical factors, such as polysemi and homonymy.

Meaning vagueness can be done based on logic as the essence of philosophy. Logic is required to prevent bias meaning. It is done by wording in sentences meaning clearly and appropriately. Logic is a proficient means to clarify philosophical language vagueness. The main function of language philosophy is not to explain or predict but break down something people need to know.

2.3 Analogy: Meaning Truth Expression

Analogy is one of the ways to think interpret textual message. Analogy is one of the ways to think appearing from one thing that having similarity to be inferred at something else. For example, "...a lantern cannot surely drive away all darkness, however, if the lantern can lit other lanterns, not only does the first lantern loss its light but other lanterns are supported to light easily then" (Perama, 2011: 65).

At least, there are two analogies to understand the peaceful message. First, vagueness symbol that can be analogized with pool. Someone cannot see

something clearly, or may be at all. Analog with darkness is pool. In darkness, no one cannot understand anything. Second, lantern symbol that can be analogized with knowledge. Semantically, lantern means "a small lamp with ceresin". With its limitation, it can surely not be able to shine all darkness totally, but one lantern can lit other lanterns. If there are a lot of shining lanterns, the darkness will be disappeared. It means that knowledge cannot be obtained at once, it can be obtained with a process and long stages. Knowledge of wisdom is used as a base to understand other wisdom, and knowledge shine pool.

Pursuant to its comparison characteristic, analogy can be differed into two: logical or inductive analogy and referential or declarative analogy. Logical analogy (inductive) is a process which is apposed to actual similarity between two things and based on the similarity a conclusion is then made. For example, "...a head is closed with a hat, foots are covered with shoes, and hearth is covered with peace" (Perama 2011:41). The above example has pattern of similarity between head and hat, feet and shoes, and heart with peace. If head is protected with hat, feet are protected with shoes, heart is protected with peace. Thus, only those having peaceful heart will reach silence because they protect light of awareness. It is one of examples of texts interpretation based on logical analogy (inductive).

The second type is declarative analogy. This type of analogy is used to explain the chosen inference. In declarative analogy, there is no actual similarity between things compared. Many of our late leaders in Bali delivered messages of peace and used declarative analogy. A part from the case that message can be delivered adequately, it can also pertain social relation through language politeness, as taught in pragmatics. In order to give concrete meaning based on declarative analogy the following example is quoted. "Someone taking one hundred pieces of egg will be responsible on the whole eggs; and its biggest risk is break of the one hundred eggs itself". If the responsibility is increased by taking one truck of egg, then we have to be responsibility for one truck of egg, the risk is also bigger" (Tanuwibowo, 2011:34). The message delivered is that there is accordance between duty and responsibility; the bigger the duty is assigned, the bigger responsibility is obligated. Thus, do not merely see one's fault, but see also his or her responsibility. By doing so, we will be able to value someone with appropriately. In this context of declarative analogy, the number of egg taken functions as a referring means of someone's fault risk. The higher someone's responsibility, the higher risk someone faces. The example give overview on how a meaning can be explicated by implementing declarative analogy.

Interpretation of a text starts from linguistic construction used, such as choice of lexicon and structure of sentence used, but pragmatic interpretation shall determine universal thinking pattern. One of universal thinking patterns is analogy. In Hindu literature, a lot of religious messages delivered through analogical thinking pattern. One which is popular is philosophy of Hindu leader implied in Asta Brata. Message implied in Asta Brata is formed in logical analogy of thinking pattern (inductive), i.e. comparing actual similarity between deva's characteristic with required leader's characteristic. Thus, aspects of asta brata

is considered in coherent with name of Devas and Hindu religion, such as *Indra brata*, *Yama brata*, *Surya brata*, *Candra brata*, *Bayu brata*, *Kuwera brata*, *Baruna brata*, and *Agni brata*. It is stated in the literature as follows. *Hyang Indra, Yama, Surya, Candranila, Kuwera, Banyunagi nahan walu ta sira maka angga sang bupati matangyang inisti asta brata*. It means: 'Dewa Indra, Yama, Surya, Candra, Anila/Bayu, Kuwera, Baruna, and Agni are the eight Devas which embody a leader, which is called *asta brata*'.

Example of other analogy used to describe religious message can be seen in the following quotation "As far as the holy place in ourselves has not been designed, not only sensitive problem...a simple case can become the beginning riot even murder. (Perama, 2011: 5). On this quotation, there is declarative analogy by using clausal symbolic "holy place" in our body which is properly set' was used to explain how important and necessary it is to set holiness of thought and feeling to show ourselves enlighten human who can give the highest offering that is patience to fight against any enemy in our body. As the end of discussion, it is important to meaning of *rwa bhineda* in quotation of narration and poet as follows. "Happiness, pleasure, is white cloud. Sadness, misery is dark cloud. Both white and dark cloud appears and disappear in turn. Soul harmony is similar to a patient sky seeing all without any disturbance (Perama, 2011 : 112).

Between Dark and Bright

Sun sets
Behind sky
Disappears from our vision
And appears in other side
With bright light
Dark and bright
They appears mutually

(Tanuwibowo, 2011:31)

3. Closing

Language philosophy teaches us the way how to communicate truth meaning. The communicating method is urgent as truth can be comprehended in wrong way if it is expressed with non appropriate language. Thus, meaning of a truth shall be expressed appropriately as well. Many problems on meaning appear as the result of inappropriate expression. The inappropriateness can be rooted from disorder of empirical and formal proposition. The other cause is meaning vagueness which is the natural feature of language.

Meaning is frequently seen from dichotomy dimension; as reference and information. As a reference, meaning is coincided with entity, and many entities are similar but have different meaning. Thus, it is important to differentiate between meaning with its reference. Meaning is actually explanation of a thing.

One of the ways to explain a meaning is through analogical thinking. Analogical thinking is a universal thinking pattern. It is based on something

having similarity to be inferred to something else. Through analogical thinking, it is expected that religious texts messages can function as a foundation to realize humanistic value and peace. Thus, philosophy of language teaches people to mean truth appropriately based on universal thinking pattern.

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