



## THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF MANGGARAI SPEECH COMMUNITY ON HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC WELFARE

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**Abstract:** This study describes the conceptualisation of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare, with special reference to the forms and meanings of language they employ in verbal expressions in the texts of ritual speeches as cultural discourses. This is a descriptive study. The methods of collecting data were observation, interview, focused-group discussion, and documentary study. The sources of primary data were members of Manggarai speech community represented by five key informants. Data were analysed qualitatively by using inductive method. The results of study show that the forms and meanings of Manggarai language used in verbal expressions in the texts of cultural discourse in Manggarai language are specific to Manggarai culture as they reflect the conceptualisation of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare. As conceptualised in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community, the indicators of household economic welfare are designated by having meals three times a day, the availability of full corn and rice as food stuff, the availability of vegetables in the farm lands, the availability of pigs and chickens raised.

**Key words:** *conceptualisation, Manggarai speech community, household economic welfare*

### INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the relationship of Manggarai language, Manggarai culture and conceptualisation of Manggarai speech community that refers to Manggarai people as members of Manggarai ethnic group living in the land of Manggarai in the island of Flores, the province of East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia (Lawang, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, et. al., 2017; Bustan, 2017; Bustan, 2018). As the land of Manggarai is densely peppered with mountains, the landscape of Manggarai has also given rise to a considerable variety of cultures between areas (Erb, 1999:15; Bustan, 2017). The variety of cultures shows that Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community have different ways of thinking in viewing the world. As Frawley (1992:24) pointed out, the speakers of one language think differently from the speakers of other languages, especially dealing with non-linguistic facts or extra-linguistic phenomena. The variety of cultures and the variety of thoughts are reflected in the variety of languages that Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community employ in macro-interactional level as well as in micro-interactional level like in certain register.

The variety of language that members of Manggarai speech community employ is of two kinds involving social variety if it is viewed from the groups of its users and functional variety it is viewed from of the context of situation (Hasan, 1989). In view of social variety in language they employ, Manggarai language consists of several dialects. One of the dialects is central Manggarai dialect which is spoken by the majority of Manggarai speech community residing in the central parts of Manggarai region (Verheijen, 1991; Mangga, 2016). As it is used as the lingua franca among members

of Manggarai speech community, the dialect has been acknowledged as the general language for Manggarai speech community, which is known as Manggarai language (Bustan, 2005; Bustan & Semiun, 2016:16). In view of functional variety, there are various kinds of registers in Manggarai language. Along with their contexts of situation, the forms and meanings of language used in the registers are specific to Manggarai culture as they reveal the worldviews shared together by members of Manggarai speech community. The registers are reflected in the features of language they employ in cultural discourses which refer to ritual speeches spoken or utter in the contexts of rituals. The features of language they employ in cultural discourses are specific to Manggarai culture in their forms and meaning as they contain a bulk of linguistic and cultural knowledge revealing the conceptualisations of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community (Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2017). Some of the linguistic and cultural knowledge stated and implied designate the conceptualisation of Manggarai people on household economic welfare. Bearing this in minds, this study focuses on the conceptualisation of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare with special reference to the forms and meanings of language they employ in the cultural discourses. We are interested in conducting this study for the reason that, even though many rituals are no longer practiced routinely and intensively in Manggarai culture, it is found out that some verbal expressions are still used by Manggarai people as the sources of cultural texts to guide their thoughts and behaviors in developing their conceptualisation on household economic welfare.

