

Analysis of Japanese Proverbs Using the Words “Mizu” and “Ame” and Sundanese Proverbs Using the Words “Cai” and “Hujan”

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Abstract

This comparative research delves into the analysis of *kotowaza* in Japanese that incorporate the lexical elements 'mizu' and 'ame', alongside *paribasa* in Sundanese containing the equivalent words 'cai' and 'hujan'. The primary focus of this study is to explore the layers of semantic meaning and understand the cultural context underpinning the formation of these idiomatic expressions in both languages. Through a contrastive approach, this research seeks to highlight fundamental similarities and differences in how both cultures conceptualize and utilize the concepts of water and rain in their verbal expressions. By carefully examining the connotative and idiomatic meanings inherent in each proverb, this study aims to enrich a more comprehensive understanding of Japanese *kotowaza* and Sundanese *paribasa*. The implications of this analysis are expected to provide significant insights into the linguistic specificities and cultural values embedded within each system of proverbs.

Keywords: *Contrastive analysis, semantic, mizu, ame, cai*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a form of speech or sound that is arbitrary in nature, governed by specific rules and patterns, and used by a social group. Language functions as the primary tool or medium in communication activities to achieve a certain goal (Chaer, 2003; Amalia, 2017). Without language, we would not be able to communicate easily. Every sound or word carries meaning, consisting of four aspects: perception of meaning, feeling, tone, and

message. These aspects convey the speaker's intention. Semantics is the study of meaning, employing two approaches: literal meaning and non-literal or symbolic meaning. Indirect communication carries figurative meanings and can be found in idioms, proverbs, and figures of speech (Aminuddin, 2008). Not only among Indonesian communities, but idioms, proverbs, and figures of speech are also present among Japanese communities during conversations.

The Japanese people are widely known for their strong work ethic and politeness. They highly value maintaining good relationships with others, and therefore always strive to uphold proper etiquette in every interaction. Japanese politeness is not only reflected through physical gestures but also through their extremely careful way of communicating. Often, they tend to conceal their emotions and avoid openly expressing deep feelings or thoughts (Badudu, 2008). Expressing positive feelings or thoughts could sometimes be perceived negatively and may risk hurting the listener's feelings. In communication, the Japanese typically use indirect communication patterns, conveying their intended meaning in a subtle manner. They prefer the use of indirect expressions or figurative language to soften their speech and protect the feelings of their interlocutors (Yohani, 2016). The use of proverbs (*kotowaza*) is also an important part of their communication tradition.

Kotowaza (Japanese proverbs) are born and developed within society, passed down from generation to generation without any known creator. They have become an important part of human life. Their presence is heavily influenced by the way native speakers of the language think (Hutabarat, 2017; Jaizah, 2019). Today, *kotowaza* frequently appear in daily conversations; however, many people still feel confused and do not fully understand their true meanings. Early researchers suggested that *kotowaza* cannot be translated directly, either linguistically or grammatically. The true meaning can only be grasped by analyzing the connotative and idiomatic meanings.

In Sundanese society, there are various types of idiomatic expressions, such as *kekecapan*, *babasan*, *paribasa*, *kecap kiasan*, *rakitan lantip*, *cacandran*, *uga*,

candrasangkala, *caturangga*, *caturangga ucing*, and *repok* (Sudaryat, 2016, p.14). This diversity reflects that proverbs do not simply emerge spontaneously, but rather are a product of the local wisdom of the community. For example, proverbs often derive from human body parts, behaviors, or characteristics, but they may also originate from the names of objects such as animals or plants. In daily interactions, Sundanese people often use *paribasa* as a way of communicating because it is considered a more polite and refined means of conveying messages, ensuring that the listener does not feel offended or hurt by the words spoken.

