LOCAL WISDOM OF MANGGARAI SPEECH COMMUNITY ON FOREST AND GRASSLAND CONSERVATION AS MANIFESTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP TO SUPPORT GREEN ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

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KEYWORDS

Conservation, Environmental stewardship, Green economy Local wisdom, Manggarai speech community.

This study investigates the cultural conceptualization of Managarai speech community on the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as the manifestation of environmental stewardship to support green economy with special reference to the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in verbal expression of Manggarai language in the cultural discourse of environment as the reflection of Managarai culture. The study is viewed from cultural linguistics, a new theoretical perspective in cognitive linguistics exploring the relationship of language, culture, and conceptualization. The study is descriptive as it describes the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as the manifestation of environmental stewardship to support green economy, as reflected in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena in the verbal expression of Manggarai language used in the cultural discourse of environment. The result of study reveals that the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community regarding the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as the manifestation of environmental stewardship to support green economy is reflected in the verbal expression, Neka pongga puar boto mora usang, neka tapa satar boto mata kaka 'Don't clear the forest so the rain doesn't disappear, don't burn the grassland so the animal species don't die'. The forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used are unique and specific to Manggarai culture as the parent culture in which Manggarai language is embedded. The meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena designate the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community on local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as the manifestation of environmental stewardship that supports the success of green economy program in Manggarai regency. The verbal expression should be preserved and maintained as it ensures that actions do not harm natural environment, especially forest and grassland, in the long term and allows future generations of Manggarai speech community to enjoy the same resources and benefits.

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INTRODUCTION

It is all agreed that there is a close relationship between both language and culture belonging to a society as members of a social group. The relationship is manifested in a set of cultural conceptualizations ascribed in their cognitive map as the frames of reference for them in viewing and making sense of their world (Sharifian, 2011). The cultural conceptualizations are reflected, among other things, in the features of verbal expressions they employ in certain speech events or speech acts in their contexts of living together. The features of verbal expressions are unique and specific in their forms and meanings in accordance to the contexts in which they are used considered along with the

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cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of the native speakers of that language as the members of a speech community. The cultural conceptualizations include, among other things, the system of knowledge that contains a set of local wisdoms as the parts of cultural patrimonies inherited from their ancestors that function as the frames of reference for them when communicating or interacting with natural environment such as forest and grassland (Bustan, 2024; Bustan, 2025).

This study investigates the relationship of both Manggarai language and Manggarai culture belonging to Manggarai society as members of Manggarai speech community living in the region of Manggarai which occupies the western part of the island of Flores, one of the five big islands, in the province of East Nusa Tenggara (Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2006; Bustan, 2009; Bustan & Kabelen, 2023; Bustan, 2024; Bustan, 2025). As the relationship of both Manggarai language and Manggarai culture is complex and pervasive that the study focuses on the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community on the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation along with its significance as a manifestation of environmental stewardship to support green economy, as reflected in the verbal expression of Manggarai language used in the cultural discourse of environment. The local wisdom is defined as a manifestation of environmental stewardship as it is mainly concerned with the responsible use and protection of the natural environment, especially forest and grassland, while green economy, as its name suggests, refers to an economy that aims at reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities (Bustan, 2024; Bustan, 2025).

The study is conducted for the basic reason the features of verbal expression are unique and specific to Manggarai culture as the parent culture in which Manggarai language is embedded. The unique and specific features of verbal expression are reflected in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used which designate the cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community regarding the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as a manifestation of environmental stewardship to support green economy. At the same time, the result of study might be beneficial as the frame of reference for the members of Manggarai speech community in organizing the ways they interact with the natural environment, especially forest and grassland, to support green economy which is in line with one of the objectives of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed by the United Nations Organization (UNO) (Bustan, 2025). Another reason is that there has no any study exploring in more depth the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community regarding the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation to support green economy in Manggarai language in view of cultural linguistics. Thus the use of cultural linguistics as its theoretical framework is the novelty dimension of this study as, in this regard, Managarai language is explored through the lens of Manggarai culture in order to uncover the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community regarding the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as environmental stewardship to support green economy.

