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REDISCOVER AND REVITALIZE LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to delineate the needs for the rediscovery and revitalization of language for the purposes of expounding the essence of language, language diversity and the need to maintain ethnic languages that are on the verge of extinction. The extinction of a language through lingua-cide or euthanasia is to be deplored because the death of a language means a loss of human ideas, history, civilization, cultural heritage, work of art, creativity, imagination, and way of talking about life. Some ways to save dying ethnic languages is among others revival of interest in language as human endowment, promotion of multiculturalism and revitalization of local wisdoms in ritual language which is a central part of solidarity making process.

Key words: *rediscover, revitalize, language death, language diversity, local wisdom*

1. Introduction

All animals have some system for communication with other members of their species, but only human beings have a language which is a unique human endowment. Language differentiates human beings from other species because the other species do not have such a sophisticated means or tool to create ideas, develop imagination, accumulate knowledge, and talk about them. With language human beings enjoy an unlimited possibility of freedom and egalitarianism unheard of in other species of the world. In this paper the writer intends to revisit and expound the essence and importance of language in human life.

It is universally acknowledged that language permeates all aspects of human life and is important for the development of civilization; language is involved with everything humans do as social beings –there is not one aspect of human life that is not touched by language. However, it is an undeniable fact that language often does not enjoy the privilege of a special status as basic science that deserves special attention for its investigation, understanding, development, and maintenance. We have witnessed that much interest is voiced about conserving endangered animals and plants that are on the verge of extinction, also interest in keeping and enriching the genetic pool, but is there comparable interest shown in keeping, maintaining human language and its diversity? To quote an example: languages are far more threatened than fish (5%), plants (8%), birds (11%), mammals (18%). Over 40% of world languages are threatened with extinction (Harrison, 2007:7).

Several topics will be discussed briefly, they are: the concepts of sign, symbol, language as part of semiotic system through which human beings interact and create culture, language death, language diversity, multiculturalism, and local wisdom and ritual language as a venue to learn about local wisdom and thus revive language, especially those that are dying.

2. Sign, Symbol, Language, Semiotics

Language is one of many different systems of communication. Verbal language is unique to human beings and different from all other systems of communication including those that are used by animals. The uniqueness of human language lies in the fact that it is symbolic. Because it is symbolic language is limitless in its design features, in its development, and in its use, especially to create meaning. For those whose job is doing linguistics, this topic may be considered trivial, but when approached with the right questions, it can be fruitful, even entertaining.

Language is a system of signs, both natural and conventional, used as symbols to represent ideas, concepts, and descriptions of human experiences. Benveniste (1971:73) maintained that the whole of human language is based on symbolization; and on the same line, the psychologist Jean Piaget (as quoted by Cast, 1989:24) maintained that the initial function of language is not communication but symbolization. One conclusion that can be drawn from this line of thought is that if the function of language is just communication then human language would be the same as animal communication.

Animal communication is instinctive, based on stimuli and is very restricted in its use; that is, only for here and now, and serves the purposes of fulfilling basic needs pertaining to food, drink, sleep, mate, and care of off-springs. In contrast, human language is creative, stimulus free and can be used to talk about the past, present and future, about ideas and things that exist and those that do not exist, or things that are just imagined. This flexibility is only possible because human language consists basically of symbols that allow the freedom to talk about anything in detail and with clarity and precision. Even three-year old children play with symbols, and they have the ability to differentiate what is symbolic and what is real and what is conventional (Piaget, 1956 as quoted by Cast, 1989:25). Moreover, children master language without any kind of learning; that is why experts talk about language acquisition through exposure at the knees of mothers and other care givers, i.e. in a social context.

Human beings are endowed with the ability to create symbols, that is why human beings are called *homo simbolificus* or *animal simbolicum* which means 'human or animal that creates and uses symbols'. So far researchers have not found traces of the creation and use of symbols in animal communication. Experts also maintain that no species of monkey or the great ape has ever created a single genuine symbol even though in terms of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), the great apes are 98% similar to humans.

Human beings do not only invent language but they also create culture. Experts maintain that human beings have put aside instinct and replaced it with culture. Human beings have developed consciousness from an instinctual level to a reflective mode. Human beings may lack the keen instinctual structure of animals but they are endowed with the capacity and freedom to think, speak, discover and understand without limits (Dehaene, 2009:313, 305).

