

RITUAL DISCOURSE TRADITIONAL RICE PLANTING COMMUNITY OF RONGGA, EASTERN PART OF FLORES ISLAND

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ABSTRAK

This is the study of the traditional rice planting ritual discourse community of Rongga, Manggarai Eastern of Flores. The research is an ethnopragsmatics intended to understand the social practices bound by cultural context in ritual rice planting. This cultural context contains the values of local wisdom, behavior, social categories, emotions, beliefs, and so on. Ethnopragsmatik is supported by theories eclectically, namely the theory of critical discourse analysis, ethnography of communication, speech acts, natural semantic, and cultural discourse of culture. It is specifically aimed at describing the cultural norms and their meaning configurations. The theory used in the study is the cultural scripts developed by Wierzbicka (1994, 2002) considering that cultural norms constitute rules and regulations in social interaction practices. They can be investigated from the use of grammatical aspects of language and linguistic routines which are context-bound. They can be configured by paraphrasing in simple language.
Keywords: Ritual discourse, language structure, context-bound

INTRODUCTION

Ronggan is one of the regional languages living and developing and is well maintained in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. As a mother tongue, the Ronggan is widely spoken among the Ronggans daily life at such as house-hold, school, social interaction as well as in a ritual ceremony.

Majorly, among the Ronggan ethnicity, there currently live several traditional ritual ceremonies one of them is the rites associated to the field or the garden such as forest chopping, field/garden cleansing, sawing corn, rice seeds, harvesting rites done as a thank-giving for the field of crops.

The Ronggan is not only spoken as a medium of social communication among the community of the Ronggan ethnicity but is also uttered within the ritual context among them. As the ethnic language, it also at the same time functions as the ethnic marker or symbol, and the Ronggan language serves as a means of communication in order to maintain and inherit the tradition, chiefly, in the traditional ceremonies or the other ritual ones. The heritages meant are the one of ancestor's either tangible or intangible ones well wrapped in the cultural package. From the ritual view-point, the Ronggan language preserves two functions namely (1) as a means of communication, and (2) as a medium of instruction in the ritual activity among the Ronggan ethnicities.

As a part of culture, the language brings along three entities namely (1) the language as a complexity of ideas, value, norms, and regulations, (2) the language as the complexity of the mankind patterned behavioural activity in the society, and (3) the language as the product result of the human culture. As the prime existence it has the most precious values among the speakers for it is believed that it has the value domain by which to express it and it also preserves the value to be followed by the significance of an expression. Such a norm has something to do with an act deserving to do within the particular roles. The language as a collection of the ideas, it truly contains something dealing with the cultural values that is a conception considered most valuable in the social life, primarily, the society of Ronggan ethnicity.

As a symbol, the Ronggan language could be made a tool of communication by which to understand the culture either at the moment or in the future. It may be viewed as a resource on how to respond to the cultural mystery starting from the behaviour up to the development and the preservation of the ethnic cultural values of the Ronggan ethnicity.

In the ritual function, the Ronggan language is meant as a discourse in which the Ronggan is spoken in a ritual activity referred to as *ngaja adha*. The rite with the Ronggan society is one of the oral expressions in Ronggan language. The position it occupies as a regional language, the Ronggan language functions as (1) symbol of the regional identity, (2) a symbol of the regional pride, (3) and, an inter-family

medium of instructions, primarily, within the Rongga society. It does not only serve as a means of communication but it is also spoken in a ritual activity such as the one of study in this research. This research is particularly and deeply studied over the phenomenon of language spoken as a cultural element among the Ronggan ethnic society occupying the major parts of the Manggarai Regency in East Flores, Province of East Nusa Tenggara (ENT). Since it ranges over a wide area, the main point of observation in this research focuses upon structural analysis, and entity and meaning. The character of the language unit spoken in a ritual utterance discourse is related to the rice planting namely '*Mbasa Wini*'. The rice planting, hereinafter, is referred to as one of Ronggan community rites still rooting in depth until nowadays. There are several phases in the rice planting process those are (1) blessing of corn and rice seeds (*to kungu*), (2) rice and corn seed planting event, (3) rice and maize harvest rituals.

Research conducted is a field research that is ethnographic synchronous, namely the observation of the phenomenon or the real and natural aspects of a Rongga community. Research location is in the Rongga area. The source of data is the event of the rice field ritual tradition practiced by ethnic Rongga. The data is in the form of video recording, audio visual and oral data.

Data collection will be done by observation method, interview, questionnaire, and documentation. The linguistic structure is the one in a rice planting discourse in the form of utterance spoken in the Ronggan society. The ritual utterance, hereinafter, is referred to as the ritual utterance through a sacrifice symbol used by Ronggan society in relation to a rite chiefly within the family environment that is the rice plating. The ritual entity is the existence of a sacrifice in relation to the rice planting ritual. Therefore, the significance studied is the contextual one beyond the ritual discourse.

This research takes 4 chief clans coming from the area of original Rongga as the informants from whom the data are obtained. The purpose to achieve in this research is to obtain an objective description over the Rice Planting Utterance Discourse among the Ronggan Society and this study belongs to the Etnopragmatik is supported by theories eclectically, namely the theory of critical discourse analysis, ethnography of communication, speech acts, natural semantic, and culture.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method is the main attempt done to achieve the research purpose. The study of BRD among Ronggan ethnicity in East Manggarai-ENT Province necessitates a scientific method. This method becomes the primary pillar in describing the ethnopragmatics phenomena in the BRD. The main principle of a method is to mean manner, procedure, principle, framework, and and the like according to several experts. The method plays an important role in order to direct and to structure the research more deeply.

