

Cultural Conceptualization of Manggarai Speech Community Regarding Objectives of Pursuing School Education: A Cultural Linguistic Analysis

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Abstract: Games are increasingly recognized as effective tools for This study explores cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community regarding objectives of pursuing school education, as reflected in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena in the verbal expressions of Manggarai language used in the situational context of pesta sekola. The study is viewed from the perspective of cultural linguistics, one of the new theoretical perspectives in cognitive linguistics exploring the relationship of language, culture, and conceptualization. The study is descriptive-qualitative. The results of study show that the relationship between Manggarai language and Manggarai culture is manifested in the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community regarding the objectives of pursuing of school education. The cultural conceptualization is reflected in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expressions of Manggarai language used in the situational context of pesta sekola as a new tradition in Manggarai culture. The meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expressions designate that, in the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community, the objectives of pursuing school education are indicated not only by getting certificate, but also by acquiring deep knowledge and extensive skills as the milestones to get better jobs in future and to enjoy freedom from any form and manifestation of imperialism.

Keywords: Cultural conceptualization, Manggarai speech community, objective, school education

INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that language is a chief means of communication used by a society as members of a speech community to express their thoughts, ideas, feelings, emotions, and experiences in the world. The world conveyed through language they employ involves the factual world and the symbolic world which refers to the world in which the objects as the

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referents of language used are imaginative as the objects are in their cognitions or minds. As culture is the worldview of society, this implies that language used by a society as members of a speech community is closely related to culture they share. The relationship is manifested in conceptualization ascribed in their cognitive map that contains a bulk of linguistic and cultural knowledge that function as the sources of reference for them in viewing and making sense of the world.

As such, it is true to say then that language used by a society as members of a speech community serves not only as the window of their world, but also as the window into their cognitions or minds (Yu, 2007). The view comes closest to the idea of Rao (2021) that there are interactive functions of language and cognition in thinking as language accumulates cultural wisdoms, while cognition develops mental representations modeling surrounding world and adapt cultural knowledge to concrete circumstances of life. The function of language as the window into the cognitions or minds of its speakers can be seen in micro-interactional levels like in a certain speech event. The features of linguistic phenomena used in the speech event are unique and specific in some respect to culture as the parent culture in which that language is embedded (Duranti, 1997; see also Siregar et.al, 2023). As language is embedded in culture, the speech event as the manifestation of language in its use as the reflection of culture is also defined as the cultural event.

This paper explores the relationship of Manggarai language and Manggarai culture belonging to Manggarai society as members of Manggarai speech community residing in the region of Manggarai that lies in the western part of Flores Island as one of the five big islands in the Province of East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia (Bustan, 2005; Bustan, 2024; Bustan, 2025). As the relationship is complex that the study focuses on the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community regarding the objectives of pursuing school education. The study is conducted with special reference to the forms and meanings of the verbal expressions of Manggarai language they employ in the situational context of *pesta sekola*, a special party which is designed to raise fund to pay school fees for those pursuing school education, especially in higher education level.

The study is conducted for the basic reason that the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena in the verbal expressions used in the situational context of the *pesta sekola* are unique and specific to Manggarai culture as the parent culture in which Manggarai language is embedded. The meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expressions designate the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community regarding the objectives of pursuing school education. Another reason is that the results of previous studies show that there has no any study exploring in more depth the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community regarding the objectives of pursuing school education portrayed through the lens of cultural linguistics as an emerging paradigm or model in cognitive linguistics which is mainly concerned with the study of the relationship of language, culture, conceptualization.

METHOD

This study is descriptive-qualitative as its aim is to describe the cultural conceptualizations of Manggarai speech community regarding the goals of school education in the view of

cultural linguistics with special reference to the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena they employ in the situational context of the *pesta sekola* (Muhadjir, 1995; Nusa Putra, 2011). To achieve the intended aim, the procedures of research were field research and library research. The field research was carried out to collect the primary data related to the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai people regarding the goals of school education. For the purpose of this study, the location of the field research was in Pagal village, Cibal district that lies in northern part of Manggarai regency.

The sources of the data were the native speakers of Manggarai language, especially those residing in Pagal village, represented by three persons as the key informants selected on the basis of the ideal criteria proposed by Afrizal (2014), Bungin (2007), and Faisal (1990), and Duranti (2001). The main approach to collecting the data was dialogic ethnography as the data were acquired on the basis of the cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of the key informants (Bernstein, 1972; Hymes, 1974; Spradley, 1987; Duranti, 2001). The methods of data collection were observation, that is participant observation, and interview especially in-depth interview. The techniques of data collection were recording, elicitation, and note-taking (Spradley, 1987; Duranti, 2001; Bungin 2007). The library research was carried out to collect the secondary data relevant to the focus of the study. The method of data collection was documentary study. The kinds of documents used as the sources of data were general documents (books) and special documents (articles, papers, research results). The collected data were then analyzed qualitatively by inductive method as the analysis was started from the data to the local-ideographic concept or theory because it describes the cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community regarding the objectives of pursuing school education.

