Article

The Representation of Indonesian Women Migrant Workers in the Lyric of Tarling Ndremayon

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to: (1) identify the semantic meaning of Tarling Ndremayon lyric, representing, representing the life of TKW, and (2) social factors that trigger TKW's life representation in the Tarling Ndremayon songs. The subjects of this research were six Tarling Ndremayon songs. The data were collected through a note-taking technique and interview. The collected data were then analyzed by employing textual analysis. The research findings show that Tarling Ndremayon lyrics that represent the life of TKW narrate five semantic meanings, such as affliction, sacrifice, loneliness, poverty, and jealousy. It implies that the women migrant workers and their families suffer from their condition since the lyrics' major semantic meanings narrate sadness. Meanwhile, the social factors that represent TKW's life in the Tarling Ndremayon songs are economy, affection, and education. The singers presented these representations: the women migrant worker, her husband, and her child.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indramayu is a regency in West Java known for the second biggest exporter of women migrant workers (Tenaga Kerja Wanita/ TKW) in Indonesia (Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Informasi, 2017). (Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Informasi, 2017) reports that 13,719 Indonesian international migrant workers are from Indramayu, and 40% work in Taiwan, and the number increases every year. In Indramayu, this condition is triggered by an economic factor as the main problem (Gita, 2018). Indramayu people believe that job opportunities abroad are more available and provide higher salaries while finding a job with an appropriate salary in Indonesia is difficult (Akbar et al, 2017; Khusna, 2018; Nurjanah, 2016) berimbas pada tidak terkendalinya jumlah pengangguran. Pengangguran sampai saat ini masih menjadi masalah krusial pemerintah Indonesia. Dengan tingkat pendidikan dan skill yang minim, para pencari kerja ini harus saling berkompetisi dengan yang lain. Kondisi ini akhirnya menjadi pemicu terjadinya mobilisasi tenaga kerja secara masal antar negara yang

dilakukan oleh pemerintah. Untuk mengurangi angka pengangguran, pemerintah melaksanakan program penempatan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia (TKI.

Indonesian international migrant workers from Indramayu are mostly dominated by women who work in several countries, such as Malaysia, Brunei, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Taiwan, Korean, etc. as a labor force or housemaid (Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Informasi, 2017). They work as a migrant and leave their family, including husbands and children for years. Such a phenomenon influences multiple aspects of social and psychological life (Lestari, 2016), and one of them is language.

Language is not merely a means of communication. It reflects its users' identity, condition, behavior, feeling, and culture. To express those elements, people use language in various forms, such as poems, legend, tales, songs, etc. (Slatinská & Pecníková, 2017). One of the most common forms of language used to express Indramayu people's identity, condition, behavior, feeling, and culture is

a song known as Tarling Nremayon, local traditional music of Indramayu (Febrianto, 2019). The word tarling is derived from two musical instruments, *gitar* (tar) and *suling* (ling), and its lyric uses the Javanese Indramayu dialect (Yulistiana et al., 2019). Tarling Ndremayon's lyrics tell about love, life, etc., and the lyrics bring moral massages for its listeners (Yulistiana et al., 2019). Moreover, it is frequently found that the lyrics of many Tarling Ndremayon songs tell the life of Indonesian women migrant workers or her family as well as their suffering for this condition.

Language reflects the daily-cultural activities of a society, and it is a foundation to build a culture (Suyitno, 2017). Cultural concepts of society are palpably seen from various language systems, either in semantic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, pragmatic, and semiotic levels (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2014). Vocabulary, particularly, can expose a phenomenon of culture because it reflects its speakers' emotions, feelings, social status, and cultural identity (Šabec, 2017). (Šabec, 2017) in his research proves that the use of certain vocabulary in Slovenian songs successfully reflects the ethnic and cultural identity of expatriate Slovenian communities who live in the United States and Canada. It indicates that words become a significant sign of ethnic and cultural identity.

