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Generic and Specific Lexicons of Sago

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Abstract

Each entity within the vocabulary circles of Sago possesses both generic and specific lexicons following the practical and sociocultural experiences of the Irires community living in the regency of Tambrauw, the Province of West Papua. The generic and particular dictionaries have the naming related to the environment understood and lived by the Irires community. Language and culture are those things that need to be revitalized, more specifically, those that relate to the entity within the sago environment. The revitalization of the entity of language, in turn, will impact the environment. Thus, living language about the sago lexicons indicates that the sago environment is still preserved.

1. Introduction

Etymologically, the word Irires is derived from the word iri, "river," and the word *res*, "stream" (Syufi, 2014; 2021). This suggests that the Irires people live as they live by the river. This article will discuss the generic and specific lexicons of Sago possessed by the Irires people living in the southern part of the regency of Tambrauw from the ecolinguistics perspective. This will explore the vocabulary richness of the people as a result of their interaction with nature, most specifically with the environment of Sago. The knowledge of the lexicons is based on the visual experiences at first before being stored cognitively.

Human-nature relations can be described through language (Brown, 2004; Gonzales, 2019; Mbakop, 2021). Humans represent nature through language to record all aspects of flora and fauna (Yadnya et al., 2021). The recording of all those aspects of flora dan fauna is through naming. They are naming functions to classify the entities according to the perspective of their language users. Therefore, vocabulary is the key to representing the nature of the flora and fauna of certain communities (Szudarski, 2017). Here, the focus will be given to the lexicons relating to the activities of the Irires people and how they perceive the nature of flora dan fauna.

Local wisdom is invaluable in representing the culture of the Irires People. Local wisdom is a part of cultural tradition or oral tradition. It is the source of character building for the young

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generation (Sibarani, 2014, p. 45). Local wisdom includes local practices, local norms, local knowledge, local skill, local institutions, and local beauties (Sibarani, 2012, p. 57). About this, Irires people have this local knowledge, both generic and specific relating to sago lexicons. This is reflected through the naming structure in the Irires language. Based on its nature, language cannot draw directly on things (Lycan, 2018); therefore, it uses indirect ways through terminology. Language and mind are integrated so that each human activity needs language to explain meaning and value in the cognition of the community's socio-culture. This is to say that the knowledge domain here is accepted as a cultural value (Duranti, 2011, p. 103).

The Irires language exists as a part of its people's culture; it is a unit of the Irires people's culture. According to Sibarani (2012:49), the relation between language and culture is that language should be learned in the context of culture, and culture can be learned through language. The existence of lexicons indicates that the language is still living and not in danger of extinction (Tualaka, D., & Langkameng, 2022). The following will cover specific glossaries of Sago and the cultural system of sago processing and its taboos. The focus will be on the meaning of Sago as a representation of the Irires people living in the village of Miri, Ifiam, Atafrumek, Meinad, Meis, Wafmana, and Aifamas (Syufi, 2016, p. 4). Those villages are located in the Irires District of the Tambrauw Regency in the Province of West Papua.

The discussion will show how interconnected language and culture are in learning the cultural elements included in the language patterns designed by the language users to study language and culture related to humans and activities (Sibarani, 2012, p. 51). Thus, language system does not restrain the culture system; it is actually within the whole system of culture (Duranti, 2011, p. 336).

2. Material and Method

Garfinkel (1972) explains that ethnomethodology, as shown, offered several important and innovative ideas for those researchers interested in applying traditional ethnographic methods to study everyday speaking. In addition, Duranti (2011:11) says that linguistic anthropologists have also benefited from the work of contemporary social theorists who pay particular attention to the constitution of society and culture in everyday life. He adds that to underline how knowledge is never neutral and always a form of power. Foucault suggests that we think of it in terms of spatial concepts such as "region domain, implantation, displacement, transposition."

According to Sudaryanto (2015:9), method refers to ways to do or apply something; meanwhile, technique refers to how to do or apply the methods. The method used for this study is qualitative descriptive to describe the concepts theoretically and practically. The descriptive qualitative design has many similarities with descriptive quantitative design, so the qualitative descriptive method can also be called quasi-qualitative (Bungin, 2011, p. 68).