Researchers have shown that not one of the primates, the great apes, ever invented cultural symbols on its own –they may be trained to imitate some rudimentary types, though. As for humans, they are the only species that has an imagination unparalleled in the animal world (Dehaene, 2009:317). Another fact about human beings that deserves attention is that one of *Homo Sapiens*'s most salient features, which sets them apart from other primates, is that human beings are born with an immature and highly plastic brain. A human baby is delivered at a time when its brain's development is far from complete (Dehaene, 2009:314). Thus a human baby has to complete the development of the brain on its own outside the womb, while at the same time adjust its plasticity to its physical, environmental needs and changes, and most importantly the plasticity in the development of his mind through use. The concept of plasticity is two-fold: one pertains to the development of the brain, the "hard-ware", and the other in the development of the mind, the "soft-ware" through language and culture. Language is a tool, and as a tool for socialization and thinking language is the most amazing achievement of the development of the human brain as a processor. Language straddles the physiological aspect and the mental aspect of man; and it is an exclusive property of the human mind.

The study of symbols is part of the study of semiotics which investigates the whole cultural process as communicative process within a system of signification. Significance refers to the fact that a thing or word is used as a representation of (i.e., it stands for) something else (Eco, 2009:8). A Symbol does not have substance; that is why words do not have meanings; it is people who have meanings for words. As linguists put it, meaning is not inherent in the objects or the signs themselves, but in the relationship which human beings construct and the way they perceive the relations between them. This is how language is manipulated to create meanings that are stored in the human memory as knowledge. Experts also talk about first order semiotic system dealing with denotation and second order semiotic system dealing with connotation especially in literary studies (cf. Hoed, 2011:45).

Language is a complex system of knowledge. Individual languages have been forged and shaped by people to serve as repositories for cultural knowledge, and have been adapted over time to serve the needs of a particular population in their environment (Harrison, 2007:7). The difference in geographical, social, physical, and mental environment, on the one hand, is perhaps one of the reasons we have such a diversity of languages; but on the other hand, the diversity of languages may have developed from the egalitarianism which is a basic nature of the human race, who always strives for clarity, vividness, and individuality. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), in 2005 and Harrison in 2007 reported that there are 6.912 living languages in the world (Gordon -SIL, 2005:16; Harrison, 2007: 7). To mention in passing, in Indonesia there are 763 languages according to the National Language Center –project of language mapping (Moeliono 2009, and Sanga, 2011).

3. Language death

Language ceases to be language when it is not used for human conversation. The disappearance of languages is both a social and scientific reality. These realities have to be met. On the social front, many individuals and communities have launched energetic efforts or initiatives to preserve, transmit, reclaim, revive, and revitalize languages, knowing that languages only thrive in communities of speakers (Harrison, 2007:9). At the same time it is acknowledged that language change is inevitable: it changes, because people change. We know that language can always disintegrate when it is not used with care and respect. It is organic and is symbiotic to human existence.

On the scientific front, our knowledge is still quite imperfect as to how and why language death occurs. Is it natural death, is it *lingua-cide*, the killing of languages, or is it *euthanasia*, a voluntary suicide due to neglect? We also lack a clear understanding of what exactly is being lost when a language dies –is language unique and contains irreplaceable knowledge, or does it contain merely common sense knowledge that is specially packaged in the different languages? Could such knowledge ever be adequately captured in books, dictionaries, and video recordings in the absence of any speakers? Once a language dies or vanished, can the language and the knowledge contained in it be re-created, reclaimed; will it re-emerge spontaneously after a while, or is it forever lost and unrecoverable? (Harrison, 2007:9-10). Reports have been made about the unique revival of classical Hebrew that has been dormant or dead for thousands of years (Evans, 2010: 51).

On the human front, in the interest of humanity we must encourage the investigation and documentation of what we can and while we still can (Harrison, 2007:10). We must also launch and intensify efforts to prevent *lingua-cide* and prevent *euthanasia* of small ethnic languages in the face of pressures by big languages, national language, important foreign languages, or public policies. To quote an example of a negative public policy, Kaswanti (2009:206) mentioned that in American Indian reservations in the United States, Amerindian children were punished by whipping for speaking in their mother tongues because the languages were prohibited in dormitories. When the children did want to speak their indigenous language they had to do it secretly.

