



## **Anti-Language, War on Discourse, Agrolinguistic Case, and Museum of Palm Oil in Indonesia**



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### **Abstract**

Researchers on linguistic and discourse related to palm oil conflicts and problems are very scarce internationally. Some researchers are mostly not exposed massively to the public, therefore the people are not fully aware of palm oil linguistic cases. The politics of palm oil conflicts in Indonesia involves anti-language, the war on discourse, and agrolinguistic cases. The problem is this politics seems to be oriented to exploit the problems, not to solve them. Manipulation becomes one of the major factors of the prolonged palm oil conflicts in Indonesia. The aspects of language and discourse play significant roles due to its functions as the medium of exploration on palm oil plantations. It can be said that language is one of the core ingredients to create and to solve management of regional conflicts of palm oil. Thus, e135 paradigm, agrolinguistics, and forensic linguistics can be applied eclectically to analyze on the objects like anti-language, the war on discourse, conflicts of palm oil, and palm oil regulations and acts as well in order to suggest some regulations in solving and preventing severe conflict and its potential. The aspects of political meaning, culture, and values are also studied in this paper. Thus, e135 paradigm based on multidisciplinary linguistic analysis at the strategic level, agrolinguistics and forensic linguistics is applied. A qualitative approach was applied. In collecting the data, some instruments such as existing documents and existing records were used. This paper was based on Hibah Berbasis Kompetensi (Competency-based Research) in 2016 funded by Ministry of Research and Technology of Indonesia.

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## 1. Introduction

Palm oil conflicts in Indonesia are not just related to economic activity, social resistance, cultural values, and violence, but also related to language practices and complex social problem. Multidimensional conflicts of palm oil plantation in Indonesia among companies, government, NGO's and society have become one of the serious conflicts which are not thoroughly solved as of today. This problem is very complex since it involves multilayered aspects like the role of language in conflicts, socio-political dimension, socio-cultural basis, socio-psychological, cognitive framework on conflicts, and the regulations of the plantation from the government. This paper just focuses on some linguistic aspects such as anti-language, the war on discourse, agrolinguistic and other related aspects such as farmer's museum, palm oil regulation, culture, and suggested policies to the Indonesian government.

Anti-language is a kind of discourse war in conflicts which represents the nature of the problem itself. Therefore, studying anti-language and its structures may contribute to the study of the social problem in order to solve it. All anti-language is part of the language in the form of discourse, so it has narrative and linguistic structure. The linguistic practices also have patterns, objective, and formula.

Some questions are how to use anti-languages found in the field of palm conflicts as one of material analysis on the real problem? How to analyze the palm oil conflicts in Indonesia based on discourse analysis? How to develop discourse analysis to achieve that goal? Is there any possible methodology of discourse analysis can be developed to respond to these questions? Since the purpose of analyzing the problem is to solve it, I argue the method of discourse analysis should not only be descriptive and critical, but it is important to raise the bar of discourse methodology to the very heart of the problem based on discourse evidence.

The problem of this model is the structures of the problems are not the same. Different social problems will have different structures and different discourse as well. Social conflicts also have their own linguistic structures that lie in the discourse since conflicts always have language use among the actors. Therefore, the method of analyzing discourse in the field of conflicts should always be related to actors' behavior and the structures of actions. There is no single methodology of discourse analysis can solve any social problem, but it can contribute to deeper understanding of the problem itself. Solving a social problem is a complex process. That's one of the reasons why an interdisciplinary study of e135 paradigm is also applied to support analysis.

