

Interpretation of the *Amaedola* Text of the Nias Diaspora Community as an Effort to Preserve Nias Culture and Its Utilization as Cultural Reading Material

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Abstract. This research for exploring the oral tradition of the *amaedola* (Nias parable) which shows the richness of Nias culture, but it is feared that this oral tradition will become extinct because most of the younger generation do not understand it and are unable to use it. Another phenomenon is the research that has been done and the reference sources related to this topic are also minimal. This Study Aims to explain: (1) the interpretation of the *amaedola* text of the Nias diaspora community according to Paul Ricoeur's theory, (2) the maxim of the *amaedola* text. *Amaedola Niha Khöda* and Interpretation of the Parable of the Nias Diaspora Society" which can be used as cultural reading material and literacy material for Oral Literature courses.

Keywords: interpretation, *amaedola*, cultural reading

1 Introduction

Oral traditions in Indonesia are very diverse, one of them is *amaedola* or usually called "parable" in Nias language. The parable is conveyed in an indirect form of language. Delivery of oral traditions is generally packaged in indirect or implied language. In order to understand language in parables or *amaedola*, it is necessary to use certain theories to interpret the meanings implied in them. The Hermeneutic theory is a hermeneutical school inspired by Betty's opinion which works by interpreting the symbols contained in the text, revealing the critical events contained in it with critical questions, the interpreter is influenced by all aspects of his intellectual and psychological experience, when interpreting a text he is liberated from the previous author's intent and is not hindered by the standard text. This is what is meant as an imaginary world formulated by the text itself. The text independently or relation to other texts is not bound to the initial audience, as spoken language is bound to the listener. Interpretation

is an attempt to reveal the metaphorical meaning of literary works so as to successfully unlock the plurality of meanings, ambiguities, and mysteries in symbols (Ricoeur, 2006:223)¹

Meaning at the level of linguistic semantics and reflective understanding at a higher level approach ontologically. Furthermore, existential or ontological understanding is an understanding at the level of the existence of meaning itself. The Referential meaning of literary and philosophical works cannot be carried out in ordinary speech texts but is conveyed symbolically through implied meanings that can be captured by the senses. Non-literary language keeps the language of ambiguous meaning away while literary language emphasizes aesthetic elements in suggestive symbolic language and fictional experiences that describe the expression of life.

The oral tradition of the Nias people, known as *amaedola*, contains social and cultural values that govern the lifestyle of the Nias people. *Amaedola* is passed down from generation to generation in various forms of poetry, parables of expressions that indicate the identity of the Nias tribe, both those who still live in their area of origin and those who have migrated out of the Nias area (Gea 2014).² *Amaedola* is usually in the form of parables, proverbs, stories, or short sentences that serve as advice and principles of life that are commonly used in daily conversations, it can be in traditional events, giving advice and in the form of a story.

Amaedola is a form of politeness in language as the formation of the character of the Nias tribe. With its uniqueness that conveys messages, criticisms, and values metaphorically with the aim of maintaining language politeness and maintaining the relationship between the speaker and listener. The speaker and listener are in polite harmony as well as arranged in an aesthetic language, and the message is conveyed appropriately. The principles of language politeness are based on the conversational thimble introduced by Grice, namely the principle of language politeness based on maxims. Leech (1993) divided the principles of politeness on the conversational maxims introduced by Grice, namely: (1) tact maxim, 'reduce expressions that harm others and increase expressions that benefit others, (2) generosity maxim, is done by reducing expressions that benefit oneself, and maximizing expressions that are detrimental or

¹ The concept of Ricoeur's interpretation was inspired by Betti's opinion, namely; (1) events in the study of texts become effective in understanding the symbols in the text, numbers and others as a coherent, grammatical and logistical reconstruction of speech and text; (2) critical events revealed in cases that require a questioning attitude such as incongruence, illogicality (elements) and including their authenticity; (3) psychological events become active when the author/writer plays an objective role in his intellectual position; (4) technical-morphological moment events that aim to understand the content of meaning in relation to particular logic and its formative principles. Ricoeur who represents methodological hermeneutics, interpretation is seen as a study to reveal the rational meaning of texts determined by distance, space, and time from the reader. Ricoeur also has the opinion that in the course of time, the original intention of the author will no longer be used as the main reference in understanding the text. This means that with Ricoeur's hermeneutics, the initial text written by the author has been liberated autonomously (freed himself from the subjectivity of the original intention of the author/author). The autonomy of the text referred to by Ricoeur in its application as a written text is a text that no longer speaks to the speaker. When the written text is interpreted it is no longer related to what the author intended.