## FRAMEWORK

Culture creates distinctions between people as it functions not only as a sense of identity but also as a symbol of identity for a people as members of a social group (Ochs, 1991). The function of culture as the distinctive feature between people finds its reflection in language they employ because when they value certain things and do them in a certain way, they come to use their language in ways that reflect what they value and what they do (Wardaugh, 1991; Wierzbicka, 1991). This comes closest to the conception of Kramsch (2001:6) that people who identify themselves as members of a social group acquire common ways of viewing the world through interactions with other members of the same group. These views are reinforced through institutions like family, the government and other sites of socialization through their lives. Common attitudes, beliefs, and values are reflected in the way members of the group use language – for example, what they choose to say or not to say and how they say it. The views are related to the idea of Brown (1994:170) propounding that culture is deeply ingrained part of the very fiber of our being, but language as the means for communication among members of a culture is the most visible and available expression of that culture (Cakir, 2006; Bilal and Erdogan, 2005; Wierzbicka, 1991).

The use of language as the most visible and available expression of culture belonging to a people as members of a speech community is the main concern or interest of cultural linguistics, one of the theoretical perspectives in cognitive linguistics which explores the relationship between language, culture and conceptualisation. Cultural linguistics is regarded as an emerging paradigm or model in cognitive linguistics because it not only emphasizes the cultural elements of cognition, but it also serves as an approach to identifying language differences that reveal cultural differences that the native speakers of those languages share (Occhi, 2007). This supports the conception of Humboldt stating that the diversity of languages is not only the diversity of signs and sounds, but also the diversity of cultures (Cassirer, 1987; Foley, 1997; Sumarsono, 2010). The conception is further elaborated in the theory of linguistic relativity proposed by Sapir and Whorf that the varying cultural concepts and categories inherent in different languages affect the cognitive classification of the experienced world in such a way that speakers of different languages think and behave differently. In relation to this, two the principles that should be taken into account when conducting the differences of languages are as follows: (a) we perceive the world in terms of categories and distinctions found in our native language and (b) what is found in one language may not be found in another language or other languages due to cultural differences (Miller, 1968).

As language can be defined differently, in the perspective of cultural linguistics, language is defined as a cultural activity and, at the same time, an instrument for organizing other cultural domains. The basic reason is that language used by a people as members of a

speech community is shaped not only by their special and general innate potentials as human beings, but also by physical and sociocultural experiences. Similar to language, culture may mean different things for different people and, as such, in the perspective of cultural linguistics, culture is defined as the source of conceptualisation of experience (Palmer and Sharifian, 2007; Palmer, 1996; Sibarani, 2004; Wallace, 1981). Based on the assumption that language and cognition are closely related, according to Foley (1997), culture is a cognitive map shared together by a people as members of a speech community serving as a display illustrating how they organize their ways of thinking about items, behaviors and beliefs or events in cultural domain.

Language in its use as the means for communication among members of a culture is a symbolic system with the power to shape and create such cultural realities as norms, values, perceptions and identities which are expressed and conveyed through discourse as its vehicle (Kramsch (2009; Berger and Luckman, 1967; Grice, 1987; Dillitone, 2002). According to Kovecses (2009), the function of discourse as a vehicle to express and convey cultural realities can be seen when they interact with each other for particular purposes. To achieve their goals of interactions, they produce particular discourses as assemblies of meanings relating to particular subject matters. When the discourses present a conceptual framework within which significant subject matters are discussed in their culture and latent norms of conduct, discourses can be regarded as ideologies or worldviews. Therefore, in this sense, a discourse is regarded as the source of making meaning in a culture (Geertz, 1971; Schneider, 1976).

The function of discourse as the source of making meaning in a culture is realised in a cultural discourse, that is an umbrella term for any form of discourse which takes place within a cultural domain containing a set of items, behaviors and beliefs defined as belonging to the same category of things (Gumperz, 1992). In terms of its contents stored in the forms of language used, a cultural domain serves as a basic unit of meaning that shapes how a people as members of a cultural group conceptually organize their worlds involving factual and symbolic worlds. Therefore, according to Schensul, et al (1999), a cultural discourse is defined as the vehicle for the representation of cultural conceptualisation shared by a people as members of a cultural group or cultural community in viewing the world surrounding them.

