



THE MEANING OF THE MINANGKABAU VERB 'MANGECEK': A NATURAL SEMANTIC METALANGUAGE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze words in Minangkabau that have the same semantic prime: 'mangecek' using Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM). This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach. This research used a theory by Goddard and Wierzbicka about NSM. The data found in this study were connected words that are associated with the prima semantic 'say'/'mangecek' in Minangkabau language. The sources of this data were the 10 informants who native speakers from Padang city, which is the capital city of the West Sumatera province. The data were collected using interview guidelines, recording equipment, and writing equipment. An interactive model of data analysis is used to analyze the data. From the data that were collected and analyzed there are a total of 10 words related to the semantic prime of 'Say': *maupek*, *bacariuk*, *malawan*, *mangaluah*, *manyindia*, *marayu*, *bagunjiang*, *manyabuik*, *mamuji*, and *manyapo*. These words are similar but not exactly the same so it will create misunderstanding in the diction.

Key words: Natural Semantic Metalanguage, Minangkabau language, *mangecek*, allolexy, polysemy.

A. INTRODUCTION

The field of linguistics is concerned with the study of the form and meaning of language. The complexity of meaning produced in a language can be influenced by the presence of cultural and environmental features that creates difficulty in understanding meaning contained. Difficulties in knowing and understanding the meaning of a language usually appears in units of language that have special meanings in the form of idiomatic meaning. The meaning cannot be predicted by translating it literally.

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Understanding the meaning of language is related to a linguistic branch called Semantics. Semantic is the study of how to express the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences that focuses on the conventional meaning. Studying meaning in semantics can be done by using different approaches or theories, one of which is using Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) approaches. Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) is a philosophy that focuses on deconstructing the meaning of words until the core meaning is discovered. Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) is a theory that focuses on deconstructing the meaning of words until the core meanings are found. Goddard (2008) defines NSM as a system that deconstruct meaning by using the universally accepted semantic primes (p.1). It means that NSM is tool in finding the core meaning of words. This also suggests that the semantic primes were used which is something that is widely agreed.

When conducting NSM analysis, it is required to use reductive paraphrase. It is a clear sentence-based interpretation of concept terms using words that can no longer be deciphered. Reductive paraphrase, according to Durst (2004), is a sentence-like explanation used to express the idea of meaning.

Semantic primes are needed in NSM to decode the meaning of words in all languages. Goddard and Wierzbicka (2014) stated that, in that semantic primes are units of word-meaning that cannot be furthermore elaborate (p.11). Semantic primes are units that can no longer be deciphered because they are the origin of the meaning of the words.

Sharifian and Palmer (2007: 108) classified the syntactic primes for three semantic primes:

1. Do
X does something
X does something to someone [patient]
X does something to someone with something [patient + Instrument]
2. Happen
Something happens
Something happens to someone [undergoer]
Something happens somewhere [locus]
3. Say
X say something
X say something to someone [addressee]
X say something about something [locutionary topic]
X say: "...” [direct speech]

The number of semantic primes has been growing since its inception in 1972. There are only 14 semantic primes at first, according to Goddard and Peeters (2008, pp. 15-17). It grew to 53 semantic primes in 1996 and continues to grow to 65 semantic primes now.

Table 2.1 Related categories of semantic primes (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2014:14)

Related Categories	Semantic Primes
Substantives	I-me, you, someone, something-thing, people, body
Relational substantives	kind, parts
Determiners	this, the same, other-else
Quantifiers	one, two, some, all, much-many, little-few
Evaluators	good, bad
Descriptors	big, small
Mental predicates	know, think, want, do not want, feel, see, hear
Speech	say, words, true
Actions, events, movement, contact	do, happen, move, touch
Location, existence, possession, specification	be (somewhere), there is, be (someone)’s, be (someone/something)
Life and death	live, die
Time	when-time, now, before, after, a long time, a short time, for some time, moment
Space	where-place, here, above, below, far, near, side, inside
Logical concepts	no, maybe, can, because, if
Intensifier, augmentor	very, more intensifier
Similarity	like, way, as

Table 2.3 shows that there are 16 related categories that exist in all languages. Each category has a number of semantic primes, which are the central meanings or definitions of all the word’s languages. It can also be deduced from the table above that many semantic primes share the same categories. Synonyms or related terms will emerge as a result.

Allollexy is a term used to describe situations in which several different words or word-forms (allollexes) express the same meaning in different contexts. The concepts of allollexy are important in NSM, particularly for inflection language. Goddard (2008: p.6) stated allollexy is when there is more than one word that expresses one semantic prime. Goddard (2002: 20) also explained that allollexy was a concept created in 1980 by Wierzbicka when she observed that the meanings of words are not free from variations.