RESULTS

The results of study show that there is an interactive connection between both Manggarai language and Manggarai culture belonging to Manggarai society as members of Manggarai speech community in viewing and making sense of the world. The relationship is manifested in cultural conceptualization ascribed in their cognitive map as the source of reference for them in viewing and making sense of the world, involving the factual world and the symbolic world. In accordance with the main concern of this study, the cultural conceptualization is related to the objectives of pursuing school education for the members of Manggarai speech community, as reflected in the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena in the verbal expressions of Manggarai language in the situational context of the *pesta sekola* as the nonverbal setting in which the verbal expressions are used and interpreted. The forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expressions are unique and specific in some respect to Manggarai culture as the parent culture in which Manggarai language is embedded. The meanings stored in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expressions serve as the sources of motivation for the members of Manggarai speech community to study hard when pursuing school education in order to achieve success as expected. As reflected in the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community, the key of success in pursuing school education is indicated not only by getting certificate, but also by acquiring knowledge and skills as the milestones for them to have better jobs in

future and to enjoy the freedom of life from various forms of imperialism. The findings come closest to the conception Sharifian (2017) that both language and culture belonging to a society are interconnected and the manifestation of such a relationship is reflected in cultural conceptualization.

Based on the results of data selection, the verbal expressions of Manggarai language which are always used by the members of Manggarai speech community as the main themes in the situational context of the *pesta sekola* are as follows:

(01) *Ngo sekola toe landing bora, landing boto pika nggerlau Bima.*

‘Go to school not because of being rich, but will not be sold to Bima’.

(02) *Loce rompok du ngo, loce rombeng du kole*

‘White mat when go, colorful mat when come back home’

(03) *Lalong bakok du lako, lalong rombeng du kole*

‘White cock when go, colorful cock when come back home’.

The forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expressions are related to one another in designating the cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community regarding the objectives of pursuing school education. The cultural conceptualization refers not only to the past experiences of Manggarai speech community when the region of Manggarai was colonized by the government of Bima and Goa (Bustan, 2016), but also to their expectations in the future due to pursuing school education.

The following discusses in more depth the forms and meanings of linguistic phenomena in the verbal expressions of Manggarai language designating the cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community dealing with the objectives of pursuing school education.

Data (01): Ngo sekola toe landing bora, landing boto pika nggerlau Bima

As seen in the physical features of linguistic phenomena in data (01), *Ngo sekola toe landing bora, landing boto pika nggerlau Bima* ‘Go to school not because of wealth, but not to be sold to Bima’, the verbal expression appears as a declarative sentence as it provides information that the objective of pursuing school education for Manggarai speech community is not because of having wealth, but they will not be sold to Bima. The sentence is negative form indicated by the word *neka* ‘not’ as the form of negative marker in Manggarai language, as seen in *toe landing bora* ‘not because of wealth’ and the word *boto* ‘in order not’, as seen in *boto pika nggerlau Bima* ‘not to be sold to Bima’. In terms of its lexical items, the sentence is a complex sentence made up two clauses as its component parts.

The two clauses serving as its component parts are as follows: (a) *Ngo sekola toe landing bora* ‘Go to school not because of having wealth’ as the main clause and (b) *Landing boto pika nggerlau Bima* ‘But not be sold to Bima’ as the subordinate clause or dependent clause as its meaning depends on the meaning of the main clause in which it is hosted. The meanings of the two clauses support and emphasize one another in which the meaning of clause (a) supports and emphasizes the meaning of clause (b) or, vice versa, the meaning of clause (b) supports and emphasizes the meaning of clause (a). The sentence invites sensory pleasure when it is spoken and listened to because the number of words in the two clauses is the same as four. The same number of words also maintains the rhythm and tempo when the sentence is spoken and listened to.

