

# Pattrens of NSM Syntax of Semantic Primitives Prototypes in the Fields of Custom and Religion in Bali

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**Abstract** Efforts in documenting variations and clusters of Balinese lexicons, particularly in the fields of custom and religion, have been gradually made. The patterns of NSM syntax of prototypes of semantic primitives were thoroughly examined. Thus, an example of the use of the lexicon that represents each prototype of semantic primitives was made to complete the list of the lexicon previously studied. Therefore, NSM dictionary on prototypes of semantic primitives can be easily come into being. Data were obtained by the methods of participative observation, during which the techniques of Focus Group Discussion, recording, and note-taking were employed (Bungin, 2001:57; Moleong, 2000). In-depth interviews to several informants in the two regencies were carried out. The results of the interview were then cross-referenced to such key informants as tradition and community leaders. Data were comprehensively studied by the methods of *padan* of which relevant theories were used to study data and *agih* of which supporting equipment was sourced from the language itself (Sudaryanto, 2003). The results of data analysis showed that the patterns of NSM syntax were novelties by combination of several prototypes of semantic primitives accordingly. The patterns comprise of simple patterns, complex patterns, and the related specific patterns.

**Keywords:** *pattern, NSM syntax, lexicon, prototype, semantic primitives*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Cultural practices in Bali include customary and religious activities which are conducted in every social interaction among Balinese people. Such cultural practices contain values and norms as well as local wisdom. By identifying and understanding their contents of values, Balinese people then know how to apply them accordingly in their customary and religious life in Bali. In order to maintain and preserve these cultural practices, it is necessary to make thoroughly documentation and develop it accordingly in the form of lexicon networks in the fields of custom and religion based upon the inherent proximity of meaning with its semantic primitives prototypes. A few examples of sentence and its use are really needed just to complete draft of the semantic primitive dictionary,

A dictionary is an effective tool in maintaining a language from extinction, as it lists lexicons along with description of their lexicographical meaning

based on the contexts of use and culture. Therefore, this research is designed to drafting semantic primitives dictionary in the field of custom and religion in Bali of which it is the so-called NSM dictionary. In addition, the drafting of this dictionary is intended to maintain the cultural characters which include norms, values, and ideology of Balinese people. The NSM dictionary is made through several stages, namely mapping and making lists of lexical networks which are commonly referred to as a glossary, and exemplifying based on the syntactic patterns.

Many compilations of lexically glossary lists completed with their lexical meanings has already been carried out and made by linguists and researchers making use of primary data or secondary data. Based on the idea suggesting that language can influence human mind – in this case, human uses language to preserve cultural characters including the local wisdom – a glossary containing words and terms of the semantic primitive prototypes of Balinese language in the field of customs and religion has been successfully compiled. They are classified or

prototyped into 16 prototypes in which they have their own lexical representations

Lexical representations categorizing into the semantic primitive prototypes can be used in the customary and religious life in Bali. Their use is dependent on the factors and aspects of the Balinese culture. Efforts in documenting the variations and clusters of Balinese lexicons, especially in the field of custom and religion, have been gradually carried out. One of the efforts being observed concerns on the patterns of NSM syntax of semantic primitive prototypes in the fields of customs and religion in Bali. Therefore, an example of the use of a lexicon which is a representation of each semantic primitive prototype is given to complete the list of lexicons, simplifying the making of the semantic primitive (NSM) dictionary. Based on the background described above, this article is then focused on the patterns of NSM syntax of semantic primitive prototypes in the field of customs and religion in Bali.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

The design of this research starts from knowledge claim or hypothesis that a semantic primitive dictionary has special characteristics, of which the meaning of lexicon as the representation of semantic primitives can be particularly explained by the techniques of explication and configuration. Then, the explanation of meanings needs to be completed with examples in order to enhance the draft of the semantic primitive dictionary. This claim is supported by research strategies and methods. The strategy adopted is in terms of a field and qualitative research. The methods applied include method and technique of collecting data, method and technique of analyzing data, and method and technique of presenting data analysis.

Participative observation method was applied to collect data (Bungin, 2001:57; Moleong, 2000). It was in the form of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with recording and note-taking techniques. Furthermore, in-depth interview method was also applied to collect further information. The in-depth interviews were conducted first with few informants at the research location and then the results of these interviews were cross-referenced with key informants, comprising of notable figures in the society, academicians, and policy makers. Samples were selected from the available population based on the purposive sampling technique (Bungin, 2003).

Once the data were obtained and classified, the next step was to carry out data codification. Then, the data were analyzed systematically with padan method

with such supporting instruments as relevant writings or theories, and the agih method in which the supporting instruments are part of the language itself, while the basic technique applied was the technique of sorting determining elements (Sudaryanto, 2003).

There are two methods of presenting the results of data analysis, namely the formal and informal methods. The formal method is a method of presenting the results of data analysis using statistics in the form of tables and figures, while the informal method is the method of presenting the results of data analysis by describing detailed and elaborated explications of words. To obtain reports or complete results of data analysis in this research, the methods employed to present the results of data analysis were the formal and informal methods, while the techniques used were adding, substituting, and paraphrasing (Sudaryanto, 1993: 36).

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Semantic primitive is one important concept of the NSM theory which is a limited set of unchanging meanings. Within this meaning there are also semantic features that will not change (Goddard, 1996a:2). Semantic primes are a reflection of the formation of human mind that is innate by humans since birth. To represent them, semantic primitives can be explicated by paraphrasing with natural language and words that are intuitively related or are in a similar semantic field, rather than using technical language (Wierzbicka, 1996d: 31). For that reason, the existence of the concept of semantic primitives is believed to have a theoretical impact in which semantic primitives can be used to explicate naturally and simply any whole complex meanings. Regularity in semantic primitives is the cause – that is, when the entire lexicons are comprehensively analyzed, the regular feature can be identified. The better the semantic primitives and regularity can be described, the more regular the change and development of meanings can be determined.

