Color in Mandailing Language: A Semantic Study of Connotation

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Abstract:
Language is the way of humans perceives their environment. This paper aim described the study of color semantics in Mandailing language. This is because color is one of the most important elements in human life to convey a certain impression and is an interesting topic to analyze because the vocabulary of color in each language is unique. On this occasion, the authors used the Natural Semantic Metal Language approach to describe Colors in Mandailing Language by using semantic studies of connotation. The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method that produces word descriptions. The data technique uses the technique of recording, observing and because of the methods used to obtain data so that it is done by recording using language, both spoken language (Mandailing community speech) and writing related to naming color names. Basically, Mandailing culture recognizes 12 colors, namely red (rara), brown (coklat), gray (abu-abu), purple (bunga torung), orange (pinang), pink (merah jambu), green (rata), light green (rata bulung pisang), blue (rata ombun), white (bontar), black (lomlom) and yellow (gorsing). The function of color in the Mandailing language is also used as a means of communication and social adaptation. In terms of meaning, the color in the Mandailing language also has connotative meanings such as dysphemism and euphemism. The research was conducted in Matondang Village - Palas, North Sumatra with 100% ethnic population in Mandailing. The results of this study indicate that the naming of colors in the Mandailing community in Matondang Village is caused by experience in seeing an object so that when seeing the same color as the object, the naming of the color name appears with the object's name.

Keywords:
natural semantic language; color semantics; naming

I. Introduction

Color is a visual form that existed in human life since ancient times until now. Color greatly influences the role in human life because color is able to be a means of expression that continues to evolve and become one of the means of communication media in everyday life. Color is nothing ordinary and meaningless. Color is important because it is a strong abbreviation to convey ideas and information (Paterson, 2004: 3). The using of color in connotation refers to the term introduced by Allan and Burridge (2006) as follows X-phemisme. The term ' X-phemisme' is a phrase used in various forms of speech such as orthophemism (direct speaking as is), dysphemism (coarse language), and euphemisms (refined speech). Orthophemism and euphemisms are words or phrases used as alternatives to express something that is not pleasing in our hearts.

The interesting in this study is that there is diversity in the unit of expression of color meaning in people's lives, including the diversity of language origin and language units, as well as the use of semantic domains in color. Color has been produced in many language studies
including Gladstone (1858), Geiger (1868), Magnus (1877), Marty (1879) from these studies can be used as a reference in the study is Berlin and Kay (1969). Kay & McDaniel (1978); Kay, Berlin, Maffi, & Merrifield (1997); Kay & Maffi (1999) concluded that language is a tool for expressing meaning. Dixon (1992:5) argues that in its use language will begin with meaning and end in meaning. Starting from the meaning of meaning before using a form of language either orally, writing or gesture, the language user formulates the concept in his/her mind first, and ending with meaning means the interlocutor or reader can understand the concept in its entirety. The Semantic Meta-language approach is often used to map the default meaning of a language. Color in vocabulary becomes an interesting part of the language to study because the color in the language has differences meaning with other languages.

Language is one of the most important things in the life of every human being (Purba, N. et al. (2020). In Mandailing language, colors can represent in one's view of their life, beliefs and culture, as such colors serve a specific purpose that users want to convey. In fact, color can also determine the emotions and characteristics of a person or society in a culture. Shara Mazhitayeva and Zhanar Kaskatayeva (2013) in title Color Semantics: Linguistic-Cultural Aspect. The study described that color has a big role in modern human life and has been accustomed to using it in communication to be more efficient with others which is a major need with a scientific background. For example, the nature and traditions are shared by speakers and listeners. The relationship of the wardrobe to the scientific trend "color linguistics" is a theoretical aspect. Linguists distinguish comparative-historical studies from color vocabulary (evolutionary trends), psycholinguistic components of color naming, cognitive aspects, cultural aspects of language formation, and investigations of nominative terms from color vocabulary. Color is an indicator of what people think of the world; they can easily be associated with certain emotions they evoke with others (black as sadness, red as emergency, green as safe, white as pure, etc.) and have different connotations in different cultures. However, in different cultures, they can cause different reactions, as some cultures may lack certain features or even features (cf. Nitina, Iljinska, Platonova 2008, 182–186). By Brent Berlin and Paul Kay (1969: 3) this is applied to the term color names used, because they can describe certain nuances of meaning in a language, for example in Russian there are twelve basic colors because they have the concept of 'голубой', which in other languages, including Latvian and English, are each designated with a compound word, for example 'Gaïši zils' like light blue. The significance of color semantics as culture component has complicated and various sacral system of senses, interpretations for every nation and becomes embodiment of definite cultural values. Consequently, color naming can be represented as linguistic cultural phenomenon.

