



## THE FUNCTION OF PLANT METAPHOR AS A SYMBOL OF UNITY FOR MANGGARAI SPEECH COMMUNITY

Fransiskus Bustan<sup>1)</sup>, Josua Bire<sup>2)</sup>, Agustinus Semiun<sup>3)</sup> and Hendrikus Jehane<sup>4)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup>[frankybustando@gmail.com](mailto:frankybustando@gmail.com); <sup>2)</sup>[josua.bire@gmail.com](mailto:josua.bire@gmail.com); <sup>3)</sup>[agustinussemiun@gmail.com](mailto:agustinussemiun@gmail.com)  
<sup>4)</sup>[hendrikusjehane@gmail.com](mailto:hendrikusjehane@gmail.com)

Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences,  
Nusa Cendana University, Kupang - Indonesia

**ABSTRACT:** This paper explores the function of plant metaphor as a symbol of unity for Manggarai speech community with special reference to the forms and meanings of the linguistic phenomena used in the plant metaphor. The study is descriptive. The study is viewed from cultural linguistics with special reference to metaphor as a part of cultural conceptualization emerging in cognitive level. The result of study shows that the form and meaning of plant metaphor as a symbol of unity for Manggarai speech society is reflected in the verbal expression, *Muku ca pu'u neka woleng curup* 'One clump of bananas doesn't talk differently, one clump of canes doesn't walk differently'. The forms and meanings of the linguistic phenomena used in the plant metaphor are specific to Manggarai culture revealing the conceptualization of Manggarai speech community on the significance of maintaining unity in their contexts of living together as members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogic clan. Besides contributing to the significance of cultural linguistics as an approach to exploring language differences due to cultural differences, the study is also beneficial to remind Manggarai speech community that the content stored in the plant metaphor implies local wisdom inherited from their ancestors that should be maintained and preserved.

**Keywords:** *function, plant metaphor, symbol of unity, Manggarai speech community.*

### INTRODUCTION

It has been widely acknowledged that language and culture belonging to a people as members of a social group are closely related because language they employ serves as the mirror of culture they share and, at the same time, as the window of their world (Sapir, 1949; Miller, 1968; Casson, 1981; Cassirer, 1987; Brown, 1994; Kramsch, 2001). The relationship of both language and culture is manifested in conceptualization ascribed and imprinted in their cognitive map that contains a bulk cultural knowledge used as the sources of reference for them in viewing the world that involves the factual world and the symbolic world (Foley, 1997). The conceptualization ascribed and imprinted in their cognitive map is reflected in metaphor because metaphor is a part of their cultural conceptualization emerging in cognition level (Palmer and Sharifian, 2007; Sharifian, 2007; Kovecses, 2009).

Bearing the matters stated above in minds, this study explores the relationship of Manggarai language, Manggarai culture and conceptualization of Manggarai people as members of Manggarai speech community residing in the region of

Manggarai that occupies the western part of the island of Flores in the province of East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia (Verheijen, 1991; Erb, 1999; Bustan, 2005; Bustan, et al, 2017) with special reference to metaphor as a part of cultural conceptualization emerging in their cognition level. As metaphor is of various kinds, the study focuses on plant metaphor considered along with its function as a symbol of unity for Manggarai speech community, as reflected in the forms and meanings of the linguistic phenomena used in that plant metaphor.

We are interested in conducting the study for the reason that the forms and meanings of the linguistic phenomena used in the plant metaphor are specific to Manggarai language and Manggarai culture designating the conceptualization of Manggarai speech community on the function of plant metaphor as a symbol of unity for them in the contexts of living together as members of a social group. Another reason is that there has no any study investigating in more depth the function of plant metaphor as a symbol of unity for Manggarai speech community in view of the perspective of cultural

linguistics as one of the new theoretical perspectives in cognitive linguistics exploring the relationship of language, culture and conceptualization (Palmer, 1996; Palmer and Sharifian, 2007; Sibarani, 2004; Bustan, et al, 2017).

## OBJECTIVES

In general, the objective of the study is to describe the function of plant metaphor as a symbol of unity for Manggarai speech community, as reflected in the forms and meanings of the linguistic phenomena used in the plant metaphor. Along with the two related aspects as the matters of discussion, therefore, the specific objectives of the study are as follows: (1) to describe the forms of the linguistic phenomena used in plant metaphor as a symbol of unity for Manggarai speech community and (2) to describe the meanings of the linguistic phenomena used in plant metaphor as a symbol of unity for Manggarai speech community.