FRAMEWORK

As aforementioned, the study is viewed from cultural linguistics, one of the new theoretical perspectives in cognitive linguistics exploring the relationship of language, culture, and conceptualization. Cultural linguistics is defined as an emerging paradigm or model in cognitive linguistics as it draws on the combined resource of anthropological linguistics and cognitive linguistics in providing an account of the communicative behavior of a society as members of a social group in viewing and making sense of the world. (Kramsch, 2001; Palmer, 1996; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011; Bustan, 2025). In line with the basic premise that there is a close relationship between language and minds or cognitions as the main concern of study in cognitive linguistics, the main objective of cultural linguistics is to explore

language through the lens of culture in an attempt to uncover conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of its speakers in viewing and making sense of the world (Foley, 1997; Palmer, 1996; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011; Goodenough, 1964; Malcolm, 2007; Bustan, 2025). As every culture has its own ways in viewing and making sense of the world, cultural linguistics also aims at exploring the differences between languages due to cultural differences (Palmer, 1996; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011; Bustan, 2025).

The aim comes closest to the conception of Humboldt that the diversity of languages is not only concerned with the diversity of signs and sounds, but also the diversity of cultures (Miller, 1968; Foley, 1997). The conception also parallels to 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 the speakers of different languages think and behave differently. Along with this conception, therefore, the basic principles that should be taken into account when we explore the relationship of language, culture, and conceptualization 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 due to cultural differences (Sapir, 1949; Goodenough, 1964; Miller, 1968; Bustan, 2025).

As it is implied in its definition, cultural linguistics has three basic concepts, involving language, culture, and conceptualization. As language can be defined differently, in the perspective cultural linguistics, language is defined as a cultural activity and, at the same time, as an instrument for organizing other cultural domains. This definition is based on the fact that language used by a society as members of a social group is shaped not only by their special and general innate potentials as human beings, but also by their physical and sociocultural experiences (Palmer, 1996; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011). Similar to language, as culture may mean different things for different people (Kaplan & Manners, 1999), in the perspective of cultural linguistics, culture is defined as the source of conceptualization of experiences faced by a society as members of a social group in the contexts of living together for a long period of time (Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011; Palmer, 1996; Wallace, 1981; Birx, 2011). In this regard, according to Foley (1997), culture serves as a cognitive map belonging to a society as members of a social group as a whole that serves as the source of reference for them in viewing and making sense of the world. In this light, language they employ functions as a display illustrating how they organize their ways of thinking about items, behaviors, and beliefs in cultural domains (Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011; Birx, 2011; Alshammari, 2018).

The relationship of both language and culture belonging to a society as members of a social group is manifested in their conceptualization, the fundamental cognitive processes which naturally lead to the development of schemas, categories, metaphors, and scripts. The ways a society as members of a social group conceptualize their experiences in cultural domains are known as cultural conceptualizations that contain such cultural aspects as beliefs, norms, customs, traditions, and values. As cultural conceptualizations and language are the two intrinsic aspects of cultural cognition, the cultural conceptualizations have conceptual existence and linguistic encoding. Language in this regard is a central aspect of cultural cognition that functions as a collective memory bank for a society as members of a social group to store as well as to communicate their cultural conceptualizations, past and present (Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2011; Langacker, 1999; Bustan, 2025).

Along with its function as a memory bank, language they employ is defined as a fluid vehicle to retransmit the socioculturally embodied cultural conceptualizations. This idea is also based on the fact

that language is shaped by cultural conceptualizations that have prevailed at different stages in the story of its speakers and the different stages can leave their traces in current linguistic practices and, as such, language is a primary mechanism that stores the cultural conceptualizations as well as communicates the cultural conceptualizations in question. The cultural conceptualizations distributed accross the minds of a society as members of a social group that represent their cognition at the cultural level are linguistic imagery which is concerned with how they speak about the world that they themselves imagine. The world is the symbolic world which refers to the world in which the object used as the referent of language used is imaginative in nature and, as such, it is required in-depth interview to interpret its meaning (Bustan, 2025).

There are several approaches to exploring the relationship of language, culture, and conceptualization as the main concern of study in cultural linguistics. In line with its main objective, however, the main approach is ethnography approach because it aims at describing the culture shared by a society as members of a social group through the lens of language they employ (Bernstein, 1972; Spradley, 1978; Hymes, 1974; Spradley, 1978; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Palmer, 1996; Sharifian, 2011; Duranti, 2001; Foley, 1997; Bustan, 2025). As cultural linguistics explores the differences between languages due to cultural differences, other approaches are the school of Boas' linguistics, ethnosemantics, and the ethnography of communication (Boas, 1962; Bernstein, 1972; Palmer & Sharifian, 2007; Palmer, 1996; Sharifian, 2011; Bustan, 2025). The basic reason is that cultural linguistics draws on the resources of anthropological linguistics and cognitive linguistics in providing an account of the communicative behavior of a society in viewing and making sense of the world (Gumperz, 1992; Hymes, 1974; Alshammari, 2018).