Speakers of each language have their ways to create new vocabulary based on their experience or view over the world (Šabec, 2017), mental experiences, representational spaces, concepts, or conceptual complexes (Aajami, 2019). One of the media to express these elements is songs. Song lyrics are composed to effectively reflect, represent, communicate and store their ethnic identity, condition, and feeling (Baker, 2013), powerfully label societies' condition and social levels, and obviously depict a society's history (Olsen & Gould, 2008). Song lyrics enable the certain marginalized group to be socially accepted because people can learn and recognize the cultural identity of an ethnic through music (Liu, 2019; Rausch, 2011). Hip hop in the United States becomes the energy of black to campaign equality and a bridge linking cultures in the US (Rausch, 2011) while Hongkong music films can narrate Hongkong history, culture, people, and art to the world to campaign their cultural identity (Liu, 2019). Therefore, investigating culture is

possibly conducted through language in song lyrics because the music that accompanies song lyrics is the manifestation of culture (Adegoke, 2011).

Language use that aims to express feeling, emotion, condition, and identity is influenced by multiple factors, including age, social issues, economy, culture, ethnic, politic, education, gender, demography (Adegoke, 2011; Gross, 2018; Hovy, 2015), genre, key rules of interaction, aims, and norms (Salzmann et al., 2012; Wee, 2014). Furthermore, language use depends on its users' emotions because it determines the purposes and context of their communication (Adegoke, 2011).

Similar research investigating song lyrics was conducted by (Šabec, 2017) who analyzed structural and semantic aspects of Slovenian anthem and society's behavior toward the anthem lyric. Meanwhile, studies investigating Tarling were conducted by (Febrianto, 2019; Kamaluddin, 2016; Mulyana & Octavianti, 2017; Nurlelasari et al., 2017; Supriatin, 2012; Yulistiana et al., 2019) who specifically analyzed Tarling texts that represent Jawa Cirebon literature, lexical items of Tarling that narrate social issues, and lexical functions of Tarling lyrics. These studies indicate that Tarling texts are considered a literary work because they use aesthetic word choices from the Javanese Cirebon dialect and foreign languages, such as Arabic, English, and Chinese. Moreover, the studies reveal that the majority of Tarling lyric narrate social issues and life in Cirebon, such as marriage, social relations, and youth.

The previous studies indicate that an investigation of semantic meaning and social factors of Tarling Ndremayon representing the life of TKW has not been conducted yet. The previous studies did not specifically investigate the semantic meaning and social factors of Tarling Ndremayon that narrate TKW. This study's findings are expected to enrich theoretical perspectives of language and culture in song lyrics, particularly Tarling Ndremayon, and to enrich cultural investigation of Indramayu society.

It is concluded that investigating Tarling Ndremayon songs that narrate Indonesian women migrant workers is interestingly conducted. This research aims to (1) identify the semantic meaning of Tarling Ndremayon lyric that represents the life of TKW, and (2) social factors that trigger TKW's

life representation in Tarling Ndremayon songs. To answer the formulations, this research employs the semantic meaning theory of (Šabec, 2017) and social factors of language and society theory of (Adegoke, 2011).

II. METHODS

This study employed descriptive qualitative research to interprets the semantic meaning and social factors in the lyrics of Tarling Ndremayon representing the life of TKW. This research's data sources were six Tarling song lyrics entitled *duda kepaksa, jeritan TKW, kelingan mimi, nitip rindu, wadon perkasa,* and *cerita TKI* and one informant, namely Tato Nuryanto. To collect the data, the researcher employed two techniques: note taking and interview. The steps of data collecting techniques were: (1) listening to the Tarling Ndremayon songs, (2) writing words representing the life of TKW, (3) classifying the data based on semantic meaning and social factors, and (4) interviewing the respondent to get more in-depth data. The data were then analyzed by employing semantic perspectives of Šabec (2017) to reveal the semantic meaning of the lyric. The data were then analyzed by employing the language and society theory of Adegoke (2011) to reveal the social factors of using the lyrics. The findings of this study were finally presented in tables and descriptions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings reveal five semantic meanings and three social factors in the six Tarling Ndremayon songs representing TKW.

Semantic Meaning in Tarling Ndremayon Songs Representing TKW

The results reveal five semantic meanings in the six Tarling Ndremayon songs representing TKW. The total occurrences of each lexical meaning are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Semantic meaning in the Tarling Ndremayon songs representing TKW

No.	Lexical meaning	Frequency	Percentage
1	Affliction	16	39%
2	Sacrifice	10	24%
3	Loneliness	9	22%
4	Poverty	4	10%
5	Jealousy	2	5%
	TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that the five lexical meanings refer to horrible conditions and unhappiness. Affliction is the most dominant semantic meaning occurring in the Tarling Ndremayon songs representing TKW while jealousy is the least occurrence. It could be concluded that the singers of the Tarling Ndremayon songs as well as their relatives, are not happy because of working as a TKW.