The NSM syntactic theory refers to a particular grammatical pattern of a lexicon which is a representation of a semantic primitive prototype. Even though each lexicon has a particular grammatical pattern, it does not mean that this pattern is not universal. Instead, the universality of the grammatical pattern can be easily perceived and it is of a characteristic of the NSM syntax. The NSM syntax is considered the same as a syntactic frame, because every lexical representation of a semantic primitive prototype has a pattern corresponding to the lexical meaning. The lexical meaning can prove that a lexicon

can bind the emergence of other meaningful lexicons. For example, the lexicon DO can bind the emergence of two arguments, involving the doer, something, and for someone else, so that the syntactic frame of this lexicon is: SOMEONE do SOMETHING; SOMEONE do SOMETHING for SOMEONE ELSE. The NSM syntactic theory with its syntactic frame suggests that the lexical meaning of a semantic primitive can be expressed in various forms in various context of situation and culture.

Wierzbicka (1996) states that certain lexicons have a universal and natural meaning. For example, the concept of the word *say* in English which is used to give a statement or to declare something can be paraphrased in (1) I declare something to you; (2) people say something bad about you; and (3) I want to say something now. Wierzbicka (1996b) states that even though the grammatical patterns of a language are specific, universal patterns can always be identified. These universal grammatical patterns are expressed as a set of basic sentences in various languages. These basic sentences are constructed by universal lexical elements. The relation of universal lexical elements based on the grammar of a language is referred to as the NSM syntax. Furthermore, the said expert formulated the principles of the NSM syntax, as follows: (1) every pattern is predicted to exist in the languages of the world; (2) those patterns are the innate grammar of human cognition; and (3) they use universal semantic lexicons. The patterns of the NSM syntax described in this section consist of simple patterns and complex patterns, as well as various possible developed patterns.

### 3.1. Simple Patterns

The simple pattern referred to in this section is a pattern consisting of a combination of two prototypes constituting a simple sentence.

#### Substantives + Determiners

Example: *canangé patuh*  
 Substantive(something) Determiner  
 The offering is the same

#### Substantives + Quantifiers

Example: *yéhé bek*  
 Substantive (something) Quantifier  
 The water is full

#### Substantives + Evaluators

Example: *pénjoré tegeh*  
 Substantive (something) Evaluator  
 The decorated bamboo pole is tall

#### Substantives + Descriptors

Example: *bantené patut*  
 Substantive Descriptor  
 The *banten* (offering tray) is right

#### Substantives + Mental Predicates

Example: *tiang ngadek*  
 Substantive (first person) Mental Verb  
 I smelled (something)

#### Substantives + Speech

Example: *Manggalané nyawis*  
 Substantive (*pengurus adat*) Speech Verb  
 The leader of *pengurus adat* (customary functionaries) answers

#### Substantives + Actions

Example: *kramane matektekan*  
 Substantive (people) Action Verb  
 The people are chopping (food)

#### Substantives + Events

Example: *reramané mapiteket*  
 Substantive (family) Event Verb  
 His parents are giving advice

#### Substantives + Movement

Example: *ia ngaba*  
 Substantive (third person) Movement Verb  
 She carried (something)

#### Substantives + Existence

Example: *saténé ada*  
 Substantive (food) Existence  
 There is (still) some *satay*

#### Substantives + Life

Example: *reramané idup*  
 Substantive (family) Alive  
 Her parents are (still) alive

#### Substantives + Death

Example: *bébéké mati*  
 Substantive (an offering) Dead  
 The duck is dead

### 3.2. Simple Patterns Followed by a Complement.

The complement can be filled with a prototype of time, place and space, and intensity.

#### Simple Patterns + Substantives

Example:  
*Kramané ngulat klakat*

Substantive (people) Action Substantive  
(something) People are making bamboo weavings

### Simple Pattern + Time

Example:

*kramané tedun mangkin*

Substantive (people) Action Time

People are starting to work together now

### Simple Pattern + Space (Place)

Example:

*Panglisire mesanekan ring gedong*

Substantive (customary elders) Event Place/Space

The customary elders are resting inside the house

### Simple Pattern + Space (Location)

Example:

*gambelan kagenahang ring bale gong*

Substantive (*gambelan*) Action Location

The *gambelan* (traditional musical instrument) is kept in *bale gong* (a building in which *gambelan* music is performed)

### 3.3. Other Possible Patterns

These patterns of NSM syntax are highly complex patterns consisting of two or more clauses.

#### Specific patterns involving similarity

##### Substantives + Similarity + Substantives

This pattern refers to an expression or a proverb which employs a figure of speech or supposition.

Example:

*ia cara crukcuk*

Substantive (third person) Similarity Substantive (something)

She is like a *crukuk* (a songbird)

##### Negative-Imperative Specific Patterns

This pattern can be found in the expressions that employ proverbs or metaphors in Balinese language.

Example:

*de ngaden awak bisa*

Do not overestimate yourself

## IV. CONCLUSION

### 4.1. Conclusion

From the above results and discussion, the following can be concluded:

The examples of the use of lexicons were structured by combining multiple lexicons of semantic primitives prototypes based on the NSM syntax.

### 4.2. Suggestion

Based on the data of lexicons that have been collected, a few things need to be suggested as follows:

- 1) Linguistic documentation in the form of a dictionary needs to be developed further and needs to be explored to other domains;
- 2) A research needs to be conducted on the lexicon prototypes in the Balinese language which is concerned with the explanation of the history of language.

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