The cultural linguistics is reflected in discourse as the function of language as a symbolic system with the power to shape and create such cultural realities as norms, values, perceptions, and identities is expressed through discourse as its vehicle (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Grice, 1987; Alshammari, 2018; Kramsch, 2001; Bustan, 2025; Fairclough, 2003). The function of discourse as the vehicle for expressing such cultural realities can be clearly seen when a society as members of a social group interact with each other for particular purposes. To achieve the intended goals of their interactions, they should produce particular discourses as assemblies of meanings dealing with particular subject matters under discussion. When the discourses present a conceptual framework within which significant subject matters are discussed in their culture and the latent norms of conduct, discourses can be defined as ideologies or worldviews (Kovecses, 2009; Fairclough, 2003) and, in this light, according to Geertz (1973) and Schneider (1976), discourse defined as a source of making meanings in a culture (Duranti, 2001). The meanings are known as symbolic meanings or cultural meanings (Bustan, 2025).

Since meaning as fundamental to language and culture is mainly realised in a cultural discourse, Gumperz (1992) declared that a cultural discourse is an umbrella term for any form of discourse which takes place within a cultural domain that contains a set of items, behaviors, and beliefs defined as belonging to the same category of things. In terms of its function, a cultural discourse serves as the vehicle for the representation of cultural conceptualization shared by a society as members of a social group. As the use of language as an essential instrument and component of culture is reflected in verbal expression (Langacker, 1999), a cultural discourse can be defined as a repository of meanings stored in the forms of linguistic signs commonly shared by members of a culture (Kovecses, 2009). The forms refer to the physical features of linguistic phenomena, as reflected in words, phrases, or sentences, while the meanings refer to the contents stored in the forms of verbal expressions which uncover the cultural conceptualizations ascribed in the cognitive map of the native speakers of that language along with their existence as the members of a speech community (Foley, 1997; Bustan, 2005; Sharifian,

2007; Bustan, 2025). The cultural discourse is of various kinds in accordance with the context in which it is used and one of those kinds is cultural discourse of environment which is concerned with the relationship of language and environment, in which natural environment is included (Bustan, 2024; Bustan, 2025).

METHOD

This is a descriptive study as it aims at describing the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community on the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as the manifestation environmental stewardship to support green economy (Muhadjir, 1995; Nusa Putra, 2011). The procedures of research were field research and library research. The field research was carried out to collect the primary data. The location of the field research was in Pagal village as one of the traditional villages in Manggarai regency. The sources of the data were the members of Manggarai speech community residing in Pagal village, represented by three key informants selected on the basis of the ideal criteria proposed by Afrizal (2014), Bungin (2007), and Faisal (1990), and Duranti (2001). The main approach to collecting the required data was dialogic ethnography as the data were acquired in accordance with the cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community (Bernstein, 1972; Hymes, 1974; Spradley, 1987; Duranti, 2001). The method of data collection was interview (in-depth interview) and the techniques of data collection were recording. elicitation, and note-taking (Spradley, 1987; Duranti, 2001; Bungin 2007). The library research was done to collect the secondary data relevant to the focus of the study. The method of data collection was documentary study and the documents used as the sources of data were general documents (books) and special documents (articles, papers, research results). The collected data were analyzed qualitatively by inductive method as the analysis was started from the data to the local-ideographic concept or theory which describes the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community on the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as the manifestation of environmental stewardship to support the success of green economy program in the regency of Manggarai.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The result of study shows that there is a close relationship between Manggarai language, Manggarai culture, and conceptualization of Managarai speech community in viewing and making sense of the world. More specifically, the relationship is manifested in the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community regarding the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as the manifestation of environmental stewardship to support green economy, as reflected in the verbal expression of Manggarai used in the cultural discourse of environment. Based on the result of data selection, the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community on the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as a manifestation of environmental stewardship to support green economy is reflected in the verbal expression of Manggarai language as in the following, *Neka pongga puar boto* mora usang, neka tapa satar boto mata kaka 'Don't clear the forest so the rain doesn't disappear, don't burn the grassland so the animals don't die'. The forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression are unique and specific to Manggarai culture as the parent culture in which Manggarai language is embedded. The meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression designate the cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community regarding the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as a manifestation of environmental stewardship that supports the success of green economy program. The local wisdom provided in the verbal expression is a part of cultural patrimony inherited from the ancestors of Manggarai speech community that should be preserved and maintained because it serves as the manifestation of environmental stewardship that supports the success of green economy program designed on the basis of local culture of Manggarai in the regency of Manggarai.