The structures of conflicts in discourse are perhaps rare aspect to discuss in discourse analysis. Since the language in practices can represent or projects the reality, this structure is possible to occur in discourse. So the key element is the linguistic structures of discourse that represent the nature of conflicts. This method will provide a better understanding of the real conflicts in the field and the social reality around it. Of course, this discourse methodology alone will never be possible to solve the conflicts, but it is also true that to solve a conflict or social problem we need to deepen our understanding of the nature of the problems. I propose the idea on discourse methodology that discourse analysis should not only be critical or criticizing the problem, but it also should contribute to designing or developing the possible solution. The first method of analysis is to study the nature of conflict based on its representation in linguistics structures in the discourse of anti-language. This process of analysis is to see the patterns of conflict representation in linguistic structures. The representation itself is structures or patterns. Based on a qualitative approach, some instruments such as existing documents, existing records and meetings were applied.

## 2. Research Methods

### Concept and Theory

#### 2.1 Anti-language and war on discourse

Anti-language is communicative discourse at the level of resistance and is developed for a specific purpose by the alternative system. It has the natures of anti-thesis, therefore this discourse phenomenon is mostly related to conflicts and resistance to the larger social system (see for example Halliday, 1978; Kress and Hodge, 1979; and Sawirman, 2014b). In short, the practice of anti-language is indeed a form of discourse in action. Conflicts and resistance found to have structures in discourse. They consist of the aspects of conflicts reality, human intent, interests, cognition, and behavior represented in language construction. Therefore, studying the discourse in conflicts as a form of anti-language should use those aspects as the variable of analysis. Anti-language negates the language of its opponent. The aspects of power relations in this social problem are hard to face.

The meaning components of anti-language (see also [Sawirman, 2014b](#)) have the patterns [+conflicts], [+resistance], [+protest], [+the voice of alternative system of social order], [-resolution]. There is no anti-language without objective or particular purpose. Since conflict and resistance always have purposes depending on different interests. The language of resistance brings the meaning and intent of resisting, contradicting, and fighting ([Sawirman, Hadi and Yusdi, 2014](#)). It is not always violent, though it actually depends on the level of conflicts ([Sawirman, Hadi and Yusdi, 2015](#)). The phenomenon of anti-language defies the concept language as simply the means of communication. The facts in the field prove that language in use has much more functions than just for communication. Language in a more complex form known to be discourse is the means of manipulation, arising and exploiting conflicts, at some extreme level it becomes part of violence. Analyzing anti-language is not only to describe its discourse structures, but also to comprehend the nature and the root of the problems so the resolutions can be developed. This objective may become an intellectual tradition for social problems based discourse analysis.

## 2.2 Postdiscourse of e135

The term *postdiscourse* means a discourse theory after any other discourse theories, approaches, and analyses. One of the very problems of discourse analysis and linguistics nowadays is the lack of strategic studies which therefore renders the analysis cannot cope adequately with the strategic and tactical aspects of discourse practices and the social problems. Postdiscourse Analysis of Sawirman-e135 (PAS-e) is designed to answer the problem ([Sawirman, 2015](#)). It's expected to be the fundamental basis of Andalas University School which provides the strategic paradigm in linguistics and discourse analysis. This theory is based on interdisciplinary adaptations as the core strategy to face, solve, and exploit various decisive complexities of dynamics of social and strategic problems. The nature of PAS-e is profoundly and dialectically framed in several methods. Moreover, this theory is designed to have incisive capabilities to evolve through the development of social problems. It is also focused on investigating the strategic, tactical, and dark natures of meaning mediated by discourse including their effects on the society which involve various social actors and particular orientations of interests. PAS-e involves all branches of linguistics and other disciplines coherently based on the strategy of transfiguration which breaks the boundaries of any fields. Therefore, this theory absorbs the natures of conceptual adaptations and evolution to adapt to the very dynamics of the social problems. One of the intentions and orientations of PAS-e is to provide culmination based solution (the ways of tactics) and non culmination based solution (the ways of strategy). Thus, the profound analyses are made to be the basis of designing the possible solutions to cope with the problems and the possible problems.