² *Amaedola* is one of Nias oral literature in the form of proverbs and short stories or sentences with figures that have certain meanings. This parable is known as a form of advice and life principles that are commonly used in daily conversations, conversations in traditional events, giving advice, in the form of a short story by making several objects as illustrations containing the message and advice implicitly.

burdensome to oneself, (3) approbation maxim, namely the principle of politeness by reducing expressions of demeaning others and increasing expressions of giving praise to others, (4) modesty maxim, namely the principle of politeness by reducing expressions of praising oneself and increasing self-deprecating expressions, (5) agreement maxim, reducing expressions of disapproval to others, increasing expressions of approval to others. (6) sympathy maxim, namely the principle of politeness by reducing antipathy to others and increasing sympathy for others.

2 Research Methods

This chapter discusses the methodology which used collection of data. This research is a type of research that is combined with naturalistic qualitative and development research. Qualitative and naturalistic are carried out in interpreting the *amaedola* text in natural conditions with observation, interview, and documentation techniques, taking notes, being involved, capable. Naturalistic descriptive qualitative research methods are carried out based on existing facts and in accordance with natural phenomena so that the recording and presentation are also carried out as they are.

This research was conducted in Sibolga City at the Nias diaspora community association under the auspices of the Nias Sibolga Charitas group. Technique of Collecting data were carried out through interviews, observations, and library searches. Furthermore, the researchers documented, classified, described, and systematically analyzed the interpretation of *amaedola* originating from respondents and informants.

3 Research Result

The *amaedola* text contains cultural meanings which include anthropological views which contain the meaning to be conveyed in the form of maxims of wisdom, generosity, praise, humility, approval, and sympathy. By finding the maxim of the function of the use of *amaedola*, the classification can be determined. The following are the functions of using *amaedola*: advice, criticism, philosophy, consolation, raising awareness, invitation, life guidance, gratitude, affirmation, and motivation. The following table contains the results of the research.

Table 1. Data Of *Amaedola*

No	Functions	Data	Percentage
1	advice (<i>mene-mene/möli-möli</i>)	135	32,29
2	criticism (<i>degu-degu</i>)	75	17,94
3	philosophy (<i>lala wa auri</i>)	69	16,50
4	consolidation (<i>fondara dödö</i>)	29	6,93
5	raising awareness (<i>famasugi fa'aboto ba dödö</i>)	26	6,22
6	invitation (<i>fondröniaö</i>)	25	5,98
7	life guidance (<i>fanuturu lala wa'auri</i>)	24	5,74
8	gratitude (<i>fangandrö saohagölö</i>)	16	3,82
9	affirmation (<i>fangaro 'ö</i>)	16	3,82
10	motivation (<i>famarou dödö</i>)	3	0,71
	Total	418	100

3.1 Interpretation of the *Amaedola* Text of the Nias Diaspora Community

Based on the results of research and interpretation of the *amaedola* text of the Nias diaspora community, data was found according to the results of classification and categorization in the function of using *amaedola* in the functions of (1) affirmation (*fangaro'ö*), (2) consolidation (*fondara dödö*), (3) raising awareness (*famasugi fa 'aboto ba dödö*) (, (4) life guidance (*fanuturu lala wa'auri*), (5) advice (*mene-mene/möli-möli*), (6) motivation (*famarou dödö*), (7) gratitude (*fangandrö saohagölö*), (8) criticism (*degu-degu*), (9) philosophy (*lala wa auri*), translation of functions number 8 and number 9 obtained from the results of interviews with informant P. Samuel Gulö interview on 18 April 2022, while the translation of function number 1 up to 10 was obtained through an interview with an *amaedola* user informant, P. Aloysius Telaumbanua on April 13, 2022. This informant in his daily life is a humanist who lives in Gunung Sitoli and has served in Sibolga (10) invitations (*fondroniaö*).