Discussion

As seen in the physical features of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression, *Neka pongga puar boto mora usang, neka tapa satar boto mata kaka* 'Don't clear the forest so the rain doesn't disappear, don't burn the grassland so the animals don't die', it appears in the form of a command sentence of request type as it provides request for the members of Manggarai speech community not to clear the forest so the rain doesn't disappear and not to burn the grassland so the animals don't die. In terms of its structure, the verbal expression appears in the form of a compound sentence made up of two independent clauses or complete sentences as its component parts as in the following: (01) *Neka pongga puar boto mora usang* 'Don't clear the forest so the rain doesn't disappear' and (02) *Neka tapa satar boto mata kaka* 'Don't burn the grassland so the animals don't die.'

The relation of the two independent clauses or complete sentences forms an asyndeton construction as it is not linked by using the coordinating conjunction *ago* 'and' or *ko* 'or' as a lexical-cohesive device. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the coordinating conjunction is intentionally omitted for the purpose of keeping and maintaining the harmony of rhythm and tempo when the verbal expression is spoken and listened to as the number of words in the two independent clauses or sentences is the same as six words. The omission of the coordinating conjunction reveals the beauty in the forms of linguistic phenomena used aimed at inviting sensory pleasure when the verbal expression is spoken and listened to and, as such, the message stated and implied regarding the local wisdom of forest conservation as the manifestation of environmental stewardship is fully understood by the members of Manggarai speech community. The cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community regarding the local wisdom of forest conservation as the manifestation of environmental stewardship to support green economy is reflected in the sentence (01) and the cultural conceptualization of environmental stewardship to support green economy is reflected in the sentence (02).

Local Wisdom of Forest Conservation

As aforementioned, the cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community regarding the local wisdom of forest conservation as a manifestation of environmental stewardship to support green economy is reflected in the sentence (01), *Neka pongga puar boto mora usang* 'Don't clear the forest so the rain doesn't disappear'. As seen in the physical features of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression, the sentence appears is the form of a complex sentence made up of two clauses as its component parts. The two clauses serving as its component parts are as follows: (a) *Neka pongga puar* 'Don't clear the forest' that functions as the main clause as it can stand alone as a complete sentence and (b) *Boto mora usang* 'So that the rain doesn't disappear' as the subordinate clause or dependent clause as it cannot stand alone as a complete sentence as its meaning depends on the main clause (a) in which it is embedded or hosted.

As seen in the physical features of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression, the main clause (a), *Neka pongga puar* 'Don't clear the forest', is made of the word (function word) *neka* 'not' as the negative marker, the word (verb) *pongga* 'clear' as the Predicate (P), and the word (noun) *puar* 'forest'

as the Object (O). The verbal expression appears in the form of a negative sentence indicated by using the word (function word) *neka* 'not' as a particle that functions as the negative marker that distributes preceding the word (verb) *pongga* 'clear' as the Predicate (P) which is followed by the word (noun) *puar* 'forest' as the Object (O). In terms of its syntactic structure, the word (noun) *puar* 'forest' is the Objective Complement (OC) as it functions to complete the meaning of the word (verb) *pongga* 'clear' as the Predicate (P). Referring to the lexical meanings of its words or lexical items, the main clause (a) is a negative command sentence of request type as it provides request for the members of Mangggarai speech community not to clear the forest. The word (noun) *usang* 'rain' is the Objective Complement (OC) as it completes the meaning of the word (verb) *mora* 'disappear' as the Predicate (P). Referring to the lexical meanings of its words or lexical items, the main clause (a) appears in the form of a negative declarative sentence as it provides information regarding the disappearance of rain due to the clearance of forest.

While in terms of semantics, the relation of the main clause (a) and the independent clause (b) is cause and effect in nature in which the main clause (a) implies the cause and the subordinate clause or dependent clause (b) implies the effect. This means that if the forest is cleared, the rain will disappear or, vice versa, the rain will disappear if the forest is cleared. Along with the use of the negative markers, neka 'not' and boto 'in order not', the verbal expression provides a reminder for the members of Manggarai speech community as a whole not to clear the forest for the basic reason that, as aforementioned, if they clear the forest, the rain will disappear as the forest serves as the source of rain. The basic reason is based on the fact that there have deforestation actions done by the members of Manggarai speech community in the last few decades to fulfill their household economic needs.