Considered along with its use in the situational context of the *pesta sekola* as the nonverbal setting, the meanings implied in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression designate that, in the cultural conceptualization of Manggarai speech community, they pursue school education is not because their parents have wealth to fund, but so that they will not be sold to Bima. The meanings are conceptualized in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community on the basis of their past historical experiences when they were colonized by the government of Bima as the extension of the Kingdom of Goa in South Sulawesi (Bustan, 2016). Many historical facts showed that most of young people living in rural areas who did not attend school education were caught and made slaves in the exchanges of taxes to the Bima and Goa governments as the rulers of Manggarai region at that time. Being slaves, they had to work hard all day long to devote selflessly to their masters as the merchants. Referring to their past historical experiences under the colonization of the government of Bima and Goa, the members of Manggarai speech community motivate their children to pursue school education until they achieve success. The indicators of success expected are indicated not only by getting certificates, but also by acquiring deep knowledge and extensive skills as the milestones to get better jobs in future and to enjoy the freedom of life from any form of imperialism due to the lack of knowledge and skills

Data (02): Loce rompok du ngo, loce rombeng du kole

As seen in the physical features of linguistic phenomena in data (02), *Loce rompok du ngo, loce rombeng du kole* ‘White mat when go, colorful mat when come back home’, the verbal expression appears as imperative sentence of request type as it provides request of the parents for their children to bring back home some changes after attending school education. The expected changes are metaphorically analogized with the change in the color of a mat from the condition of white mat (*loce rompok*) when going to school (*du ngo*) and the condition of a colorful mat (*loce rombeng*) when coming back home. In terms of its lexical items, the verbal expression appears in the form of a compound sentence made up of two independent clauses or complete sentences as its component parts. The two independent clauses serving as its component parts are as follows: (a) *Loce rompok du ngo* ‘White mat when go’ and (b) *Loce rombeng du kole* ‘Colorful mat when come back home’. The combination of the two clauses forms an asyndeton construction as the relationship is not linked by using the coordinating conjunction *agu* ‘and’ as a lexical cohesive device. The coordinating conjunction is intentionally omitted to maintain the rhythm and tempo when

the verbal expression is spoken and listened to as the number of words in the two clauses are the same as four. The coordinating conjunction *agu* ‘and’ is intentionally omitted for the purpose of keeping and maintaining the harmony of rhythm and tempo when the verbal expression is spoken and listened to as the number of words is the same as four. This is because the verbal expression is regarded as a fixed form accepted as a part of social convention inherited from previous generation.

The forms of linguistic phenomena used in the two independent clauses support each other with opposite meaning relations. The nominal phrase *loce rompok* ‘white mat’ as the Subject (S) of the independent clause (a) is antonym with the nominal phrase *loce rombeng* ‘colorful mat’ as the Subject (S) of the independent clause (b). The antonymous words in the two nominal phrases are the word (adjective) *rompok* ‘white’ as the Modifier (M) of the word *loce* ‘mat’ as the core word that functions as the Head (H) in nominal phrase (a) and the word (adjective) *rombeng* ‘colorful’ as the Modifier (M) of the word *loce* ‘mat’ as the core word that functions as the Head (H) in nominal phrase (b).

Along with the situational context of its use in the *pesta sekola*, the meanings stated and implied in the forms of linguistic phenomena in the verbal expression designate the cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community regarding the objective of pursuing school education. The objective is not only to get certificate, but also to acquire deep knowledge and extensive skills as the milestones to have better jobs in future. The change of their patterns of behavior due to pursuing school education is likened the change in the color of a mat from white mat (*loce rompok*) to colorful mat (*loce rombeng*) because of having deep knowledge and extensive skills. In other words, the nominal phrase, *loce rompok* ‘white mat’ refers to having no knowledge and skills and, in contrast, the nominal phrase, *loce rombeng* ‘colorful mat’ refers to acquiring deep knowledge and extensive skills due to pursuing school education. Similar to the process of producing the *loce rombeng* that takes time, to achieve the objective of pursuing school education also needs a long process and requires hard work.

Data (03): Lalong bakok du lako, lalong rombeng du kole

As seen in the physical features of linguistic phenomena in data (03), *Lalong bakok du lako, lalong rombeng du kole* ‘White cock when go, colorful cock when come back home’. It is worth noting that the word (deverbal noun) *lalong* is the conversion of nominal phrase, *lalong bakok* ‘white cock’ which is indicated by the deletion of the word (noun) *manuk* ‘chicken’ that, if it is used, the word (noun) distributes preceding the word (deverbal noun) *lalong* ‘cock’. The verbal expression appears in the form of an imperative sentence of request type that provides the expectation of Manggarai speech community regarding the success of pursuing school education.