## FRAMEWORK

As has been previously stated, this study is viewed from cultural linguistics as one of the new theoretical perspectives in cognitive linguistics exploring the relationship of language, culture and conceptualization with special reference to metaphor. Therefore, the following provides some conceptions dealing with metaphor.

Metaphor can be defined differently and, as a result, there are many different definitions of metaphor. Regardless such differences, Foley (1997) defines metaphor as a kind of figurative language indicated by the change of one lexical item with another lexical item. In line with this, according to Badudu (1983), metaphor deals with the use of word which does not share true meaning as it functions as an analogy based on certain similarities. In view of its function, metaphor refers to the form of word or phrase used to say something which has similarity in quality with something compared (Alwi, et al, 2008). While Verhaar (1999) argued that metaphor is concerned with the use of word or verbal expression whose literal meaning refers implicitly to another meaning through comparison based on similarity in feature, quality and behavior. This conception emphasizes that one of the prominent characteristics of metaphor is the extension of meaning from denotative to connotative meaning.

As language serves as the mirror of culture in which that language is embedded or the window of the world shared by the speakers of that language, Duranti (2001) propounded that metaphor is the implementation of the system of knowledge shared by a people as members of a speech community that

functions as a guide for them to understand the world (Casson, 1981; Wardaugh, 2011). This comes closest to the conception of Sharifian (2007) that metaphor is a part of cultural conceptualization emerging in cognition level. The conception is based on the fact that language is full of metaphors in viewing one experience based on another experience. Metaphor in this light is defined as a theory of society that contains their experiences on the world as it functions both as conceptual frame to understand the world and as linguistic device enabling them as human beings relate various domains of experiences and coherences between interrelated events (Duranti, 2001).

Besides being identified from semantic aspect as the transference of name, on the ground of its function, metaphor can also be identified from the perspective of anthropology and philosophy. In view of the perspective of anthropology and philosophy, metaphor is defined as the basic character of relationship between the human linguisticity and the world. As human linguisticity is always metaphoric in nature, it is a truism that all words and names are regarded as the results of human creation and not given by nature.

As metaphoric symbol can't be understood its meaning without reference to its context of use in discourse (Kovecses, 2009), metaphor can be identified into several kinds including nominal, predicative and sentential metaphor. Nominal metaphor and predicative metaphor can be understood their meanings by observing the contexts of sentences. Sentential metaphor can be understood its meaning on the basis of its relation with sentences preceding or following it. Nominal metaphor appears in the form of noun or noun phrase, predicative metaphor appears in the predicate of a sentence and sentential metaphor appears in the form of a complete sentence (Wahab, 1991). At the same time, metaphor can also be classified into several kinds and one of those kinds is known as plant metaphor which refers to the use of plant or its parts that creates a new form as well as a new meaning as an extension from denotative or canonic to connotative or noncanonic meaning (Pateda, 2011). Similar to other kinds of metaphor, the study of plant metaphor can be viewed from two related aspects involving form (signifier or expression) and meaning (signified or content) as the two poles of linguistic sign (Hasan, 1989; Foley, 1997). Form refers to the physical form of the linguistic phenomenon used that can be seen in the surface structure. Meaning refers to the content implied in the expression or stored in the physical form of the linguistic sign used (Bustan, 2005).

## METHODOLOGY

This study is descriptive as it describes the function of plant metaphor as a symbol of unity for Manggarai speech community, as reflected in the forms and meanings of the linguistic phenomena used.

The study was based on primary and secondary data. In line with these two kinds of data, the procedures of research done were field and library research. The field research was aimed at collecting the primary data in Manggarai region, especially in Ruteng as the main location. The methods of data collection were observation and interview. The techniques of data collection were recording, elicitation and note-taking. The sources of the primary data were Manggarai speech community as the native speakers of Manggarai language, especially those residing in Ruteng. For the purpose of the study, however, they were represented by five key informants selected on the basis of criteria provided by Faisal (1990), Spradley (1997) and Sudikan (2001). The library research was aimed at collecting the secondary data. The method of data collection was documentary study. Two kinds of documents used as the sources were general documents (books) and specific documents (articles, research report and so forth).

The data were then analyzed qualitatively by inductive method meaning that the analysis was started from the data to abstraction and concept or theory of metaphor, especially the local theory describing the function of plant metaphor as a symbol of unity for Manggarai speech community.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

The result of study shows that there is a close relationship between both Manggarai language and Manggarai culture as the source of conceptualization for Manggarai people as the members of Manggarai speech community in viewing the world. The relationship is manifested in the conceptualization of Manggarai speech community on the significance of metaphor as a part of the cultural conceptualization emerging in their cognition level with special reference to the function of plant metaphor as a symbol of unity for them, as reflected in the forms and meanings of the linguistic phenomena they employ in the plant metaphor. The forms and meanings of the linguistic phenomena they employ in the plant metaphor are specific to Manggarai culture as they reveal and designate the conceptualization ascribed and imprinted in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community on the function of plant metaphor as a symbol of unity

for them in their contexts of living together, especially in their contexts of living together as the members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogic clan.

