



Quantity and quality of water in Indonesian proverbs: Cognitive semantics study

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the conceptualization that occurs in Indonesian society's cognition system in using or understanding Indonesian proverbs that use specific features in the domain of quantity and quality of water. To arrive at the objective, cognitive semantics theory and the basic concept of great chain metaphor theory are used as guiding principles. Through the mapping out of the source domain and target domain it is found that in Indonesian proverbs, the Indonesian society use concrete or familiar elements in the domain of the quantity and quality of water to understand abstract or unfamiliar entities. In detail, (a) metaphorical linguistic expressions in the domain of the quantity of water are used to understand the size of blessing, capability, knowledge, advice, and problem, and (b) metaphorical linguistic expressions in the domain of water quality used to comprehend the internal condition of man and social and non-social environmental conditions.

Keywords: quantity and quality of water, Indonesian proverbs, cognitive semantics, conceptual metaphor

Introduction

"ilmunya dangkal (his knowledge is shallow)"

"Menyelami ilmu (diving into a knowledge)"

"Menimba ilmu (accumulate knowledge as water in the bucket)"

The three expressions are the example of borrowing the element of water to clarify the knowledge someone has. Knowledge is an abstract entity to be explained using concrete features. *dangkal* (shallow), *menyelami* (diving into), and *menimba* (accumulate) are concrete features that belong to water. Consciously or not, these features are frequently used in Indonesian society to clarify abstract entities in life, not limited to the three expressions. The question, however, remains as to what causes features in the water domain to be metaphorically utilized. Indonesian geographical condition makes clear the questions. Indonesia is a maritime country. Sea makes up 75 % of Indonesian geographical area (5.8 millions km square and Indonesia has the richest marine biodiversity in the world known as mega biodiversity^[1]. The Central Bureau of Statistics points out that fishery household sector comprises 1,288,821 for fish farming and 927,243 for fishing^[2]. People find vast waters of benefit that they make a living from. Indonesia has a long history of maritime civilization from 15th to 17th centuries^[3]. The bonding of Indonesian society to the water is responsible for use of the element of water in the many Indonesian proverbs.

Kochhar-Lindgren^[4] argues that dramatizing water provides a constellation for building transnational intercessions around our many stories of water, as the problems we face with water are certainly not bound by the space of the nation-state. The statement does not touch on the universality but

conventionality concerning water. In the same vein, Moreno^[5] argues that rather than being universal, similar interpretation of meaning between one nation and others is conventional or genera in nature. In other words, the cultural background of a language speaker will constantly influence the meaning of the language. Language even distinguishes one ethnic characteristics from the one of other ethnic's one ethnic distinguishing characteristic of one with other ethnicity^[6, 7]. Therefore, the meaning of water for the people of Indonesia possibly differs from other nations.

The quantity and quality of water, among the many elements of water constitute domains whose dominant features are used to create linguistically metaphorical expressions in Indonesian proverbs. Of 422 proverbs employing water elements, 41 proverbs use the quantity of water and 19 proverbs employ the water quality. In this study, the quantity of water refers to the amount of water in a container and the quality of water deals with the extent, the level, the measure of suitability for health viewed from the biological^[8], physics^[9], and chemistry^[10] parameters. In the *great chain of being* theory^[11], water belongs to a non-living things that has physical qualities, structural and functional features. This research deals with the fact that quantity and quality of water is frequently employed by Indonesian people as a structural feature to clarify abstract or unfamiliar entities, which are of specific human features.

Pateda^[12] maintains that proverbs actually represent the way figurative meanings are used. Figurative language, according to Evans and Green^[13], is a complex term. In other words, it calls for a mental process in generating and understanding the structure of proverbs. Basically speaking, mental processes come about when a person has a particular purpose in his mind. He uses a diverse form of speech to convey his intention. Hence, a study is conducted using the cognitive

semantics theory in order to discover a mental phenomenon. Cognitive semantics, according to Evans and Green ^[13], has to do with the research on conceptual structure, conceptualization process, and more on the unfolding of the human conceptual system nature.

