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**THE MEANINGS OF THE BALINESE 'TO EAT': A
STUDY OF NATURAL SEMANTIC METALANGUAGE (NSM)**

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ABSTRACT

The study discusses the meanings of 'to eat' in Balinese. It aims to describe the application of the theory of Natural Semantics Metalanguage (NSM) on the Balinese language verb, which means 'to eat'. The theory used to analyze the verb is the theory of Natural Semantics Metalanguage. The theory recognizes the principle that the natural state of a language is to maintain the form for one meaning and one meaning for one form. The study uses two types of data sources, namely: (1) primary data in the form of oral data and (2) secondary data in the form of written data related to the research topic. The method used in data collection is observation and conversation. Results of the data analysis are presented by using formal and informal methods. These results indicate that the verb "to eat" in Balinese language consists of: lexicons of *ngrayunang*, *ngajeng*, *daar*, *nunas*, *nede*, *ngamah*, *nidik*, *nyaplok*, *caklok*, *ngleklek*, dan *nyanggol*. Such lexicons, in addition to having the same semantic field, they also have distinctive features that differentiate one lexicon to the others.

Keywords: *meta language, semantic field, and the distinctive features.*



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1. Introduction

One of the few general rules of semantic mentions that the different forms will be different in meaning (Chaer, 1990: 39). That is, if there are two or more words that look different although the difference is slight, its meaning is different. Therefore, two synonymous words are not exactly one hundred percent have the same meaning. There is definitely a difference. It can be proved on the words *kini* and *sekarang*. Both words are essentially synonymous, but in reality are not interchangeable in a sentence. The word *sekarang* in the sentence, “*Istri yang sekarang cantik*” " it cannot be replaced with the word *kini* because sentence construction that appears to be, “*Istri yang kini cantik*” (not grammatical).

The statement was supported by the proponents of the theory of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) who believes in the principle that the natural conditions of a language is to maintain the form for one meaning and one meaning for one form (Wierzbicha, 1996). The principles, in addition to be applied to the grammatical construction, it is also applied to the lexical construction. The description can be seen in the following data.

(1) *Imeme sedek madaar di paon.*

'Mother is eating in the kitchen'

(2) *Ida Bagus kari ngrayunang.*

'Ida Bagus is still eating'

Data (1) and (2) show that the lexical forms are different, especially lexicon *madaar* on data (1) and lexicon *ngrayunang* on the data (2). Such differences in accordance with the opinion of Goddard (2002: 130) that special semantic features called subtle difference, is inherent in some lexicons that have shaped configuration of distinctive meaning between the one lexicon to the other lexicons, especially the lexicon that is in the same semantic field, such as lexicon *madaar* which is classified as low Balinese language, while *ngrayunang* is classified as polite Balinese.

Although these two words refer to the same reference, the two lexicons have components of meaning, which is not one hundred percent the same. According to Palmer components of meaning is the whole meaning of a word composed of a number of elements in which the



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elements of one another have different characteristics (1981: 108). It can be proved by the two lexicons that cannot be exchangeable in the sentence. If imposed, the sentence will be as follows.

(3) * *Imeme sedek ngerayunang di paon.*

'Mother is eating in the kitchen'

(4) * *Ida Bagus kari madaar.*

'Ida Bagus is still eating'

The two sentences, namely: (3) and (4) are not acceptable in the Balinese speech community for breaking the speech ethics. The linguistic phenomeon is very interesting to be studied more in depth in order to obtain a more complete description of the application of the theory of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) in the Balinese language verb meaning 'to eat'.

2. Theoretical Basis

The theory used to analyze Balinese verb of 'to eat' is the theory of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM), which combines the philosophical traditions, the logic in the study of semantics, with the approach of typology on the language studies based on empirical research across languages (Wierzbicka, 1996: 23) and it is expected to provide an overview of the semantic structure. Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) is: (1) a theory that can be used to explicate the meaning of the verb *madaar* 'to eat' in Balinese, (2) the theory of NSM recognizes the principle that the natural conditions of a language is to maintain the form for one meaning and one meaning for one form, and (3) in theory of NSM explication of meaning is framed in a metalanguage originating from natural language.