On the basis of the fact that language as an essential instrument and component of culture is reflected in linguistic structure (Langacker, 1999), according to Kovecses (2009), a cultural discourse as a repository of meanings stored in the forms of linguistic signs commonly shared by members of a culture in which the language they employ is embedded. The study on the features of language in a cultural discourse should be viewed from two poles of linguistic signs, that is pairing of form and meaning. The form refers to the physical feature of language used, as reflected in its

surface structure, while the meaning refers to the content stored in the form of language reflecting the conceptualisation of experience faced by its speakers in the context of living together for years (Foley, 1997). This is also one of the reasons stimulating us to investigate the relationship between Manggarai language and Manggarai culture as the main concern of this study, as reflected in the conceptualisation of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare, with special reference to the forms and meanings of language or linguistic signs used in a number of verbal expressions in the texts of cultural discourses.

There have been many studies on the relationship between Manggarai language and Manggarai culture, but there is no any study exploring in more depth the conceptualisation of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare, with special reference to the forms and meanings of verbal expressions they employ in cultural discourses. Nevertheless, there are several studies which directly and indirectly support this study. The study of Verheijen (1991) entitled 'Manggarai dan Wujud Tertinggi' described the conceptualisation of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community on the existence of God as the Supreme. The study of Bustan (2005) on *tudak penti* cultural discourse viewed from cultural linguistic perspective provided several texts of *tudak penti* cultural discourse as the main sources of reference in exploring the conceptualisation of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare. The study of Bustan (2006) on Manggarai cultural ethnography sketched out the system of economy of Manggarai people, but there was no explanation on their conceptualisation on household economic welfare.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

As mentioned earlier, this study aims to describe the relationship between Manggarai language and Manggarai culture, as reflected in the conceptualisation of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare, with special reference to the forms and meanings of language used in verbal expressions in cultural discourses. As such, the specific objective of this study is to describe the conceptualisation of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare, with special reference to the forms and meanings of language used in verbal expressions in the cultural discourses. In an attempt to achieve objectives of the study, the description is made on the basis of conceptions proposed in the theory of cultural linguistics by Palmer (1996) and Palmer and Sharifian (2007). The conceptions are also supported by a number of relevant theories which include, among others, the theory of language diversity of Humboldt in Cassirer (1987) and Miller (1996), the theory of linguistic relativity of Sapir and Whorf in Richard et al (1992), the theory of anthropological linguistics by

Foley (1997), the theory of language and culture by Kramsch (2001), the theory of sociolinguistics by Wardaugh (2011), Gumperz (1992), Bernstein (1972) and the theory of culture by Schneider (1976), Geertz (1971) and Ochs (1991).

## METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive study as it describes the conceptualisation of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare based on data collected during the field research conducted in Ruteng as the main location of field research (Muhadjir, 1995:83-85). The data were mainly obtained by using ethnographic approach (Hymes, 1974; Spradley, 1997; Palmer and Sharifian, 2007; Geertz, 1971; Foley, 1997). The main sources of primary data were Manggarai peoples as members of Manggarai speech community as the native speakers of Manggarai language, especially those living in Ruteng as the main location of field research. However, for the sake of this study, they were represented by five key informants selected on the basis of criteria proposed by Faisal (1990:44-45), Spradley (1997:35-52) and Sudikan (2001:9).

The methods of collecting data were observation, interview and focused-group discussion. The observation was aimed at having a general picture on the conceptualisation of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare. Based on the data of observation, the interviews were done with key aimed at distilling their thoughts and ideas on the conceptualisation of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare, as reflected in the forms and meanings of language used in the cultural discourses. For the sake of data triangulation, focused-group discussion was also carried out with the key informants. Besides recording data, some descriptive notes were also taken during observation, interview, and discussion. The method of documentary study was implemented to collect secondary data relevant to the theme of this study. The documents used as the sources of reference were general documents (books) and special documents (scientific articles, results of research and paper). The data were analyzed qualitatively by using inductive method as the analysis was started from data to concepts related to the conceptualisation of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare, as reflected in the forms and meanings of language used in verbal expressions in the cultural discourses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of study show that there is a close relationship between Manggarai language, Manggarai culture and conceptualisation of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community. The relationship is reflected in the forms and meanings of language Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community employ in verbal expressions in the

texts of cultural discourses revealing their conceptualisation on household economic welfare. The following are provided some verbal expressions in which their forms and meanings designate the conceptualisation of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare.