Affirmation (*Fangaro'ö*). Affirmation (*Fangaro'ö*) is an attempt to strengthen others. The affirmation is needed by everyone in the family. The family is a human community as a homogeneous being who lives together for a relatively long period of time, this alliance is considered a forum that plays a very important role in facilitating the various needs of the lives of individuals who live in it (Wonmut, 2019:50).³ The Nias people's traditions have a family goal, namely: (1) to be more aware of and live their identity as an autonomous human being in a family (*sambua fongambatö*), to continue the lineage, to obtain male descendants as the successor to the lineage, to maintain inheritance. (2) obtaining social status as a family (*ngambatö*) an unmarried boy is not counted in the traditional banquet. *Amaedola* used in family life as a form of affirmation was found in as many as 16 items with a percentage of 3.76% of all data.

The following is an example of *amaedola* analysis. *Hulô*=like, *gana'a*=gold, *sinolalômbu*=which has been gilded. Meaning is based on the structure in English: Like gold that has been plated. The gold that has been plated looks beautiful and gives off a luxurious glow. Thus this proverb is used to praise the beauty of the bride who is beautiful, white, clean, and charming. In family life, this proverb is used to praise the beauty of the bride who is beautiful, white, clean, and charming. The golden symbol used to represent the precious and brilliant self-esteem of a Nias girl is also followed by the consequence of always maintaining the nobility and chastity of a Nias girl as something that must be maintained.

Consolation (*Fondara Dödö*). The use of *amaedola* as a form of consolation for the people of Nias (*Ono Niha*) especially in situations of grief and misfortune, death. The people of Nias refer to death with the words: aetu noso (end of life) *mondröi ulidanö* (died), *mofanö* (go), *ahuwa* (a situation towards the end), *alele* (without power). Death is something that is absolutely experienced by all living things, including humans. Death can not be predicted when it will happen, no one knows when death will pick him up. Some died when they were children, teenagers, and adults and some died when they were old. When the time of death comes no one can escape it.

³ The family is a community that accommodates various life interests, both for individuals as well as a community. This is marked by getting to know each other personally to strengthen each other (Wonmut, 2019:50)

The following is an example of *amaedola* analysis, *no abasö* = already wet, *ba ihawui* = overwritten, *na sa teu* = also raining. Meaning based on structure in English. It's wet and it's raining again. Wet is an uncomfortable situation, disturbing as well as when it rains, it will certainly multiply the discomfort and difficulty he experiences. *Amaedola* is described as people who experience successive misfortunes. People who experience this fate need to be given empathy. This proverb is generally used to provide comfort and empathy for fellow human beings who experience misfortune, or death that causes grief for those left behind. Nias people believe that humans have something eternal *noso* (spiritual element), *lumölumö* when *mondroi ulidanö* (passes away) Death separates the place and nature between the dead and the living, but the relationship between the two continues as usual. Parents who died were respected, remembered, made an example and a source of inspiration by their descendants. According to the belief, it is believed that it is those who do good and practice the teachings and laws of *Lowalangi* (God) who will come to the 'upper world' where *Lowalangi* is (Telambanua, 2021:7-17).⁴

Raising Awareness (*Famasugi Fa'Aboto Ba Dödö*). Raising awareness is meant to arouse, stimulate, and increase responsiveness and adaptive power to actual situations and issues as well as respond to and try to solve the problems that exist in it consciously. One of the areas that accommodate this activity is the world of politics (Sutrisno Nanang et al, 2019:iii)⁵. Aristotle defines humans as zoon politicians where humans become more human when they live together with other humans. The first humans lived together with their partners, namely husband and wife in a family with their children. A family is formed by each individual with the intention of meeting the needs and welfare of all family members. Based on the statement above, it can be concluded that the awareness that needs to be raised starts from the middle of the family and then enters a wider scope. *Amaedola* from (No. 49)

