



Meaning and Values of Agriculture Ritual Speech on Dawan Ethnic in Mollo District of South Central Timor



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Article history:

Received: 5 August 2016

Revised: 10 January 2017

Approved: 8 February 2017

Published: 5 March 2017

Keywords:

Culture;

Language;

Agriculture;

Ritual Speech;

Meaning and Value;

Abstract

This paper contains the results of research on the exposure of the meaning and value of agriculture ritual speech on Dawan ethnic in Mollo. This study is based on the Cultural Linguistic Theory that sees language is a cultural expression that describes the user's perception or view of the world. Based on the theory, the results obtained, as follows: (1) the language in ritual speech include: a magical function, a conative function, and an emotive function; (2) agriculture ritual speech on Dawan ethnic in Mollo has meaning and value like surrender, togetherness, inheritance, and environmental care.

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1. Introduction

Agriculture world has a vocabulary of language related to the perspective and behavior of the farmers. They have vocabularies/lexicon and phrases (proverbs, byword, and taboo words) typical for agriculture. In fact, there is also a powerful magical ritual speech as a means to subdue / control over nature. Interventions and manipulations perpetrated by man against nature are forms of local wisdom in various fields, including agriculture.

The local wisdom of agricultural in various communities, including ethnic recorded in the vocabulary of language cultural community. The vocabulary of language constitutes the element of its culture. It is owned by all ethnic groups with different characteristics, including Dawan ethnic in North Mollo, South Central Timor regency.

People in North Mollo are identified as one of sub-ethnics, in addition to other sub-ethnics, such as **Miomafo**, **Amanuban**, and **Amanatun**. The characterize is implicit in the idea, behavior, and the results of their work, as proposed by **Koentjaraningrat (1984: 182)**, that culture as a whole system of ideas, actions and results of man in society owned/acquired by man through learning.

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The culture of a society, including wisdom implicit in the linguistic element, is owned and used by community culture and community speech. Similarly, language recorded cultural elements in the form of livelihood systems. For Dawan ethnic, agriculture has been livelihood system. Generally, the society works as farmers in accordance with the structure of the soil and climate

Sawu (2004: 33-34) revealed that farmers whose fields anywhere in East Nusa Tenggara, including Dawan's farmer has his own calculations. Correspondingly, they also have a calculation of the season (dry or wet) based on events and natural events. Sawu disclosed circumstances as a wisdom tradition that is part of the culture that formed a civilization that should be preserved for treating and addressing modern life.

Local knowledge of agriculture implied in the speech which as a prayer tradition. Prayer addressed to Uis Neno (god the creator) and Uis Pah (guard/sustainer). This transcendental communication contains functions, meanings, and values that reflect the perceptions of native speakers.

Problems

The title of this article implies research problem, namely: "What are the functions, meanings, and values implied in the agriculture ritual speech of Dawan ethnic in Mollo?" This question will be answered from several perspectives cultural-linguistic by staying on Dawan cultural context.

Objectives

In line with the formulation of the problem and an overview of the scope of its research, this study aims as follows:

- a) Identifying and describing language function in ritual speech of agriculture on Dawan ethnic in North Mollo.
- b) Specifying the meanings and values implied in ritual speech of agricultural on Dawan ethnic in North Mollo.

Review of Literature

a. Ritual speech

Ritual speech (ritual language in the term of Fox) is different from ordinary speech. Fox (1986: 102) said that the ritual language is typically different from ordinary language. In another part of his writing (ibid. Case 98), Fox also said that ritual language gets most poetic characteristic from systematic deviations to ordinary language. Language has integrity or cultural content that should be described in textual, contextual, and cultural (Fox, 1988: 13).

Regarding the concept of ritual speech explicitly stated by Fox (1986: 106.108) identifying the characteristic of ritual language, as follows:

- a) Ritual language is as ordinary language that enhanced form, function, and meaning;
- b) Ritual language has the shape and arrangement tends to remain;
- c) Ritual language is poetic and metaphorical;
- d) Ritual language often presents polysemy, homonymy, and synonymy; and
- e) Ritual language has forms and meanings associated systematically.

A feature of poetic proposed by Fox and exploited parallelism, both proposed by Fox and by Foley in line with the use of paralinguistic elements as suggested by Casson (1981: 34-35). Parallelism, according to Baugrande and Dressler, is one of the instruments of discourse cohesion in the form of reuse of the structure (i.e. repetition structures) with a different material (Malmkjaer and Anderson, 1991: 464). Meanwhile, paralinguistic elements, according to Casson (ibid.) includes tone and quality of the sound.

