

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Proverbs are one of the cultural heritages that contain noble values and deep meanings in people's lives. In every region, including Dahadanö Gawu-Gawu Village, proverbs have an important position as part of local identity and tradition. In the context of traditional Nias weddings, proverbs are not only decorative words, but also contain advice, advices and life values that are passed down from generation to generation. These proverbs are usually spoken by the elders at each stage of the wedding ceremony, which becomes an integral part of the sacred procession. However, in the implementation of the wedding ceremony, although it is attended by various groups of people-from the elderly, young people, to children-many of them, especially the young, seem to pay little attention to the procession that takes place. They tend to just sit and chat, without paying attention to the meaning of each stage of the event, including the proverbs that are spoken. This indifferent attitude is a sign of a lack of concern for local culture, which is actually rich in educational and moral values.

The lack of understanding and interest from the younger generation towards proverbs and local culture is certainly a common concern. In fact, these proverbs contain important teachings that are relevant to shaping the character and identity of the next generation. If this is left unchecked, it is not impossible that the cultural heritage will be lost to the times. Therefore, efforts are needed to reintroduce and preserve proverbs in people's lives, especially to the younger generation, so that Nias culture remains alive and is appreciated by future generations.

“Proverbs are simple and concrete sayings popularly known and repeated, which express a truth, based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity” (Hoshan, 2021). Because they stem from collective wisdom, proverbs are an important part of everyday communication and are passed down across cultures. A proverb is a

traditional expression that contains advice and moral values, delivered either implicitly or explicitly. It is usually composed in a concise yet meaningful manner, making it easy for anyone to use in various situations. This characteristic makes proverbs an effective medium for conveying moral and social messages. In addition, proverbs are often metaphorical, meaning that the meaning conveyed is not always literal but contains figurative meaning. Therefore, understanding the context is very important in interpreting proverbs. Some proverbs describe basic rules of behavior that provide guidance in acting and behaving in society.

In this case, proverbs that contain many meanings are certainly related to semantics which is the study of meaning in language. As said by Betti et al (2021) that semantics is the study of meaning in language. It can be applied to entire texts or to single words. In linguistics, semantics is the subfield that studies meaning. One of the factors that make students unaware of proverbs is because they do not understand the meaning contained in the proverbs. Therefore, semantics can address meaning at the levels of words, phrases, sentences, or larger units of discourse. According to Abdurrahman (2019) semantics is the study that talking about meaning of words, phrases and sentences. The traditional meaning that a language's words and sentences communicate is the subject of linguistic semantics.

Semantic is a subfield of linguistics that studies language meaning. It entails researching how speakers and listeners comprehend and interpret the meaning that words, phrases, and sentences express. Lexical semantics, which examines the meaning of individual words, and phrase semantics, which examines the meaning derived from sentence structures, are both included in semantics. Semantics also studies the connections between words, such as antonyms (words with opposite meanings) and synonyms (words with similar meanings), which aid in our comprehension of the subtleties and variances of language meaning. In semantics, context is also very important because the setting and background of the communication frequently affect an expression's meaning. As a result, semantics aids in our

comprehension of how language functions to transmit meaning and how we employ language to successfully communicate.

Additionally, the theory of meaning put forward by Geoffrey Leech serves as a crucial basis for the analysis of proverbs as a component of linguistic and cultural heritage in semantic studies. Conceptual (denotative), connotative, social, emotive, reflective, collocative, and thematic meaning is the seven categories into which Leech separates meaning. Each of these meaning categories contributes to the disclosure of deeper meanings concealed inside basic linguistic constructions. In the context of proverbs, especially proverbs from the Nias language, these seven types of meaning can show how cultural values, social norms, and local beliefs are represented and transmitted through language. Conceptual or denotative meanings in proverbs usually contain literal meanings, which are often difficult to understand if one is not familiar with the cultural context behind them. Meanwhile, connotative meanings lead to emotional associations or cultural values attached to the words or phrases in the proverbs. For instance, the usage of animal or natural symbolism in Nias proverbs frequently symbolizes people's spiritual beliefs and their proximity to the environment. Proverbs are also employed to express specific emotions, like warning, satire, or counsel, or to validate social position, as demonstrated by their social and affective connotations.

However, there are problems when younger people or non-Nias speakers understand these proverbs. Comprehending the reflective, collocative, and thematic implications of proverbs is becoming more difficult due to social changes, globalization, and the absence of local language usage in daily life. Once able to impart moral principles and life lessons, proverbs now frequently seem archaic or even perplexing to people who are unaware of their original meaning. As a result, the messages contained in proverbs can be misinterpreted or even lose their meaning. Therefore, the semantic approach becomes very important in the effort to preserve proverbs as part of cultural identity. Through semantic analysis based on Leech's theory, we can not only understand the explicit meaning,

but also explore the cultural values implied in it. This effort can be a bridge between the older and younger generations, as well as a means of cross-cultural education. The use of proverbs in education, media and language learning can also strengthen cultural awareness and local identity, especially in the midst of rapid changes and the swift flow of global information.

Furthermore, changing cultural norms and customs may cause disparities in the way these sayings are interpreted or used in current marriages, which begs the question of their applicability and relevance in contemporary settings. Therefore, the task is to investigate ways to maintain these proverbs while making sure that their meanings are correctly understood and utilized in a way that balances tradition with the changing cultural context. This research aims to analyze the semantics of Nias proverbs used in traditional wedding ceremonies, exploring how their meanings are constructed, interpreted and transformed over time. It will also discuss the impact of cultural shifts on the perception and application of these proverbs in contemporary Nias society.

Through **Semantics Analysis on the Proverbs of Traditional Nias Wedding at Dahadanö Gawu-Gawu Village, Gunungsitoli City**. So that students can know the meaning contained in the proverbs. This can also make generations preserve these proverbs as cultural heritage.

1.2 Focus of the Research

This research focuses on identifying and analyzing the meanings of proverbs used in the Nias wedding tradition at Dahadanö Gawu-Gawu Village.

1.3 Formulation of the Problem

1. What are the proverbs in Nias traditional weddings and their relationship with semantics?
2. What are the associative meanings of each proverb in the stages of traditional Nias wedding?

1.4 Objectives of the Research

1. To find out the proverbs found in traditional Nias wedding and their relationship with semantics.
2. To identify and analyze the associative meanings contained in each proverb used in the stages of traditional Nias wedding.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The Significance of the Research are:

1. Theoretically: It is anticipated that this study would advance linguistics, especially semantics. Through an examination of the meanings of proverbs in traditional Nias wedding ceremonies, this study sheds light on the ways in which language transmits social norms, cultural values, and collective wisdom. Understanding the relationship between language, culture, and tradition is aided by this research. The body of information regarding regional languages and their semantic components is also expanded by this research.
2. Practically
 - 1) For Young Generation: The results of this study can be incorporated into English language learning resources to help young people better grasp semantics and develop a cultural appreciation.
 - 2) For Community: By recording the meaning and application of proverbs in wedding customs, this study contributes to the preservation of proverbs as a component of Nias cultural heritage and inspires the next generation to value and maintain these customs.
 - 3) For Researcher: For further research on the connection between language, culture, and tradition especially in the context of Nias society this study lays the groundwork. The semantics of proverbs used in traditional wedding ceremonies can be examined to help researchers better understand how language expresses cultural identity. A useful resource for linguists, anthropologists, and educators who want to learn more about regional languages and their function in cultural preservation is this research.