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# THE FORMS AND MEANINGS OF THE *LELAK LOCE RENDA* FOLKSONG IN MANGGARAI LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT: This study describes the relationship of Manggarai language, Manggarai culture, and conceptualization of Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group in viewing and making sense of the world, as reflected as reflected in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena in the text of the Lelak Loce Renda folksong in Manggarai language as the reflection of Manggarai culture as the identity marker of Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group. The study is descriptive-qualitative. The study is viewed from cultural linguistics as one of the new theoretical perspectives in cognitive linguistics which explores the relationship of language, culture, and conceptualization. The result of study shows that the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the text of the Lelak Loce Renda folksong are unique and specific to Manggarai culture as parent culture in which Manggarai language is embedded. The contents stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena in the text of the Lelak Loce Renda folksong serve a set of meanings which are interconnected to one another in designating the ways Manggarai society view and make sense of the world. The prominent meanings implied the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the text of the Lelak Loce Renda folksong are social, economic, religious, and educational meaning.

Keywords: forms, meanings, Lelak Loce Renda, Manggarai language

# **INTRODUCTION**

Both language and culture belonging to a society as members of an ethnic group are closely related to each other because language in its use as the chief means of communication between and among the members of an ethnic group is the reflection of culture they share. The function of language as the reflection of culture shared by a society as members of an ethnic group is manifested in conceptualization ascribed in their cognitive map in viewing and making sense of the world (Palmer, 1996; Langacker, 1999; Ungerer and Schmid, 2006; Palmer and Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011). The conceptualization is reflected in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena they employ in such cultural texts as ritual speeche, folktale, folksong, and proverb (Bustan, 2005).

This study addresses the relationship of both Manggarai language and Manggarai culture belonging to Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group residing

in the region of Manggarai that lies in the western part of the island of Flores as one of the big islands in the province of East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia (Hemo, 1987; Verheijen, 1991; Erb, 1999; Lawang, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan & Bire, 2017; Bustan & Liunokas, 2019; Bustan et al., 2020; Bustan & Kabelen, 2023; Gunas et al., 2023; Bustan et al., 2023; Bustan et al., 2024; Monteiro et al., 2024; Bustan & Ludji, 2024; Bustan, 2024). As the relationship is pervasive that the study focuses on the conceptualization of Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group in viewing and making sense of the world, involving both the factual world and the symbolic world. The conceptualization is reflected in the *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong in Manggarai language with special reference to the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in that folksong. The study is conducted for the basic reason that the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the text of the *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong are unique and specific to Manggarai culture as the hosting culture in which Manggarai language is embedded.

#### **FRAMEWORK**

Language serves a pivotal role in the life of a society as members of a social group as, of so many different media of communication they employ to fulfill their basic needs as human beings, language is regarded as the most effective one. In addition to expressing their thoughts or ideas and feelings, language they employ is also used to convey their experiences in the world (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Miller, 1968; Keesing, 1981; Stross, 1981; Wallace, 1981; Grice, 1987; Cassirer, 1987; Suriasumantri, 2001; Whorf, 2001; Maslova, 2004; Malcom, 2007; Abdikalyk et al., 2016; Sihotang, 2018). In this regard, language serves as the reflection of culture they share (Sapir, 1949), as Brown (1994) propounds that culture is deeply ingrained part of the very fiber of our being as members of social group, but language is the most visible and available expression of culture (Kramch, 2001; Cakir, 2006; Bilal & Erdogan, 2005; Bustan et al., 2024; Monteiro et al., 2024; Bustan & Ludji, 2024).

The views imply that the use of language as the reflection of culture shared by a society as members of a social group makes their social lives as a whole meaningful. In line with the significance of language as the most visible and available expression of culture shared by a society as members of a social group, according to Kramsch (2001), language is a symbolic system that has the power to shape and create such cultural realities as norms, values, perceptions, and identities. The use of language as the most visible and available expression of culture shared by a society as members of a social group can be clearly seen in cultural texts which refer to the texts taking place in cultural domain (Gumperz, 1992; Hymes, 1974; Bustan, 2005).

The features of linguistic phenomena used in a cultural text are unique and specific in some respect to culture as the parent culture or hosting culture in which that language is embedded. In terms of two poles of linguistic sign, the unique and specific features of linguistic phenomena used in a cultural text are reflected in forms and meanings. The meanings stated and implied in the forms of linguistic phenomena used designate a set of conceptualizations ascribed in the cognitive map of its speakers as the sources of reference of their experiences regarding the ways they view and make sense of the world, involving both the factual world and the symbolic world (Foley, 1999; Bustan,

2005; Piliang, 2006). As culture is the worldview of a society as members of a social group, language they employ serves not only as the window of their world but also as the window into their cognitions or minds (Bernstein, 1972; Wallace, 1981; Palmer, 1996; Whorf, 2001; Bustan, 2005; Ungerer & Schmid, 2006; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011; Yu, 2007; Bustan et al., 2024; Monteiro et al., 2024; Bustan & Ludji, 2024).