Based on the description above, characteristics of ritual speech which is used in this study, especially the data collection phase, namely: (1) has the form (including diction and prosody) are likely to remain; (2) is spoken by certain people; (3) is spoken at atmospheric sacred ritual actions; (4) used to communicate with the Divine and the ancestors so generally it is a monologue; and (5) the language tends magical power.

b. Language Functions

Every act of communication involves a number of elements. The elements are the sender, receiver, message, code, contacts, and context. Based on those elements, the function is divided into six languages, namely: (1) the function of speaker attitude towards the depiction of what was discussed (focusing on the

sender); (2) the delivery of the response function (focus on receiver); (3) message delivery function (focus on the message); (4) function of depictions of context (focusing on the context); (5) the function of the creation / establishment of contacts (focusing on contact); and (6) function code comprehension (focusing on the code). Jakobson calls each function mentioned above as emotive function, conative function, referential function, poetic function, fatigue function, and metalinguistic function (Sudjiman and Zoest, 1992: 70-76; Levinson, 1985: 41; Cobley and Jansz, 2002: 147).

Malinowski classifies the function of language on pragmatic function and magic function (see Halliday and Hasan, 1994: 20-21). Malinowski seems to emphasize the element of the sender and receiver. The relationship between the sender and the receiver determines the choice of other elements. The choice of language/code, contact quality, context, and meaning of codes used to describe the relationship between sender and receiver.

c. Meaning and Value

Meaning means something expressed by a sentence (Matthews, 1997: 220). Djajasudarma (1993: 138) defines meaning as a linkage among the elements in a language. According to Noth (1990: 61), meaning is semantic structure.

Kleden (1996: 5) stated that value is same with meaning. Value or meaning is related to culture, or more specifically associated with the symbolic world in cultural. Cultural value is an abstract thing that used to be the guidelines and the general principles in acting and behaving. According to Frondizi (2001: 7-9), the value is not real quality. He also said that the value is not in the form of objects or elements of the objects, but the nature and the quality of a particular object are said to be "good". The values believed by a community describing its personality, as expressed by Notosusanto:

"We cannot talk about the personality if we do not rely on the values that determine our personality is our values, which determine a person's personality is values compared to the values of others. Thus, the values of a society determine the personality of the society itself "(see Bagus, 1986: 12).

According to this view, the value associated with the knowledge, beliefs, symbols, and meanings. Kleden's opinion is actually showing linkage among three things: function, meaning, and value. Although those things cannot be separated in the study of culture, but in this study, values paired with meaning, while the function, especially language function in ritual speech stand.

2. Research Methods

Cultural linguistic theory

White and Dillingham (1973: 31) argued that language is part of culture. This opinion comes into being a cultural-linguistic theory. According to Alisjahbana (1979: 11), there is nothing clearer and more accurate reflects the culture of a nation rather than language. He also said that every language perfectly embodies the culture of the community of native speakers.

Sapir-Whorf in his hypothesis stated that language determines the manner and way of thinking of native speakers. This hypothesis implies if a nation has a different language with other nations, they have a different way of thinking, too (Ibrahim, 1994: 45).

Alisjahbana (1977: 290) showed the relationship of language and culture by saying that language is the embodiment of culture. Suharno (1982) used a cultural-linguistic term that has a similar understanding with cultural-linguistic initiated by Alisjahbana. Suharno (1982: 102) said: "Cultural Linguistics term... Indicates something new.... which 'something' means attention and expectation about doing pioneering research on new horizons language based on the cultural...." In line with Mbete's opinion (2004: 19) quoted Duranti's opinion, that cultural-linguistic developed study on language as a cultural resource and speech as a cultural practice.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Agriculture ritual speech function on Dawan ethnic

Agriculture ritual speech function on Dawan ethnic in Mollo is classified by reference to the opinion of Malinowski and Jakobson (Sabon Ola, 2005: 85-87). According to Malinowski, language functions as practical/pragmatic and magical. Meanwhile, according to Jakobson, language functions as emotive, conative,

referential, poetic, fatigue, and metal lingual. Based on the analysis, the function of agriculture ritual speech on Mollo society can be grouped as follows.

a. Magical Function

The magical function is reflected in the various ritual ceremonies so it is often called as a ritual function. Ritual speech as a prayer actually has a magical function which is a reflection of the relationship between man and the creator and the spirits. It becomes the core of the religious views tradition of Mollo society.