Language is a naming order, and there are different concepts regarding this (Halliday, 1978). From the perspective of Mayerthaler (1988:6), it refers to morphology which is the theory of word structure, the apparatus of morphological rules are defined by the nature of a (morphological) word of the language (Bratlie et al., 2022). Morphology, as the focus of this study, will only refer to nouns, verbs, and adjectives of the Irires language. Nouns refer to meaning construction or terms for all things or anything nominalized (Suryati et al., 2022). Based on the forms, nouns can be divided into a base for derivative nouns and derivative nouns itself (Nikolaeva, I., & Spencer, 2020). Base nouns are the base for derivative nouns through the morphological process; base nouns can stand alone.

3. Results and Discussion

The discussion section will cover the lexicon of Sago and the ceremony system before and after the processing of Sago. Sago can be classified into two types: *mendow ages*," the male Sago," does not produce starch (Warami, 2013). On the contrary, *mendow aflaj, "*female sago," is the one that produces sago starch. When the Sago is cut into two parts, two specific lexicons are used. Mendirgid is used for the uppercut of the Sago, and *mendirmow* for the lower cut of the Sago. Both *mendirgid* and *mendirmow* are regarded as specific vocabulary because they differ from the use of language, usually referring to upper and lower cuts on wood, bamboo, iron, stone, etc. The uppercut on wood is called *mer awirgid*, while the lower amount on wood is called *mer awir mow*. The uppercut of bamboo is called *mendag awir gid*, and the lower cut is called *mendag awir mow*.

All references are to cut for other things, but Sago uses the wood *awir*, while for Sago, the word *mendir* is used. In relation to the container from sago fronds used when squeezing Sago, the upper part is called afes; while the lower part for collecting the sago starch is called *afaj.* Since the vocabulary referring to the upper and lower part of the container are those particularly pointing to male and female, this might also indicate the relation of power between male and female. The male position is regarded as on top, suggesting that men hold more power than women in society. Another specific lexicon is *mendow ahaweus*. This lexicon is used when water resulting from the squeezing activity has transformed into starch. The lexicon eus here means white.

It can be assumed that there is a morphological process in forming the word by adding the lexicon *ahaweus*. This process aims at harmonizing the sounds. Next, the lexicon *memsug.* This is also a specific lexicon referring to wood used to stab and cut Sago into two parts. The generic reference for timber used in the agriculture field to make holes to pour seeds in the Irires language is *meckur*. The lexicon *memsug* also specifies the wood's physical form to be long and big, different from *meckur,* which is not too long nor too big. Meanwhile, the reference for timber used to stab and cut trees or wild bananas is mergoh. This process of penetrating wood or wild banana is usually conducted between the age of four to seven years old.

This practice of stabbing wood represents the Irire's youth before they could use spears for stabbing " *mek* for boars, deer, or *menenon*" for cassowary and other big hunted animals. Lyons (1977:204) states that giving a word meaning indicates understanding the study of the word related to the relation of the meaning of different words. As an example, the lexicon *ahaweus* has several meaning relations. The first meaning relates to the sago processing activity. The second meaning relates to the tree that has been cut and is about to fall with its leaves turned upside down. The third meaning relates to poisoned fish whose belly part is upside down, usually referred to as *menggomei ahaweus*. Another of *ahaweus* refers to a person about to drown, and their eyes are turning upside down. The last example presented here about the specific lexicon for Sago is *ipek afah*. This specific vocabulary means that when there is an activity of sago processing, especially in no production of sago starch. The lexicons also mean when poisoning fish using derris elliptica roots, no guests are allowed, for this will result in either the fish returning to life or no catch at all.

The reference for the activity of squeezing Sago is *uf menur*. However, when in the process of squeezing Sago, the reference used is *ipek afah*. This is to suggest that during this process, no guests are allowed because the tradition of the Irires people confirms that this will affect starch production. Further, at the time of worship for the activity of sago processing, two specific lexicons are used in the traditional system of the Irires language, namely *iref menggor* and *ihnah menggor*. *Iref menggor* means feeding guests on the occasion of either food or folk festivals. This kind of festival is presented when there is new food and family and guests join in eating the food together, such as *mengukei* "nuts," moi sweet potatoes," and mamp pandanus."The Irires People no longer practice the culture of

iref mengggor, and the lexicon itself has already shifted in meaning to refer to a practice of giving ample food to either siblings or relatives.

