

A Natural Semantic Language Approach to Dawan Verb 'To Take'

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Abstract—This research investigates the study of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) to the verb mait 'to take' of Dawan - East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. Typically the study describes the semantic structure and the semantic role of the argument of the mait. I made use of Goddard's theory of NSM (Goddard, 1997) in dealing with the verb analysis. Data were obtained from 5 Dawan native informants. Results of data analysis show that the verb of Dawan has a significant meaning in line with the concept of semantic of the verb mait "to take", oet "to cut", usik "to despoil", main "to pick up", kui "to waste", heut "to pick", so "to spoon", abakat "to rob", nakolo "to pilfer", mpoel "to throw", mbok "to pull", Nak Haen "dig", Muhabi "pinning", Huk "catch", and Iup "broken". The semantic structure based on the argument that fills the verb is if one "takes", the component mapping is "X does something on Y" and therefore this "Y moves through X" at the same time; X wants this; X does something like this.

Keywords: NSM; Semantic Role; Ver "To Take" Dawan.

I. INTRODUCTION

Dawan also called Atoni, Uab Meto, or Molok Meto is part of the Austronesian language family. Dawan is a language with a number of speakers ranging from 900,000 more people (Budiarta, 2016). Dawan speakers are spread throughout the island of Timor, especially western Timor, the district of South Central Timor (Amanuban sub-tribes, Amanatun, Mollo), North Central Timor (Miomafo, Noemuti, Biboki Insana sub-tribes), and partly the inhabitants of urban and Kupang district (Kopas sub-tribe, Timaus, Amfoang, Sonba'i, Nairasis). This language is also used by the enclave ocussi-Ambeno enclave, as Baikenu or Baikeno. The spread of Dawan speakers in different regions influences dialect differences between regions, for example the

dialect of North Central Timor district (TTU) is different from the dialect in South Central Timor (TTS) or Kupang district. Meanwhile, in the TTU region there are dialect differences between one or several sub-districts and other sub-districts, such as the dialect of the Miomafo and Noemuti people.

One of the unique characteristics of Dawan is its verb construction. The Dawan verb is always accompanied by the pronominal subject marking person, both in intransitive and transitive clauses (Budiarta, 2012). In its use, the Dawan verbs are present in the derived form. The verb basic form is as the basic bound form; the Dawan verb never stands alone (Budiarta, 2016). In addition, the Dawan verb is also interesting to study in terms of meaning. Researches on Dawan have indeed been done by previous researchers. However, the field

studied is more dominant outside the semantic field, such as its parallel sound correspondences (Dgglwlrqdo, Derxw, Duwlfoh, & Edwards, 2016); its position in the study of language ecology (Honours, Rsa, Rsa, & Ed, 2007); its formation of compound words (Budiarta, 2016); its typological nature of grammatical (Budiarta, 2012); its location at linguistic world (Engelenhoven, 2010); and possibly there are many others. Apparently, separately conducted investigation on its meaning explication still remains as a prospective project.

As it was revealed that unique characteristic of Dawan is its verb construction (Budiarta, 2012; Tennis, Kroon, & Haan, 2018), the present study seeks to explore its nature of verb with Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach. Typically, the verb *mait* 'to take' is the main object to be examined in the study. There are a number of verbs, under explication, corresponding to the verb "to take" in terms of the semantic prime in Dawan. In addition, of the many existing verbs, the verb *mait* is a verb with its semantic-related explicated verbs have a fairly complex meaning that it is difficult to determine their semantic primitives. Hence, the complexity of the meaning of this type of verb evokes the currently researcher to examine it in depth.

In general, researches on the theory of NSM exemplify all meanings, whether lexical, illocutive, or grammatical meanings (Goddard, 1997; Wierzbicka, 2007b; Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2016; Farese, 2015). Moreover, this theory exemplifies the meaning framed in a metalanguage derived from natural language. This theory has the uniqueness of recognizing the uniqueness meaning system in a language and in the uniqueness there is a set of universal semantic structure called "natural semantic" (Goddard, 1997), so on this occasion the present researcher addresses the study on the explication of the meaning of the Dawan verb "to take" in a more specific detail using the NSM theory.