In the said of ritual language the atmosphere changes from the profane to the sacred atmosphere. The changes called as 'transubstantiation' which denotes the vertical relationship between the speaker and the hearer. An Empirical-logic aspect no longer is considered to understand the significance of the interaction meaning. That is why this domain is more appropriately called symbolic behavior (religion) which describes the function of magical language (Dhavamony, 1995).

The magical function of agriculture ritual language on Mollo society appears in the following fragment of the opening section of the speech that describes the transcendental communication. Invisible hearer shows magical functions of languages spoken in the ritual. A greeting to *Uis Neno* as shown in the following is an indication of the magical function of ritual language intended.

Ama Uis Neno ama amoe neno tunan, pahapinan,
Bapak Tuhan hari Bapak pencipta hari atas, dunia,
'God, Our father the creator of heaven and earth'

tasi nok in nesan ok-oke, Ama amoe mansian,
laut dengan punya isi semuanya, Bapa pencipta manusia,
'Sea and all its contents, father, the creator of man'

Fragment of the speech also showed one-way communication or monolog, but the dialogue is understood as requiring metaphysical understanding. Invisible the hearer means supernatural that only can be communicated by prayer. Ritual speech as a prayer is actually a precondition (condition becomes foundation) for transcendental communication.

b. Conative Function

Communication without a face that is not included in the domain of sociolinguistics is the embodiment conative function. This function focuses on the analysis of the response of the receiver/hearer. Conative function as hopes for an answer from receiver/hearer is only the beliefs of speakers. This function is also closely associated with a magical function that is really a realm (domain) of cultural linguistic.

This communication implies the belief of speaker that *Uis Neno and Uis Pah hear* all requests, both the successful opening of the land, the soil fertility and abundant agricultural products, and spared from the destructive pests to plants and crops. Although no verbal response, but the speakers attended the ritual to build "an image" that if during the opening of the land there is no any accidents or disasters such as injured by a sharp object that is used to open the land, means the request granted through the ritual. Similarly, if the plant thrives, no pests that attack plants and yields abundant then they believe that their request granted.

c. Emotive Function

Emotive function, according to Jakobson emphasizes the expression of hope from the speaker and all who attended the ritual. The hopes through agriculture ritual speech are motivated by the experience / empirical facts like the following.

- a) The opening can cause an accident, for example, injured by a sharp object. In addition, new land does not guarantee the fertility of the soil.
- b) The Seedlings are planted not necessarily excel and grow as a good crop and yield good fruit.
- c) The crops are grown frequently attacked by pests.
- d) Yields are kept often damaged after being stored for consumption or for seed the next planting season.

The fact, as mentioned above triggers the using of language functions as emotive.

3.2 Meaning and Value of speech Ritual Agriculture

Linguistic expression viewed from any perspective has meaning and value. Meaning is an explicit and implicit content, while value has mental-psychological to lead a person or group of people to choose the action or attitude as the consciousness of the community collective. Agriculture ritual speech in a society of Mollo, sociologically and anthropologically contains a number of meanings and values, as described below.

a. Meaning and Value of Surrender

Speech as a prayer certainly implies surrender. It is shown at all the speech implies powerlessness of the speaker and representative. The ritual held as a reflection of helplessness and lack of expertise in counteracting the various issues related to agriculture. Without changing the meaning of every shape of lingual, can be understood the meaning and value of surrender.

The meaning of Surrender is a cognitive map (mnemonic) of Dawan ethnic in Mollo on the role of creator and ancestors. The surrender implies on putting the Creator as the first line, Uis Neno and ancestor, Uis Pah in agricultural activities, even all the activities of life. This reality is an act of religious on the community of Mollo. It is described in post-harvest ritual speech section below:

anpat ma anpao kai, pantam pen kai
menjaga dan menunggu kami, menjaga bantu kami
'Maintain, supervise and protect us'

ne panin moa faj moa manas es ifo, es fufu,
di ujung hama malam dan hama siang yang tikus, yang lapuk,
'From night pests and in the day like rats as well as damage'

es alle kanan menas huma-huma, 'su'at huma-huma,
yang semua nama penyakit macam-macam, cobaan macam-macam,
'From diseases and disaster'