Kononov (1975) being the first who investigated meanings of color naming in Turkic languages distinguished 20 different meanings of black color as an adjective. The black color means not only darkness, piercing cold, dense, large, strong, fierce, mass, ordininariness, uncertainty, but also hardship, difficult anxiety, poverty. Some scholars consider names related to black color dividing them on 6 groups: 1) evil; 2) crime, cruelty; 3) priority; 4) holiness, kindness; 5) simplicity; 6) grief and despondency. One more meaning of black color is connected with beauty: Black-eyed, Black-haired. Moreover, black color is treated as natural color: color of the earth, sign of prosperity. This is philosophical notion meaning constancy, statics: “naked earth”, “common people”, and “matchlock gun, “black horse”, maid who does spade work. The earliest researches on studying color naming semantics in Turkic languages were works of academician Kononov devoted to the study given problem: “On the semantics of the words “white” and “black” in Turkic geographical terminology”, “Semantics of color naming in Turkic languages” in which semantics of the words “white” and “black” are examined, that occur in geographical terminology of Turkic languages, also connotation peculiarities of those are considered there.
Based on the explanation, the author investigates the ways of color naming composition and their meanings in the language of Turkic people. Another study of semantics is to clarify the relationship between language and culture. The number of vocabularies that come from various languages, even parts of various grammar languages, will reflect the speaker's culture. In other words, understanding culture is a way to understand language which is an important part of building a culture. In many cultures and in cultural life, certain people express themselves in many ways. One of them is the use of color as a symbol in cultural. In the Aboriginal culture in Australia, people who do not know the tradition of clothing and technology that expresses their everyday cultural life by providing color certain on their bodies. Red and yellow ochre colors, variations of light yellow to brown or red, white pipeclay' white is used to make tobacco pipes', and charcoal 'Charcoal' (Goddard, 1997: 89). Because of the close relationship of color to people's life, color also often used as a substitute to indicate a certain expression. Black has negative connotations and in many languages is often associated with depression, pessimism, and anger (Soriano - Valenzuela, 2009).

Allan (2001: 146) states that the meaning of connotation is a semantic effect that arises from broad insight into something and comes from experiences, beliefs, and prejudices about fill in the context. Allan divides the meaning of connotations into three, namely dysphemism is the connotation of words or phrases used to express things that are rude, orthophemisms are connotations of words or meanings used to replace words that are considered rude or considered offensive and used in formal situations, and eupemism is the connotation of a word or phrase used to replace words that are considered offensive and used in informal situations. This paper aims to determine the meaning of color connotations that are often used by people in the Mandailing language, such as white, black, yellow, green, blue, red, orange, purple, gray, and brown. As for the benefits of this paper is in order to increase understanding and knowledge in the field of linguistics, especially in the field semantics in color naming and meaning.

In many cultures and in cultural life, certain people express themselves in various ways, such as in communicating, the use of red color ‘rara’ states someone or “anak boru” is beautiful and black ‘lomlom’ is handsome for “alak lai”. The meaning of color in interacting with the surrounding community has a deep meaning in the Mandailing language which is used in daily conversation. In essence, the meaning of color upholds cultural values in the Mandailing community. The expression of the Mandailing language color has a unique and varied meaning.

Later, Berlin and Kay developed the hypothesis of the basic “color” terms. In their Basic Colour Terms, Berlin and Kay (1969) proposed an onto-methodology of cross-cultural colour research realised by the Munsell system. They claimed the relation between Munsell, the workings of the visual system, and the color naming behavior of people, is so binding it can be taken to be a causative law. Diversity of color-naming behavior is defined as a system-regulated stability evinced by evolution. Berlin and Kay’s survey Basic Color terms: their Universality and Evolution still provides a challenging platform for a number of linguistic and anthropological researches involving colors.