- (1) *Cumang hang gula, remong hang lesu, haeng hang mane*  
meet food morning meet food day  
meet food evening  
'Having breakfast, having lunch, having dinner'
- (2) *Latung peno mbaru, woja peno ca'o*  
corn full house rice full storehouse  
'The house is full of corn, the storehouse is full of rice'.
- (3) *Tewar wua, wecak wela*  
scatter fruit scatter flower  
'The fruits are scattered, the flowers are scattered'.
- (4) *Cing ngger sili, wela ngger pe'ang*  
shoot PREP:to down blossom PREP:to outside  
'Shooting down , blossoming outside'.
- (5) *Tela galang pe'ang, dila api one*  
open manger outside flame fire inside  
'The manger is open outside, the fire flames inside'.
- (6) *Res baling lele, ras baling racap*  
cackle PREP:around armpit cackle  
PREP:around side  
'Chickens cackle around armpit, chickens crackle around side'.

As seen in data (01), *Cumang hang gula, remong hang lesu, haeng hang mane* 'Having breakfast, having lunch, having dinner', the verbal expression is a compound sentence consisting of three independent clauses as its component parts. The three clauses as its component parts are (a) *Cumang hang gula* 'Having breakfast', (b) *Remong hang lesu* 'Having lunch' and (c) *Haeng hang mane* 'Having dinner'. The combination of these three clauses appear in an asyndeton construction as they are not linked by coordinating conjunction *agu* 'and'. Based on the syntactic structure of Manggarai language, the coordinating conjunction *agu* 'and' should be presented between clause (a) *Remong hang lesu* and clause (b) *Haeng hang mane*. If the coordinating conjunction *agu* 'and' is presented, the construction of the sentence should be, *Cumang hang gula, remong hang lesu agu haeng hang mane* 'Having breakfast, having

lunch and having dinner'. The coordinating conjunction is omitted as the verbal expression is a fixed form of language used in the texts of ritual speeches as cultural discourses as functional variations in Manggarai language.

Clause (a) is a verbal phrase consisting of two words or lexical items as its component parts or immediate constituents. The two words or lexical items are the word (verb) *cumang* 'meet' as Head (H) and the word (noun) *hang gula* 'breakfast' as its Modifier (M). The word (noun) *hang gula* is a nominal phrase consisting of two words as its component parts which include the word (noun) *hang* 'food' as its Head (H) and the word (adverb of time) *gula* 'morning' as its Modifier (M). Clause (b) is a verbal phrase consisting of two words or lexical items as its component parts which include the word (verb) *remong* 'meet' as Head (H) and the word (noun) *hang lesu* 'lunch' as its Modifier (M). The word (noun) *hang lesu* is a nominal phrase consisting of two words as its component parts which include the word (noun) *hang* 'food' as its Head (H) and the word (adverb of time) *lesu* 'day' as its Modifier (M). Clause (c) is a verbal phrase consisting of two words or lexical items as its component parts. The two words or lexical items as its component parts are the word (verb) *haeng* 'meet' as Head (H) and the word (noun) *hang mane* 'dinner' as its Modifier (M). The word (noun) *hang mane* is a nominal phrase consisting of two words as its component parts which include the word (noun) *hang* 'food' as its Head (H) and the word (adverb of time) *mane* 'evening' as its Modifier (M).