Based on the result of data selection, the function of plant metaphor as a symbol of unity for Manggarai speech community is reflected in the forms and meanings of the linguistic phenomena used in the following verbal expression, *Muku ca pu'u neka woleng curup, teu ca ambo neka woleng lako* 'One clump of bananas doesn't talk differently, one clump of canes doesn't walk differently'. The verbal expression is one of the cultural texts inherited from the ancestors of Manggarai people that functions as a guideline for them in an effort to maintain a sense of unity and oneness in their contexts of living together as a social group, especially in their contexts of living together as the members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogic clan.

### Discussion

On the basis of the findings provided above, the following discusses the forms and meanings of the linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression, *Muku ca pu'u neka woleng curup, teu ca ambo neka woleng lako* 'One clump of bananas doesn't talk differently, one clump of canes doesn't walk differently', a plant metaphor in Manggarai language that functions as a symbol of unity for Manggarai speech community in their contexts of living together, especially in their contexts of living together as the members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogic clan.

### Forms

For the sake of clarity, the forms presented in this part are viewed from two related perspectives involving the perspective of linguistics and that of cultural linguistics. The perspective of linguistics deals with the physical forms of the linguistic phenomena, as reflected in their surface structures on the basis of conception that the structure of language used by Manggarai speech community in the plant metaphor reflects the structure of their cognition. The perspective of cultural linguistics is concerned with the features of Manggarai language used in the plant metaphor as a part of cultural conceptualization emerging in cognition level of Manggarai speech community in viewing the world that involve both the factual world and the symbolic world.

### In view of linguistic perspective

In view of linguistic perspective, as can be seen in the physical forms of the linguistic phenomena used, the verbal expression, *Muku ca pu'u neka woleng curup, teu ca ambo neka woleng lako* 'One clump of bananas doesn't talk differently, one clump of canes doesn't walk differently', is a compound sentence made up of two independent clauses or complete sentences as its component parts. The two independent clauses as its component parts are as follows: (a) *Muku ca pu'u neka woleng curup* 'One clump of bananas doesn't talk differently' and (b) *Teu ca ambo neka woleng lako* 'One clump of canes doesn't walk differently'.

The combination of the two independent clauses constructs an asyndeton structure as it is not link by coordinative conjunction *agu* 'and' or *ko* 'or' as lexical cohesive devices. This is because the construction is regarded as a fixed form for the features of the linguistic phenomena used in the plant metaphor as one of the cultural text accepted by Manggarai speech community as the social conventions inherited from their ancestors. In addition, the two independent clauses appear as negative sentences indicated by negative marker *neka* 'not' to show negation. The negative marker *neka* 'not' distributes preceding the verbal phrase *woleng curup* 'talk differently' in the independent clause (a) and distributes preceding the verbal phrase *woleng lako* 'walk differently' in the independent clause (b).

The independent clause (a), *Muku ca pu'u neka woleng curup* 'One clump of bananas doesn't talk differently', is made up of two phrases as its component parts. The two phrases as its component parts are *muku ca pu'u* 'one clump of bananas' functioning as the subject and *neka woleng curup* 'not talk differently' functioning as the predicate. The phrase *muku ca pu'u* is a nominal phrase made up of two component parts that include the word (noun) *muku* 'banana' as head or core word and the words (nominal phrase) *ca pu'u* as its modifier or attribute. The nominal phrase *ca pu'u* 'one clump' is a nominal phrase made up of two words as its component parts that include the word (adjective) *ca* 'one' as modifier or attribute and the word (noun) *pu'u* 'clump' as head core word. The word (adjective) *ca* 'one' modifies the word (noun) *pu'u* 'clump' as head or core word or, vice versa, the word (noun) *pu'u* 'clump' as head or core word is modified by the word (adjective) *ca* 'one'. The nominal phrase *muku ca pu'u* is a nominal metaphor indicated by the word (noun) *muku* 'banana' that refers to a clump of bananas.