Lingua-cide or the "killing" of language will lead to *ideo-cide*, the "killing" of idea. Some experts in ethnolinguistics and in oral literature claim that when ideas go extinct, we all grow poorer. What exactly is lost when a language, the most massive, complex repertoire of ideas we know, ceases to be spoken? We lose all the rich ideas and wisdoms developed and forged by human communities in the course of time. Language disappearance is an erosion or extinction of ideas, of ways of knowing, and ways of talking about the world and human experience (Harrison, 2007:7). When we lose a language, we lose a culture, an intellectual wealth, a work of art, a sophisticated tool needed to create sophistication. Harrison (2007) also writes that the voices of the last speakers of many languages are now fading away, never to be heard again. Some linguists and those who are concerned with languages may rush to record, codify these languages or tongues, while a few ethnic communities may struggle to revive the languages, with little success or with no success at all.

An old adage says that: "Language pre-exists our birth, and continues after our death". But we may question it, because when we die, will a certain language continue to exist. We know that language is social in its origin, social in its development and social in its use. Thus, when we do not have a social base to support a language it will most certainly go extinct. A language lives and thrives when it has a community of speakers to support it. Real speech and thought always exist in a context of communication between real persons. If the community or part of it finds a language un-prestigious, and hence loses interest in it, or when it is interested in other languages and abandons the language, then death or extinction is inevitable. We must bear in mind that prestige is a social concept which means that it is used or maintained by a social group. Language can disintegrate, especially when whole communities abandon it; and it perishes without any physical traces except when a writing system has been developed.

Another question that can be posed is: Is conserving ethnic languages the same as just documentation, campaigning for their preservation, launching support for them to achieve legal status? In both the scientific and social fronts we are confronted with a need to work harder to ensure the survival of small languages. As Harrison put it, the extinction of ideas we now face has no parallel in human history; over 40 % of the world languages are in the process of dying (Harrison, 2007:viii). To take an Indonesian example, many minor ethnic languages are dying in the pressure of informal Indonesian that enjoys unrestricted freedom to penetrate all walks of life especially the life of youths. Informal Indonesian has taken over the function that should have been a privilege of ethnic or so-called local languages, for example the domains of everyday communication in the home and in informal situations in the village settings (cf. Moeliono, 2009). Sanga (2011) observes that 86,7 % of languages in Indonesia are at risk of extinction.

The initiative that needs to be devised is to show that all ethnic languages are unique receptacles or repertoires of knowledge and wisdoms, and show that there is a need to promote their use in specific situations, such as in rituals, traditional festivals, which are venues to reaffirm, renew and strengthen solidarity. Solidarity is most conspicuous in the use of language in the ceremonial life of a traditional people which is often threatened by language erosion. My own limited observations on ethnic or local languages on Flores have shown that rituals and ceremonies are effective means to build and maintain the loyalty of the speakers to their own language because it plays on the emotion to identify with a social group. And in addition, certain ceremonies and rituals offer a venue to renew, maintain, and even forge new solidarity through celebration of ethnicity.

4. Language Diversity

As mentioned in section 2 above, there are 6,912 languages in the world. There is clearly a link between language diversity and the presence of indigenous or native people. The word indigenous is used to refer to people who have inhabited a particular land since before recorded history and have a strong ecological engagement with that land (Harrison, 2007:11). From this concept we have the term indigenous languages. The accepted hypothesis maintains that languages stem from families, which means that languages "were born" from the same source, but in the course of time they are diversified into many different languages through use to cater the different needs of different people living in different places and times. Experts in historical linguistics maintain that languages change substantially every one thousand years –approximately 40 generations. Changes are gradual, but are most conspicuous in that time interval when languages become mutually unintelligible; and the change is only obvious to those trained to discern the difference.

Each language has a different story to tell us. The story is preserved in the community of speakers or in the individual minds. If a language is recorded properly, it will have its own library loaded with grammars, dictionaries, botanical and zoological encyclopedias, and collections of songs and stories (Evans, 2010:xviii), because it deals with the *biosphere* or the totality of life of all species and all ecological links at a certain place and time as they are experienced by the speakers of a language. Each language would also develop its own *logosphere* which encompasses the vast realms of words and their links to meanings and to other languages of the world. It is true that individuals are enmeshed in different traditions, but there is a psychic unity that binds them in the reality of the human race, or to use the expression coined by the psychologist Jung: there is a collective consciousness that was shared by all mankind (Hall, 1981: 14). Evidence of the psychic unity can be discerned in the fact that people can learn another language and that translation between languages is possible, though limited.