On the basis of the situational context of ritual and the sociocultural context of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community as its physical setting, the verbal expression designates the hope of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community that the plants they grow in the lands grow well and yield abundant crops. If they have abundant stock of food, they can have breakfast, lunch and dinner. In contrast, if they don't have abundant stock of food, they just eat twice (having lunch and having dinner) or once a day (having dinner). The conceptualisation is soldered and imprinted in the cognitive map of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community based on their prior experiences that, when the lands didn't yield abundant crops or harvests, they just ate twice or once a day due to the lack of food stuff available.

As reported by informants, due to the lack of food stuff, Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community ate cassavas, the flour of sugar palm tree and of forest potato for a few months during the starvation months. Being aware of the situation and condition of starvation they ever experienced in the past, it is not surprising that in the cultural discourses, they beseech to God as the Supreme that all plants that they will plant in the lands like corn, rice and vegetable are hoped to grow well and provide abundant crops or harvests for them in the coming yearly season and, as such, they will not suffer from starvation due to the lack

of food stuff available. As mentioned earlier, if the availability of food stuff is abundant, they can eat regularly in a day, in that they can have breakfast, lunch and dinner. Referring to the content stored in its form, the verbal expression designates that eating three times a day is one of the main indicators revealing the condition of household economic welfare for Manggarai people.

As seen in data (02), *Latung peno mbaru, woja peno ca'o* 'The house is full of corn, the storehouse is full of rice', the verbal expression appears as a compound sentence consisting of two independent clauses as its component parts. The two clauses as its component parts are (a) *Latung peno mbaru* 'The house is full of corn' and (b) *Woja peno ca'o* 'The storehouse is full of rice'. The relationship of these two clauses forms an asyndeton construction as they are not linked by coordinating conjunction *agu* 'and'. Based on the syntactic structure of Manggarai language, if the coordinating conjunction *agu* 'and' is presented, the construction is *Latung peno mbaru agu woja peno ca'o* 'The house is full of corn and the storehouse is full of rice'. The reason of omitting the coordinating conjunction *agu* is that, in the view of Manggarai as members of Manggarai speech community, the verbal expression is a fixed form of language used in the texts of ritual speeches as cultural discourses as functional variations in Manggarai language.

On the basis of tradition inherited from their ancestors, in the past, corn was stored in the house and rice was kept in a storehouse built at the back part of the main house. As reported by the informants, corn was the main food they ate every day, while rice was only provided when there was party or served for elder and sick people. As conceptualised in their cognitive map, one of the indicators designating household economic welfare is the availability of abundant corn in the house and the availability of abundant rice in the store house. As such, one of the requests that they beseech to God as the Supreme mediated through the cultural discourses is that corn and rice they plant in their agricultural lands grow well and yield abundant crops so that they will not suffer from starvation due to the lack of food stuff, especially corn and rice as the main or staple food for Manggarai people.

As seen in data (03), *Tewar wua, wecak wela* "The fruits are scattered, the flowers are scattered", the verbal expression is a compound sentence consisting of two independent clauses as its component parts which include (a) *Tewar wua* 'The fruits are scattered' and (b) *Wecak wela* 'The flowers are scattered'. The combination of these two clauses appear in an asyndeton construction as they are not linked by using coordinating conjunction *agu* 'and'. In the syntactic structure of Manggarai language, if the coordinating conjunction *agu* 'and' is presented, the construction should be, *Tewar wua agu wecak wela* "The fruits are scattered and the flowers are scattered". The coordinating conjunction *agu* is omitted because, in the view of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community, the verbal expression is a fixed form in the

texts of ritual speeches as cultural discourses as functional variations in Manggarai language.

Along with the content or meaning stored in its form, it is also conceptualised in the cognitive map of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community that household economic was not only indicated by the availability of abundant corns and rice, but also designated by the availability of abundant vegetables which include fruits and flowers. As such, one of the requests that they beseech to God as the Supreme is that vegetables they plant in their lands grow well and yield abundant crops so that they will not lack of vegetables.