The NSM Analysis Techniques

Wierzbicka (1996: 23) and Beratha (2000: 248) argue that the NSM analysis techniques using paraphrase that follows the following rules.

(1) Paraphrasing should use a combination of a number of original meaning proposed by Wierzbicka. The combination of a number of the original meaning is required, related to the



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claims of the theory of NSM, a form cannot be deciphered only by using a single original meaning.

- (2) Paraphrasing can also be done using the elements that constitute the distinctiveness of a language. This can be done by combining elements that constitute the uniqueness of the language itself to decipher.
- (3) Paraphrasing sentence must follow the rules of syntax of the language used to paraphrase.
- (4) Paraphrasing always use simple language.
- (5) Paraphrasing sentences sometimes require special indentation and spacing.

Example: *madaar* 'to eat'

At that time, X does something to Y. Therefore, Y moves to the X. At the same time X wants this. X does something.

Note: X = subject / agent

Y = object / theme

3. Research Methodology

This study uses two types of data sources, namely (1) the primary data i.e. oral data and (2) secondary data in the form of written data in relation to the research topic. Primary data is the main data in this study. Secondary data is an indispensable source of data. Secondary data serves to reinforce the primary data.

The methods used in the data collection were listening and conversation (Sudaryanto, 1993: 133). The listening method can be equated with the method of observation, meanwhile conversation methods can be equated with the interview method. Observation methods in its operation can be assisted with uninvolved observation conversation techniques and note-taking. With uninvolved observation conversation techniques, data can be collected through observation of non-participatory nature. That is to say, the researcher does not engage in verbal interaction with the research subjects. Note-taking techniques used in data collection in order to be more efficient because it only records the discourse in which there are forms of verbs of Balinese language.



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In addition to the method of observation, data collection also used interview method. This interview method in its implementation was aided by face to face interview techniques and note-taking. A method of conversation is equated with the interview method, which in practice trying to approach the atmosphere of intimacy, to get openly verbal interaction between researcher and informants. Nevertheless, the observation method was the most important of the two methods used in data collection, because it is intended to obtain empirical data.

To analyze the data regarding the verbs of Balinese language, particularly with respect to the meaning of 'eating', then it was used the theory of Natural Semantics Metalanguage (NSM). The theory recognizes a principle that the natural state of a language is to maintain the form for one meaning and one meaning for one form.

Results of the data analysis are presented using informal and formal methods. Informal methods are realized in the forms of verbal word with some technical terms in the field of Balinese verbs. Formal methods are used also as a complement of informal methods. In this case the formal method is realized in the form of symbols / signs, such as: '...', "...", x..., y...

4. Discussion

The sense of 'eat' in Balinese

Hierarchically Balinese system is based on lineage. Balinese community system is known as *wangsa* or castes (Wiana, 1993: 21). Brahmins, known as the highest caste, *Ksatria* is the second caste, and *Vaishya* as the third caste. The third caste is grouped into *triwangsa* groups. The fourth caste is known as common people.

Relating to the social strata of the Balinese society, than it emerges a stratified Balinese language systems. The Balinese stratified language system known as *sor singgih basa* which is basically the polite and the folk language in use (the research team of the Faculty of Letters, 1978/1978: 1).

The usage of *sor singgih basa* is traditionally deemed to have good speaking manners when talking to a higher caste (Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya) by using polite Balinese language (cf. Jendra, 1988: 7).



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As a result of the use of the *sor singgih basa*, the concept of to eat is expressed by a number of lexicon in the Balinese language, such as: *ngrayunang*, *ngajeng*, *daar*, *nunas*, *nede*, *ngamah*, *nidik*, *nyaplok*, *caklok*, *ngleklek*, and *nyanggol*. However, this study does not make the problem of *sor-singgih basa* as the main problem. The corpus of data that can be studied, remain rooted in the assumption that the semantic structure of the lexicons in Balinese language verbs have a variety of forms and have the same semantic field. Harimurti (1982) mentions that the semantic field is part of a semantic system of language, which illustrates a part of the reality in the field of culture or a particular universe which is realized by a set of lexical items related meaning. Semantic field theory is related to the theory that the vocabulary of a language has a field structure, both lexical and conceptual structure can be analyzed in synchronic, diachronic, as well as paradigmatic approach (Aminuddin, 1988: 108).