As far as the metaphor is concerned, the fundamental notion in the cognitive semantics is that by using metaphor the speaker is not deemed as violating the rule of competence. It is said in Brouwer ^[14] that viewing a metaphor as a rhetorical phenomenon is no longer a valid notion. Instead, metaphor is thought of as a result of a model of conceptual arrangement for conceptualizing new experiences. The metaphor then results from the act of projecting or mapping out a conceptual scheme from one domain into another that provides a final general picture of our first understanding. In that respect, Ferrando ^[15] asserted that cognitive semanticist finds that metaphors are a vehicle of conceptualizing more abstract and intangible experiences into concrete and familiar frameworks. Communicating, according to Lakoff and Johnson ^[16], is a conceptual system based activities which are similar to thinking activities and action taking. It can hence be said that language is an important source of evidence to figure out a conceptual system. This research is conducted to discover the conceptualization process which comes about in the cognition of the users of Indonesian proverbs to unveil a wide range of thoughts concerning the quantity and quantity of water. This study was conducted by identifying the source and target domain of the water contained in the Indonesian proverb.

2. Research methods

This research was conducted with qualitative approach and hermeneutical research type. To get the conceptualization that occurs in the cognitive system of Indonesian in using proverbs, a cognitive semantic theory is used. The perspective lens of the cognitive semantics is used because the nature of the proverbs is metaphorical. To keep this research going in the accurate direction, four key assumptions of cognitive semantic theory and four basic concepts of great chain metaphor theory were used as guiding principles. The four key assumptions of cognitive semantics comprise (1) Conceptual structure is embodied (the 'embodied cognition thesis'), (2) Semantic structure is conceptual structure, (3) Meaning representation is encyclopaedic, (4) Meaning construction is conceptualisation ^[13]. The four basic concepts of great chain metaphor theory that coproduce a comprehensive proverb are: (1) Great chain of being, (2) the nature of think, (3) generic is specific, and (4) conversation quantity maxim ^[17].

To understand the Indonesian proverb further in the analysis process it is important to bear in mind that some proverbs do not only contain metaphors, but also metonymic properties.

Ibanez ^[18] proves that there may be interaction between metaphor and metonymy in the cognitive process of creating proverbs. The interaction occurs in the analysis of the source-in-target of the proverb. Two possible interactions occurring between metaphor and metonymy comprise (a) the metaphorical mapping provides the source for the metonymy and (b) the metonymic mapping provides the source for the metaphors ^[18]. In this research, the metaphorical analysis of the proverbs considers metonymy that is present in the process of conceptualizing proverbs.

The conceptual metaphor includes the source and target domain, and a series of mappings between both of them. The mapping is intended to derive a statement from conceptualization in the cognitive system of community using Indonesian proverbs. Langacker ^[19] argues that the domain constitutes a cognitive entity including mental experiences, space for representation, concept, or conceptual complex. In the same vein, Evans and Green ^[13] define domains as conceptual entity with varying degrees of complexity and organization. The only requirement for the structure of knowledge to be considered as a domain is that it offers background information by way of which lexical concepts can be understood and used in a language. Source domains are typically more concrete and familiar than target domains since metaphor is frequently used when one finds it difficult to delineate something abstract that he resorts to using other concrete codes which are more familiar. Kovecses ^[20] maintains that conceptual domains from which metaphorical expressions are derived in understanding other conceptual domains are known as source domains, whereas conceptual domains that are understood in this way are referred to as target domains.

Due to the conceptual metaphor theory used, the data of this research comprise proverbs containing metaphorical linguistic expressions in terms of the water quantity and quality and the meaning thereof. The data includes the meaning of the expressions which are of necessity to get the target domain of the mapping done. The data are derived from the books which present a collection of Indonesian proverbs as the primary data source such as the Ramadan's complete dictionary of Indonesian Proverbs for Elementary, Junior High, High School, and university students, as well as for the general audience ^[21] and other books on a collection of Indonesian proverbs to complement the existing data such as Proverbs written by Pamuntjak, *et al.* ^[22] and the archipelagic Proverbs: the spring of the nation's wisdom written by Santosa ^[23]. The data collected from the three books, 204 proverbs explicitly use the word water and 218 proverbs use words or phrases in terms of the water element such as rain, wet, bathing, river, drinking, sea, and so forth.