The phrase *neka woleng curup* 'not talk differently' appears as a verbal phrase made up of

two component parts. The two component parts are the word (function word) *neka* 'not' as negative marker used to show negation as modifier and the verbal phrase *woleng curup* 'talk differently' as its head or core word. The verbal phrase *woleng curup* 'talk differently' is made up two words as its component parts. The two words as its component parts are the word (adverb) *woleng* 'differently' as the modifier and the word (verb) *curup* 'talk' as its head or core word.

The independent clause (b), *Teu ca ambo neka woleng lako* 'One clump of canes doesn't walk differently', is made up of two phrases as its component parts. The two phrases as its component parts are the nominal phrase *teu ca ambo* 'one clump of canes' functioning as the subject and the verbal phrase *neka woleng lako* 'not walk differently' functioning as the predicate. The nominal phrase *teu ca ambo* 'one clump of canes' is made up of two component parts that include the word (noun) *teu* 'cane (s)' as the head or core word and the nominal phrase *ca ambo* 'one clump' as its modifier or attribute. The nominal phrase *ca ambo* 'one clump' is made up of two words as its component parts that include the word (adjective) *ca* 'one' as its modifier or attribute and the word (noun) *ambo* 'clump' as its head or core word.

### **In view of cultural linguistic perspective**

In view of cultural linguistic perspective, the linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression, *Muku ca pu'u neka woleng curup, teu ca ambo neka woleng lako* 'One clump of bananas doesn't talk differently, one clump of canes doesn't walk differently', is a sentential metaphor. This is because the verbal expression appears as a complete sentence, that is a compound sentence made up of two independent clauses or complete sentences as its component parts involving, *Muku ca pu'u neka woleng curup* 'One clump of bananas doesn't talk differently' and *Teu ca ambo neka woleng lako* 'One clump of canes doesn't walk differently'.

While in terms of the words as the components parts making up the verbal expression, the forms of the linguistic phenomena appear as nominal metaphors and predicative metaphors. The nominal metaphors can be seen in the nominal phrases, *muku ca pu'u* 'one clump of bananas' and *teu ca ambo* 'one clump of canes' functioning as the subjects of the sentences. The predicative metaphors can be seen in the verbal phrases, *neka woleng curup* 'not talk differently' and *neka woleng lako* 'not walk differently' functioning as the predicates of the sentences. The two kinds of plants, *muku* 'banana' and *teu* 'cane', as the material symbols used in the

verbal verbal expression indicate that, in terms of the forms, the nominal metaphors are plant metaphors.

### Meanings

In line with its form as a sentential metaphor, the meaning of the linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression, *Muku ca pu'u neka woleng curup, teu ca ambo neka woleng lako* 'One clump of bananas doesn't talk differently, one clump of canes doesn't walk differently', can be understood on the basis of its relation with sentences preceding or following it. This implies that the meaning of the independent clause or complete sentence, *Muku ca pu'u neka woleng curup* 'One clump of bananas doesn't talk differently' can be understood on the basis of its relation with the independent clause or complete sentence, *Teu ca ambo neka woleng lako* 'One clump of canes doesn't walk differently' or vice versa.

Besides creating a new form, the use of the plants in the verbal expression also causes an extension of meaning from denotative to connotative meaning that reveals the conceptualization ascribed and imprinted in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community on the function of plant metaphor as a symbol unity in their contexts of living together as the members of a social group, especially in their contexts of living together as the members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogic clan. As conceptualized in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community, the contents stored in the forms of the linguistic phenomena used in the plant metaphor, *Muku ca pu'u neka woleng curup, teu ca ambo neka woleng lako* 'One clump of bananas doesn't talk differently, one clump of canes doesn't walk differently', imply some advices for them so that they must always live in unity in their contexts of living together, especially in their contexts of living together as members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogic clan.

As members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogic clan, as reflected in the nominal metaphor *muku ca pu'u* 'one clump of bananas' and *teu ca ambo* 'one clump of canes', they are prohibited from being different in words, as implied in the predicative metaphor, *neka woleng curup* 'not talk differently', and being different in deeds, as implied in the predicative metaphor, *neka woleng lako* 'not walk differently'. It is conceptualized in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community that, as members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogic clan, it is expected that their words and deeds must always be the same and go hand in hand in order to prevent them from social disharmony due

to social conflicts in their contexts of living together as a result of being different in their words and deeds.

### CONCLUSION

There is a close relationship between Manggarai language, Manggarai culture and conceptualization of Manggarai speech community in viewing the world. The relationship is manifested verbal expression, *Muku ca pu'u neka woleng curup, teu ca ambo neka woleng lako* 'One clump of bananas doesn't talk differently, one clump of canes doesn't walk differently', as a plant metaphor in Manggarai language that functions as a symbol of unity for Manggarai speech community in their contexts of living together as members of a social group, especially in their contexts of living together as the members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogic clan. This is because their existence as members of the *wa'u* is formed because of the similarity of the descendants traced according the paternal lineage.