The following is an example of *amaedola* analysis, *Lölö nafo*=betel pulp, *moroi*=from, *yomo*=house, *irugi*=until *dar'o nete*=across the bridge, *tobali*=to be like, *henu-henu gae*=banana pistil. Meaning is based on structure in English The betel pulp from the house after arriving across the bridge becomes much like the pistil of a banana heart. The betel pulp of a person who eats betel is much less than the pistil of a banana heart. Through this parable, it is illustrated that news or small problems when they get out of the house are widely spread and will be exaggerated more than they are. This is what is called fake news, news that has been added with "spices". This parable is conveyed with the intention to raising awareness so that everyone respects the good name of each other by avoiding hoaxes or telling lies.

⁴ The last supper for parents who want to death has the meaning as preparation to meet the ancestors. In activities around death, symbols of the world above and the world below used. The symbols of the upper world between others: silk, gold, a collection of statues ancestor, yellow color, golden color, bird eagle, golden umbrella, sun, chicken, upstream, east and others. World symbol below include: snakes, crocodiles, red, dark color, moon, downstream, west, etc. (Telambanua, 2021:7-17)

⁵ Critical ideas need to be stimulated to increase power response and adaptive intellectuals to actual issues in order to have capacity to respond on the basis of data, ethics and empirical facts. (Sutrisno Nanang et al, 2019:iii)

Life Guidance (*Fanuturu Lala Wa'Auri*). The guidance of human life is the teachings of faith conveyed by religion as a way of life for its adherents (Ridwan Lubis, 2017: 3-4).⁶ The Nias Diaspora group who are members of the “Charitas” community have a Catholic background. In conveying reflections at worship celebrations, both led by the Imam as well as by catechists and meditation leaders from the common people, in conveying the meaning in the sermon it is usually delivered in the form of *amaedola*. The delivery of benevolent values, advice and so on is relevant to catholic values. Although there are many oral traditions of Nias that are no longer relevant to religious teachings, those related to *amaedola* are still very relevant to be used as a means to inculcate values in religious events. The following is *amaedola* data that is included in the life guidance function.

The following is an example of *amaedola* analysis, *Hulö*=like *abo'a hakhi reziwala*=falling/dropping off a coconut frond, *möi fondrou'ö belalagania* = beautifying one's appearance. Meaning is based on structure in English. If the coconut frond falls, it appears to increase in height. Coconut trees have midribs that hang down and partially cover the coconut trunk. When the dangling coconut fronds are cleaned and the coconut stalks look more neat and beautiful in appearance. So that is why a person who generously allows part of his property to be given to others becomes seen as more "great". This parable is intended as a life guide that in life it is necessary to give charity and do charity according to their respective beliefs.

Advice (*Mene-Mene/Möli-Möli*). Advice is a cultural tool that contains noble cultural values that have scientific, artistic, spiritual, and local wisdom elements. The representation of advice is usually in the form of sayings and parables, proverbs, and others. The advice contains cultural content, teachings that are used as guidelines for life as excellence and traditions that are lived by the community concerned (Nurlina, 2019:34).⁷

The following is an example of *amaedola* analysis, *Na* = if, *adölö* = straight, *geu* = wood, *ba labe'e* = made into, *dela* = bridge, *ba na abila* = if bent, *ba labe'e* = made into, *famaö'ö*, the side of a traditional house. Meaning based on structure in English: if the wood is straight it is made into a titi, and if it is bent it is made into a *famaö'ö* (the side of a traditional house). Titi is a kind of emergency bridge that is usually used to cross the river. This footbridge is usually chosen from straight wood and has a sturdy texture so that the footbridge becomes sturdy, does not shake, and is safe for use by those who cross it. Meanwhile, crooked (not straight) wood can still be used as *famaö'ö* on the side of the traditional house. The message that *amaedola* mini wants to convey is that a person's strengths, talents, and talents are different, if used according to each person's skills and needs, it will be very useful. This parable is an exhortation to appreciate the uniqueness and talents of each person.

⁶ Therefore, religion is concerned with living guidance for humans in their life (Ridwan Lubis, 2017:

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⁷ The parable of having function as a container or cultural facility which contains high values in the form of scientific, artistic, spiritual, and excellence for the Teaching community what is meant is everything that is taught to humans which can be in the form of advice, advice, or instruction. Usually, in teachings containing prohibitions, procedures, and science (Nurlina, 2019:34).