The reason why some of the human stories pass people by unnoticed is due to the fact that, like taught by an old axiom: "You only hear what you listen for, and you only listen for what you are wondering about". Perhaps the interest and the wondering of younger generations have faded away with time. Some young people consider speaking an ethnic language means showing parochialism, or being old fashioned and obsolete, even being narrow-minded, and it is not cool, not prestigious. In the face of such a condition, ethnic languages keep losing its speakers among young people or cannot develop interest groups to revitalize or revive them. It is an oft-quoted fact that the loss of interest in traditional, indigenous language is most conspicuous among young generations.

To learn from an analogue: language diversity is needed like genetic diversity in the animal and plant world. The diversity stems from the need to survive in special geographical and temporal contexts. When talking about language, diversity keeps the need to grow and to communicate open, and it enriches the genetic pool of languages. It is also a realization of the freedom to describe something in detail in a specific way according to individual interests. When we study language, we study human thought in its diverse forms. Language diversity is intimately tied up with the great plasticity of human experience. Evans put it very elegantly that we study other languages because we cannot live enough lives (Evans 2010: 155) to learn about all that lives of different people can offer.

To continue the line of analogy mentioned above, there is co-evolution of genes and language and culture. Human evolution has involved an intense interplay between the "hardware", contained in the form of human genes and physiology, and the "software", in the form of language and culture. In human evolution: one part is physical evolution: changes in the genes; the other is cultural and linguistic evolution, forged and perhaps choreographed by complex, structured, and ever-changing social institutions which human beings learn from their parents and other care givers, and then pass on to the next generation. Like in the genetic pool, human beings not only grouped their cognitive resources

according to temporal contexts, but also build on one another's cognitive invention over time. This is a must because to rely on or learn exclusively from the genetic pool will need a considerably long time (geneticists talk about millions of years). But with language and culture as sources, "each new generation of children grow up in something like the accumulated wisdom of their entire social group, past and present" (Tomasello 1999, as quoted by Evans, 2010:156).

One of the reasons for the diversity of languages is that groups of human beings began to live across a range of ever more distinct ecological locations. Hence, the power of culture extended their adaptive reach, and drove the differentiation of local cultures. This trend would be accelerated further in many cases by a conscious quest for diversification to mark local groups and keep out untrusted or perhaps hostile groups. It is a known fact that social groups may disintegrate due to "heresy" –i.e., groups of people follow different ideologies, or "schism", i.e., groups of people follow different leaders. We also know that diversity increases the developmental plasticity of the organism, so that decisive information can be transmitted culturally rather than genetically. In this connection we need to acknowledge the long period of dependency that human babies or children need while being enculturated by their parents and other group members. Human beings need exceptional learning skills to cope with widely variant cultures. In an amazing way, language diversity provides human beings with the variety of case studies needed to check out causal and evolutionary models, just as species diversity enabled the development of evolutionary theory in biology (Evans 2010: 157)

Concerning universality or diversity it needs to be put forward that there are two types of attitude to global knowledge. They are:

(1) Universalizing, that is develop one common world language and incorporate all knowledge into it in the hope to unify all mankind within a single unified realm, following or subscribing to one universal value system. In this way we will reduce the risk of conflict stemming from different languages that promote different value systems.

(2) Diversifying, that is recognizing the strength and richness that come from distinct traditions that can never be mapped onto a single value system where people speak a single world language. It is believed that any reduction of language diversity diminishes the adaptational strength of the human species because it lowers the pool of knowledge which we can draw (Evans 2010: 19). Boas and Sapir have shown that differences among languages lie not merely in the content of individual classifications, but in their systematic formal arrangement. This line of thought brought about the concept of linguistic relativity because each language represents a classification of experience which can vary considerably (Lucy, 1992:24). It is also to be noted that some people even consider language diversity as an impediment for commerce and spread of knowledge (Kaswanti in Subagyo (ed.) 2009:204)

To quote an extreme illustration from biology, specifically agronomy, i.e., concerning the production of field crops, Evans (2011:19) writes that the yields and efficiency of a food plant may be increased considerably by having just one genetically homogenous population of, for instance, banana; but it may take just one new strain of fungus to wipe out the whole population, and there will not be any banana left in the world. This is a proof that diversity in nature is common and required for survival. On the same line, Hall (1981:16) maintained that all cultures need one another to survive.