Behind the surrender meaning and value, there is also the hope of viability and sustainability. The food, in this case, the harvest, is a basic requirement that the absolute lasts a lifetime. In connection with it, surrender also means surrendering the continuance of the crop in order to meet the food needs until the next harvest season, besides the availability of seeds in the next planting season, as the fragment of speech described below.

henati kalo naleko te haim bi le to mnanuf le'i in nanan
supaya kalau baik ya kami di yang tahun panjang yang ini dalam
'Wish for this year'

hai bisa miah ma miun,
kami bisa makan dan minum,
'We could eat and drink'

ai ampaek alle kanan pena ane bisa misop ton,
atau memakai semua nama jagung padi bisa akhir tahun,
'Enjoy corn and rice until the end of the year'

henati anpaonan to amunit bi ton amnemten ten.
supaya menunggu tahun belakang di tahun datang juga.
'Till the end of this year and the following year'

b. The meaning and value of Togetherness

As it is explained before that ritual speech is religious. Nevertheless, the dimension of life is singular but plural. It is shown on lingual expression in speech is also a sociological dimension. It is implied in meaning and value of sociological.

The fragment of speech as described in the following:

hai ala kai bae feto bae mone,
kami semua kami saudara perempuan, saudara laki-laki
'We are all sisters, brothers'

ala kai olif tataf,
semua kami adik kakak,
'We are all siblings'

hai mi 'bua alle' kanan mnahta ma mninut,
kami mengumpulkan semua nama makanan dan minuman,
'We collect all kinds of food and beverages'

The use of first pronouns of inclusive plural (1JM-ink) *we* showed that the speaker delivers requests to *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pah* not for and on behalf of itself, but for and on behalf of a group of people, namely the speakers and the representative, both present and not present. Ritual speech of opening new land also implies togetherness meaning, as described in the following.

leko hai ana ok-oke, atoni, bifel, hai hem mulai
baik kami anak semuanya laki-laki perempuan kami supaya mulai
'Both men and women want to start'

meup lelen ne le' panin hem sen hai senat ok-oke
kerja kebun di yang ujung supaya tanam kami tanaman semuanya
'Cleaning the garden to plant all the crops'

The second fragment of speech describes the reality of social cohesion in a society of Mollo. It even exceeds the boundaries of age and gender as expressed in the use of the word female-male and siblings. The meaning and value explain two things religiously and socially, as shown below.

- a) Religiously, human are equal for *Uis Neno* and *Uis Pah*. In this dimension, man is distinguished by the intensity of the interaction transcendently.
- b) Sociologically, togetherness is the key to achieving success collectively. The quality of social behavior on Dawan people in agriculture can be seen in working together and enjoying the harvest together (harvest of agricultural / crop).

This reality also reflects the principle of balance (equilibrium) between vertical interaction and horizontal interaction. Wise words "work and pray" is a further implication of awareness on the meaning of togetherness. Behavior which only accentuates vertical interaction or horizontal interaction includes a denial of balance principle.

c. Meaning and Value of Inheritance

Each social and cultural actions applicable and take place today is a reflection of past of ancestors or can be considered as heritage. In addition to the measures, heritage can also be objects, including agricultural land, as seen in a fragment of a ritual speech of opening new land in the society of Mollo as follows.

ala hai babfin natuin akontin mimnau mis kai
hanya kami paman mengikuti melewati mengingat terlalu kami
'Ancestors who always remember us'

tal leka amfeman kai pis es henati hai ala kai
sampai kapan memberikan kami sebelah satu supaya kami hanya kami
'Thus giving us a piece of land'
leko hai ana ok-oke, atoni, bifel, hai hem mulai
baik kami anak semuanya laki-laki perempuan kami supaya mulai

'Both men and women . . . '

This expression hinted that agricultural land is inheritance. Because of the inheritance builds the society's awareness to maintain it, in addition, to honor the ancestors, as well as support the necessities of life economically. The meaning and value of inheritance in planting ritual is related to main food for Dawan ethnic in Mollo. It is implied in the speech as follows.

mautnai leko i ma tabu i hai maitman pen finjes ma aen finjes
 biarlah jam ini dan waktu ini kami mengambil jagung bibit dan padi bibit
 'Let us take the seed of corn and rice'

ai koto, lolo, laku he amtaobe ne lele le' panin
 atau kacang, ubi jalar, ubi kayu untuk menaruh di kebun yang ujung
 'Or beans, sweet potatoes and cassava for planting'

The speech revealed the main food for Dawan ethnic in Mollo, namely: rice, corn, and potatoes. Attitudes and behavior in preserving the heritage can be seen in their daily lives, although diversification of food to consume every day, corn, rice, and potatoes are still the main food for consumption. Without knowing the nutrient of higher quality local food, the Dawan still maintain local food with local flavors as well.

d. Meaning and Value of Environmental care

The existence of ecological aspects in the context of cosmology is important and essential in guaranteeing the balance of the cosmos. Therefore, treatment of caring environment is important to do. However, the important thing is awareness and traditional perceptions of environmental maintenance without disturbing the ecological balance is the main option.