## 3. Results and Analysis

### 3.1 Anti-Language and War on Discourse of Palm Oil

The role of linguistic analysis involved conflict, social behavior, and violent crimes. Forensic linguistic analysis of violent crimes for example (see, for example, [Inesta 2006; Smith, 2008](#)) consider the link between antisocial behavior and language in criminal contexts. In fact, language, conflict, and violence are inherent to human behavior. [Inesta \(2006:109\)](#) explains that language as an external indicator of the structure of cognitive processes dealing with behavior related to its functions as communicating, imagining, remembering, learning, perceiving. Anti-language and war on discourse cannot be categorized as the violent act itself although both are related. The statement is supported by [Smith \(2008:106\)](#). He claims that there are links between offender's violence and language use and discourse. In other words, the analysis of language use and discourse can predict the risk of violent behavior. In the context of violent crime, conflict, and behavior, forensic linguist share responsibility as a social scientist to examine phenomena and impact on society (see also [Hickey 2010:3](#)). The practice of anti-language and war on discourse are, in fact, based on conflicts and behaviors.

Sometimes anti-language and the war on discourse are used to project the force and the interest. When conflicts are about to happen, that is the time the policy fails. Both anti-language and war on discourse are actual language aspects in the form of discourse of resistance. The nature of resistance and conflicts become the dominant factors that influence the structure of its discourse. The voice of protest, conflicts, obstructed discourse can be categorized as anti-language. Mostly it exists in anti-society. The discourse facts found in the field of palm oil conflicts are practices and discourse structures of anti-language in those problems represent the nature of the conflicts. So studying anti-language in this problem will help to better understanding the possible solution for this social conflict in Indonesia.

### 3.2 GAPKI's versus NGO's campaign

War on discourse between GAPKI's campaign and NGO's campaign are opposites. GAPKI stands for *Gabungan Pengusaha Kelapa Sawit Indonesia (The Indonesian Palm Oil Association)*. GAPKI not just claims that the export of crude palm oil (CPO) has increased each year, but also put a target to develop palm oil expansion continuously. As stated by GAPKI, numerous companies, businessmen, and capital owners have also developed the use of palm oil, palm kernel, and the remains of palm processing. Those products according to GAPKI have been exported overseas. Some researchers also explores that the roles of palm oil companies and agro-industries companies are also quite significant in reducing the number of poverties and unemployment in international level such as in Indonesia (van Gelder, 2001), in Thailand (Watnapinyo, 2007), in Nigeria (Oladipo, 2008:75-87), in Costa Rica (Orozko dan Morillo, 2007). Furthermore, the contribution of palm companies on various aspects like granting the scholarships for the students, sporadic donations for numerous people's events and activities actually can enhance the development of the region in which the palm company operates. Anti-language has the natures of anti-thesis in linguistic dialectics. It's also used by palm oil companies and society to attack NGO, as in the following figures.



Figure 1:  
Companies's Campaign 1  
(Source: www.nasionalisme.co)

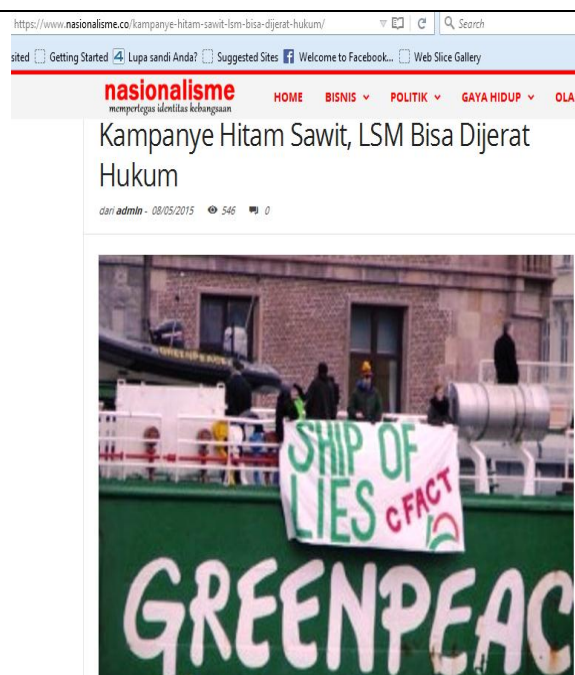


Figure 1:  
Companies's Campaign 2  
(Source: www.nasionalisme.co)

It's also the fact that palm oil farmers are in difficult situations and suppressed by the conditions nowadays. The people in several regions have also planted the palm oil in the area of forest conservation. This stands against the remarks of SDGs and international NGOs for the society not to destroy the forests for farming. Some figures below are examples.