This paper described several definitions so that this does not happen on going confusion. The colors in this paper are a collection of colors that are pronounced by the Mandailing community everyday life, both in the form of color connotations and the naming of color names, such as Red “rara”, brown, gray, purple (bunga torung), orange (kulit pinang), pink (merah jambu), green (rata), blue (rata ombun), white (bontar), black (lomlom), yellow (gorsing). The role of color to express something that contains a specific purpose, and is used in everyday life ideas or objects that are often construed in a limited way as a conventional sign, something that is built
Semantic color is the study of the meaning of words and sentences as well as the meaning communicated through language, so as to convey a message in the communication process through an interpretation and the semantic meaning of color uses a theoretical approach. MSA according to Goddard (2010) is the decomposition of meaning representations based on the main points of universal semantic units, namely the same meaning of a word in language. Previous research, the study of semantics based on the theory of natural semantic meta-language (MSA) has done a lot with the world’s languages, such as Leo (Thailand), Mangaaba-Mbula, Malaysia (Austronesia), Mandarin Chinese, Poland, Spain, English, Hawaiian creole, Acehnese, Japanese and several native Aboriginal languages in Australia, such as Bunuba, Yankunytjajara (Goddard, 2002: 12) The authors use the Natural Semantic Meta language approach to describe the meaning of semantic color in Mandailing Language. The meaning of Color is an interesting topic to analyze because the vocabulary of colors in each language has its own uniqueness. Based on the MSA approach, color vocabulary is classified based on the basic colors, namely black and red which can be represented as natural signs and adverbs or adjectives. The authors describe the original meaning of the color vocabulary obtained. Besides that, the color variations in the Mandailing language are very strict, such as blue ‘rata ombun’ in example “warna baju mi warna ni langit” (your clothes was wearing same as the weather today, a sunny day) ‘rata ombun’ as the meaning of the weather, the color yellow is often referred to as gorsing meaning ripe, and this is usually expressed in daily conversations such as “madung gorsing do pisang nomui?” ‘gorsing’ does not mean yellow, but the naming of fruit, “oh amang songun huida ho rata bitua” here ‘rata’ does not mean green but means hungry and it is an adjective.

Basically, the color comes from the color of plants or fruit. Basically, the colors come from the colors of plants or fruits. In Indonesian, there are six basic color vocabularies with classification, namely ‘white, black’, ‘red, yellow, green, and blue’. Color name often has an association with culture and objects that are around the society. It is appropriate with the state of Abdullah (2017:53) that from the names can be known what standard that is used by a society to make a classification, it also means if we can know the view of life of the culture supporters. Except of color naming concept above, there are many more forms of color naming concepts in Mandailing which are very interesting to be researched deeply. Cultural meaning is a typical meaning that expresses the cultural elements and needs that are typically in the cultural aspect (Subroto, 2011:36). In addition, in naming color form, Munsell (in Darmaprawira, 2002:50) states that the color has three dimensions, namely the color name, value or degree, and chroma or intensity. Thus, (1) color can be identified easily by the naming concept, (2) the value of color can differentiate the color brightness quality, and (3) the intensity of color is a color quality that causes the color speaks, shouts, or whispers in a soft tone.

II. Research Method

The method in this research is using descriptive qualitative methods. Use of methods is considered from the center attention to the characteristics and properties of language data as they are. Consideration this certainly corresponds to one characteristic qualitative research methods, namely background natural or in the context of wholeness (Moleong, 2010). That matter in line with Djajasudarma’s opinion (1993) that research with using descriptive methods should generate actual freedom data. The meaning of descriptive method produces data actual freedom, researcher get data is not pushy to informants. So is data must be actual in the about event existing data. The research stages descriptive include (1) provision data, (2) data analysis, and (3) presentation or formulation of analysis results (Mahsun, 2005). Qualitative method descriptive views of Bogdan and Taylor as a research procedure produce descriptive data in the form of words, both spoken
and written (Moleong, 1993). The descriptive term suggests that the research carried out is solely based on the facts exist or a phenomenon that is true empirical life of its speakers so that it is generated or recorded in the form of language.

The data source used is the primary data in the form of a collection of Mandailing semantic colors obtained from the daily conversations of Matondang villagers. Then the authors compiled the data. Secondary data is in the form of color semantics obtained from documents such as dictionaries, books, and articles.

Furthermore, researchers used participant observation techniques, in-depth interview techniques, and literature study to collect data. Lately the concept of color has developed rapidly along with the development of the culture of the people, the use of color in addition to the interests of expression is also used to create certain impressions in creating an atmosphere, the concept of color is used as a tool for interaction in aspects of everyday life to be considered how choose the right color for specific situations, conditions and purposes. Color in the language level is realized with the color vocabulary in the phrase, sentence or basic lexeme of the color vocabulary itself, so that the approach can be from various aspects of research and points of view. Color is a visual symptom so describing it is not easy; color is a perception so it has something to do with the informant's subjectivity from the research data.