Lexicon of *Ngrayunang*

Lexicon of *ngrayunang* has the same semantic field as the word *madaar*. That is, the two words are in essence a speech act verbs, with the referents move the object to the upper body, the mouth; the object then chewed and swallowed.

Although these two words have the same semantic field, each has certain semantic features which are different from one another. The most dominant semantic features differentiate between one lexicon with the other, is the relationship of these words with the agents / actors.

If the lexicon *madaar* intended in most people, the lexicon *ngajeng* and *ngrayunang* are words of respect for dialogue partner or the person to whom being talked about. This can be seen in the following data.

(5) *Ngrayunang dumun, malih jebos wawanin.*

‘Please eat first, later on you may continue working’

Ngrayunang lexicon in speech (5) simply cannot be replaced with the word *madaar* because *ngrayunang* word has different semantic features with *madaar* lexicon. This is consistent with the NSM theory that it maintains one form for one meaning and one meaning for one form. In



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other words, each lexicon certainly has its own meaning and is different from other lexicon. In order that the explanation is easier to understand, it can be seen in the following explication.

At that time X wants something from Y.

Therefore, Y to X body part (agent).

X wants something.

X does something.

Lexicon of *Ngajeng*

Lexicon *ngajeng* which means 'to eat' is intended to human beings, not for animals or pets. *Ngajeng* lexicon means putting something into mouth, chewed and swallowed. This lexicon in essence is often used as a form of respectful word for all levels of caste. The use of the word *ngajeng* can be seen in the following data.

(6) A. *Gusti Ketut wenten Pak De?*

‘Is Gusti Ketut available Pak De?’

B. *Wenten, ragane kari ngajeng*

‘Yes he is, he is eating’

Ngajeng word in the sentence (6) B is essentially classified as active transitive verbs. That is, verbs that require object, but in this sentence, there is no object. This happens because the dialogue partner has understood that what is eaten by the agent / actor is rice. Sentence (6) B in Balinese is essentially the same as the equivalent sentence in Indonesian, such as "Have you eaten, sir?" It means, he is eating rice. The verb "eat" on the sentence can be classified as active transitive verb of speech act. In order that *ngajeng* lexicon meaning to be clearer not ambiguous, the following explication is made.

At that time the X wants something in Y.

X does something. Therefore, Y moves to the X.

X does it this way.



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Lexicon of *Daar*

Lexicon *daar* is often used by the speech community outside *triwangsa* when viewed from the ancestry system. The most dominant semantic features that distinguishing lexicon *daar* with other lexicons are participants. That is, when and to whom it is used.

It is not appropriate if the lexicon *daar* is addressed to the dialogue partner of higher caste as it will appear the form of speech, such as *Daar nasine, Gusti Aji ?*. Such forms of speech, even if means 'eat', its use is less appropriate. In this respect, it is a form of speech that mixes between high Balinese language variety and low Balinese. The speech should be as the following data. *Daar nasine, Man!*

‘Eat the rice, Man!’

Form of speech (7) uttered by speakers who have equal social status or speakers of a higher social status.

Other semantic features, namely the *daar* lexicon is only used for humans, not for animals or pets, such as cats, dogs, or cows. Other semantic components, namely *daar* lexicon used by someone to put something into his mouth, chewed and swallowed. In order to be more clearly the meaning of the lexicon *daar* is explicated as follows.

At that time X does something. Therefore, Y moved to the upper body part, namely the mouth simultaneously.

X wants something in Y.

X does something like this.

Lexicon of *Nunas*

The word *nunas* is classified as word of *polysemy*. *Polysemy* is defined as a unit of language (particularly words, phrases) that has more than one meaning (Chaer, 1989: 104). For example, the word “head”, in the Indonesian language has a meaning (1) part of the body from the neck up, as it is in humans and animals, and (2) the chairman, leaders, such as the principal, the head of the office.