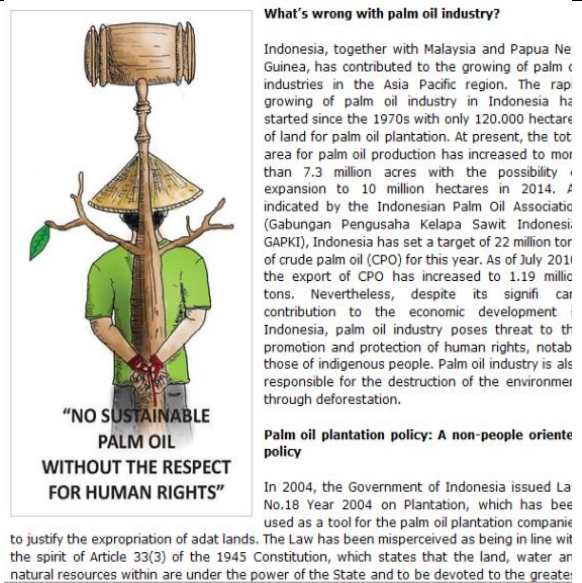


Figure 3:  
NGO's Campaign 1  
(Source: lama.elsam.or.id)



Figure 4:  
NGO's Campaign 2  
(Source: lama.elsam.or.id)

The phenomena of anti-language from media, NGO's and complex problems in palm oil plantation including policies from the government have become demanding challenge to overcome (Sawirman, 2012). These problems have long-term impacts which corrupt national character in the society around the plantation. The spectrum of the problems is wide such as conflicts among the society, companies and NGO's. Anti-language used in common by NGO's attack the companies, palm commodities, and even the government.

### 3.3 Companies and outsourcing worker's protests

Actually, the remaining protests from the society on the plasma land, nonpermanent labors or outsourcing workers as called *Pekerja Waktu Tertentu* (PWT) in Indonesia and child labors as well are still echoing. The position of local outsourcing worker today is still marginalized. As in contract system (including the process, procedure, and the freedom of contract) among the local outsourcing workers and several companies in Indonesia. Based on the research, almost all of the points related to the process, procedure, and freedom in the contract which is clearly stated in Chapter 1338 of The Book of Civil Law Acts put the local outsourcing worker in disadvantage and weak position. In fact, almost all of the companies in Indonesia have the same standardized format for the contract letters. Implicitly, if the local sourcing worker wants to be hired or to get the extension, whether they agree or not, they have to sign the contract letter that has been designed by the company. Hence, the freedom principle in the contract as a basis of the legal contract is being ignored or manipulated. In fact, based on the principles of rights equality the workers have to be involved in designing the contents and the patterns of agreements of the contract.



Figure 5:  
NGO's Campaign 3  
(Source: kompas.com)



Figure 6:  
NGO's Campaign 4  
(Source: lama.elsam.or.id)

Even though most of the content of industrial companies' contract in Indonesia is not contradicted by the law, public order and decency, but there are no local outsourcing workers who been included to make the contents of the contract. It has an impact on equal points toward the contents of the contract. According to Minister of Manpower Regulation number Per-02/Men/1993 on Certain Time Employment Agreements that the employment agreement for a specified time only is held for a specific job based on nature, type, or activities which be completed within a certain time. For example, the estimated job which can be completed in not too long time and a maximum of three years. In the hierarchy of the production process, the labor is the perpetrator of the bottom process. However, their role is significant to the survival of a business. Unfortunately, the fate of the workers has not received a serious the attention. Various injustices lead to lack of prosperity because of no social warranty and future uncertainty. Subcontract at the local level such as in the industrial and service companies in Indonesia have not received adequate attention even by the Labor Law that had legalized by The House of Representatives (DPR) in 2003. Here is one of the contract fragment cases between MH (initial name) and KA, Inc based on the PAS-e analysis.