This study focuses on proverbs that incorporate natural elements such as *mizu* and *ame* in Japanese *kotowaza*, and *cai* and *hujan* in Sundanese *paribasa*. It aims to compare the two cultures, Japanese and Sundanese, in their use of proverbs, which remain relevant in everyday communication. The researcher explores the meanings of these proverbs through a semantic approach.

Considering the classification of meanings, it can be stated that tracing the meanings of proverbs (both *kotowaza* and *paribasa*) is more effective when using an idiomatic meaning approach. This is because idioms are expressions whose meanings cannot be "predicted" from the meanings of their individual components, whether lexically or grammatically (Chaer, 2003, p.296). For instance, in Sundanese, the phrase *panjang leungeun* ("long hand") does not literally mean "having long hands," but idiomatically means "having a tendency to steal." Nevertheless, it remains important to study the lexical meanings of each word, as this helps uncover the relationships between words and meanings. Through this method, one can understand how the idiom was born, not only from a historical aspect but also from sociological and psychological perspectives.

Research comparing Japanese *kotowaza* and Sundanese *paribasa* remains quite limited. Some notable studies include "Makna Budaya Leksikon 'Mizu' yang Tercermin dalam Peribahasa Jepang dan Padanannya dalam

Peribahasa Sunda" by Sunarni, N., & Johana, J. (2019); "Analisis Peribahasa Jepang yang Mengandung Kata 'Mulut' (Kajian Semantik) Ecopedagogical Values in Traditional Idiomatic Expressions" by Sudaryat, Y., Permana, R., & Nurhadi, J. (2019); and "Conceptual Metaphor In Japanese Idiom With The Word *Mizu* 'Water'" by Ainun, N., Mulyadi, M., & Pujiono, M. (2022). These previous studies show that there is still ample room for further research, particularly studies focusing on the idiomatic meanings and proverbs of two different cultures. In-depth research comparing words and meanings between these two cultures is greatly needed.

The primary aim of this research is to understand and expand knowledge about the richness of proverbs, both in Japanese focusing on those containing the words *mizu* and *ame* and in Sundanese focusing on those containing *cai* and *hujan* as well as the meanings they convey. Thus, this study is expected to provide additional insights for both the writer and readers regarding Indonesian proverbs and Japanese kotowaza, as well as deepen the understanding of Japanese culture.

This research explain the definitions of *paribasa* and *kotowaza*, the classification types of Sundanese and Japanese proverbs, and present examples of proverbs containing the words *mizu* and *ame* in Japanese *kotowaza*, and *cai* and *hujan* in Sundanese *paribasa*, along with explanations of their meanings. Furthermore, the study will discuss the comparison between Sundanese proverbs containing *cai* and *hujan* and Japanese *kotowaza* containing *mizu* and *ame*, examining their similarities and differences in meaning. Based on these considerations, the researcher has chosen the title "Analysis Of Japanese Proverbs Using The Words "*Mizu*" and "*Ame*" and Sundane Proverbs Using The Words "*Cai*" And "*Hujan*" (Semantic Study)" for this research project.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because it relies on textual and visual data, involves a distinctive analytical process, and applies various research designs. Qualitative research often requires efforts to explain to readers the purpose and meaning of the study. This includes presenting a specific research design, providing careful reflection on the researcher's role in the research process, and utilizing various evolving data sources. Additionally, qualitative research must use specific protocols for recording data and conduct information analysis through a series of structured steps. Equally important, a systematic approach is needed to document methodological integrity and to ensure the accuracy or validity of the collected data (Creswell, John, 2018)

For this reason, the method employed in this study is the descriptive method. Descriptive research is characterized by presenting research results using a descriptive approach. As the name suggests, the purpose of this type of research is to provide descriptions, explanations, and validation of the phenomena under study. When using a descriptive research design, the formulated problem must be significant, possess scientific value, and not be overly broad (Ramadhan, M., 2021). Similarly, Djiwandono, P.I., and Yulianto, W.A. (2023) argue that descriptive research designs typically portray the characteristics of a community or location in detail. When the number of subjects is small or the research is conducted over a short period, it is usually referred to as a small-scale study.