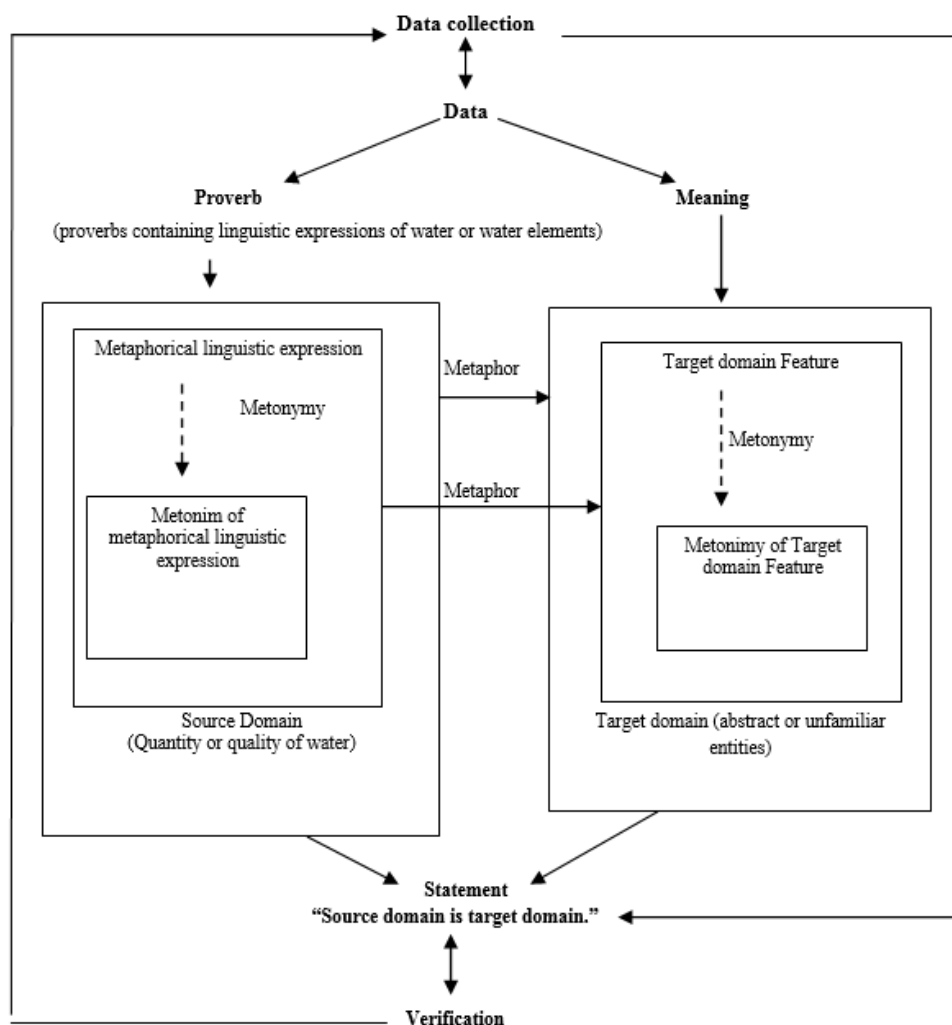


Fig 1: Mapping process between source and target domain.

Figure 1 shows the outline of the mapped out source domain and target domain in this study (adapted from Miles and Huberman [24] and Ibanez [18]). The mapping of the water-related water words and phrases starts with the structure of proverbs and the whole meaning thereof. The proverbial structure is assigned to the box of source domain while the meaning of the proverb is assigned to the box of the target domain. The content of the box is filtered down until source domain and target domain are obtained. The metonymy reduction can possibly happen in the source domain and the target domain box. After obtaining the expected source domain and the target domain, a statement is made that "source domain is target domain" resulting from a conceptualization created between the source domain and the target domain. Through this process the cultural features of the society can be figured out of the conceptualization in the cognition system of society.