*PIHAK PERTAMA berhak atau dapat memutuskan hubungan kerja secara sepihak terhadap PIHAK KEDUA tanpa peringatan terlebih dahulu, tanpa ada ganti rugi ....* ('The first party has the authority or is able to terminate the contract with the second party without any prior warning, without any compensation...')

(Source of Fragment Contract Letters: Josefino, et.al. 2010)

There are discourse fragments that can be categorized as a breach on the Act No. 13 about manpower as follows: (1) *the first party has the authority or is able to terminate the contract with the second party*, (2) *without any prior warning*, (3) *without any compensation...*. These discourse fragments imply the orientations and the nature of oppression because there is no meaning of equal agreement between the two parties (employer and employee). The fragment *the first party has the authority or is able to terminate the contract with the second party* indicates the oppressive power exercised by the first party because it explicitly eliminates any possible opportunities of the second side (employee) to gain any adequate rights. Moreover, the phrase *terminate the contract* exposes one

Sawirman, -. (2017). *Anti-language, war on discourse, agrolinguistic case, and museum of palm oil in Indonesia*. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 3(5), 72-82.  
<https://sloap.org/journals/index.php/ijllc/article/view/225>

sided power and intention in deciding the fate of the workers without any appropriate assessments and adequate evaluation. This phrase is obviously engineered and manipulated by using the forms of language which enforces the absolute authority, control and total power of making unilateral decisions. This discourse practice actually terminates the possible opportunities for the second side in defending their rights. This phrase also implies the tactical attempts of the first side to weaken the position of the second side in this agreement or contract. In essence, these aspects are the natures of repressive exploitation. The phrase *without any prior warning, without any compensation...* implies the tactical orientation of the first party in deciding the terms of the contract in full one-sided authority in accordance with the tactics of achieving the maximum profit with less production cost. Therefore, this phrase manipulates the agreement to place the employee in very powerless position without any voice and rights. Furthermore, this phrase as a discourse is used by the first party to construct the forms of employee's social practices and behavior in the silence and mere instrument of production. Such a discourse practices in this contract is significantly designed to alienate the workers from their rights since those rights are categorized as an additional production cost.

Furthermore, based on the above analysis, the holistic architecture of this discourse including its fragments are obviously engineered to shape particular profound behavioral control of the second side (employees) in accordance with the economic tactics of producing the maximum profits. Hence, the possible ineffective and inadequate workers as the main instruments of production will be eliminated through the unequal contract that has been approved by both sides. It means that the employer intends to secure the process of production from any problems with the workers. Such oppressive contract becomes the law based legitimate instrument of the employers in removing the workers that are not productive enough although ironically the contract itself is a breach of the laws. The key words *authority*, *terminate*, and *without* are actually the core discourse engineering architecture in this contract which forges the meaning orientation and its controlling effects to exploit and control the employees. These keywords are engineered based on the tactics of eliminating the rights of the workers as the possible burdens for the production cost, thus the profit can be maximized.

### 3.4 Palm oil companies and society's conflicts

All forms of manipulation, in this case, use indirect use of language as the instrument. There is a linguistic pattern where the actors of manipulation tend to avoid direct utterance. Sometimes they use words with different meanings to camouflage the real intention and create discourse structures related to aggression, conflicts, and violent behavior.

