

## HIEM: THE SHAPE OF THE ACEH PUZZLE

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### ABSTRACT

Human creativity, which is multidimensional and plays an important role in the formation of culture, is often expressed through humor and riddles, such as *Hiem* in Acehese society, which functions as a humorous language game to entertain and train critical thinking skills. This research is a qualitative descriptive study with a literature study method that examines Acehese *Hiem* from literary books through collecting, classifying, and interpreting data based on its form, meaning, and linguistic elements with an analysis that focuses on words and sentences. The results of the study show that Acehese *Hiem* is a form of humorous riddle that is rich in creativity and can be classified into five main forms, namely simile, word play, analogy, polysemy, and abbreviation, which utilizes ambiguity of meaning and linguistic elements to generate humor, convey communicative functions such as satire and reprimand, while also serving as a local cultural heritage that needs to be preserved.

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### INTRODUCTION

Humans are the most creative creatures, as their creativity always produces new things worth studying. Creativity is often accompanied by a strong sense of humor. Human creativity plays a vital role in shaping individual and collective identity, as well as shaping the culture and traditions that constitute our heritage (Lestari et al., 2023). In addition, creativity is a complex concept consisting of a set of multidimensional abilities, which include aspects of originality, fluency, flexibility, and elaboration in producing and communicating ideas (Lee, 2019). This creativity is a product, idea, or solution to a problem that is valuable to a person or society (Alhusaini et al., 2014). Thus, creativity is not merely an individual cognitive ability, but rather a major driving force in the evolution of

civilization that enables humans to continuously adapt and make meaningful contributions to their social environment.

A person's creativity can be sparked by humor, humor, or riddles. Behind the joy and intellectual challenge of filling leisure time, there is a drive to think critically to construct unexpected answers. Humor is often used by people to fill their free time with those around them. People fill their free time by telling stories, reciting rhymes, or playing riddles with humor interspersed within. As stated by (Alfiansyah & Parmin, 2021) What underlies all forms of humor is the theory of bisociation as a study of humor in psychology, this theory suggests two situations or events that are impossible to occur at once but still have a connection.

One of the most widely held theories of humor is the incongruity detection and resolution theory, which states that humor requires the recognition of incongruity, resulting in an unexpected violation of expectations causing cognitive arousal; and the resolution of that incongruity (Sahayu et al., 2022). In humor, as in language, there is a deep irrational part that comes from the subconscious (Stefanova, 2012). Thus, humor is closely related to riddles because both rely on incongruities in meaning that violate the reader's expectations, trigger cognitive stimulation, and involve irrational elements from the subconscious in the process of understanding and solving them.

A riddle is a form of speech that has questions and answers, often associated with humor. Riddles are a linguistic product that has been passed down through generations, with varying cultural influences from various social groups. Riddles, a form of linguistic communication based on reciprocal interaction between language users, constitute a complex form of dialogue (Basori & Firdaus, 2025). Parents often play with their children with riddles. However, riddles aren't just something parents tell their children; anyone can do it (Wijaya & Rohmadi, 2011). One example is a riddle given by a teacher to his students. The use of riddles is not limited by location, so they can be done anywhere during free time.

Just like riddles in general, there are riddles known as traditional riddles, taught by the ancestors of a community. Furthermore, there are also modern riddles that have undergone many changes and developments. This development can be seen in various aspects of community life, such as following trends or changing times. In Balinese, the Balinese people usually call these riddles *timpedan*. In Javanese, riddles are usually called *cangkriman*. In Gayo, they are called *keketiken*, and in Acehese, they are also called *Hiem*.

*Hiem* is well-known among the Acehese as an engaging language game. Variations of *Hiem* primarily serve to entertain and train critical thinking. Riddle discourse is an interesting discourse to study due to its strong humorous nuances. Thus, humor is closely

related to riddles, just as *Hiem* in Acehese society functions as a language game to entertain and train critical thinking, possessing a strong humorous nuance.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method. The data sources in this study are all forms of natural *Hiem* found in Acehese literary books. Data sources were collected by recording *Hiem* available in books as the main data source for writing this paper. After the data was obtained, it was classified based on the forms contained in Acehese *Hiem*. Then, the data was interpreted based on the meaning contained and the linguistic elements contained in each *Hiem*. This research is included in the descriptive research type. Kountour (2005) stated that research like this has data that is analyzed systematically and carefully, focusing on words and sentences, not on numbers or formulas.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the collected data, several forms of Acehese riddles (*Hiem*) were discovered. These forms were then simply classified into several groups based on their similarities. This discovery not only grouped the words but also interpreted other linguistic elements contained within the *Hiem*. The *Hiem* forms will be explained in more detail below.

### 1. The form of the parable

Imagery is the comparison of an object with another object that has the same characteristics or properties. In the discourse on riddles, the form of imagery is often used to show ambiguity so that the answer to the riddle is difficult. One form of imagery can be seen as follows:

(1) + *Bak sibak oen si oen, tapi hana mala-mala*

One tree, one leaf. But it doesn't wither

- *Sindok*

Spoon

From example number (1) we can see that there is an analogy between an object and another object that has the same characteristics, such as the handle of a spoon which is likened to a tree because it has the same characteristics, namely its shape. In addition, in the next sentence, an ambiguity is raised in this sentence, namely how a tree never withers. Because withering is a characteristic of living things, this situation is very contrary to the actual situation.

The next example also illustrates the same thing regarding analogy, namely:

(2) + *Apui hu bak ranteng, Peue?.*

What kind of fire is burning on the branch?

- *Campli masak*

Cooked chilies.

From the words above, a similar analogy also occurs in example number (2), in this example *Hiem* likens fire to a ripe or old chili, because they have the same characteristic of being red. The ambiguity lies in the fire which is ready to burn the twig.