The descriptive method was selected because the aim of this research is to identify and analyze linguistic facts, the relationships between meanings and linguistic contexts, as well as the similarities and differences in languages that describe and interpret idiomatic forms found in Japanese and Sundanese languages. To collect and analyze data, the researcher employed a semantic approach, which studies symbols or signs that express meaning, examines the relationships between different meanings, and analyzes their impact on

humans and society (Tarigan, 2009, p. 7). Literature review and interpretative techniques were used as research methods. The literature review technique was used to collect information sources by exploring literature and documents related to the theories and materials under investigation. The interpretative technique was employed to analyze the collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The uniqueness of this research lies in its approach of comparing proverbs from two distinct cultures Japanese and Sundanese focusing specifically on natural elements such as water and rain (*mizu* and *ame* in Japanese; *cai* and *hujan* in Sundanese). Unlike previous studies that tend to examine a single culture or lexical item in isolation, this study directly analyzes the idiomatic and connotative meanings of *kotowaza* and *paribasa* in a parallel manner. By employing a semantic approach with an emphasis on idiomatic meanings, this research complements earlier studies such as those by Sunarni & Johana (2019) and Ainun et al. (2022), which were limited to one cultural context. While supporting previous findings on the importance of cultural and idiomatic context in understanding proverbs, this study also expands the scope by providing a deeper cross-cultural comparative analysis. This makes the research both relevant and significant in enriching cross-cultural, linguistic, and local wisdom studies reflected through language.

Similarities and Differences Between Japanese *Kotowaza* and Sundanese *Paribasa* Using the Word 'Water'

Asemizu tarasu and *cai karacak ninggang batu laun-laun jadi dekok*

At a glance, these two proverbs seem to have different lexical meanings. *Asemizu tarasu* literally means "sweat dripping," while *cai karacak ninggang batu laun-laun jadi dekok* literally means "drops of water falling onto a stone will eventually cause a dent." Despite the

lexical differences, both proverbs share a similar context, which involves drops of water.

Their similarity lies in their idiomatic meanings, both referring to the idea of hard work. However, the metaphors used in each proverb differ. The Japanese *kotowaza* uses a metaphor where *Asemizu tarasu* conveys the idea of sweat dripping as an image of effort, while the Sundanese *paribasa* uses the metaphor of water droplets impacting a stone over time, also illustrating perseverance and effort.

Kaeru no tsuchi ni mizu and *herang caina beunang laukna*

These proverbs share similarities in their lexical meanings. *Kaeru no tsuchi ni mizu* refers to "water on a frog's face," while *herang caina beunang laukna* means "the water is clear, the fish are caught." Both involve animals that live in and depend on water. The lexical similarity highlights that both frogs and fish are aquatic creatures dependent on water for survival, but their idiomatic meanings are very different.

Kaeru no tsuchi ni mizu describes indifference—being unaffected by what happens around you—emphasizing focus and persistence toward a goal without being disturbed by the surroundings. In contrast, *herang caina beunang laukna* describes achieving success without harming others, indicating that success is achieved without pushing others aside. Thus, the idiomatic difference is that the Japanese *kotowaza* implies indifference, while the Sundanese *paribasa* emphasizes positive, harmonious hard work.

Kuboi tokoro ni mizu tamaru and *ka cai jadi saleuwi ka darat jadi salebak*

These proverbs share idiomatic meaning. *Kuboi tokoro ni mizu tamaru* means that people and things naturally gather where they belong. *Ka cai jadi saleuwi ka darat jadi salebak* means unity and mutual cooperation. Both proverbs convey the idea of gathering or coming together. A deeper look shows that both describe close cooperation or natural gathering based on inherent characteristics, aiming to strengthen through unity.