Instances for of the many variants of Dawan *mait* "to take" is *heut* "to pick" and *nhok* "to pierce". These verbs take the concept of *moe* "to do", as in the following explanation.

a) *Inan heut fula*

'She picks flowers'

The word *heut* is paraphrased as below.

X does something on Y

X does it by hand

Y: experiences something

X: wants this

X does like this

b) *Ista nhok upun*

'Ista pierces a manggo'

The word *nhok* is paraphrased as below.

X does something on Y

X does it with wood

Y: experiences something

X: wants this

X does like this

It can be said that the verb "to take" presents an argument in sentence but the difference in verb form between the two sentences is not because of the difference in the argument being the object of the sentence but due to the way of "to take" implied by the verb. The existence of different verb forms with similar meanings, as well as the different objects and desired outcomes of the action of the verb, are also naturally influenced by the manner of taking, the tools used, and some of them occurring due to the verbalization of the instruments used as the means of taking (Sudipa, 2012; Widani, 2016). The verbs that populate the predicate function are derived from the nominated pickup tool (denominal verb) through implicit process (Wierzbicka, 1996; Durst, 2004).

As has been explained in the *heut* and *hock* example, the Dawan verb "to take" has many vocabulary equivalents that have a common field of meaning. The number of matches is very possible to classify them semantically based on the appropriate types. The appearance of different forms of the verb is influenced by the way of "taking", the instrument used to take, the object or entity taken (human, animal, plant, or other inanimate object), the purpose, and the result of taking. Another thing that can be said is that naturally SDawan verb "to take" structure of verbs produces different roles in each of its arguments. In general, the roles played by the verb argument are subject as ACTOR and objects as UNDERGOER or PATIENT (Goddard, 1997). In more depth, the role of ACTOR and UNDERGOER atau PATIENT tersebut has the role of each subordinate, but the role of subordinates taken will be different depending on the purpose of making use of the verbs.

II. METHOD

The research was designed using qualitative method. Data were obtained from 5 Dawan native speakers. Typically, the data were collected by distributing questionnaires to the 5 participants, in addition to the interview conducted with the participants. The distributed questionnaires contain a number of questions related to the use and explicative meaning of the verb *mait*. It was aimed to elicit the required data. The data were then analyzed qualitatively by providing systematic explanation to the verb *mait* and its related components of other verb. The NSM theory of Goddard was used as a guidance in breaking down and making sense of the data. Results of data analysis were presented in both formal and informal methods.

III. DISCUSSION

Classification of the Dawan Verb "to take"

Dawan verbs are divided into three types: state verb, process verb, and action verb. Even though, other recent study has indicated a more amount in Amanuban dialect of this language (Tenis, Kroon, & Haan, 2018) but the mentioned three is as encountered in the present investigation of general Dawan. A state verb implies a verb reference in some situations; process verbs can be recognized by two indicators: (a) it can be used to answer the question "what happens to the subject?" and (b) it implies a change from one state to another; action verbs can be identified from two characteristics: (a) it can be an answer to the question "what the subject does" and (b) can be used as a formation for imperative sentence (Goddard, 1997; Anderson et al., 2015; Allan, 2006). A number of Dawan *mait* variants are explicated as follows.

Mait "to take"

The verb *mait* presents an argument in sentence but the difference in verb form between the two sentences is not because of the difference in the argument being the object of the sentence, thus it is because of the "to take" method implied by the verb. The existence of different forms of verb with similar meaning, in addition to the different objects and desired results of the action of the verb, is also naturally influenced by the way of taking and the tools used. For more details, it can be seen in the following example:

Au ait an Reni in kalele bin lalopa

I takes ring Reni on road

'I take Reni's ring on the road'

Marten mait kit fane es ume hana
Marten take plate in kitchen dapur
'Marten takes a plate in the kitchen.'