There are practices of violent language which represents the conflicts between native traditional society and palm companies or industries as called *Perusahaan Terbatas Perkebunan* (PTP) in Indonesia. The language from the society has the nature of resistance, whereas the language from the company mostly oriented to calm the native people and to win the legal process. The case of palm oil disputes involves language and social behavior.

Anti-language seems to have the aspects of social control and behavioral patterns. This is not simply related to certain ideology, but it is more like a conflict between different values and interests. The native society views their land in traditional and cultural values which therefore different from the capitalistic point of views. These different cultural backgrounds have different discourse as well.

One of the most profound critical problems is concerned with the conflicts between palm oil companies and the society around the palm oil plantation. In essence, there are two trigger factors that mainly induce the conflicts: *lahan plasma* (plasma land) and *lahan inti* (core land). Both problems were the main sources of conflicts between the society and PT Wangi Alam dan Selva Inhu Tani in Mesuji at the end of 2011 in Sungai Sodong Village Kabupaten Ogan Komering Ilir, South Sumatera ([Kompas, 2012](#), [Tempo, 2011](#); [Pelita, 2011](#)). The society mostly uses the language oriented to imposing the will. They also show the force of the mass. On the other hand, although the companies use the language to calm the people, they also use the force of the police to secure the area of industries. One of the most tragic bloodsheds in this case is the riot in Mesuji (see [Kompas, 2012](#)).

Mostly the discourse and the form of anti-language collided between two sides, the society and the company. Based on the current cases, both company and society have a polar opposites understanding on the problems and therefore fraught with perilous frictions. The society has a form of orientation to gather the people in massive numbers, whereas the company tends to secure its assets and interests. Such a friction inflicts the conflicts. The conflict in Mesuji is an obvious example of extreme conflict escalation which erodes the conscience of humanity ([Kompas, 2012](#)).

Furthermore, the government does not have an adequate and reliable early warning system on physical conflict and its threat potentials in palm oil area. Therefore, the lethal conflicts in the land of palm oil plantation can never be anticipated since there is no strategic pre-emption based early warning system and conflict management. The lack of early warning system on conflict and its threats shows that there is no particular model of holistic and reliable strategic policy in solving and anticipating the conflicts in Indonesia (Sawirman, 2012). This is actually an incisive weakness on the strategic policy of Indonesian government which therefore induces the conflict to grow and reach a serious level of threats. This demanding problem strongly needs a grand design of strategic policy to manage the conflicts in the forms of regulations and the amendments of current government's regulations.

### 3.5 Discourse structure and the root of the problem is the land itself

The structures of the meaning and discourse of anti-language in palm conflicts in Indonesia are related to the structures or the patterns of conflicts in fields. This relationship occurs because discourse is strongly related to actions and reality. All processes of realities have their own language practices in the forms of discourse. Therefore, the more violent the action, the more violent the language.

The government does not provide a transparent process of land policy although it seems ideal on the paper, it is different in real practices. In West Sumatra for example (see Sawirman, 2012a) the root of palm oil conflicts is ironically concerned with the practice of cooperation and partnerships between palm oil companies and the society. The company plant the palms in *Tanah ulayat* (a land owned by particular Minangkabau tribe). This is land strongly bound by Minangkabau traditions and culture, therefore it has various aspects of ideology, culture and social psychology. These three aspects can easily and potentially induce frictions and conflicts. *Tanah ulayat* has become a cultural heritage in Minangkabau, hence it is not for sale. Mostly the palm companies are granted the permission from Minang society to cultivate the lands for palm oil plantations. It indicates that the conflict related to *tanah ulayat* as the land for building palm industrial activities in West Sumatra is remaining highly potential to happen, thus, it must be any problem in palm regulations.

The conflict explodes when the society imposes the company tends to breach the previous agreement in which both sides have approved to share the yields at 40:60 (the society gains 40% whereas the company gets 60%) or 30:70 (30% for the society and 70% for the company). Since the company seems not to meet the agreement on the plasma land after some years and couple of harvesting instead of merely buying the time, the society finally will step into aggression. The conflict occurs and the friction is intensified. The farmers consider the company inconsistent, this inconsistency is believed as the causal factor of conflicts.