However, their lexical meanings differ: *Kuboi tokoro ni mizu tamaru* refers to water pooling in a hole, whereas *ka cai jadi saleuwi ka darat jadi salebak* describes water becoming a river and land becoming a valley indicating gathering whether the place is low or high.

Mizu tari tekyo naru and *cai karacak ninggang batu laun-laun jadi dekok*

These two proverbs share an idiomatic meaning that relates to results appearing after consistent efforts. *Mizu tari tekyo naru* means that everything will naturally yield results when the time is right. Meanwhile, *cai karacak ninggang batu laun-laun jadi dekok* implies that small but consistent efforts will eventually succeed.

The difference lies in their lexical meanings: *Mizu tari tekyo naru* refers to "when water comes, a ditch forms," symbolizing that major efforts will yield significant results, represented by flowing water. In contrast, *cai karacak ninggang batu laun-laun jadi dekok* uses the image of mere water droplets that, over a long period, still produce a visible impact, symbolizing the power of perseverance over time.

Mizu wa houen no utsuwa ni zuitau and *pindah cai pindah tampian*

These two proverbs share both lexical and idiomatic meanings. *Mizu wa houen no utsuwa ni zuitau* literally means "water follows the shape of the vessel, whether square or round." Similarly, *pindah cai pindah tampian* means "when water moves, its container also changes." Lexically, both illustrate how water adapts to the shape of its container. Idiomatic meanings also align: *Mizu wa houen no utsuwa ni zuitau* suggests that a person's nature or character can be influenced by their environment, situations, or surroundings. Likewise, *pindah cai pindah tampian* refers to adapting to a new environment.

Thus, both proverbs emphasize the importance of adaptability, showing that just as water changes shape depending on its container, people must also adjust to their surroundings, with the environment significantly influencing them.

Tabel 1. Comparison of *Kotowaza* and *Paribasa* using the word 'Water'

<i>Kotowaza</i>	<i>Paribasa</i>	Similarity	Difference
<i>Asemizu tarasu</i>	<i>cai karacak ninggang batu laun laun jadi dekok</i>	Lexical meaning	Idiomatic meaning
<i>Kaero no tsuci ni mizu</i>	<i>herang caina beunang laukna</i>	Lexical meaning	Idiomatic meaning
<i>Kuboi tokoro ni mizu tamaru</i>	<i>ka cai jadi saleuwi ka darat jadi salebak</i>	Idiomatic meaning	Lexical meaning
<i>Mizu tari tekyo naru</i>	<i>cai karacak ninggang batu laun laun jadi dekok</i>	Idiomatic meaning	Lexical meaning
<i>Mizu wa houen no utsuwa ni zuitau</i>	<i>pindah cai pindah tampian</i>	Idiomatic meaning	

Moreover, similarities and differences are also evident in the relationships between meanings through the use of figurative language. To make it easier to see these similarities and differences, the explanation is as follows:

Asemizu tarasu and *cai karacak ninggang batu laun-laun jadi dekok* are both results of semantic extension through metaphor. However, they differ in terms of the change in meaning. *Asemizu tarasu* is used to express an individual's hard work, whereas *cai karacak ninggang batu laun-laun jadi dekok* is used to express continuous and persistent effort.

Kaero no tsuchi ni mizu and *herang caina beunang laukna* show differences in idiomatic semantic extension. *Kaero no tsuchi ni mizu* is an example of semantic extension through metonymy and conveys the meaning of indifference. In contrast, *herang caina beunang laukna*, also a result of metonymic extension, conveys the meaning of positive success.

Kuboi tokoro ni mizu tamaru and *ka cai jadi saleuwi ka darat jadi salebak* are both results of semantic extension through metaphor. They differ in their lexical meanings but share similarities in idiomatic meanings. *Kuboi tokoro ni mizu tamaru* is used to express the gathering of people or objects, while *ka cai jadi saleuwi ka darat jadi salebak* is used to express cooperation, both emphasizing the strength that comes from unity.