Dawan people in Mollo have awareness as it is written in the speech planting ritual, as follows:

fini hai miloitan milaljelen, maut mbi tabu leko i
 dulu kami memperbaiki selesai, biar pada waktu saat ini
 'Which we have prepared this time'

haim sanaon Uis Neno Uis Pah henati kalo nalekot
 kami memohon Tuhan hari Tuhan bumi supaya kalau baiklah
 'We ask the god of the Creator and the keeper of nature'

mokan kai anbi le' hai senat hai luat le'i henati
 bersama kami pada yang kami tanam kami semai yang ini supaya
 'Accompanied / guided us during plant'

kalo leko te anfe aluku ma ulan na'ko neno tunan hen pofe,
 kalau boleh ya berikan pengukur dan hujan dari hari atas supaya siram,
 'please give rain to water the plants'

henati kalo lekot hai senat le'i an moin nok alekot,
 supaya kalau boleh kami tanam yang ini hiduplah dengan terbaik
 'So that our plants flourish'

The request to Uis Neno and Uis Pah to give rain and provide soil fertility is really a symbolic act of environmental care. Dawan people in Mollo do not use chemicals fertilizer, not because of they know and understand the impact of the chemicals fertilizer, but because of their belief that help is coming from Uis Neno and Uis Pah. It is implied on attitudes and behavior of surrender.

Modern farming methods are bases on logic has been to build an understanding that without fertilizer plants may not grow fast and produce lots and excellent. Dawan people in Mollo are aware of it. However, traditional ways by relying on the interaction to ask for help from Uis Neno and Uis Pah still a strong

collective consciousness. With keywords *faith* of asking help from God and ancestors, the same land could be cultivated repeatedly with results that are not reduced, or at least not cause hunger for the society.

Maintenance of the natural environment for Dawan ethnic in Mollo is also regulated by customs agreement regarding forest fires. Prohibition for strict sanctions becomes a proof of their sincerity in taking care of the natural environment. In the era before 1950, or in 1940-es, sanctions for perpetrators who burn the forest is buried/planted live up to the limit of the neck; the head becomes prey to wild animals around the burial until death.

The development of modern law and awareness of human rights, **the sanction has been invalid**. But the customary penalties in the form of animals (pigs, cattle or buffalo) still have the power to a deterrent for perpetrators of burning the forest. In addition, people still have the traditional belief that nature can give a reprimand/warning to everyone who burns the forest in the form of disaster, such as accidents.

4. Conclusion

The discussion has some conclusions in the following.

- a) Ritual speech is a means to build a vertical relationship between man and god called Uis Neno (Creator) and Uis Pah (Guard / Sustainer). The utterances contain a request the abundant agricultural products.
- b) Language/ritual speech of magical function, conative and emotive. Those functions in the agricultural ritual speech of Dawan people are an expression of helplessness and surrender of man on Uis Neno and Uis Pah.
- c) Agricultural ritual speech of Dawan ethnic in Mollo has meanings and values, as follows: Surrender, togetherness, inheritance, and environmental care. The meaning and value of the surrender and inheritance have a religious dimension, meaning and value of togetherness have sociological dimension, and the meaning and value of environmental care have ecological dimension.

Suggestions

Based on the previous conclusions, the researcher proposes some suggestions as follows.

- a) For the younger generation of Dawan in Mollo to maintain and preserve agricultural ritual speech that has meaning and value in order not to lose identity in a globalized world.
- b) Traditional aspects should be in the line with modern things so far as it does not cause unsure identity, otherwise, build universal values based on local values.
- c) The regional autonomous government of South Central Timor (TTS) will need to accommodate local wisdom of Dawan, especially in agriculture, through the maintenance and revitalization policy values to improve civility.

Acknowledgements

The author acknowledges to all supporters for completing the present study to be published in International Journal of Linguistics, Language, and Culture that published by IJCU Publishing. The author also thank the editor of IJLLC that guides for finishing the article.

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