5. Multiculturalism

Today there is a lot of discussion concerning multiculturalism which includes discourse about multilingualism. The two go hand-in-glove, because they are two sides of the same coin that define humanity. Multiculturalism and multilingualism find their base in the idea that cultures and languages are equal and that all deserve equal treatment for purposes of maintenance, development and use, and that they need one another to thrive and survive. We have heard about how communities use and even promote celebration of ethnicities –since cultures and languages are closely tied with ethnicity—which promote understanding and mutual respect between the diverse cultures and languages. The celebration is marked by displaying distinct music, dance, singing, works of art, costume, foods (cuisines), beliefs, stories, legends, etc. Some people may be suspicious though, of this idea of celebration of ethnicity as if it will inevitably lead to conflict and disintegration in communities comprising of multicultural and multilingual groups. The pessimism stems from a lack of trust in humanity, in that human beings everywhere are interested in knowing, touching other human beings, to learn from their experiences, to listen to their stories, to reconfirm their psychic ties. We need to reiterate that unity of the human race is not just a matter of memory of genetic ties but reconfirmation of those ties.

Multiculturalism requires that all cultures stand on a par, they have to be equal, and thus lines of cultural communication are mutually open to all. In such a situation a venue is opened for a culture to learn about and from another culture no matter how big or how small the culture might be. The mutual respect will ensure that all cultures survive and contribute to the repertoire of human knowledge. With respect to language, an ideal situation would be, members of a minor language learn the language of a major group and members of a major language also learn the language of a minor group. In the end, it is hoped that both groups become multilingual and thus multicultural.

The relation between multiculturalism and multilingualism in Indonesia deserves a brief mention. As mentioned in section 2, there are 763 languages in Indonesia, of which there are two languages that have more than 10 million speakers, and 11 languages that have between one and ten million speakers (Moeliono, 2009:195). However, there is no struggle for monopoly or hegemony by the big languages. The real condition in Indonesia shows that the national language, Indonesian, does not enjoy a basis of a big group of native speakers. It is true that Indonesian enjoys a big popularity and a unifying factor as a national language but most speakers are bilingual, speaking another ethnic language as mother tongue. This condition should be conducive to multiculturalism to thrive because most Indonesians are to a certain extent bilingual.

6. Ritual language and Local Wisdoms

One important question pertaining to language maintenance is what measures should be taken to revitalize or revive interest in small endangered languages. Kaswanti (2009: 293-218) discussed in length the Indonesian case, focusing on development of ethnic languages. This paper will continue that line of argument touching briefly on one special area comprising ritual language and local wisdoms.

Indonesia is known for its lively ritual life which can be observed in all the ethnic cultures. From my observation, rituals and traditional ceremonies and festivities are good venues that attract people's attention both indigenous and visitors as shown in activities devised to show the mosaic of cultural traditions for purposes of tourism. In some of the interviews that I made with the local peoples, a recurrent theme caught my attention. The theme can be summarized in the expression that there is a need to keep tradition alive. In some special cases concern is expressed about "keeping the dreams" of the ancestors alive. Another theme that also recurs in the discussion is the need for dream keepers. Some of the elders I interviewed said that if there are no more dream keepers, then the dreams of the ancestors will fade away.

The dream is found in the language, especially the ritual language that expounds the stories of creation, of journeys, of social organization, of livelihood, and of natural and spiritual relationships of all creatures. The dream in the traditional understanding is collective in the sense that every member of the ethnic group has a part—they can draw from it and they can add or continue making it. This dream is manifest in traditional songs, stories about ancestors and personal histories, prayers and mantras in which they expound their relations to all the creatures and nature: animals, insects, mountains, valleys, rivers, water-falls, fields, plants, trees and grass, water, pond, sea, rain, cloud, fire, soil, stone, and the heavenly bodies: the sun, moon, stars and meteors. In my observation what they are doing is in most cases showing admiration or awe of the process of creation hidden behind the physical manifestation of things; things that they regard as "persons".