Mizu tari tekyo naru and *cai karacak ninggang batu laun-laun jadi dekok* differ in terms of semantic extension: *mizu tari tekyo naru* through metonymy and *cai karacak ninggang batu laun-laun jadi dekok* through metaphor. However, they share similarities in their idiomatic meaning change. *Mizu tari tekyo naru* expresses hard work that results in great achievements, while *cai karacak ninggang batu laun-laun jadi dekok* expresses continuous effort. Both highlight consistent effort.

Mizu wa houn no utsuwa ni zuitau and *pindah cai pindah tampian* are both results of semantic extension through metonymy. They share similarities in both lexical and idiomatic meaning changes. Both *mizu wa houn no utsuwa ni zuitau* and *pindah cai pindah tampian* describe the movement of water from

one place to another, and idiomatically they both mean adapting to the environment.

Comparison of Japanese *kotowaza* and Sundanese *paribasa* Using the Word "Rain"

Asaame uma ni kura oke and *ditiung memeh hujan*

These proverbs share a similarity in idiomatic meaning: *Asaame uma ni kura oke* idiomatically means being prepared for any possibility even when the situation seems unfavorable, while *ditiung memeh hujan* means preparing before disaster or misfortune strikes. Both highlight preparation for facing various circumstances. Upon deeper analysis, the similarity between these two proverbs illustrates the idea of being prepared regardless of the presence or absence of obstacles, always ready to face either advantageous or disadvantageous conditions.

The difference lies in their lexical meaning: *Asaame uma ni kura oke* literally means putting a saddle on a horse when it rains in the morning, whereas *ditiung memeh hujan* literally means preparing an umbrella before the rain comes. The *kotowaza* describes rain that has already fallen but is not something to fear, while the *paribasa* refers to rain that has not yet started.

Ame futte chi katamaru and *halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe*

These proverbs share a similarity in lexical meaning: *Ame futte chi katamaru* means "after the rain falls, the ground hardens," and *halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe* means "a year of drought is ended by a single day's rain." Both portray how rain can change a situation. Looking deeper, the similarity shows that rain can transform conditions when it arrives, whether for better or worse, because rain inevitably falls.

However, the difference lies in their idiomatic meaning: *Ame futte chi katamaru* means that after difficulties or hardships, situations often improve. On the other hand, *halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe* means that long-standing good deeds can be undone by a single mistake. Thus, the *kotowaza* focuses on strengthening through adversity, whereas the *paribasa* warns about the fragility of good things.

Kanbai ni ame and *halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe*

These proverbs share a similarity in lexical meaning: *Kanbai ni ame* means "rain during the dry season," and *halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe* also refers to "a year-long drought ended by a single day's rain." Both involve the occurrence of rain during a drought.

Upon closer examination, the similarity illustrates unexpected rain during the dry season, but the idiomatic meanings differ. *Kanbai ni ame* means something long-awaited has finally come true, while *halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe* conveys the idea that something good built over a long time can be undone by a single mistake. Thus, the *kotowaza* emphasizes fulfillment after waiting, while the *paribasa* highlights the loss of long-built achievements due to minor faults.

Ame futte chi katamaru and *hujan ge aya raatna*

These proverbs share a similarity in idiomatic meaning: *Ame futte chi katamaru* means that after hardships, situations tend to improve, while *hujan ge aya raatna* means that every problem has a solution. Both express that problems will eventually be resolved. Looking deeper, they both depict that troubles will not last forever;

there will always be evaluation and resolution, and problems will be solved.

The difference lies in their lexical meanings: *Ame futte chi katamaru* literally means "after rain, the ground hardens," while *hujan ge aya raatna* literally means "even rain has its end." The *kotowaza* focuses on how challenges toughen someone after they pass, whereas the *paribasa* emphasizes that even problems have a natural endpoint.