In addition to these examples Dawan also has other lexicon variants that contain the meaning of taking. The variants of the verb 'to take' are *oet* 'to cut', *usik* 'to rob', *main* 'to pick up (garbage)', *kui* 'to waste', *heut* 'to pluck', *son* 'to spoon', *nakolo* 'to pilfer', *abakat* 'to throw', *mbok* 'to pull', *nak haen* 'to dig', *muhabi* 'to clamp', *huk* 'to catch', and *iup* 'to break down'.

Ani oet hau hote
Ani cut wood burn
'Ani cuts (take) firewood'

Falen saep hau
Falen take wood
'Falen takes some wood'

Usik "take" (to rob)
Falen *nasik* loet
Falen rob money
'Falen takes (rob) money'

Main "take" (pick up)
Reni *nain* kiu
PRON-2SG pick up orange
'Reni picks up some orange'

Kui "take" (waste)
Sin *Nkui* oe
They waste water
'They waste some water'

Heut "take" (pick)
Falen *seo* hau kaes fua
PRON-1SG pick fruit papaya
'Falen picks papaya'

Semantic Structure of the Dawan Verb 'To Take'

The defining semantic primes of the verb "to take" in Dawan is based on natural the theory of natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) proposed by Anna Werzwicka (1996). The semantic prime is a set of unchanged meanings. In this primal sense there are unchangeable semantic features and these

meanings are the first meaning human beings know in their life.

Mait "to take"

The verb *mait* 'to take' for the speech community of Dawan language is divided into several lexicons. This division occurs based on the entities performing the verbs. The verb *ait* 'to take' verb is used if the verb is the first person singular. The term *mait* is used if the actor is a second person singular. The variant *nait* "to take" is used if the actor is a single third person singular. *Tait* "to take" is used if the actor is the first person plural. For more details, it can be seen in the following example:

Au *Ait* dompet nok loetan bin noel
I take wallet with money in river
'I took a wallet with money in the river'

Marten *mait* bantal nan nem es ume nan!
Marten take pillow inside house
'Marten, go get the pillow inside the house!'

In the above sentence, both the verb *mait* and *ait* are used to retrieve something (objects). *Ait* is used for the first person singular. While the *mait* is used in imperative sentence for a second person singular. The commonly used instrument is the hand. The exponents and sub-components of the verb *mait* or *ait* can be explicated through the following paraphrase.

Explication:

In terms of semantic structure, this verb can be explicated as follows:

At that time, X did something on Y
X did this (by hand))
Therefore, Y moves to X at the same time
X: wanted this
X did it this way

Resti *nait* ho kaca mata
Resti take eyeglass you
'It was Resti who took your eyeglass'

em he *tait* hau naek i
Come we take wood big this
'Let's take this big wood'

In the above sentence the verb *nait* or *tait* is used to retrieve something (objects). Instrument that is usually used is hand. The exponents and sub-components of this verb can

be explicated through the following paraphrase.

Explication:

In terms of semantic structure, this verb can be explicated as follows:

At that time, X did something on Y
X did this (by hand)
Therefore, Y moves to X at the same time
X: wanted this
X did it this way

If the actor of this activity is man, the object of the verb *mait*, *ait*, *nait*, *tait* can be animate or non-animate entities. To assist in the occurrence of this action, in addition to using human hands, it can also be done by using other aids such as plastic, sack or bucket. In general, this activity is carried out by mapping the component "X wants this" in the hope that "something happens to Y", that is to say the 'Y' as the entity or the subject to action can move.

Oet "to take" (cut)

Verb *Oet* has four variants. The variants consist of verbs, such as *keut*, *saep*, *lef*, and *eb* which respectively means "to take". Each of these verbs has a different semantic role of argument. The semantic role of the argument can be seen in the following example:

Riki *oet* mankit hau jati nane namaon
Riki ask for take teak very hard
'Riki asked to take the teak wood'

In the data above, the roles of semantic agent and patient can be seen. The role of the agent is evident in the entity Riki, while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *teak*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

Erik *keut* mutuka hau mahoni I he ta hote labaha
Erik take wood mahogany that in order easy when used
'Erik took the mahogany wood so that it would be easy to use'

In the above data, the role of semantic agent and patient can be seen. The agent's role is clearly visible in entity 'Erik', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *mahogany*. Again, the role of the patient is based on the physical change of the entity as it is fully affected by the other entity.