3. Results & Discussion

3.1 Water Quantity

Linguistic Metaphorical expression of the quantity of water in the Indonesian proverb. *air segeluk* (a bathroom ladle of water), *seteguk air* (a gulp of water), *hujan lebat* (pour), *air*

dalam lukah (water in the fishing tool), *air selupak dan seperigi* (a water in the hole of a ditch, a well-full water), *tohor* (moist or almost dry), *cetek* (shallow), *dalam* (deep), *penuh air* (filled with water), *air besar* (mighty water), *tambah air* (add water), *air segelas* (a glass of water), *sesayak air* (a coconut shell ladle of water), *air secupak* (a scoop of water), *secawan air* (a cup of water), *air laut* (a briny water of the sea), *air dalam perigi* (the well water, *laut kering* (dry sea), *air kubangan* (a poodle of water), *kurang hujan* (lack of rainfalls), *tujuh lautan* (seven seas), *air satu dan setengah tong* (one and half barrel of water), *air setitik* (a drop of water), *sedikit hujan* (drizzle), *dan hujan sehari* atau *sepagi* (a daylong rain or a morning shower). The mapping process results in five target domains in terms of quantity in the Indonesian proverb. The conceptualization encompasses (a) the quantity of water as the size of blessing received, (b) the quantity of water as the measure of the capability, (c) the quantity of water as the size of knowledge, (d) the quantity of water as the size of advice given, and (e) the quantity of water as the size of the problem. Blessing, ability, knowledge, advice, and problems constitute abstract entities or nonphysical objects. Kovecses [20] argues that the abstract entities or nonphysical immaterial can be defined using

linguistic expressions of physical objects. In this study, water is the physical object used to describe the five abstract entities is water. The following are five conceptualizations presented successively.

3.1.1 Water Quantity as The Size of Blessing

The conceptualization of *water quantity is the size of blessing* reveals that the society use concrete elements in the domain of the water quantity to describe blessing which is abstract in nature. A large amount of water means countless blessings whereas the little amount of water represents a small blessing. Blessing used in this study can refer to material and immaterial things [25], which Indonesian Dictionary (2018) refers to a living, income (such as money and other things to sustain life), profit, opportunity to eat. In other words, the blessing, in this respect is generic in a sense which has to do with income, help, work, and so forth. Data (1) exemplify the concept of water quantity in terms of how big or small the blessing is.

- (1) *Hanya orang haus yang dapat merasakan segarnya seteguk air* (The thirsty can taste the freshness of a gulp of water) Meaning: The poor are very happy even though they get a little (Ramadan, 2002: 16).

The water metaphor in the data (1) point out a small amount of water characterized by the phrase a gulp (*seteguk*). In Data (1), the thirsty are likened to the poor. Data (1) presents two source domains of water metaphor, the existence of water and the quantity of water. The quantity of water is characterized by the phrase of a gulp of water which denotes a small amount of water. A gulp of water even signifies a small blessing that the target domain in a nutshell deals with the small blessing.

3.1.2 Water Quantity as The Measure of Capability

Ability to do something or wealth is a domain depicted by using metaphor in terms of water quantity. The analysis conducted points out the quantity of water used to represent the ability or great wealth. The amount of water denotes small fortune. Ability according to great dictionary of the Indonesian language (2018), is the capability, the capacity, the strength, and wealth. The most frequent ability in Indonesian proverbs is the ability used in terms of riches or wealth. Data (2) is the elaboration of conceptualization of water quantity in terms of the measure of ability or wealth.

- (2) *Memandikan dengan air segelas* (Bathing one with a glass of water) Meaning: shortage in many aspects (Ramadan, 2002: 10).

Data (2) depicts a destitute life one lives. A glass of water is enough to drink or wash hands with, but it does not suffice for bathing. A glass of water can hence be said to be in the domain of the water quantity. A glass of water will not be sufficient for bathing purpose. The quantity of water mentioned above provides a generic picture of destituteness. Deficiency refers to the domain of human capacity.

3.1.3 Water Quantity as The Size of Knowledge

Knowledge is an abstract entity of which understanding requires the use of concrete object features. The quantity of water, in this respect, is one of the concrete objects whose

features are frequently used by the Indonesian people to define Knowledge. Knowledge, according to great dictionary of the Indonesian language (2018), is intelligence that humans have. The conceptualization of *the quantity of water is the size of knowledge* reveals that the society employs the notion of a large amount of water to depict the extent or the depth of knowledge one demonstrates. Data (3) exemplify the formation of the conceptualization.

- (3) *Bila kail panjang sejengkal, jangan lautan hendak diajuk* (A span of hook will not fathom the sea) Meaning: when we barely have any knowledge or experience, we cannot deal with the knowledgeable and experienced people square away (Ramadan, 2002: 17).