One recurrent phrase that also caught my attention is the expression that they need to learn from the wise words of the ancestors and that ancestors have spoken in metaphors. The metaphors have to be expounded, perused to understand according to contexts past and present. Metaphors are powerful, perhaps because they address issues of life indirectly, and they contain instructions as to how to conduct personal and social lives within the community. The elders in all ethnic groups often say that there is a lot of wisdom found in the words of the ancestors if one is willing to listen. It is to be noted that metaphors are also instances of the use of the second order of semiotic system that need to be deciphered according to the context of situation.

Ritual language that attracted a prominent researcher, James J. Fox, is found in the area of eastern Indonesia which according to his keen observations is an area of considerable linguistic diversity due to geographical, historical, and cultural factors—of the 763 languages in Indonesia 487 languages are found in eastern Indonesia (Moeliono, 2009:195). Geographically, eastern Indonesia consists mostly of small islands, and there is mountainous hinterland on several of the larger islands; there were ample possibilities for migration and lack of political hegemony by any one linguistic group. Historically there are evidences of historical division among colonial powers (world powers have fought in the area for

spices, sandalwood, and pearl: especially the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British). Culturally the area encompasses a very diverse region (Fox, 1988:1). The overwhelming majority of the languages of the area are Austronesian, but they show considerable divergence. A number of non-Austronesian languages are found on Alor, Timor, and Halmahera.

Fox observed a distinct characteristic of oral composition in eastern Indonesia that is the binary mode which is an essential means of social as well as ritual communication. For many of the societies of the region, dyadic language has become the primary vehicle for the preservation and the transmission of cultural knowledge (Fox 1988:2). The quotations provided in the appendix of this paper are examples of semantic and syntactic parallelism, known in the technical term as *Parallelismus membrorum*, which is an attempt to unfold the same thought in two parallel members of the same verse or stanza. It needs to be pointed out that the two elements mentioned do not represent two different entities, but they are two aspects of the same thing reinforcing each other.

What is meant by ritual language comprises the words of the ancestors which are considered a pre-eminent vehicle of social discourse. Ritual language is seen to stand above, and often in contrast to, ordinary individual speech. Ritual language allows performers to impersonalize and externalize precisely what is most extraordinarily personal. Ritual language may also be used to convey assertions of advice, instruction, or reprimand from the ancestors or spirits; and on the other hand, it may be used to express the payers, hopes, fears, rivalries, anxieties, or grievances of particular individuals that might otherwise not be openly disclosed. Ritual language constitutes an elevated mode of discourse that is able to give public voice to what might otherwise be unspeakable; it is concerned with revelation and disclosure, often associated with traditional beliefs.

Examples of the dyadic language forms found in parallelism are presented in the appendix. The examples are taken from nine languages of Flores. The reason why they are put in the appendix is to avoid breaking the fluency of the presentation. Suffice it to say at this point that rituals and ceremonies play an important role in maintaining cultural identity through language use, and that it is a means to keep the collective dreams alive and therefore keep solidarity alive. Rituals and ceremonies provide valuable venues to revitalize and revive ethnic languages because in the festivals which normally include communal dining, singing, dancing, games, and recounting of tales, myths and legends, the ethnic languages will again gain a status to channel the distinct "voice" of the ethnic groups.

7. Conclusion

When we read about the Nagoya protocol about measures required to conserve nature we see that the world is concerned with saving our physical environment, ecology, and in maintaining the genetic pools in the plant and animal worlds. But it seems that the public is silent about the ecology of mind (cf. Bateson, 1972: 24) which rests on language as an intellectual and sophisticated tool to process information accumulated in the human minds.

To conclude I need to reiterate that language is an indispensable asset to build the world anew. Each language is a unique receptacle of knowledge and is irreplaceable. About language diversity, a quote from the linguist Joshua Fishman is in order. He elegantly wrote, "The entire world needs a diversity of ethnolinguistic entities for its own salvation, for its greater creativity, for the more certain solution of human problems, for the constant rehumanization of humanity in the face of materialism, for fostering greater esthetic, intellectual, and emotional capacities for humanity as a whole, indeed, for arriving at a higher state of human functioning" (Fishman, 1982: 14, as quoted in Harrison, 2007:vii). The statement is self evident and needs no elaboration.