Nina *saep* mohoan poat lek leko nane het

moe malo

Nina take skin wood kusambi with careful because will make ingredient.

'Nina takes the bark of kusambi carefully for it will be used as herb'

The data above indicate the role of semantic agent and patient. The role of the agent is clearly visible in the Nina entity, while the patient's role can be seen in the *kusambi bark* entity. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

Rino leftani raffia nae het fut manus i

Rino take string of raffia to tie betel leaf

'Rino takes the raffia rope to tie the leaves of the betel'

In the above data, the role of semantic agents and patients can be seen. The agent's role is clearly visible in entity 'Rino', while the patient's role can be seen in entity *raffia rope*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

Eb mankit jak i sikone, nane namnatun

Please take jackfruit because jackfruit has been ripe

'Please get the jackfruit for it is ripe'

The data above shows the role of agent and patient semantic. The agent's role is clearly visible in the entity 'Marlin', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *jackfruit*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

Muhabi "take" (clamp)

The verb *muhabi* has several variants. The variants consist of *uhabi*, *nahabi*, and *tahabi*. The three verbs each have a different semantic role of argument. The role of the semantic argument can be seen in the example below;

au *uhabi* polpoen ekja haek

I take pen that fall down with use feet

'I picked up a pen fallen down with my feet'

The role of semantic of agent and patient is seen in the above data. The agent's role is clearly visible in entity 'I', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *pen*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other

entities.

Marlin le *nahabi* bukba nekja haen

Marlin take book that fall down with use feet

'Marlin picked up a book that fell on the floor with her feet'

In the data above, the semantic role of agent and patient can be seen. The role of the agent is clearly visible in entity 'Marlin', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *book*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

om he nua kit *tahabi* tekja haek

We two take (book) with use feet

'Let's pick the book up by foot'

In the above data, the semantic role of the agent of the patient can be seen. The role of the agent is clearly visible in entity *we*, while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *book*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

Huk "take" (catch)

Verb Huk has only one variant of Musnon. The verb has a semantic role of two different arguments. The role of the semantic argument can be seen in the example below;

Marten *musnon* okam i

Marten please take cucumber this

'Marten, please take this cucumber'

In the data above, the semantic role of agent and patient can be seen. The role of the agent is clearly visible in the entity 'Marten', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *cucumber*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

The Semantic Role of Argument of the Verb 'To Take'

With classification of the verb semantically, the verbs meaning 'to take' in Dawan are included in the action verb type. In the action verb, the actor acts as an agent. This group of verbs requires that the entity possesses human characteristics, so that the entity fully controls the event. In general, the group of verbs analyzed has a semantic role of argument. The actor as an agent, and the object as a patient.

Mait "take"

Mait verbs have several variants. The variants consist of *vait*, *nait*, and *tait*. Each of the three verbs has a different semantic role of argument. The semantic role of the argument can be seen in the following example:

Au (Esy) **ait** *an Reni in kalele bin lalopa*

I take Reni ring on road

'I picked up Reni's ring on the highway

The semantic role of the agent and the patient is seen in the above sentence. The role of the agent is clearly visible in my entity 'I' (Esy), while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *ring*, whereas the locative role can be seen on *on the highway*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

Marten **maüt** *kit fane es ume hana*

Marten take plate in kitchen

'Marten, get a plate in the kitchen'

From the above data, it can be seen that there is a semantic role of agent, patient and locative. The role of the agent is clearly visible in the entity 'Marten', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *plate*. The semantic role of locative is seen in the entity *in the kitchen*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities. Similarly, as a locative role because the entity is where the event occurred.