III. Result and Discussion

This research tried to find the meaning of color semantics in Mandailing language such as red and yellow, taking the meaning of red and yellow in interacting which means beauty and splendor or wealth as an object study. Based on the research results, it was found that there were several study semantics of colors in Mandailing language. There are several colors that will be used in the Mandailing language with semantic study on connotation and this section discussed the meaning that in concept of semantic color in the Mandailing language such as red (rara), brown (coklat), gray (abu-abu), purple (bunga torung), orange (pinang), pink (merah jambu), green (rata), light green (rata bulung pisang), blue (rata ombun), white (bontar), black (lomlom) and yellow (gorsing).

1. Black “lomlom”

“na lomlom ma sasilonmu” 1.a
hitam sekali kukumu
your nails are so black

“lomlom doma pat nidanaki na main tano” 1.b
hitam sekali kaki anak itu karena main tanah
the boy’s feet was so black from playing with the ground

“tano na lomlom ma najeges tu suan-suan ni” 2.a
tanah hitam adalah tanah yang lebih bagus untuk tanaman
black soil is a better soil for crops

“bayoi lomlom ugligin ana na ganteng” 2.b
ku lihat pemuda hitam yang sangat ganteng
I saw a very handsome black young man.
Based on example 1 there is a black color "lomlom" where in examples 1.a and 1.b black color "lomlom" means dirty, has a negative meaning then can be concluded from the analysis results in example 1 called negative connotations (dysphemism). While in the number 2 black color "lomlom" has a positive meaning that is handsome. In other words in example number 2 it is also called connotation euphemism.

2. White “bontar”
“ma sadia dongan unmurni? aso na bontaran obukmi”
sudah berapa usianu? kenapa rambutmu sudah beruban
how old are you? Why is your hair graying?

“na bontaran muko nia da”
his face is very clean

Based on example in number 1 there is a color white "bontar" where in example 1, has a negative meaning that white "bontar" is old because the hair is all white, then it can be concluded from the results of the analysis in example 1 called negative connotations (dysphemism). While in number 2 has a positive meaning is also called connotation euphemism because white "bontar" has a clean meaning.

3. Brown “coklat”
“na coklatan aek ni sumuri”
warna air sumur itu coklat
the well’s water color is brown

“buat pe jau arambir na madung coklati”
tolong ambilkan kelapa yang coklat itu
get me that brown coconut, please

Based on example in number 1 there is a brown color "brown" where in sentence 1 this brown color states the well water is very murky (yellow) in this case the sentence number 1 is expressed with negative connotations (dysphemism). While in number 2 the color brown "brown" has a positive meaning that is an old coconut, thus in number 2 contains a positive meaning that is connotation euphemism

4. Yellow “gorsing”
“na gorsing ma ipon mui”
kuning sekali gigi mu
it is yellow with your teeth.

“madung na gorsingan ma eme nomui”
Padi kalian sudah kuning sudah bisa dipanen
your rice is yellow can already be harvested

Based on example 1 there is a yellow color "gorsing" where in example 1 this yellow color expresses the meaning of color that is not good to see (dirty) in this case the sentence number 1 is expressed with negative connotations (dysphemism). While in number 2 color yellow (gorsing) has a positive meaning that can be harvested and the yellow color "gorsing" here can be attributed
to the naming of plants such as lush. The example contained in number 2 contains a positive meaning that is connotation euphemism.

5. Green “rata”
“rata do ma pancubitanmu” 1.a
sakit sekali cubitanmu
your pinch is hurts

“aamang, madung mangan tai songon si rata bitua huligin” 1.b
anakku, baru saja makan tapi ibu lihat kamu tidak kenyang-kenyang
my son, you just ate but I see you are not full.