Table 2. Comparison of *Kotowaza* and *Paribasa* using the word 'Rain'

<i>Kotowaza</i>	<i>Paribasa</i>	Similarity	Difference
<i>Asaame uma ni kura oke</i>	<i>ditiung memeh hujan</i>	Idiomatic meaning	Lexical meaning
<i>Ame futte chi katamaru</i>	<i>halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe</i>	Lexical meaning	Idiomatic meaning
<i>Kanbai ni ame</i>	<i>halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe</i>	Lexical meaning	Idiomatic meaning
<i>Ame futte chi katamaru</i>	<i>hujan ge aya raatna</i>	Idiomatic meaning	Lexical meaning

In addition, similarities and differences also appear in the interrelationship of meanings through figurative language. To make it easier to observe these similarities and differences, the following explanation is provided:

Asaame uma ni kura oke and *ditiung memeh hujan* show a difference in the type of semantic extension, with one through metonymy and the other through metaphor. However, they share a similarity in the change of idiomatic meaning. *Asaame uma ni kura oke* is used to express prevention or preparation, while *ditiung memeh hujan* is used to express readiness before a disaster.

Ame futte chi katamaru and *halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe* are both results of semantic extension through metonymy. They share a similarity in

lexical meaning change but differ in idiomatic meaning change. *Ame futte chi katamaru* is used to express a transformation that occurs after rain, whereas *halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe* is used to express a change caused by rain.

Kanbai ni ame and *halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe* differ in the type of semantic extension, with one through metaphor and the other through metonymy. They differ in idiomatic meaning change but share a similarity in lexical meaning. *Kanbai ni ame* is used to express rain occurring during the dry season, while *halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe* is used to express rain that happens during the dry season.

Ame futte chi katamaru and *hujan ge aya raatna* differ in the type of semantic extension, with one through metonymy and the other through metaphor. However, they share a similarity in idiomatic meaning change. *Ame futte chi katamaru* is used to express that difficulties are resolved, while *hujan ge aya raatna* is used to express that every problem always has a solution or will eventually be resolved.

CONCLUSION

The similarities and differences of each proverb using the words "water" and "rain" in Japanese and Sundanese show five points of comparison. These similarities and differences between the two languages can be seen in table 3 and table 4.

Table 3. Comparison of *Kotowaza* and *Paribasa* using the word 'Water'

<i>Kotowaza</i>	<i>Paribasa</i>	Similarity	Difference
<i>Asemizu tarasu</i>	<i>cai karacak ninggang batu laun laun jadi dekok</i>	Lexical meaning	Idiomatic meaning
<i>Kaero no tsuci ni mizu</i>	<i>herang caina beunang laukna</i>	Lexical meaning	Idiomatic meaning
<i>Kuboi tokoro ni mizu tamaru</i>	<i>ka cai jadi saleuwi ka darat jadi salebak</i>	Idiomatic meaning	Lexical meaning
<i>Mizu tari tekyo naru</i>	<i>cai karacak ninggang batu laun laun jadi dekok</i>	Idiomatic meaning	Lexical meaning
<i>Mizu wa hounen no utsuwa ni zuitau</i>	<i>pindah cai pindah tampian</i>	Idiomatic meaning	

Table 4. Comparison of *Kotowaza* and *Paribasa* using the word 'Rain'

<i>Kotowaza</i>	<i>Paribasa</i>	Similarity	Difference
<i>Asaame uma ni kura oke</i>	<i>ditiung memeh hujan</i>	Idiomatic meaning	Lexical meaning
<i>Ame futte chi katamaru</i>	<i>halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe</i>	Lexical meaning	Idiomatic meaning
<i>Kanbai ni ame</i>	<i>halodo satahun lantis ku hujan sapoe</i>	Lexical meaning	Idiomatic meaning
<i>Ame futte chi katamaru</i>	<i>hujan ge aya raatna</i>	Idiomatic meaning	Lexical meaning

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