While in terms of its lexical items, the sentence appears in the form of a compound sentence made up of two independent clauses or complete sentences as its component parts. The two independent clauses serving as its component parts are as follows: (a) *Lalong bakok du lako* ‘White cock when go’ and (b) *Lalong rombeng du kole* ‘Colorful cock when come back home’. The forms of linguistic phenomena used in the two independent clauses support each other with opposite meaning relations. The nominal phrase, *lalong bakok* ‘white cock’,

as the Subject (S) of the independent clause (a) is antonym with the nominal phrase, *lalong rombeng* ‘colorful cock’, as the Subject (S) of the independent clause (b). The antonymous words in the two nominal phrases are reflected in the word (adjective) *bakok* ‘white’ as the Attribute (A) or Modifier (M) of the word (noun) *lalong* ‘cock’ as the core word that functions as its Head (H) in the nominal phrase (a) and the word (adjective) *rombeng* ‘colorful’ as an attribute that functions as the Modifier (M) of the core word (noun) *lalong* ‘cock’ as the core word that functions as the Head (H) in nominal phrase (b).

The relationship of the two independent clauses forms an asyndeton construction as it is not linked by using the coordinating conjunction *agu* ‘and’ or *ko* ‘or’ as lexical-cohesive device. The coordinating conjunction *agu* ‘and’ or *ko* ‘or’ is intentionally omitted for the purpose of keeping and maintaining the harmony of rhythm and tempo when the sentence is spoken and listened to as the number of words in the two clauses is the same as four. As aforementioned, this is because the verbal expression is regarded as a fixed form accepted by the members of Manggarai speech community as a part of social convention passed down from previous generation.

Along with the situational context of *pesta sekola* as the nonverbal setting in which the verbal expressions are used and interpreted, the meanings implied in the forms of linguistic phenomena used in the verbal expression designate the cultural conceptualization ascribed in the cognitive map of Manggarai speech community regarding the objective of pursuing school education. The objective is not only to have certificate as a partial fulfillment to get diploma, but also to have deep knowledge and extensive skills as the milestones for them to have better jobs in future as well as to enjoy the freedom of life from any form and manifestation of imperialism due to the lack of knowledge and skills. The change of their patterns of behavior after attending school education is likened the change in the color of cock from white to colorful because of having deep knowledge and extensive skills. As it is likened the change of the color of the cock’s feather, to achieve success expected in pursuing school education requires hard work because the change is not easy as it is spoken as actions speak louder than words.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a rich interplay between language, culture, and cognition within the Manggarai speech community, particularly in relation to how educational aspirations are conceptualized and transmitted through culturally embedded verbal expressions. This interdependence affirms the central tenet of Cultural Linguistics that language reflects and shapes the cultural models shared by members of a speech community (Sharifian, 2011, 2017). The Manggarai expressions used in the *pesta sekola* context are not merely linguistic artefacts; they function as cultural schemas that articulate historical memory, social values, moral obligations, and collective expectations toward school education.

In line with Sharifian’s (2017) framework, the Manggarai expressions examined in this study demonstrate how cultural knowledge is encoded in linguistic structures. The expression *Ngo sekola toe landing bora, landing boto pika nggerlau Bima* illustrates how historical experience has become a foundational schema within the cultural cognition of the

Manggarai community. Through the linguistic markers of negation (*toe*, *boto*), the expression encapsulates a conceptual metaphor of “education as liberation.” Rather than pursuing schooling as a function of material wealth, the Manggarai conceptualize education as a protective mechanism against exploitation and domination—echoing Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) view that metaphors constitute fundamental forms of human reasoning.

The reference to “being sold to Bima” is not merely literal but operates as a culturally salient symbol grounded in collective memory of Bima and Goa rule (Bustan, 2016). Cultural Linguistics emphasizes the role of cultural schemas—such as *historical memory schemas*, *fear schemas*, and *liberation schemas*—in shaping worldview (Sharifian, 2011). The Manggarai linguistic evidence demonstrates that schooling is cognitively framed as emancipation from past forms of imperialism, with education symbolizing resistance, mobility, and security.

The expressions *Loce rompok du ngo*, *loce rombeng du kole* and *Lalong bakok du lako*, *lalong rombeng du kole* demonstrate how metaphorical thinking is central to the Manggarai cultural conceptualization of educational outcomes. Within a conceptual metaphor framework (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), the transformation from “white” (*rompok/bakok*) to “colorful” (*rombeng*) mat or cock signifies the desired cognitive and moral transformation that schooling is expected to produce. The metaphors map the domain of material color transformation onto the domain of educational maturation.