The water-related metaphor in the data (3) is the word ocean. A span of hook delineates smithereens of knowledge and experience while the ocean describes the vast knowledge. The ocean is viewed in the angle of depth as compared to the hook used in fathoming (*ajuk*) the sea. When it is used for fishing, hook plunges vertically into the sea. The word 'ajuk' (fathom) is frequently used to estimate the depth of the sea as in proverb *dangkal telah seberangan, dalam telah keajukan* (the shallow waters to cross over, the deep has been fathomed) and *dalam laut boleh diajuk, dalam hati siapa tahu* (the depth of the sea may be fathomed, the depth of human being who can fathom). The depth of water is the parameter of water quantity. Therefore, deep water denotes deep knowledge.

Data (3) reveal that Indonesian people utilized water quantity to depict knowledge. The deeper the water is the more a person's knowledge. The shallower the water is the less one's knowledge is. To date, this conceptualization remains. The terms 'shallow and deep' are often encountered in everyday expressions, such as shallow knowledge, no brain, deepening knowledge, and so forth.

3.1.4 Water Quantity as The Size of Advice

The analysis of the data reveals that a large amount of water is used by the society to depict much advice and small amount of water is used to represent less advice. Following are the example of the conceptualization of water quantity in the proverbs in terms of the advice as described and discussed in (4).

- (4) *Sekepal menjadi gunung, setitik menjadi laut* (a clenched amount of soil grows into a mountain, a drop of water gathers together into a sea)

Meaning: A little advice counts. A little advice can bring happiness. Little yet, It is profitable (Ramadan, 2002: 203).

A handful soil piled up into a mountain (adds up to much) and a drop of water when collected little by little will gather into a sea (expands much). Data (4) serves to represent a little advice, but it has a powerful impact advice. The water related metaphor in this proverb is the word 'drop' and 'sea'. Both words are used in a comparison to the quantity of water. A drop means a globule whereas and the sea means a lot of water. The source domain of this metaphor hence is the quantity of water. In the data (4) water is advice. A drop of water represents little advice while the ocean depicts the mighty effect of the advice given. Thus, the target domain of the water used as metaphor in this proverb is the size of the

advice.

3.1.5 Water Quantity as the Size of a Problem

The size of a problem is another domain depicted through a metaphor in terms of water domain. The problems described in this regard refer to general matters in human life. The analysis of Indonesian proverbs using water-related metaphor reveals that the Indonesian society employs small amount of water to denote trivial or insignificant problem while a large amount of water depicts serious blunder or huge problem.

(5) *Panas setahun terhapus oleh hujan sehari* (a year of drought is quenched by a day's rain)

Meaning: The multitude of kind acts is eclipsed by a blot of minor slip-up; act of kindness means no more after a mistake is made. (Ramadhan, 2002:156)

The expression a day's rain (*hujan sehari*) in the proverb (5) is compared to a year of drought. A day's rainfall is effective to get rid of any thought of a year of drought. A day of rain amounts to a little compared to the period of year. Thus, the source domain of this metaphor is the water quantity. Data (5) points out the neglected kindness is due to small mistake. A day's rain portrays minor error of a kind. Error or mistakes belongs to the domain of problems that leads to a conceptualization that a small amount of water represents minor mistake. Furthermore, water quantity denotes the size of problems.

3.2 Water Quality

In this study, water quality has to do with the water used in Indonesian proverbs to depict a wide range of things in human life, good or bad. The water quality is determined on the basis of biological parameters, physical quality, and chemical quality. Water viewed from biological parameter relates to whether or not certain microorganism is present in the water^[8]. The physical water quality parameters, according to Mulia^[9], can be viewed from turbidity, temperature, color, odor, taste, and the amount of dissolved solids (Total Dissolved Solids). The chemical parameter of water^[10] particularly examines the presence of chemical compounds in water. These chemical compounds, physically, contribute to the emergence of certain taste and odor in water, and serve as a parameter of drinking water quality. The parameters in terms of the water quality domain are concrete objects used to define abstract entities in life. The specific elements involve murky water (*air keruh*), clear water (*air bersih*), (*air bercacing*) wiggler filled water, (*hujan perak*) silver rain, (*hujan keris dan lembing*) Kris and javelin rain, (*air tahi*) fecal water.