In another conflict, the society believed that the company took over the land which belonged to the society, in contrast, the company imposes the society took the land owned by the company. As the consequences, the society stepped into pure aggression and extreme violence and attacked four palm companies in 2012. Not just PT Andalas Wahana Berjaya (AWB) and PT Mutiara Agam in Manggopoh Lubuk Basung companies in Nagari Pulau Sikabau Dhamasraya AWB, but also PT GMP (Gersindo Minang Plantation) a company of Wilmar Group are hit by a demonstration and violence mass attack (see also Sawirman, 2012).

The industries are silently forced to bribe in order to eliminate the obstacle in the process of gaining the lands. This is beyond the power of policy, or there is double policy, on the paper and in the field. This corrupt behavior from the local government apparatus sometimes makes the problem even worst.

### 3.6 Agrolinguistic Issue and Museum of Palm Oil

Austronesian linguistic model is needed to cover processes as complex as agriculture's expansions (Mathewson, 2000:458; 460). That's one of the reasons why I propose and develop the Agrolinguistics of Sawirman-e135 (AS-e) (Sawirman, 2013a; b) and BREAK theory of e135-based paradigm (Sawirman, 2014c; d) in order be able to cope with various and complex cases of linguistic and linguistic mappings on agriculture and other related cultural landscapes as well. In other words, the material objects of this theory is not only to analyze linguistic register in palm oil domain, but also to explain processes as complex as agriculture's expansions as well as other forms of linguistic register in other agricultural activities, farmer's museum, plantation, wild, agro-industry, agro-tourism, agro-business, etc (Sawirman, 2014a; b). This theory may also offer methods and procedures for tracing the spread terms of various processions since the initial process until the marketing activities of people's plantations and agriculture, the terms of traditional farming instruments, various local terms on managing the people's plantations and agriculture are the actual material objects of agrolinguistics.

Agrolinguistics is needed as a new field of linguistics. Various cultural assets and the terms related to palm processing and its traditional tools that are used in people's farm palm in Indonesia are actually closed to extinction because of many causal factors. These cultural assets are not totally documented yet in a museum (Sawirman, 2013a). In addition, the majorities of those artifact lexicons are not documented yet in dictionaries. This problem can be an object of a research from various disciplines like agrolinguistics, tourism, musicology, cultural studies, archaeology, etc.

That's one of the reasons why I found one of palm oil museums in my country as called Museum Nagari Dr. Sawirman (Sawirman, 2015). This museum has also some other agricultural artifacts. Those artifacts not just only reflect the historical, cultural and social values of the agricultural practices, but also the religious, cosmological beliefs, everyday life, and ideological practices as well.

#### 4. Conclusion

There are many serious problems about palm oil business to solve by the government instead of the black campaign from numerous international NGO on palm oil issues as environmental parasites. Anti-language and war on discourse in the form of discourse in palm oil conflicts represent the collision of interests. I question why the policy fails? The meaning in anti-language projects intent and objective sometimes related to force. The possible solution for this problem is better policies and adequate enforcement of it. It has discourse structures, the narrative of resisting, protesting, and the components of opposite meanings. It seems that there are some strategic defects in these regulations which therefore fail to cope with conflicts and its potential.

In more extreme cases, anti-language and war on discourse appear as a reaction to certain oppression or injustice is done by far more stronger social system. Anti-language and war on discourse do not have a solution to the problem in its own structural and social system.

Nowadays, palm farmers are in difficult situations and suppressed by the conditions. Since the discourse analysis and its nature is not to win the problem, we need post-discourse analysis theory and agrolinguistics model that are capable to involve larger social problems and complex scales of agricultural problems. The agrolinguistics is also intended to provide the possible solutions to solve and prevent the possible conflicts.

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**Biography of Author**

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