This aligns with Kövecses’ (2015) argument that metaphor is culturally dynamic and community-specific. The use of locally grounded imagery—mats (*loce*) and cocks (*lalong*)—also illustrates the principle of *embodied cultural cognition* in which metaphors draw on objects that hold cultural significance (Gibbs, 2006). The Manggarai conceptualization of education thus does not operate in abstract terms; rather, it is articulated through familiar cultural artefacts, making educational values comprehensible and persuasive within local semiotic systems.

The formal properties of these expressions—parallelism, rhythm, balanced word counts, and asyndetic constructions—indicate their status as culturally canonical utterances. According to Duranti (1997) and Gumperz (1982), such formulaic expressions serve as tools of social regulation and enculturation. Their fixed nature allows them to function as performative utterances within ritual contexts, guiding behavioral expectations and reinforcing cultural norms. The absence of conjunctions in the expressions highlights a stylistic preference that serves both aesthetic and mnemonic purposes, ensuring that the expressions are easily transmitted across generations.

This aligns with studies on traditional verbal art (Finnegan, 2012), which emphasize that rhythmic, symmetrical structures enhance memorability and preserve cultural knowledge. The *pesta sekola* context provides a fertile environment for these expressions to operate as pragmatic acts of exhortation, advice, and moral instruction, consistent with Austin’s (1962) notion of performatives and Hymes’ (1974) ethnography of speaking.

The Manggarai cultural conceptualization of education, as encoded in these expressions, highlights a dual focus: personal advancement and collective well-being. The motivation to pursue schooling is not conceptualized in utilitarian, individualistic terms but is embedded within communal goals of social upliftment, dignity, and resistance against

historical or structural oppression. This reflects the anthropological perspective that in many traditional societies, education is a moral and communal endeavor (Geertz, 1973; Sahlins, 1999).

Furthermore, the Manggarai model of educational success—defined not solely by certificates but by mastery of knowledge and skills—corresponds with contemporary sociolinguistic findings that communities often conceptualize schooling as a path toward symbolic and material capital (Bourdieu, 1991). The emphasis on transformation (from “white” to “colorful”) further aligns with the concept of *educational habitus*, whereby schooling reshapes a learner’s dispositions, competencies, and social identity.

The study’s findings closely resonate with Sharifian’s (2017) core proposition that language reflects distributed cultural cognition mediated through cultural schemas, cultural categories, and cultural metaphors. In the Manggarai case cultural schemas manifest in collective memories of colonization, which frame education as liberation; cultural categories appear in the conceptual distinctions between “white” and “colorful” as indicators of educational status; cultural metaphors structure educational transformation through locally meaningful imagery (mats, cocks).

This indicates that Manggarai linguistic expressions cannot be analyzed outside their cultural, historical, and ritual contexts. The *pesta sekola* serves as a site where cultural knowledge is negotiated, reproduced, and transmitted linguistically—affirming claims by Palmer (1996) and Enfield (2002) regarding the inseparability of linguistic structure and cultural meaning.

The findings of this study have broader implications for understanding the cultural foundations of educational ideologies in indigenous communities. They demonstrate that educational motivation in Manggarai society is culturally constructed, historically informed, and linguistically transmitted. This insight is crucial for educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers working within multicultural and multilingual settings in Indonesia, where sensitivity to local cultural conceptualizations can significantly enhance the relevance and acceptance of educational programs.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how the Manggarai speech community conceptualizes the aims of schooling through culturally embedded expressions in the *pesta sekola* tradition. Analysis of three key expressions shows that language functions as a medium for transmitting cultural cognition, historical memory, and educational values. These expressions reveal that education is viewed not only as personal advancement but also as a culturally grounded response to past subjugation, moral expectations, and communal aspirations.

Ngo sekola toe landing bora, landing boto pika nggerlau Bima conceptualizes education as liberation from historical vulnerability and domination, aligning with Sharifian’s notion of cultural schemas that shape collective understanding. Education is thus framed as a means of dignity and freedom rather than material privilege. The expressions *Loce rompok du ngo, loce rombeng du kole* and *Lalong bakok du lako, lalong rombeng du kole* portray schooling as a transformative journey, using metaphors rooted in local material

culture to represent intellectual, behavioral, and moral growth. This reflects conceptual metaphor theory and the Cultural Linguistics view of embodied cultural cognition.

Overall, Manggarai conceptualizations of education integrate historical consciousness, transformative expectations, and communal aspirations. These values are preserved through verbal artistry and ritual practice, confirming that education is culturally mediated and socially reproduced. The study contributes to Cultural Linguistics by illustrating how indigenous linguistic practices encode cultural models of education and highlights the need for culturally responsive educational approaches that align with local values and knowledge systems.

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