The research method is both abstraction and synthesis of the theory and the research questions described in the form of a discourse. This research method is intended as a theory of abstraction and synthesis theory (ethnographic) as well as the research questions previously defined that is birth ritual discourse in form of an utterance in exploring structure, entity, and meaning containing in the birth ritual discourse among the Ronggan ethnicity (Wierzbicka, 2002).

Therefore, the research is designed in a synchronic-ethnographic field research describing language in use in both social and cultural aspects of community in certain speech events. The method used for collecting data was non-participative observation (Bungin, 2001:57; Moleong, 2000) supported with recording and note-taking techniques (Bungin, 2003; Sudaryanto, 1993:25). Then, an in-depth interview method was also employed, especially in collecting further information or data.

DATA OF ANALYSIS

This part of the discussion analyses the cultural norms in the traditional rice planting ritual discourse of the traditional farming community of Rongga Manggarai and their meaning configuration. Cultural norms on traditional rice planting ritual discourse of the traditional farming community of Rongga-Manggarai are determined by ritual culture (Wierzbicka, 2002). The ritual farming community of Rongga-Manggarai Timur-NTT is considered the core discourse containing cultural practices which can be used as a guideline or model for discovering the cultural norms.

The research result of the farming is under the qualitative approach that the ritual discourse structure discovers a language mysticism composed and ordered so that it conforms to a unit of

significance. The rice planting structure may be classified in details consisting of introduction, core, and closing. The introduction contains the preparation in the form of sacrifice, opening regard, delivery of purpose and intention, and request. The core contains preparations in forms of ritual entity such as chickens, rice, alcohol, coconuts, sula leaves as well as a request delivery in form of an utterance. The closing, this part contains information of thanks-giving to the ancestors for the ritual process that has already been held.

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Ritual Discourse Analysis

1) Asserting thoughts and hopes

The traditional farming community of Rongga, Manggarai tends to assert their thoughts and hopes directly in doing traditional rice planting ritual. *“Zenge zia kau nitu watu tana”* Please listen and accept all these things, please. The utterance *zenge zia, kau nitu tana*, contains a message that the farmers do want to reconfirm something which has happened. *“Nitu Tana”* as lord of the water spring in the very beginning phase of ritual, ‘ritual on keeping the water spring’ and their religion and custom leaders. Soon after they respect them, they may request something. The respect is reflected in the lexicon ‘*zenge kau*’ my offering’.

2) Respecting other ancestor “*Laka kau embu, kau nusi, kau ata Nggeli*”

According to the local regulation the traditional farming community has to respect other entities, such as ancestors. It is believed that when the traditional farming community respects the other entities, something good will happen accordingly. The respect includes aspects of thinking, saying, and doing. They do it because they believe something good will happen. This way of communication constitutes the representation of traditional rules and norms of the local tradition. Respecting other entities implies making friendship. The traditional farming community always makes it when they do the ritual for the rice pregnancy. In this case, the Goddess of rice who is *prabhat* is considered their friend. Therefore, they should look after her in order to get the qualification and more results. They offer purification, like fulfilling and inserting bamboo planted in the rice field with some items.

3) Hope

In the ritual, there is always hope that during the growing period, corn and rice will flourish. The Rongga ethnic group believes that during the growing period of rice and corn, they will always be afraid that something will happen. Therefore they asked their ancestors so that everything would run smoothly until harvesting. The following configuration is; *“tudi tolo pate, uta tolo rui”*

4) Promising is in line with cognitive emotion.

The traditional farming community of Rongga, Manggarai promise easily when they believe something good will happen with them. Therefore, they should keep their promises. Promise is closely dealt with such aspects as thinking, saying, and doing (Goddard, 2004). Promises can be verbally expressed after the community has thought something good will happen with them. They then can do something as promised. Based on the general rules for promising, such things as who promises whom, what relation they are in, what they promise for, where it takes place, and the like can be taken into account. The traditional farming community promises Goddess of rice in the conditional situation.

CONCLUSION

This research conclusion is that the form of the ritual discourse of the Ronggan ethnicity is a prayer and an expectation consisting of sentential series of the ritual utterance. It is a structured sequence and contains a very deep significance along with the tradition of the Ronggan ethnicity beliefs. The symbolic significance is also found in the ritual discourse. Basically, the ritual sequence is the realisation of

gratitude to the ancestor of all of his poured down blessing over the days already passed and request for a protection over the coming days. The entity used in this RPD ritual ceremony is full of significance and value of living. Both serving and sacrifice offered symbolises love, passion, kindness, purity, happiness, and, gratitude. Several aspects are concluded in this rice planting research that is the utterance form of the RPD is the monological oral form. It is said monological for in the ritual ceremony, the interlocutor is not present intactly and there is no response. The interlocutor's presence in this ritual ceremony is only a confidence and belief of the Rongga ethnicity over the interlocutor entity and the interlocutor concerned in this ritual ceremony is the ancestors. If it is so, thus, the utterance delivered cannot be responded to by the interlocutor, however, the utterance delivered could only be seen through the chicken's belly. However, the structural phase in the BRD consists of procedures: (1) inviting, (2) notifying, (3) honouring, (4) sacrificing, (5) thanksgiving. The structure may signify the following: (1) togetherness, (2) politeness, (3) request, (4) modesty, (5) obedience, (6) gratitude, (6) religion.

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