The analysis conducted reveals that the use of metaphorical linguistic expressions in terms of the water quality domain creates a statement as a result of conceptualization namely (a) the quality of water as man's inner condition and (b) the quality of the water as the good or bad man's environment.

3.2.1 Water Quality as Size of Man's Inner Condition

In this study, the inner condition in this study refers to the condition described by proverbs in terms of the emotional condition or so-called human feelings. Following are data concerning water quality that depicts the man's inner conditions.

- (6) *Jangan bercermin di air keruh* (Do not see your reflection in the turbid water) Meaning: Do not imitate evil. Do not follow after the bad example (Ramadan, 2002: 98).
- (7) *Kalau air keruh di hulu sampai ke muara keruh juga* (The turbidity of upstream water will remain turbid when it flows downwards) Meaning: If something begins badly, it will finally end badly (Ramadan, 2002:16).

Turbidity or cloudiness of water signifies poor quality. When a person sees his reflection on the murky water, the reflection will turn out to be worse. The ugly reflection is a metaphor for bad deeds. The cloudy water (6) is viewed as a mirror. Because of its murky condition, the water will not reflect well or the reflection will look worse. Water affects the reflection representing the behavior of a bad person. The man's wickedness is included in the domain of the man's inner conditions that turbid water means man's evil deed and clear water is a good deed.

Murky water will not possibly clear up even though it flows downwards into a distance (from upstream all the way down to the estuary). This portrays the inner conditions of man which is full of clutter. What begins badly will turn out badly. The proverb in data (7) may be expressed, in the following manner, a lazy person who dreads going to work will tend to veg out throughout his work.

3.2.2 Water Quality as Size of Man's Environment

Apart from being used to describe human feelings or inner condition, features in the domain of water quality in the Indonesian proverbs are also employed to depict the good or bad condition of man's environment. Environment is defined as a situation and condition confronted by someone in the societal or household environment^[26]. The environmental condition involves the social and non-social environment. Social environment encompasses the work condition and the societal environment in general, while non-social environment relates to dwelling condition and condition of a country or nation. Following is the data regarding the conceptualization of water quality in terms of good or bad environmental conditions of human beings.

- (8) *Memancing di air keruh* (Fishing in the murky water) Meaning: taking advantage of chaotic situation; grab the opportunity when it presents itself in a difficult time (Ramadan, 2002: 10).
- (9) *Menangguk dalam air keruh* (Catching using a basket in the murky water) Meaning: looking for profits in a dispute (Ramadan, 2002: 378).

Data (8) and (9) indicate that poor quality water is used to describe bad environment. On the contrary, clear water is used to portray good environment.

Murky water constitutes one of the poor water quality parameters. Murky water usually contains a variety of bad substances and some animals cannot live in a murky water. Murky water is a metaphor used to depict a bad situation in the man's social environment. Data (8) shows that someone is said to be after some profits in a chaotic situation when he is fishing in poor quality water. Chaos results from a conflict or dispute among people included in the domain of good and bad

conditions of social environment.

Data (9) indicates that a person fishes in a murky water and catches nothing in the process. The fish moves away while the water gets murky. The person will even stir up the water increasing the turbidity of water. The murky water refers to chaos or dispute that catching a fish using a basket means taking advantage of the situation (represented by fish). Fishing in the murky water is likened to grabbing opportunity in a chaotic situation or dispute. Both make up the rough situation in the social environment. Therefore, in this proverb the quality of water refers to the condition of the human environment, good or bad.

4. Conclusion

People inhabiting the maritime country, treasuring a long maritime history demonstrate creativity as evidenced by their using linguistic expressions in terms of the water quantity and quality domain to define abstract entities such as the Indonesian people. The use of the cognitive semantic theory and conceptual metaphor to flesh out the Indonesian proverbs reveals the societal cognitive processing as they capitalize on the domain of water quantity and quality. A little amount of water is used to portray a small blessing, puny abilities, smidgen of science, little advice, and small problems. On the other way around, a large amount of water is used to depict big blessing, huge capacity, deep knowledge, and much advice, and big problems. Quality water serves the purpose of delineating good man's inner condition and social and non-social environment. On the contrary, water of inferior quality is used to point out man's bad inner conditions, and unhealthy social and non-social environment.

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