Polysemy is when one word is used to express two different semantic primes (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2014: 13). Some words required more than one semantic prime to express the core meaning completely, hence the existence of polysemy. Polysemy is another fundamental concept in NSM theory, defined as single lexicon from that can express two distinct primary meanings but lacks a compositional relationship between its exponents of the same original meaning may be polysemic in different ways in different languages. Goddard (1996:29) as cited Indrawati (2006) states that in the simple level, exponent of the same

semantic prime maybe become polysemy in different languages by means of a different way as well.

Based on the description before, there are several reasons why the researcher is interested in conducting research about the verb '*mangecek*' in Minangkabau language with NSM theory. First, the researcher has been looking for similar studies on semantic 'say' verb that have been carried out by other researchers in which they used the NSM theory but no one has studied about the verb 'say' in Minangkabau language that is '*mangecek*'. Second the variation of the word '*mangecek*'. The variation the verb '*mangecek*' are: '*maupek*', '*bacaruik*', '*malawan*' etc. Because of those reasons the researcher analyzed each word that related to semantic prime '*mangecek*'/'say' to diminish ambiguities and mishaps when someone is expressing the verb 'say' in Minangkabau language. This study is important because the study highlights the different meanings of the Minangkabau verb which are connected with the semantic prime '*mangecek*'/'say' reduces the number fallacy and errors in choosing the right word to express the meaning.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative method, because this research was analyzing non-numeric data. The data of this research were obtained from the ten informants by asking the list of words related to the meaning of the act of saying '*mangecek*' in Minangkabau language. The informants were the native speakers of Minangkabau language. There are two kinds of instruments in this research. First is the key instrument. The key instrument that will be used in collecting the data to conduct this research will be the researcher herself. Second is the supporting instrument. The supporting instrument that will be used to collect the data of this research will be interview guidelines, recording equipment, and writing equipment. The researcher collected the data based on the following step: First, the researcher used the following resources, such as an interview guideline to assist the interview in answering questions and the word list to elicit explanations from the informants. Second, the researcher listened to the informants who are native speakers of the Minangkabau language. The next technique was taking notes. The final technique was transcription.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There are a lot of words formed similar but are actually different in Minangkabau language, even though the words share one semantic prime: 'say'/'*mangecek*'. This suggests the ambiguity and incorrect diction can be common in Minangkabau speaking of words that use 'say'/'*mangecek*' prime semantics as their core meaning. After analyzing the data, the following are the words found in the Minangkabau language which are connected to the 'say'/'*mangecek*' semantic prime found in Minangkabau language. It can be seen that there are ten words in Minangkabau language that are connected with the 'say'/'*mangecek*' semantic prime. This means that there are ten words that are the allolexy of the semantic prime 'say'/'*mangecek*'. These ten words are '*maupek*', '*bacaruik*', '*malawan*', '*mangaluah*', '*manyindia*', '*marayu*', '*bagunjiang*',

'*manyabuik*', '*mamuji*', '*manyapo*'. These ten words are also polysemy of five sets of semantic prime numbers, namely "SAY/FEEL, SAY/FEEL/WANT, SAY/WANT, SAY/KNOW/WANT, SAY/KNOW/SEE, SAY/SEE".

The first polysemies are SAY/FEEL: '*maupek*', '*bacaruik*', and '*malawan*'. All of the them has the similar negative connotation but they are not the same. They are different in how they express their feeling, how they feel after expressing it, how the it affects others person or thing feeling and the intention.

(1) *maupek* 'curse'

X say something to Y (i)

X say something bad about something (human/thing) (ii)

Because X feel something (regret) about this (iii)

X say something like this (iv)

(2) *bacaruik* 'swear'

X say something bad to Y (i)

X feels something [angry] about Y (ii)

X want Y to feel bad (iii)

Y feels bad (iv)

Y does not want this (v)

X say something like this (vi)

(3) *malawan* 'against'

X say something bad to Y (i)

X feels something [disagree] about Y (ii)

X want Y to know this (iii)

Y feels bad about this (iv)

X say something like this (v)

From the explication above, it can be seen that both words are similar but not the same. They are both different how they express their feelings by saying something and how badly it affects the thing. The word '*maupek*', as can be seen in (1ii) to (1iii) the person says something bad to others which in this case called as something (human/thing) and wants to express the feeling which is in this case is regret. From the paraphrase in (2) it can be seen that the meaning of '*bacaruik*' is the act of saying something which is done to express what is the person feel and this is done intentionally and with the intention to make the recipient to feel bad and causing hurt about it as in line (2ii) to (2v). '*Malawan*' from lines (3ii) to (3iii), this action carried out to say something bad to other in term to defense their self because they feel disagree about what others say.

The second polysemy is SAY/FEEL/WANT. This is the action of saying something while feeling something about it and want something from it. The words that were found were: '*mangaluah*' and '*manyindia*'.