An example of a metaphor related to humans can be seen in the following verse.

(3) *Sibak reubah mandum reubah, peu ?*

One tree falls, then all fall?

*"ureung seumanyang jeuma'ah"*

People praying in congregation

The *Hiem* above has a metaphor for all the trees following one tree, which is meant here as the congregation that follows the priest. When the imam performs one of the prayer movements, the rest of the congregation follows him.

## 2. Form of word play

Besides metaphors, there are also *Hiems* that take the form of word play. Language play in humorous discourse is usually divided into three areas: phonology, morphology, and semantics. Phonology focuses on sound substitution, morphology generally deals with abbreviations or the use of similar words. In semantics, the most common language play in humorous discourse is homonyms. The following is an example of *Hiem* that uses language play:

(4) + *Binatang pue nyang hana tom deuh di langet ?*

What animal has never appeared in the sky?

- *"Binatang film"*

Movie animals

In example (3) the use of the word "binatang" is directed at living creatures. but refers to a profession that has similarities in the word. The correct answer is "bintang", but underwent morphological changes to give rise to lexical ambiguity in the *Hiem*.

## 3. Analogy Form

Analogy is a form of puzzle that involves reason or logic. Analogical reasoning is uncertain and can be disputed when new evidence emerges, but this does not change the logical validity of the inference scheme (Zwirn & Zwirn, 2025). The thought process is the key factor that determines the answer to the riddle. The analogy process is usually very strict on the premise the questioner presents to their opponent. Furthermore, this

unconventional use of logic creates ambiguity that leads to humor. Here's an example of *Hiem*'s analogy:

(5) +*Binatang pue nyang aki jih peut tapi han jeut dijak ?*

What animal has four legs but can't walk?

*-cangguek, biasa digrob*

Frog, usually he jumps

In the example above, analogously, it's true that frogs have four legs. However, they typically jump rather than walk. The premise forces the reader or listener to think logically. Of course, the answer could be beyond expectations, but it's still acceptable based on the logic provided by the questioner.

(6) *Pakon nyamok ji piem darah ?*

Why do mosquitoes drink blood?

*sebab meunyo ji piem bensin yuem jih mehai*

because if he drinks petrol it is expensive

In examples (6) and (5), both use analogies to answer the riddle. Of course, blood is the main food for mosquitoes, but in this riddle, it also uses a comparative analogy and also has a communicative function of satirizing the high price of petrol.

In the analogy form of *HIEM*, we must not think according to conventional logic. To find the answer, we must step outside the normal framework. This form of analogy *HIEM* often causes others to be annoyed by the answer, because it is so different from the recipient's expectations.

#### 4. Polysemy Forms

Polysemy is a word form that has multiple meanings. Wijana (2014: 40) states that polysemy is a word that has many variations of meaning that are still related to each other. Polysemy usually adds ambiguity in answering a riddle. Often found in riddles, the change of reference is used using polysemy. Polysemy is also sometimes used as an option to change the answer if the recipient of the question is able to answer the riddle given. In *Hiem*, *Hiem* patterns related to polysemy are also found, including:

(7) *Pakon bumoe maken seu-um ?*

Why is the earth getting hotter?

*sabab matauroe ji buka cabang le pat*

Because the sun opens many branches.

In the discourse of puzzle number (7), the words that have a polysemous meaning are sun. The sun referred to here is a company that operates in the fashion sector, not the

sun, a celestial body that implicitly has the property of heat. So the answer to the question is related (sun) but has a different referent. As an additional example:

(8) + *Benda langet yang su jih lagak?*

A celestial body with a good voice?

- *Bintang radio*

Radio Star

The riddle above contains polysemous vocabulary, creating ambiguity in guessing the answer. All celestial objects are silent. The radio stars referred to here are those who participate in a singing contest on RRI. The winners of the contest are known as Radio Stars. Therefore, it can be assumed that radio stars have good vocal qualities.

## 5. Abbreviated Form

In the discourse analysis of riddles, familiar abbreviations were also found, which again created ambiguity for the recipient of the question. These abbreviations were then given other vocabulary with the same initials. For example:

(9) *Peu kepanjangan dari DPRD ?*

What does DPRD stand for?

*“Daerah Paling Rawan Desya”*

The most sin-prone areas

The riddle above emphasizes a strong ambiguity. DPRD is a fairly familiar abbreviation. However, this riddle uses a play on the commonly known abbreviation DPRD. This riddle also serves a satirical communicative function. DPRD, which stands for People's Representative Council, is considered a place prone to sin because it carries a significant responsibility in fighting for the rights of others.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Humor is inherent in happy souls. The use of humor can be seen in the use of riddles played by the community. Riddles have many forms that highlight the creativity in making them. In this paper, the author found several forms of the use of riddles in Acehese society, known as *Hiem*. These forms are grouped based on the linguistic elements possessed by each *Hiem*. Based on the data obtained, the forms found in *Hiem* include, among others, the form of simile, the form of analogy, the form of polysemy, the form of word play and the form of abbreviation. These *Hiem* forms give rise to different ambiguities, thus giving rise to different shades of humor. From the data analysis above, several dictions were also found that use diction of animals, objects, and colors. In addition, implicit communicative functions emerged in the riddles such as the function of satire and reprimand. *Hiem* has

been considered a local heritage that must be preserved by the Acehnese people. Hopefully, this paper can provide a clear picture of the forms of Acehnese *Hiem* to the reader. The author acknowledges the limitations of data and theoretical foundations regarding *Hiem* Aceh in presenting comprehensive examples. Consequently, this paper remains limited in scope. He hopes this paper can serve as a basis for future similar research.

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