Motivation (Famarou Dödö). Motivation is the power that moves a person behavior. The power is within the person concerned in the form of power that comes from within and from outside the self to achieve a goal. Thus, it can be concluded that motivation is a psychological impulse, both targeted at personal and group. With motivation, a person can influence the people he leads to do the work in accordance with expectations. Furthermore, Marjaya et al (2019:130) say that motivation is a movement and stimulus given by a person, leader, or anyone to encourage a person or group to be more enthusiastic about achieving goals. The following is *amaedola* that serves as motivation:

The following is an example of *amaedola* analysis, *Ha malimali* = Only *malimali* (small fish) *mbôrôta gi'a* = fish start. Meaning based on structure in English: Only *malimali* (small fish) fish starters. *Malimali* is small fish that people usually don't take into account. This small fish is considered trivial because it is considered worthless. One thing that cannot be forgotten is that this small *mali mali* fish will slowly but surely develop into a big fish. Thus, any business generally starts from small to large and then proceeds to become established and large. Motivate to reward businesses that start small because they have the opportunity to become big and established.

Gratitude (Fangandrö Saohagölö). Etymologically the word gratitude comes from two basic words "thank you and thank you". According to the KBBI, gratitude means giving thanks; giving birth to gratitude, or returning the favor after receiving kindness and so on, while obeying. The gratitude is a form of non-financial appreciation or reward that can increase the motivation and pleasure of a person or a group. The following are the functions of *amaedola* to thank

The following is an example of *amaedola* analysis, *Hulö*=like, *ahani*=drift *wondrahimba'öla*=percussion, *iwalinga*=dikira, *ahani yöu*=floating downstream, no so i raya=turns out to be drifting upstream. This parable is meant to describe a situation where someone who is thought to be stupid is actually a smart person. Businesses that were thought to be losing money actually turned out to be profitable. So sometimes things are not always what we see. Not what we think. Thank you with humility to give thanks for the sustenance. Meaning is based on structure B. Ind. It's like the *ba'öla*'s little percussion drifting away, thought to have drifted downstream, apparently already upstream.

Criticism (Degu-Degu). According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) criticism is a criticism, assessment, or review of the good or bad considerations of work, opinion, and so on. Criticism is a form of communication in a society that functions as social control or as a form of resistance individually or in community groups to the phenomena that occur (Qusairi, 2017:203)⁸, so the criticism is the delivery of opinions regarding a matter. The truth includes the relationship between individuals and society and the events that occur in it, although it cannot be used as absolute truth. The following is a function of the *amaedola* as a critical

The following is an example of *amaedola* analysis, *Hulö*=like, *zi lö* who doesn't aboto ba dödö *nia*=understood in his heart, *isofu nasa*=asked again. Meaning is based on structure in English: As he didn't understand, he asked again. People who ask are usually humble people. But if

⁸ Social criticism is, "One of the forms" communication in society that aims or works as a control against a social system or social process or as a form of resistance to the reality that occurs in a community group (Qusairi, 2017:203)

someone wants to try someone's intelligence to test this is a sign of the need for the person to practice humility. As a form of criticism to people who like to try, and test others by asking things they already know, the motivation is just to test other people's abilities. This proverb is intended for them to be more humble

Philosophy (*Lala Wa Auri*). Philosophy comes from the Greek philosophy which consists of the basic words *philein* which means love, and *sophia* which means wisdom literally meaning that philosophy is to love or seek wisdom (Tung Khoe Yao, 2013: 1).⁹ According to the KBBI, philosophy is knowledge and investigation. with reason related to the nature of everything that exists, causes, origins, theories that underlie the nature of the mind or activity, and science with the core of logic, aesthetics, metaphysics, and epistemology.