Table 1 shows that affliction becomes the most dominant semantic meaning occurring in the six Tarling Ndremayon songs. The majority of the lyric narrates affliction suffered by the singers, either the women or her family. Therefore, the singers use particular words to illustrate their condition and express their feeling of affliction. This finding is in line with the statement of (Adegoke, 2011; Baker, 2013) deploying that speakers' emotions, feelings, and conditions create and determine vocabulary use.

	Tarling Lyric	Translation
(1a)	*Blenak temen Duda kepaksa*	I really don't like it. I am forced to be a widower
	gara gara mboke bocah kerja ning Saudi Arabiah	Because my daughter's mother (my wife) works in Saudi Arabia

Data (1a) shows that the singer is suffering from being apart from his wife, who is working abroad. The condition is emphasized in the lyric "*blenak temen duda kepaksa*" which means that he is forced to be a widower or separated from his wife. Furthermore, the word *temen*, which means "extremely" aims to emphasize something. Therefore, the singer wants to narrate that his condition is extremely bad, and he severely suffers from affliction. This lyric implies that the singer regrets that his wife works as a TKW.

	Tarling Lyric	Translation
(14a)	*arep balik ning jawa rasane wirang arepan terus terang duh kelingan wong lanang ya gusti priben nasibe jabang...*	I can neither go home to Java nor tell honestly to my husband that I'm pregnant (with another man). Dear God, how pity this baby inside my womb is.

Another problem mostly occurs is pregnancy without a husband while TKWs are working abroad. This condition is considered horrifying because the women must face it alone without any support. This condition is as narrated by (14a). The

data narrates that she could not decide what they should do as a female migrant worker when they are pregnant from another man while she is already married. This lyric "*ya gusti priben nasibe jabang*" narrates her confusion with her pregnancy status and feels that she must suffer and face the problem alone.

The second semantic meaning represented in the lyric of Tarling Ndremayon songs is sacrifice. This meaning is derived from the singers' mental experience of suffering from their recent condition. (Aajami, 2019; Baker, 2013; Šabec, 2017) deploy that the use of lexemes bears certain semantic meaning as the result of the speakers' emotional condition. The lyric narrating sacrifice sends the message that working as an immigrant and leaving family has several consequences encountered by the woman, her husband, and children. However, it is deliberately done for the sake of the family's economic welfare.

Tarling Lyric	Translation
(1b) *najan tersika pegel gen terpaksa*	Though I'm tormented working here (in Saudi), I must work.
bantu anak laki sing paling disayangi	For the sake of my beloved son.

Data (2b) describes a mother's sacrifice of working as a TKW in Saudi. Though she feels tormented, she must work. Furthermore, the words *tersiksa* and *pegel,* which mean tormented and exhausted, represent that she severely suffers from her condition. However, she decides to continue the work to earn money for her beloved son's future. The two lyrics narrate contradicting conditions because though the singer suffers a lot from her condition, she willingly continues to suffer for her family's happiness. Therefore, this lyric obviously narrates a sacrifice that commonly occurs in the life of women migrant workers.

The third semantic meaning derived from Tarling Ndremayon songs representing the life of TKW is loneliness.

Tarling Lyric	Translation
(2c) *Telung taun lawase*	It has been three years
Sun ninggal tempat panggonan	I have left my country (my family)
Kangen bli ketahan	It is unbearable.
Rindu ning kampung halaman...	I am entirely longing for my family.

The data shows that the singer is feeling lonely as she is living apart from her family. Furthermore, the lyric uses the word *kangen* and *rindu*, which indicate the same meaning, miss. The repetition of this meaning emphasizes the singer's inevitable loneliness. Therefore, to entertain herself, she sings and narrates her miss to the family in several lyrics of Tarling Ndremayon. (Baker, 2013) asserts that song lyrics can be an ultimate tool to express a speaker's feelings, and it is more effective to send a message to listeners. Furthermore, (Febrianto, 2019) deploys that Tarling music functions as an entertainment media. In this case, the song lyrics become the most prominent media to express the singer's loneliness, entertain herself, and send her best to the family.