Resti **nait** *ho kaca mata*

Resti who take you eyeglass

'It is Resti who took your glass'

In the above data, there is a semantic role of agent and patient. The role of the agent is clearly seen in entity 'Resti', while the patient's role can be seen in entity *your glass*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

em he **tait** *hau naek i*

Let we take wood big this

'Let's take this large wood'

In the above data, the semantic role of the agent and patient is shown. The role of the agent is clearly visible in the entity 'We', while the patient's role can be seen in entity *large wood*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

Oet "take" (cut)

Verb Oet has four variants. The variants

consist of *keut*, *saep*, *lef*, and *eb*. Each of these variants has a different semantic role of argument. The semantic role of the argument can be seen in the example below;

Riki **oet** *mankit hau jati nane namaon*

Riki asked to take teak wood very hard

'Riki is asked to take the teak wood'

In the data above can be seen there is a semantic role of agents and patients. The role of the agent is clearly visible in the entity 'Riki', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *teak wood*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

Erik **keut** *mutuka hau mahoni i he ta hote labaha*

Erik take wood mahogany that so that easy when used

'Erik took the mahogany wood so that it would be easy to use'

In the data above, it can be seen that there is a semantic role of agents and patients. The role of the agent is clearly visible in entity 'Erik', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *mahogany*. The role of the patient is based on the physical alteration of the entity as it is fully influenced by the other entity.

Nina **saep** *mohoen poat lek leko nane het moe malo*

Nina take skin wood kusambi with careful because will make ingredients

'Nina takes the bark of kusambi carefully because it will make as herb'

In the above data, can be seen the role of semantic of agents and patients. The role of the agent is clearly visible in the entity 'Nina', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *kusambi bark*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

Rino **lef** *tani rafia nae het fut manus i*

Rino take rope raffia to tie leaf betel

'Rino picks up the raffia rope to tie the leaves of betel'

In the above data, there is a semantic role of agents and patients. The role of the agent is clearly seen in entity 'Rino', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *raffia rope*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities.

Eb **mankit** *jak i sikone, nane namnatun*

Please take jackfruit because
jackfruit has been ripe

'Please get jackfruit for it is ripe'

In the above data, there is a semantic role of agents and patients. The role of the agent is clearly visible in the entity 'Marlin', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *jackfruit*. The role of the patient is based on the physical alteration of the entity as it is fully affected by other entities.

Mbok "take" (pull)

Verbs *mbok* has two variants. Both variants consist of *ai* and *tbok*. Each has a different semantic role of argument. The semantic role of the argument can be seen in the example below:

Au *ai* tefu ubes lelo mbin lele

I take a piece cane in garden

'I picked up a cane in the garden'

From the data above can be seen the role of semantic of agent, patient and locative. The role of the agent is clearly visible in entity 'I', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *cane*. Locative role can be seen in the presence of *in the garden*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities. Similarly, the role as a locative because the entity is the place of events.

em he *tbok* laku hau es ume koten

Let we pull cassava that exists in house
behind

'Let's remove the cassava behind the
house'

In the above data, can be seen the role of semantic of agent, patient and locative. The agent's role is clearly visible in the entity 'we', while the patient's role can be seen in the entity *cassava*. Locative roles can be seen on *behind the house*. The role of the patient is based on the physical changes of the entity because it is fully influenced by other entities. Similarly, as a locative role because the entity is where the event occurred.

It turns out to be in prevalence the NSM theory introduced by Goddard and Wierzbicka (Goddard, 1997; Wierzbicka, 2007; Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2016) in every element of content of each language. Semantic primitives in Dawan is also a prevalent evidence in nature. It is that the verb *mbok* variants are identifiable through explicative process by referring to existing NSM.

IV. CONCLUSION

The semantic structure of the Dawan studied by the NSM analysis in this paper, on the verb variant of the verb *mbok*, reveals a structural pattern, i.e., if men who *takes*, the component explication is "X does something on Y" and therefore "Y moves to X" at the same time. X wants this. X does it this way. The classification of verbs based on semantic roles represents that the verbs meaning *to take* in the Dawan belong to the type of action verb. In the action verb, the actor acts as an agent. This group of verbs requires that the entity possesses human characteristics, so that it fully controls the event. In general, the group of verbs analyzed has a semantic role. The actor acts as an agent, and the patient as an object.

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