The following is an example of *amaedola* analysis, *Hulö*=like, *zanondrö akhe*=making stairs so you can climb them, *ilu'i*=bearing *dondrönia*=the ladder. Meaning based on structure in English: Like a person climbing a palm tree, (with a *tondrö*) he carries a *tondroria* *tondrö*= a ladder of a bamboo stick. A person who climbs a fig tree requires a lot of struggle, one of which he has to carry a ladder made of bamboo to get to the location of the palm tree. Without a ladder, this worker will not be able to complete his task of harvesting sugar palms. Thus a person must be willing to accept the consequences of his decisions and actions. This parable has a function as a philosophy that in life one must be willing to accept the consequences of decisions and actions.

Invitation (*Fondröniaö*). According to the KBBI the meaning of the word invitation /invitation/ n suggestion (request, etc.) to act; is an invitation, an invitation to carry out or follow. According to Ariana (2020:12)¹⁰ said that the interlocutor together with the speaker carries out the activities that are spoken, usually marked with the words "come on", "let's go", but sometimes this invitation is in the form of a metaphor in which the meaning to be conveyed is implied. So the invitation is an imperative sentence that has intent and hope/expects a response in the form of action. Here is *amaedola* with a call-to-action:

The following is an example of *amaedola* analysis, *böi*=don't, *boto*=break, *högöu*=your head, *wanguma'ö*=say, *ma'ifu*=a little, *lö*=no, *monaha*=thank you. Meaning based in English: Ind. Don't break your head saying, because in the least it's not acceptable. The human head contains brain cells used for thinking. To advise one needs to think of a suitable strategy for approaching him. In everyday life, there are certain people who are not approachable in any way because the person concerned is already very ignorant. Thus this parable is conveyed, "Don't break your head saying, for it is not acceptable in the least. An invitation to empathize when in everyday life there are certain people who are not approachable in any way because the person concerned is already very ignorant.

Based on the results of the percentage of the amount of *amaedola* that is included in each function of its use

⁹ Philosophy is wisdom in a society in the form of things that are moral in nature that can be used as a guide in speaking, acting and behaving. The following is an *amaedola* with a function as a philosophy (Tung Khoe Yao, 2013: 1)

¹⁰ Imperative an invitation to invite the interlocutor together with the speaker to do an activity spoken. Invitation utterances are generally marked with 'come on', 'let' Ariana (2020:12)

The high percentage of *amaedola*'s function as advice is related to the "firm" customary rules in the Nias tradition. According to Gulö: 2015:30, it is stated that in the tradition of the Nias people, a man who has a "couting" with a woman is considered a violation of *adat* (tradition) so it needs to be punished according to *adat*. Those who do the "couting" are forced to marry. A woman and a man caught alone, flirting with the opposite sex who are not bound by marriage, will be punished by customary fines (*fogau*) in the form of pigs and gold. This rule aims to protect the weak (women) from the domination of men.

In the context of the traditional Nias community, such regulations are very effective. This tradition, which has been passed down from generation to generation, has also been carried away and has not disappeared from the traditions of the Nias diaspora community even though they have migrated.

The results of research related to the use of maxims with the highest percentage level of wisdom maxim with a percentage of wisdom (tact maxim) with a percentage of 25.41%. The high percentage of wisdom maxim is related to the high percentage of the *amaedola* function as advice. People from Nias culture have very high self-esteem, this is illustrated by the *amaedola* they use as a philosophy, "*abölö sökhi mate moroi aila*" which lexically translates to: "it is better to die than to be ashamed". This philosophy is one of the things that encourages the Nias diaspora community to always try to instill advice in the form of *amaedola* which leads them to be wiser so that they have authority, and wisdom and are considered as respected and honorable human beings.

4 Conclusion

Based on the results of research and interpretation of the *amaedola* text of the Nias diaspora community, data was found according to the results of classification and categorization in the function of using *amaedola* in the functions of (1) affirmation (*fangaro'ö*), (2) consolidation (*fondara dödö*), (3) raising awareness (*famasugi fa 'aboto ba dödö*), (4) life guidance (*fanuturu lala wa'auri*), (5) advice (*mene-mene/möli-möli*), (6) motivation (*famarou dödö*), (7) gratitude (*fangandö saohagölö*), (8) criticism (*degu-degu*), (9) philosophy (*lala wa auri*),

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