The function of language as the reflection of culture is the main concern of study in cultural linguistics as one of the new theoretical perspectives in cognitive linguistics which explores the relationship of language, culture, and conceptualization (Palmer, 1996; Langacker, 1999; Ungerer and Schmid, 2006; Palmer and Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011). This is in line with the idea of Abdikalyk et al., (2016) that concept as a linguo-philosophical unit of linguistics is the main concern of study of cognitive linguistics. As concept can be defined differently, in the framework of cognitive linguistics, the term 'concept' refers to a semantic unit that has linguo-cultural features and characterizes the speakers of any chosen ethnoculture. As it reflects an ethnic mindset, a concept marks the ethnic language image and serves as the so-called brick to build 'the house of their being' along with their existence as members of a social group (Maslova, 2004; Langacker, 1999; Porat, 2022).

In the perspective of cultural linguistics, language used by a society as members of a social group is explored through the lens of culture they share to uncover conceptualization ascribed in their cognitive map as the source of reference for them in viewing and making sense of the world (Palmer, 1996; Bustan, 2005; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011). As mentioned earlier, the conceptualization is manifested in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in such cultural texts as ritual speech, folktale, folksong, and proverb. The forms refer to the physical features of linguistic phenomena used and the meanings refer to the contents stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena used which designate the way the speakers of that language view and make sense of the world (Bustan, 2005; Bustan et al., 2017; Foley, 1997; Monteiro et al., 2024; Bustan & Ludji, 2024).

# **METHOD**

This study is a descriptive-qualitative as its main aim is to describe the relationship of both Manggarai language and Manggarai culture belonging to Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group, as reflected in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena they employ in the *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong in Manggarai language (Faisal, 1990; Muhadjir, 1995; Bungin, 2007; Afrizal, 2014; Sugyono, 2018; Yusuf, 2019; Moleong, 2021; Sugyono, 2022). To achieve the intended aim, the study was based on two sources of data that involve both primary data and secondary data. Based on the two kinds of data, the procedures of research carried out were field research and library research. The field research was carried out to obtain the primary data regarding the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the text of the *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong in Manggarai language as the mirror of Manggarai culture. The location of the field research was in the regency of Manggarai with the main location being in Pagal as the capital city of Cibal district that lies in the southern part of Manggarai region. The sources of the primary data were Manggarai society as members

of Manggarai ethnic group, especially those residing in Pagal represented by three key informants selected on the basis of the ideal criteria put forward by Faisal (1990), Spradley (1997), Duranti (2001), Sudikan (2001), and Bungin (2007). The method of data collection was in-depth interview elaborated with the technique of recording, elicitation and note-taking (Bungin, 2007; Nusa Putra, 2011). The library research aimed to obtain the secondary data relevant to the main concern of study. The method of data collection was documentary study. The kinds of documents as the sources of reference were general references such as books and specific references such as research results, scientific articles, and papers. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively by using inductive method as the process of analysis was started or moved from the data to abstraction and concept/theory (Muhadjir, 1995). The concept/theory is a localideographic concept/theory as it describes the conceptualization of Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group in viewing and making sense of the world, as reflected in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the text of the Lelak Loce Renda folksong in Manggarai language as the reflection of Manggarai culture. The concept/theory is specific as it only applies in Manggarai language as the reflection of Manggarai culture along with its function as the identity marker of Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group (Sudikan, 2001).

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### Result

The result of study reveals that there is a close relationship between both Manggarai language and Manggarai culture belonging to Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group. The relationship is manifested in conceptualization ascribed in their cognitive map as the source of reference for them in viewing and making sense of the world. The conceptualization is reflected in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the text of the Lelak Loce Renda folksong in Manggarai language as the reflection of Manggarai culture as the identity marker of Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group (Erb, 1999; Lawang, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Verheijen, 1991). The forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the text of the Lelak Loce Renda folksong are unique and specific in some respect to Manggarai culture as the parent or hosting culture in which Manggarai language is embedded. The meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena in question designate the conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group regarding the ways the view and make sense of the world, involving both the factual world and the symbolic world. The prominent meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena are social meaning, economic meaning, religious meanings, and educational meaning.

#### Discussion

With special reference to the result of study provided above, this section discusses in more depth the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the text of the *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong in Manggarai language along with its function and significance as the reflection of Manggarai culture as the identity marker of Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic. The forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the text are analyzed on the basis of conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group as the source of reference.

#### **Forms**

The unique and specific forms of linguistic phenomena used in the *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong in Manggarai language as the reflection of Manggarai culture are reflected in the following text (original text in Manggarai language and its translated text in English).