Thus, *iref mentor* now means giving ample food. Meanwhile, *menggor* refers to offering food to the spirits to ask them not to intrude on the process of squeezing Sago, farming, hunting, and concocting Sago. In this offering ceremony, the people of Irires usually have five packs. Three packs are filled with Sago, soil, rotten wood, and pork. The offerings for the spirit are symbols. Soil represents the center of human life and the rotten wood symbol death.

In the past, before the presence of modern religion, people usually put rotten wood in the intersection to sign that relatives were passing away. Discursive provides guidelines to individuals and groups to conduct activities according to the nature of their thoughts (Syufi, 2019, p. 41). For this reason, nature should be preserved so that there will be balance in life and nature will be home for all living things. The damage in nature indirectly reflects the crack in the language of its community, more specifically, the damage in terms of the lexicons (Syufi, 2019, p. 33).

Furthermore, the traditions of packing the Sago, as mentioned above, represent strong bonds between the Irires people and the spirits, even though they live in different realms. One more specific lexicon relating to Sago in the Irires language is mendow agengen. This refers to the sago navel. It is a bit strange that Sago has a navel, but here, Sago is assumed to be like humans and animals with navels.

Humans have ways to get their basic needs, such as food and housing, through adaptation to nature or through cultivating character. The cultivation should take into consideration the issue of natural balance. In relation to Sago, nature balance can mean Sago is a local food source in times of famine. Besides, Sago can be a source of energy to uplift the people's spirit after crop failure in the dry season.

Through verbal expression in the texts about Sago, individually or collectively, the people of Irires believe that Sago is a gift from God that needs to be well cultivated, preserved, and managed for the sustainability of the life of this generation and future generation for the local food security. Besides the explanation of the generic and specific vocabulary, some other explanation needs to be presented here as well, that as the explanation of the perspectives of anthropocentrism, biocentrism, and ecocentrism toward nature. Anthropocentrism is the theory of environmental ethics that sees humans as the center of the system of the universe (Keraf, 2010, p. 47). This type of view results in the massive and structural destruction of forests and other living things such as flora and fauna. In other words, Sago might not exist as it is already destroyed.

If Sago is extinct, all lexicons, both generic and specific referring to it will as well go into extinction. This is all due to how humans perceive their authority by looking at nature as mere objects to be exploited. Thus, this anthropocentric point of view contributes much to the destruction of the environment, including that of Sago. On the other hand, the biocentrism way of thinking stresses the importance of respecting and loving nature because every being is precious (Keraf, 2010, p. 65). This kind of view leads to conservation. About Sago, this view will be interpreted as humans living their life utilizing Sago as local food security. This is so because Sago is regarded as a tree of life, giving lots of benefits to all living beings: humans, flora, and fauna, from the perspective of Paul Tylor, as cited in Keraf (2010:69).

Biocentrism is based on four beliefs, as follows. The first belief is that humans are members of the living community on Earth, just like other living beings. The second one is that the species of human beings and all other species are parts of an interconnected system. This signifies interdependency, which in turn means that the relation among each species is significant for both their reproduction and life sustainability. The third belief perceives that all organisms are the centers of life with their purposes. Thus, each organism is unique. The last one is the belief that humans are

not the most superior being. Based on these beliefs, it is important to respect the relationship between the people of Irires and the Sago environment, especially concerning the generic and specific lexicons.

The terms ecocentrism and biocentrism are often used interchangeably since they have much in common. Both theories contradict the one on anthropocentrism, which limits the ethics only to the community of human beings (Keraf, 2010, p. 92). Traditional communities mostly view their relationship with nature through the perspective of ecocentrism. They see nature as the breath to each of their activities in life and that it connects with sacred things.

This point of view is implemented to protect the relationship between the people and their surrounding nature. To conclude, generic and specific lexicons of Sago of the Irires people symbolized their relation with Sago. As Sago can live everywhere, both in damp places that do not need fertilizers and irrigation, they can lift each other, not destroy each other. This symbolizes the people who are there to help lift each other. To sum up, sociocultural cognition is very important in managing the naming order of nature, both biotic and abiotic.

4. Conclusion

Each tribe has its own generic and specific lexicons referring to various entities. Those can be lexicons about willing sites, flora and fauna, and cultural activities. The entity of language is the one binding all those other entities, as it acts as a sociocultural identity. In the language, the people of Irires of Tambrauw Regency of West Papua Province name their surroundings. Preserving the sago environment correlates positively with the lexicons, as it will be part of language and culture revitalization. In other words, if there is damage in nature, there is damage in language.

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