Another semantic meaning illustrated by the lyric of Tarling Ndremayon songs is poverty. The lyric represents that their poor condition triggers them to work as immigrants to elevate their poverty and increase life quality.

Tarling Lyric	Translation
(3d) *sayang due niat*	(I want to go home) unfortunately, I have a strong intention
niate usaha demi cita cita	(my intention being here) is to work to realize the dream

Data (3d) explains that the singer must work abroad to fulfill the need of their family. She is working as, commonly, a housemaid. She decides to work abroad because she needs money to realize her dream. The first lyric "*sayang due niat*" narrates a regret of working as a TKW in Saudi. Furthermore, this sentence implies an inability to leave her recent condition though she does not like it. Meanwhile, the second lyric "*niate usaha demi cita cita*" narrates her purposes of working as an immigrant, to realize her dreams. Basically, the majority of TKW's dreams are to elevate their family's poverty, build an appropriate house, and pay for children's education (Mulyana & Octavianti, 2017). To achieve these dreams, they must work abroad.

The last semantic meaning, which represents TKW life in the lyric of Tarling song is jealousy. Though some Indramayu people live in poverty, they perform consumptive behavior (Mulyana & Octavianti, 2017). This behavior probably results in jealousy of each other. Indramayu people argue that working as an immigrant in Middle East

countries, Malaysia, Brunei, Taiwan, or Hongkong will lift their family's condition. Thus, they will feel jealous and want to work the same jobs. This is as indicated in data (1e).

Tarling Lyric	Translation
(1e) *Apa kesirian ning tangga sing wis pada mangkat man*a	We are probably jealous of the neighbor who has already worked there (in Saudi Arabia)

The lyric admits that they are jealous of their neighbor who has already worked in Saudi as a housemaid. They see that their neighbor's financial condition develops after working as TKI. Therefore, they decide that the wife will work as a TKW in Saudi Arabia. However, they get a lot of sorrow and suffer. The word *kesirian* has a stronger meaning of jealousy than *iri*. It is used to indicate a strong feeling of jealousy and frequently acts to solve the jealousy. It is no wonder that finally, the singer's wife works as a TKW in Saudi. This condition proves that the singer uses certain vocabulary to specifically express his feeling and depict his world (Šabec, 2017).

Social Factors Representing TKW's Life

This research's findings reveal three major social factors triggering TKI's life representation in Tarling Ndremayon songs. The occurrence of these factors is presented in table 2.

Table 2. Social factors in Tarling Ndremayon songs representing TKW

No.	Lexical meaning	Occurrence	Percentage
1	Economy	23	56%
2	Affection	16	39%
3	Education	2	5%
	TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 2 presents that the most dominant social factor is the economy, while education is the least dominant factor. The six songs narrate the economic reasons for working as a TKW for 23 times (54%). In other words, the majority of Tarling Ndremayon lyrics representing TKW's life narrate the economy as their reason to work abroad. This finding is supported by (Gita, 2018) deploying that economy becomes the most ultimate factor triggering a woman to work as TKW. Meanwhile, the affection factor occurs 16 times (16%), and the education factor occurs 2 times (5%).

The first social factor that triggers TKW's life

representation in Tarling Ndremayon songs is the economy. Although Indramayu is located in strategic demography that connects Java Island, it does not give prosperity to its people, and it is proven that the number of poverty in this regency increases (Mulyana & Octavianti, 2017). The condition is worsened with Indramayu people's consumptive behavior, which forces them to earn more and fulfill their needs (Mulyana & Octavianti, 2017). Furthermore, poverty in Indramayu is not merely about economic incapability but also fulfilling basic rights. Most of Tarling Ndremayon lyric represents poverty as a serious factor that forces women to work as TKW.

Tarling Lyric	Translation
(7f) *wadon..wadon perkasa mangkat kerja mangkat usaha demi kanggo bela keluarga nyukupi segala harta benda*	I am a wonder woman who works as an immigrant to earn money for the sake of the family so that they can fulfill the family's basic needs and welfare (wealth).