“na rata ma kobun mi” 2
subur sekali kebunmu
it is so lush in your garden

Based on examples in number 1 and 2 there is a green color "rata" with a different color meaning as in the sentence 1.a green color "rata" means sick and 1.b green color "rata" means not full (feeling hungry continues), from the results of this study then examples 1.a and 1.b have a negative color meaning called dysphemism connotations. While in number 2 as in the example above, green "rata" states the meaning of fertile. Then it can be concluded in sentence number 2 contains a positive meaning called connotation euphemism

6. Red “rara”
“na rara ma i lipstik mui” 1
lipstik mu norak sekali
Your lipstick is gaudy

“nangkin adong anak boru di pancuri amana rara muko gejes ia” 2.a
tadi ada anak perempuan kulihat di air terjun, mukanya merah dan cantik
I saw that there was a girl in the water fall whose face was red and beauty

“anggo madung rara jambui berarti madung bisa dipangan”2.b
jambunya jika sudah merah boleh dimakan

From the first sentence, the color red “rara” as a negative connotation, “rara” in number 1 as meaning with gaudy lipstick. Therefore, if there are people who use a striking red color, it is often connoted with negative things (including the dysphemism connotation) and based on the analyzed that in example 1, it is used when expressing dislike. Example 2.a “rara muko nai” is used to positive meaning with a beautiful girl, and 2.b red “rara” as meaning with ripe or sweet. Based on the analyzed number 2, it is known that the red color tends towards names that have positive meaning with euphemism connotation.

7. Blue “rata ombun”
“madung rata ma bibir ni danaki na maridi” 1
bibir anak itu sudah pucat karena kelamaan mandi
the boy's lips are pale because of the long time bath
“rata do ma langiti”  2
biru sekali langitnya
it is so blue the sky

Basically the blue and green colors in Mandailing language is the same as that is “rata”, it is the only thing that distinguishes if it enters into sentences or dialogue. Based on the example above blue color "rata ombun" is still pronounced with the word “rata” this is contained in example in number 1 this blue color states the meaning of a pale color in this case number 1 has negative color meaning and it is connotation dysphemism . While in number 2 color blue "rata ombun” has a positive color meaning that is a bright color. Based on the results of analyzed in number 2 is connotation euphemisms.

Based on the analyzed colors in Mandailing language has the same meaning and different and it is can concluded based on the results in using the sentences or dialogues in the village Matondang - Palas such as yellow and green have the same meaning lush, as in the example of green color "na rata ma kobun mi" (very fertile garden) and in the example black color "ama na lomlom tanoon" (very good the color of the soil is good here contains the lush meaning of the soil) but there is also the same meaning of color. Meanwhile in Mandailing language has a different meaning such as red can be interpreted as a tacky color but if it exceeds in use it will change the meaning of the color, such as in the example "na rara ma lipstick mi" (red here means not pretty that is gaudy) and in the example "na rara ma color ni atirangga mui" (red once the color of the girlfriend on your fingernails) red here contains a beautiful meaning. Thus the color in Mandailing language has a diverse meaning. Based on the results of the above analyzed this study has the concluded that color in Mandailing language contain connotation meanings both in the form of euphemism connotations and dysphemism connotations.

IV. Conclusion

Basically, color in Mandailing same as with the color Indonesian. Modernization in various forms and characteristics is very influential great in Mandailing culture. This influence has lasted for decades years ago, especially since the Dutch colonial period, through the system governance, law, knowledge, technology and education systems they take and implement. Mandailing communities are aware of identity and unity their own culture that makes them felt different from other members of society. Basically, color has a meaning that contains an impression that we can adjust to the culture. From the results of this study showed that the response of everyone from different cultures will have different color meanings. So the use of suitable colors should also be supported by an understanding of what the color means. Basically, the color that people of Mandailing known 12 colors, but in the use of the meaning of colors cannot be developed in the use of language in the community Mandailing. Along with the progress of the Era, Mandailing society only use 7 (seven) colors in the application of everyday language that has it is own color meaning in interacting with others. Based on the results from the data analysis above, the writers drawn that color in Mandailing language in the semantic studies of connotation has several colors that can be used in communication such as black, white, brown, yellow, green, red and blue. This research focused on the aspect of connotation in the semantic study related to color in Mandailing language from the interaction of local residents. Anne Wierbicka (1996) states that the concept of color can be created in different groups of people. Therefore, in English and other languages of the world, the term color is considered as something which naturally contains a semantic domain in 'itself'. Color is not something that is value free; it is proven by color becoming identity and even interpreted. Color research in language that has been carried out includes Gladstone (1858), Geiger (1868), Magnus (1877), Marty (1879) from studies that are often used as references in research, namely Berlin and Kay
This research is expected to contribute to enriching the study of color, especially in the Natural Semantic Meta-language which is still developing. The next, the writers hope that there will be a more in-depth and comprehensive research on color and it is study methods. This paper is far from perfect and requires data optimization and a more adequate theory for a scientific work.

References