As conceptualized in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community, the verbal expression contains a local wisdom inherited from their ancestors regarding forest conservation by reminding them not to clear the forest as the source of rain so that the rain will not disappear. The local wisdom should be preserved and maintained by the members of Manggarai speech community because the negative impact or effect of clearing the forest is that they will suffer long drought throughout the year due to the lack of rainfall. As a result, they will also suffer starvation due to the lack of food stuff because the rice and corn planted in their agricultural lands did not grow well and produce abundant food stuff due to the lack of rainfall. In addition, they will also suffer the lack of drinking water supply in the water source throughout the year as the side effect of clearing forest as the source of rain. The significance of preserving and maintaining the local wisdom of forest conservation as a manifestation of environmental stewardship implied in the verbal expression of Manggarai language supports the success of green economy program designed by the local government of Manggarai regency.

Local Wisdom of Grassland Conservation

As aforementioned, the cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community regarding the local wisdom of grassland conservation as a manifestation of environmental stewardship to support green economy in Manggarai language is reflected in the sentence (02), *Neka tapa satar boto mata kaka* 'Don't burn the grassland so the animals don't die'. As seen in the physical features of linguistic phenomena used, the sentence appears is the form of a complex sentence made up of two clauses as its component parts. The two clauses serving as its component parts are as follows: (a) *Neka tapa satar* 'Don't burn the grassland' as the main clause as it can stand alone as a complete sentence and (b) *Boto mata kaka* 'So the animals don't die' as the subordinate clause or dependent clause as it cannot stand alone as a complete sentence because its meaning depends on the main clause (a) in which it is embedded or hosted.

As seen in the physical features of linguistic phenomena used, the main clause (a), *Neka tapa satar* 'Don't burn the grassland' is made of the word (negative marker) *neka* 'not', the word (verb) tapa 'burn' as the Predicate (P), and the word (noun) satar 'grassland' as the Object (O). The sentence appears in the form of a negative sentence indicated by using the word (function word) *neka* 'not' as a particle that functions as a negative marker that distributes preceding the word (verb) *tapa* 'burn' as the Predicate (P) which is followed by the word (noun) *satar* 'grassland' as the Object (O). In terms of its syntactic structure, the word (noun) *satar* 'grassland' is the Objective Complement (OC) as it completes the meaning of the word (verb) *tapa* 'burn' as the Predicate (P). The main clause (a) is a negative command sentence of request type as it provides request for the members of Mangggarai speech community not to burn the grassland. The word (noun) *kaka* 'animal' is the Objective Complement (OC) as it completes the meaning of the word (verb) *mata* 'die' as the Predicate (P). Referring to the lexical meanings of its words, the main clause (a) appears in the form of a negative declarative sentence as it provides information regarding the death of animal species due to the burning of grassland as their habitat.

In terms of semantics, the relation of the main clause (a) and the independent clause (b) is cause and effect relation in which the main clause (a) is the cause and the subordinate clause or dependent clause (b) is the effect. If the grassland is burned, the animal species will die or, vice versa, the animal species will die if the grassland is burned. Along with the use of the negative markers, *neka* and *boto*, the linguistic expression reminds the members of Manggarai speech community not to burn grassland. This is because, if they burn the grassland, the livestock animals will die. As conceptualized in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community, the linguistic expression contains a local wisdom inherited from their ancestors regarding grassland conservation as environmental stewardship by reminding them not to burn the grassland so that the animal species in it will not die. The local wisdom should be preserved and maintained by the members of Manggarai speech community because the negative impact or effect of burning the grassland is that the animal species will die. The significance of preserving and maintaining the local wisdom of grassland conservation as the manifestation of environmental stewardship implied in the verbal expression of Manggarai language supports the success of green economy.

CONCLUSION

In summary, both Manggarai language and Manggarai culture belonging to Manggarai speech community are closely related and the relationship is manifested in their cultural conceptualization regarding the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as the manifestation of environmental stewardship to support the success of green economy. The cultural conceptualization is reflected in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression of Manggarai language used in the cultural discourse of environment containing environmental issues. The forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression are unique and specific to Manggarai culture as the parent culture in which Manggarai language is embedded. The meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena designate the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community on the local wisdom of forest and grassland conservation as the manifestation of environmental stewardship to support green economy characterized by such conditions as dense forest as the source of rain and fertile grassland as the habitat of animal species. Although it is not a panacea, the verbal expression might be taken into account in designing natural environment sustainability program in Manggarai regency portrayed from the lens of Manggarai language as the reflection of Manggarai culture as the identity marker of Manggarai speech community. The verbal expression should be preserved and maintained in such a way as it ensures that actions do not harm the environment in the long term and allow future generations of Manggarai speech community to enjoy the same resources and benefits, especially which are sourced from forest as the source of rain and grassland as the habitat of animal species.

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