Tarling Lyric	Translation
(8f) *lawas..lawas jamane ninggal aken anak lakine dadi TKI ning luar negri ngadu nasib luruh rejeki*	I have been leaving my son and husband for a long time. I work as an Indonesian migrant worker in another country. I am gambling my luck to work abroad to earn money.

Data (7f) narrates the singer's condition as an immigrant worker in Saudi. The repetition of the word *wadon* aims to emphasize that she is a deliberately wonder woman who works as an immigrant, mostly as a housemaid. Furthermore, the lyric "*mangkat usaha demi kanggo bela keluarga nyukupi segala harta benda*" obviously narrates that her reason for doing this is to fulfill the basic needs and welfare of her family. Meanwhile, data (8f) narrates that the singer has been leaving her family for years. The clause "*ngadu nasib luruh rejeki*" represents that she is gambling her luck to earn money and fulfill basic needs. Furthermore, the word *rejeki* is used to explain the singer's strong need for money for economic reasons. This is in line with the argument of (Adegoke, 2011; Gross, 2018; Hovy, 2015) that the economy becomes one of the factors influencing language use, and in this case, economic reasons influence the singers to use

the word "*usaha*" which emphasizes his intention of working.

Another social factor representing TKW's life is the affection in the form of sacrifice. To support her family's financial condition and welfare, a woman must work as TKW in another country. She receives this occupation though she already knows that she must sacrifice her happiness and life, probably receive bad treatment, and work extra hours (Rostanti, 2012). Such conditions are narrated by data (1b) that uses a comparison sentence to narrate her condition and (7f) that uses the word demi to point to the singer's obvious sacrifice of working as a TKW. These findings are in line with the theory of (Adegoke, 2011; Salzmann et al., 2012; Wee, 2014) explaining that speakers' emotion and purpose determine their language use.

The last social factor representing TKW's life is education. With a low level of education and basic professionalism, a woman possibly works as an international migrant worker in a domestic area (Sari, 2017). This condition sometimes damages her because she must work all day, receive a lower payment, etc. (Akbar et al., 2017; Khusna, 2018; Rostanti, 2012). However, since she needs money to support her family, she receives her condition.

Tarling Lyric	Translation
(8h) *najan tersika pegel gen terpaksa*	Though I feel terminated and exhausted, I must do it.
tulung ning sapa sambat ning sapa	I can't ask any one's help, no one will help.
akhire kita ingat ning umah	I just remember my family.
mung apa daya	I am powerless I can't do anything.

Data (8h) narrates that the singer is forced to be a women migrant worker because she does not have any choice and power. Though she is feeling tormented, she is still working as a migrant worker. The lyric "*mung apa daya*" narrates that she is powerless and cannot do anything to solve the problem that is poverty. Furthermore, the lyric indicates that she only chooses to work as a TKI to

solve her family's poverty and gain welfare. This condition agrees with the argument of (Adegoke, 2011; Hovy, 2015) that language used is influenced by the speakers' education and the argument of (Adegoke, 2011) asserting that language is used to express the speaker's emotion.

Indramayu is one of the poorest regions in West Java, but people have high consumptive behavior (Mulyana & Octavianti, 2017). This condition triggers them to find a job opportunity in other countries as Women Migrant Workers (TKW) to earn a lot of money and create welfare (Mulyana & Octavianti, 2017). However, working as a TKW result in sufferings, severe conditions, and more TKWs and their family problems as narrated in Tarling Ndremayon songs. Tarling is selected to decipher their suffering because it more entertains and is widely accepted by the majority of Indramayu people (Febrianto, 2019). Consequently, the messages of the song are sent to other Indramayu people who experience similar conditions.

IV. CONCLUSION

Indramayu people use Tarling Ndremayon to represent the life of women migrant workers (TKW) and their families. In general, the six Tarling Ndremayon songs contain five semantic meanings: affliction, sacrifice, loneliness, poverty, and jealousy, and three social factors: poverty, affection, and education. The song lyrics primarily narrate sadness and poverty as the real conditions of TKWs and her family.

The research on cultural representation and identity as well as social factors of language usage is not limited only in Tarling Ndremayon song lyrics. Furthermore, the representation of TKW's life is not limitedly narrated in Tarling Ndremayon. Therefore, further researchers interested in conducting the same topic can investigate other linguistic phenomena such as a documentary movie, newspaper, etc.

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Biography

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