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According to Ullman, there are some elements of the cause of polysemy. A number of these elements include: (1) the specification in science, for example, the word “form” in the field of linguistics, architecture, and art has its own meaning, (2) specialization use in social life diverse community so that the word "jalan" by the driver means working, by traders is interpreted as “sold”, while in relation to meeting is defined as “take place”, (3) used in the style of language, for example, a poem that the word “blood” and “frozen” in the stanza of poetry by Chairil, *Nanti darahku jadi beku* has experienced displacement of meaning, and (4) mistakes in oral speech and in writing, the construction of *ke lapangan* may be able to contain the meaning of *sesuatu yang lapang* and *pergi ke lapangan*.

That is, the word *nunas*, in addition to having the meaning of *asking*, also means *eating*. This of course depends on the situation, where and when it is used. To be clear, it can be seen in the following data.

(7) *Nawegang nunas toyane kedik.*

‘I ask for a little water please’

(8) *Ratu, deriki dumun malinggih, tiang jagi nunas.*

‘Ratu please have a seat, I am going to eat’

Nunas word in a sentence (8) and (9) has more than one meaning (polysemy). *Nunas* word in sentence (8) means requesting, whereas *nunas* word in the sentence (9) means eating. The difference meaning is caused by the presence of the word *nunas*, in a different sentence. The meaning of word *nunas* that related to this topic is *nunas* word in the sentence (9). In this case the word *nunas* means putting something into mouth, chewed and swallowed.

The use of the word *nunas* by speakers, no other intends than to humble himself. Therefore, the speaker does not want to use the term *ngajeng*.

The word *nunas* has the same semantic field with previous lexicon, such as: *ngrayunang*, *ngajeng*, and *daar*. Its explication is as follows:

At that time the X wants something in Y. Therefore, Y moved to the top of X, namely the mouth.

X wants this.

X does it.



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Lexicon of *Nede*

The word *nede* essentially has the same semantic field as the word *ngrayunang*, *ngajeng*, *daar*, and *nunas*. Nevertheless, the word *nede* has a characteristic or uniqueness when compared to other lexicons. The word *nede* is classified as word form of respect for the humble. This can be seen in the following data.

(9) *Tiang ten madue pakaryan punapa-punapi. Sinah tiang ten jagi durus nede.*

‘I do not have anything to do. Obviously I cannot eat’

Nede lexicon is only used for humans, not for animals or pets. In order to make the lexicon meaning clearer, explication can be seen in the following description.

At that time the X wants something.

Therefore, Y moves to the X at the top, namely the mouth.

X is humble.

X does something.

Lexicon *Ngamah*

Lexicon *ngamah* is an impolite word, word that contains disrespect, anger, and the like. The lexicon also has the same semantic field as the word *ngrayunang*, *ngajeng*, *daar*, *nunas*, and *nede*. The similarity of semantic field is to put something into his mouth, chewed and swallowed. Semantic feature that most distinguishes between *ngamah* word and other words that are actors / agents. Lexicon *ngamah* is only used for humans can also be used for the animal or pets. This can be seen in the following data.

(10) A. *Ngamah dogen gaene*

‘All he did was just eating’

B. *Suba ngamah celenge?*

‘Has the pig been fed?’

Ngamah word in the sentence (11A) is very rude. Therefore, *ngamah* word is also used for animals / pets, as shown in sentence (11) B. the explication is as follows.



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At that time the X wants something in Y. Therefore, Y moves to the X.

X wants it.

X does it like this.

Lexicon of *Nidik*

Nidik word 'eat' (crude) is almost the same meaning with the word *ngamah*. Those two words, namely *nidik* and *ngamah* can be used for humans and animals.

Nidik word is often used when people are in a state of anger. This word almost as rude as the word *ngamah*. It can be seen in the data (12). *Nidik* word can also be used for animals, as shown in the data (13)

(11) *Adi telah nasine? Nyen buin nidik?*

‘Why we run out of rice? Who has eaten it?’

(12) *Nasine tidik cicing.*

‘The rice has been eaten by the dog’.

Nidik word in the sentence (12) has the same semantic field as other words, like: *ngrayunang*, *ngajeng*, *daar*, *nunas*, *nede*, and *ngamah*. That is, the words refer to to move the object to the upper part of the body, the mouth, chewed and swallowed. The explication is as follows.

At that time X wants something in Y. Therefore, X does something, and Y moves to X, and X does something like that.

Lexicon of *Nyaplok*

The word *nyaplok* means to eat. However, the word is very rude. Therefore, the word *nyaplok* is often used for animal / pets.