# Original Text in Manggarai Language

Lelak loce renda
toe emong neon lelon
Senget pede dise ende
agu waheng dise ame
dempul wuku manga dumpun
Lalong bakok du lakom
lalong rombeng koe du kolem
Mori ge Mori mese ge
lelo ta

Palong dara bakok we'e dara ndereng mosegm e Karong salang lakogm Boto weleng one kebe

# **Translated Text in English**

Wanting to have a colorful mat Is not easy as it seems Listen to the mother's message and father's advice

We have to break our nails to get results
White rooster when you go
colorful rooster when you come home
My God God Almighty
take a look
Drain while blood
come to the red blood our lives
Lead the way to walk
so as not to get lost on the slope

#### **Meanings**

The contents stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the text of the *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong in Manggarai language serve a set of meanings which are interconnected to one another. In accordance with the conceptualization of Manggarai society, however, the prominent meanings implied in the text of the *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong in Manggarai language are social meaning, economic meaning, religious meanings, and educational meaning.

# **Social Meaning**

The *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong shares social meaning as it functions as a medium of communication for Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in the world, involving both the factual world and the symbolic world. The social meaning is indicated by the use of linguistic phenomena which are beautiful in their forms that invite sensory pleasures when the text of the *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong is sung and listened. The beautiful forms of linguistic phenomena are marked by the phonological parallelism appearing in the assonance rhyme that consists of symmetric and asymmetric structure. The symmetric structure of the assonance rhyme can be seen in the use of the same vocal phonemes: */e-e/* as in the pair of words: *pede - ende*; *we'e - ndereng*; *weleng - kebe*; and */u-u/* as in the pair of words: *wuku - dumpu*. The assymmetric structure of the assonance rhyme can be seen in the use of the diffent vocal phonemes: */e-a/* as in the pair of words: *lelak - renda*; */e-o/* as in the pair of words: *emong - lelo*; */a-e/* as in the pair of words: *waheng - ame*; and */a-o/* as in the pair of words, as in the pair of words: *lalong - bakok - lako*, *palong - bakok*.

# **Economic Meaning**

The *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong in Manggarai language describes the achievement of economic welfare is not easy as it seems. In other words, the achievement of economic welfare requires hardwork because life is a struggle that requires sacrifice of time, energy, and body. We have to work all day long from morning until afternoon even though their finger nails are broken and the skin of their back ar split and burnt due to the heat of sun. The economic meaning is reflected in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression, *dempul wuku manga dumpun*, which means that we have to break our nails working in the farming land from morning until afternoon to get results. The results of working hard in the farming are indicated by the availability of abundant corn and rice as the staple foods for Manggarai society and, as such, they can have three meals of a day.

# **Religious Meaning**

The *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong in Manggarai language describes the religiocity of Manggarai society regarding the meaningfulness of the lives as human beings who are greatly dependent on God's mercy and blessings. The religious meaning is reflected in the linguistic phenomena used in the following verbal expression: *Mori ge Mori mese ge lelo ta* which lexical means 'My God, God Almighty, take a look'. The verbal expression reveals the belief system embraced by Manggarai society on the existence of God as the Almighty as the source of mercy and blessings.

# **Educational Meaning**

As reflected in the linguistic phenomena used, the *Lelak Loce Renda* folksong provides information that the parents hope that their children will be like white roosters when they go to school and like colorful roosters when they return home after graduating. The information is reflected in the verbal expression, *Lalong bakok du lakom*, *lalong rombeng koe du kolem* which lexically means 'White rooster when you go, colorful rooster when you come home'. The changes in the color of the rooster's feathers from white to colorful illustrate the changes in behavior as the positive impact of school education due to having knowledge and life skills. This implies the conceptual meaning that the success in attending school in any level is indicated not only by obtaining diploma, but also by possessing knowledge and life skills for the benefit of life in the future. Getting a certificate is an indicator of completing school as a formal proof of completion, but not as a main guarantee for the success of life in the future.

#### **CONCLUSION**

There is a close relationship between both Manggarai language and Manggarai culture belonging to Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group and the relationship is manifested in conceptualization ascribed in their cognitive map as the source of reference for them in viewing and making sense of the world. The conceptualization is reflected in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the text of the Lelak Loce Renda folksong in Manggarai language as the reflection of Manggarai culture as the identity marker of Manggarai society as members of Manggarai ethnic group. The forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used are unique and specific in some respect to Manggarai culture as the parent or hosting culture in which Manggarai language is embedded. The prominent meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena are social meaning, economic meaning, religious meanings, and educational meaning. The social meaning is indicated by the the beautiful forms of linguistic phenomena that invite sensory pleasures when the text of the Lelak Loce Renda folksong is sung and listened. The ecocomic meaning is concerned with the achievement of economic welfare which is not easy as it seems as it requires hardwork because life is a struggle that requires sacrifice of time, energy, and body. The religious meaning deals with the religiocity of Manggarai society regarding the meaningfulness of their lives as human beings greatly dependent on God's mercy and blessings. The educational meaning is related to the changes in behavior as the positive impact of school education due to having knowledge and life skills as the social capital of future life.

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