In view of theoretical perspective, the study contributes the significance of cultural linguistics as an approach to exploring the differences between languages due to the cultural differences. In view of practical perspective, the study is beneficial for Manggarai speech community to preserve and maintain the plant metaphor in order to live and develop in the present and future because it is one of the local wisdoms inherited from their ancestors that can be used to prevent them from social disharmony in their contexts of living together as members of a social group, especially in their contexts of living together as members of the *wa'u* as a patrilineal-genealogic clan.

### REFERENCES

- Alwi, H., dkk. 2008. *Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta: Pusat Bahasa dan Balai Pustaka.
- Badudu, J. S. 1983. *Sari Kesusastraan Indonesia*. Bandung: Pustaka Prima.
- Brown, H. D. 1994. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. The USA: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Bustan, F. 2005. "Wacana budaya *tudak* dalam ritual *penti* pada kelompok etnik Manggarai di Flores Barat: sebuah kajian linguistik budaya". *Disertasi*. Denpasar: Program Doktor (S3) Linguistik Universitas Udayana.
- Bustan, F., Semiun, A and Bire, J. 2017. *The Features of Anthropomorphic Metaphor in the Manggarai Language*. Germany: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.

- Cassirer, E. 1987. *Manusia dan Kebudayaan: Sebuah Esai tentang Manusia*. Diterjemahkan oleh Alois A. Nugroho. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Casson, R. W. 1981. *Language, Culture and Cognition: Anthropological Perspectives*. New York: Macmillan.
- Duranti, A. 1997. *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Erb, M. 1999. *The Mangaraians: A Guide to Verbal Lifestyles*. Singapore: Times Editions.
- Faisal, S. 1990. *Penelitian Kualitatif: Dasar-dasar dan Aplikasi*. Malang: Yayasan Asih Asah Asuh (YA3).
- Foley, W. A. 1997. *Anthropological Linguistics: an Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Geertz, C. 1973. *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books
- Hasan, R. 1989. *Linguistics, Language, and Verbal Art*. Victoria: Deakin University.
- Keesing, R. M. 1981. "Theories of culture." In *Language, Culture and Cognition: Anthropological Perspectives*. Edited by Ronald W. Casson. New York: Macmilan.
- Kovecses, Z. 2009. "Metaphorical meaning making: discourse, language and culture". *Quardens de Filologia. Estudis Linguistics*. Vol. XIV (2009) 135-151.
- Kramersch, K. 2001. *Language and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, R. L. 1968. *The Linguistic Relativity Principle and Humboldtian Ethnolinguistics: A History and Appraisal*. Paris: The Hague
- Palmer, G. B. 1996. *Toward a Theory of Cultural Linguistics*. Austin: The University of Texas Press.
- Palmer, G. B. and Sharifian, F. 2007. "Applied cultural linguistics: an emerging paradigm". In *Applied Cultural Linguistics*. Edited by Farzard Sharifian and Gary B. Palmer. Amsterdam: John Benjamin.
- Pateda, M. 2011. *Semantik Leksikal*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Sapir, E. 1949. *Culture, Language and Personality*. David G. Mandelbaum (Ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sharifian, F. 2007. "L1 cultural conceptualization in L2 learning". In *Applied Cultural Linguistics*. Edited by Farzard Sharifian and Gary B. Palmer. Amsterdam: John Benjamin.
- Sibarani, R. 2004. *Antropolinguistik: Antropolinguistik - Linguistik Antropologi*. Medan: Penerbit Poda
- Spradley, J. P. 1997. *Metode Etnografi*. Diterjemahkan oleh Misbah Zulfa Elizabeth. Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana Yogya.
- Sudikan, S. Y. 2001. *Metode Penelitian Kebudayaan*. Surabaya: Unesa Unipress bekerjasama dengan Citra Wacana.
- Wahab, A. 1990. *Butir-butir Linguistik*. Surabaya: Airlangga University Press.
- Wardaugh, R. 2011. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Whorf, B. L. 2001. "The relationship of habitual thought and behavior to language". In *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*. Edited by Alessandro Duranti. Massachussets: Blackwell Publishers.
- Verhaar, J. W. M. 1999. *Pengantar Linguistik*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Verheijen, A. J. 1991. *Manggarai dan Wujud Tertinggi*. Diterjemahkan oleh Alex Beding dan Marsel Beding. Jakarta: LIPI-RUL.