(4) *mangaluah* 'complain'

X say something (i)

X say something to Y (ii)

X say something about something (dissatisfied) (iii)
 Because X think like this: (iv)
 X do not want this (v)
 X feels (disappointed) (vi)
 X want Y to know about this (vii)
 X say something like this (viii)

(5) *manyindia* ‘sarcasm’
 X say something to Y (i)
 X say it because: (ii)
 X do not like Y (iii)
 X think Y is bad person (iv)
 X do this for some time (v)
 X want Y to feel bad (vi)
 Y do not want this (vii)
 X say something like this (viii)

‘*Mangaluah*’ was done by saying something based on the actor feels which in this case was ungrateful and want the recipient to know what the actor feels and want to get sympathize. ‘*Mangaluah*’ do not have an intention to hurt the recipient. ‘*Mangaluah*’ have the same negative connotation with the ‘*manyindiai*’ but there are some differences. ‘*Manyindia*’ dislikes the recipient and wants to hurt the recipient's feelings. So that the intention of ‘*manyindia*’ is the recipient.

The third polysemy is SAY/WANT; this is the action of saying something good to the recipient because the actor wants something from recipient. The word that was found was: ‘*marayu*’

(6) *marayu* ‘persuade’
 X say something good to Y (i)
 X say it because: (ii)
 X want something from Y (iii)
 X think Y can give something to X (iv)
 X say something like this (v)

‘*Marayu*’ shows that this word only focuses on the action of saying something good with the intention to get something from the recipient. This word has a positive connotation.

The fourth polysemy is SAY/KNOW/WANT; this is the action of saying something because the actor knows something that the recipient does not know and want to say it to the recipient. The words that were found were: ‘*bagunjiang*’, and ‘*manyabuik*’.

(7) *bagunjiang* ‘gossip’
 X say something to Y (i)

- X say it because: (ii)
- X want Y to know something about someone (iii)
- X say something bad about someone (iv)
- Because X thinks like this: (v)
- X see someone do something wrong (vi)
- X hear something bad about someone (vii)
- X say something like this (viii)

(8) *manyabuik* 'mention'

- X say something to Y (i)
- X say something because: (ii)
- X want Y to know about something (iii)
- X think X know more about something (iv)
- X want this to happen (v)
- X say something like this (vi)

Although they have similarity that the actor knows more information than the recipient, '*bagunjiang*' has a negative connotation, while '*manyabuik*' has a positive connotation. Another difference between them can be seen on what the actor said. '*Bacaruik*' saying something bad to the recipient. Unlike '*manyabuik*' just saying something to give an information to the recipient.

The fifth polysemy is SAY/KNOW/SEE, this is the action of saying something to someone else and knowing it by seeing that person. The word that was found was: '*mamuji*'.

(9) *Mamuji* 'praise'

- X say something good to Y (i)
- X say It because: (ii)
- X think Y have something good (iii)
- X see Y doing something good (iv)
- X see something good from Y (v)
- X feels something (happy) with this (vi)
- X want Y feels something (happy) (vii)
- Y feels something (happy) (viii)
- X say something like this (ix)

From lines (9i) to (9ix) showed that "*mamuji*" is the act of saying something good intentionally to recipient because of the actor know and see something good from the recipient at the same time. This means that this word is done when someone meet another person and express what they feel about them.

The last polysemy is SAY/SEE; this is the action of saying something while seeing someone at the same time. The word that was found was: '*manyapo*'

(10) *manyapo* 'greet'

- X say something to Y for a short time (i)

X say this because: (ii)

X want to say something (information) to Y (iii)

X say something like this (iv)

'*Manyapo*' with the conceptual meaning of saying is saying something as a form of opening when he wants to say something to the recipient.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Many words sound similar but actually have different meanings, therefore NSM is a tool to find these meanings. Because NSM is a theory that focusing on deconstructing the meaning of words until the core meanings are found. NSM theory can help give explanations that capture the meaning of each word In Minangkabau language there are a lot of words with similar semantic prime '*mangecek*'/'say' found, none of them are identically the same. It can be seen that even those the words have highly identical set of semantic prime, the are a few things that differentiate the core meaning of words. It can also be concluded that there are several factors that can be used in distinguish each word that shares the semantic prime '*mangecek*'/'say'.

This study focuses on the '*mangecek*'/'say' semantic prime of words in Minangkabau language. According to this research, it can be stated that Minangkabau language is a language that rich in synonymous words that can be used as data to be analyzed using NSM theory. Therefore, the researcher recommended for further researchers to analyze words in any language not only in Minangkabau language, but using other languages by using NSM because of the richness of the meanings. There are several researchers that have been studying with focus on TOUCH, SEE, and SAY, it is suggested that the next research will focus more on other sensory words or any verbs in Minangkabau words. This also shines a light on the true meaning of words within the language used in everyday life

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