As seen in data (04), *Tela galang pe'ang, dila api one* 'The manger is open outside, the fire flames inside', the verbal expression is a compound sentence consisting of two independent clauses as its component parts. The two clauses as its component parts are (a) *Tela galang pe'ang* 'The manger is open outside' and (b) *Dila api one* 'The fire flames inside'. The combination of these two clauses appear in an asyndeton construction as they are not linked by coordinating conjunction *agu* 'and'. Based on the syntactic structure of Manggarai language, if the coordinating conjunction *agu* 'and' is presented, the construction should be, *Tela galang pe'ang agu dila api one* 'The manger is opened outside and the fire flames inside'. However, the coordinating conjunction *agu* is omitted because, in the view of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community, the verbal expression is a fixed form of Manggarai language used in the texts of ritual speeches as cultural discourses as functional variations in Manggarai language.

Referring to the content or meaning stored in its form, it is conceptualised in the cognitive map of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community that one of the indicators designating household economic availability of pigs raised outside the house and the availability of their food stuff cooked inside the house. The availability of pigs is indicated by using the word manger which refers the container of food for pigs raised. If the manger is opened outside the house, it means they have pigs raised. In contrast, if the manger is closed, it means that they have no pigs raised. Other than the availability of pigs, if they have enough food stuff for pigs, the fire always flames inside the house. One of the indicators of household economic welfare is designated by flaming fire inside the house as it reveals that they have food stuff to be cooked for pigs. Therefore, one of the requests beseeched to God as the Supreme through the CDTP is the availability of pigs raised and the availability of food stuff cooked for the pigs.

As seen in data (06), *Res baling lele, ras baling racap* 'Chickens cackle around armpits, chickens crackle around sides', the verbal expression is a compound sentence consisting of two independent clauses as its component parts. The two independent clauses as its component parts are (a) *Res baling lele* 'Chickens cackle around armpits' and (b) *Ras baling racap* 'Chickens

crackle around sides'. The combination of these two clauses appear in an asyndeton construction as they are not linked by coordinating conjunction *agu* 'and'. Based on the syntactic structure of Manggarai language, if the coordinating conjunction *agu* 'and' is presented, the construction should be, *Res baling lele agu ras baling racap* 'Chickens cackle around armpits and chickens crackle around sides'. As mentioned earlier, the coordinating conjunction *agu* is omitted as the verbal expression is a fixed form of language used in the texts of ritual speeches as cultural discourses in Manggarai language. In line with the content or meaning stored, it is conceptualised in the cognitive map of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community that one of the indicators designating household economic welfare is the availability of chickens raised.

## CONCLUSIONS

There is a close relationship between Manggarai language, Manggarai culture and conceptualisation of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community. The relationship can be identified by looking at the forms and meanings of language in verbal expressions used in the cultural discourses containing linguistic and cultural knowledge of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community on household economic welfare. As conceptualised in their cognitive map, the indicators of household economic welfare are designated by having meals three times a day, the availability of full corn and rice as food stuff, the availability of vegetables in the farm lands and the availability of pigs and chickens raised.

The study not only contributes the conception that every language represents the world of thoughts with its own ways as proposed by Humboldt, Sapir and Whorf through the conception of linguistic relativity, but also enriches the conceptions on the relationship of language, culture and conceptualisation proposed in cultural linguistics of Palmer and Scharifian, anthropological linguistics of Foley, the theory of language and culture of Kramsch, the theory of sociolinguistics of Wardaugh, Gumperz, and Bernstein, the theory of culture of Schneider and Geertz, the theory of cultural discourse of Bernstein. Besides enhancing understanding on the function of register as a functional variation in Manggarai language used in the texts of ritual speeches as cultural discourses, the study might be beneficial to inspire other researchers who are interested in studying the features of Manggarai language in other kinds of registers that their forms and meanings reflect the conceptualisations of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community in viewing the worlds.

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