In essence *nyaplok* word has the same semantic field as the words: *ngrayunang*, *ngajeng*, *daar*, *nunas*, *nede*, *ngamah*, and *nidik*. The word means to put something into mouth, chewed, and swallowed. Only the word *nyaplok* is not used to humans, but animal or pets, such as dogs. It is shown in the following data.

(13) *Jajane suba caplok cicing.*

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‘the cake has been eaten by the dog’

The word *caplok* if getting prefix {N-} turned into *nyaplok*. The word *caplok* and *nyaplok* serve to form a verb meaning to do a job that is referred to by the basic words. The explication is as follows.

At that time X wants something in Y. Therefore, X does something, and Y moves to X, and X does something like that.

Lexicon of *Caklok*

Lexicon *caklok* is often used for the animal or pets. They have the same semantic field as the words *ngrayunang*, *ngajeng*, *daar*, *nunas*, *nede*, *ngamah*, *nidik*, and *nyaplok*. That is, these words are verbs speech acts with the referent put something into the mouth, chewed, and swallowed.

Although these words have the same semantic field, each has certain semantic feature that is different from one another. In this case lexicon *caklok* is only intended to the animal or pets, as shown in the following data.

(14) *Siape caklok cicing.*

‘The chicken was bitten by a dog.’

Caklok lexicon in sentence (14) can be interpreted that the dog bite and eat chicken. Explication is as follows.

At that time the X wants something in Y. Therefore, X to do something so that Y moves. X does like this.

Lexicon of *Ngleklek*

Ngleklek lexicon is a word that contains disrespect, abusive, anger, and the like. The lexicon is often used by speakers who are angry (emotional). Anger experienced by speakers when they are extremely angry. In general, this happens in an unpleasant situation, both the speakers and dialogue partners. The explanation can be seen in the following data.

(15) *Ngleklek dogen gaene!*



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‘All he can do is eating!’

(16) *Cicing ngleklek nasi di natahe.*

‘The dog eats rice in the yard’

Ngeklek word in the sentence (16) is very rude and not pleasant to hear. Its meaning remains the same, namely to eat. However, the semantic field of the most prominent features contained in *ngleklek* lexicon, which was never used in a pleasant situation, both by speakers and dialogue partners. the semantic field remains the same, namely inserting the object into the body of the agent, i.e. the mouth, chewed and swallowed. This word besides intended to men who are angry, also intended to animals or pets as shown in the data (17) and it has the same semantic field as the lexicon of *ngrayunang*, *ngajeng*, *daar*, *nunas*, *nede*, *ngamah*, *nidik*, *nyaplok*, and *caklok*. To be clearer, it can be seen in the explication of the following description.

At that time X wants something.

Therefore, X does something to Y to move.

X does like this.



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5. Lexicon of *Nyanggol*

Nyanggol word have the same semantic field as words of *ngrayunang*, *ngajeng*, *daar*, *nunas*, *nede*, *ngamah*, *nidik*, *nyaplok*, *caklok*, and *ngleklek*. That is, these words are verbs speech acts with the referent to put something into mouth, chewed, and swallowed.

Although these words have the same semantic fields, each has certain semantic features that are different from one another. *Nyanggol* word is specifically used for animals / pets, not humans. This can be seen in the following data.

(17) *Cicinge ento nyanggol balung.*

‘The dog eats bones’

Nyanggol word in sentence (18) means that the bone is run by the dog with its mouth and eaten.

To be clearer, it can be seen in the explication of the following description.

At that time X wants something.

Therefore, X does something to Y to move.

X does like this.

Conclusion

The meaning of 'to eat' can be expressed in different forms of lexicon in Balinese language. Nevertheless, the principle of MSA which maintains one form one meaning, and one meaning with one form. For example, the word *madaar* 'to eat' is obviously just focused on putting something into mouth, chewed, and swallowed. It is not likely to occur in other body parts. In other words, each lexicon in the Balinese, such as *ngrayunang*, *ngajeng*, *daar*, *nunas*, *nede*, *ngamah*, *nidik*, *nyaplok*, *caklok*, *ngleklek*, and *nyanggol* has the distinctive feature that distinguishes between a lexicon with another lexicon.



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