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9. APPENDIX

The following are some examples of excerpts of ritual language found in the form of semantic and syntactic parallelism in nine languages on Flores.

1. Ende language

Kombe e'e, rhera nara means 'He is eager at night, is longing in the daytime'.

Mbe'o sa'o, nggesu tenda means 'He knows the house, is familiar with the veranda'.

Nuka nua, tama manga means 'Ascends into the hamlet, enters the village.'

The lines above describe a wedding ceremony. There is also a special ceremony staged to mark the building of a new house, highlighted by reading histories from *Lontar* (palm leaf) parchment, singing and dancing.

2. Lamaholot language

Beta ata tutu rai naran, bau ata guna rai gating. This is a mantra meaning 'Please fill all the containers (with rice) and fill rice in ten granaries'. The harvest ceremony is highlighted with circle dance.

The expression used to refer to God is *Lera fula, Tana eka* which literally means 'sun moon, earth land'.

Wolo lolo, tobo tani, tani tutu, tani marin. Literally means 'hill above, sit cry; cry talk, cry speak'. This is a kind of lamentation staged after an accident at sea.

The Lamaholot people observe ceremonies connected with going to see to fish (they hunt whales) which are highlighted with praying, dining together, and dancing.

3. Lio language

Ende-Lio sare pawe means Ende-Lio is 'good' and 'beautiful'; *sare* and *pawe* basically mean the same thing.

'Aku pai kau talu, 'aku niu kau 'oe means 'I call you answer, I summon you reply'.

Ine 'eo ki'o jie, ame 'eo pemba pawe means 'Mother gives birth to you and father takes care of you'. Mother and father have to be seen as two aspects of the same progenitor (parents).

A Lise clan in Lio observes the ceremony of *ka po'o* (eat sacrificial rice steamed in bamboo node) which is an annual ritual to cleanse land and self in preparation or anticipating the planting season. It is also a ritual to drive away plant diseases and enemies of crops through mantras offered by the clan leader marked by assembly of clan members, dining together and refraining from certain activities.

4. Manggarai language

Laki tekek, laki mangir means 'Male water-buffalo, male of burden.'

Laki Sampe, Kraeng Sampe. *Laki* means leader (literally male or "stud"), while *Kraeng* is a term of address used for a leader by the name of *Sampe*. These lines are attributed to maleness.

The people of Manggarai observes two kinds of important ceremonies of thanksgiving and cleansing they call *penti*. The two *penti* are *penti mese* (big) and *penti koe* (small). *Tudak Pentu mese* usually requires a big sacrificial animal (water-buffalo), while in a *penti ko*, like *tudak congko lokap*, a rooster would suffice. These ceremonies require that clan members attend, but distant relatives and associates are also invited. The ceremony is marked by offering the animal to God (portion of its cooked liver) and communal dining, eating the left-over.

5. Nagekeo language

Kea pae to pae bha, mai joka mai joe, dia tuka tei meze means 'Call red rice, white rice, come be with us in our environment and fill all baskets'.

Mai kita to'o jogho waga sama; kolo sa toko tali sa tēbu. This is an invitation to unite: 'to stand rise lift in unison, unite like one yoke, one rope'.

Harvest festival in Nagekeo is highlighted with a traditional boxing called *etu*.

6. Ngadha language.

Ine pi'o da dhadhi ana milo, ine bēka da na'a po-pera (adage of Bajawa)

This is a rendition of the concept *alma mater* in Ngadha language. A mother has to show by example to underline the concept that 'a diligent mother will give birth to good children, a loving mother leaves advice and teaching'.

Bu mata siu, bu mata kolo. The expression is part of a ritual mantra invoked during the planting of rice or maize. The meaning is roughly "Let the eyes of sparrows and doves go blind"; thus, don't let the birds see the seeds. In other cases it takes the form of a conversation with the germs and animals, asking them not to damage or destroy food plants in the garden.

Denge go po-gēge da dēla means listen to the advice and instruction of elders. *Po* and *gege* are basically similar in meaning 'advice'.

The Ngadha people observes an annual festival called *Reba*, a ceremony to mark the beginning of a new agricultural calendar, marked by making a "comb" as calendar, cleansing with blood of sacrificial animal, communal dining, and taking part in communal circle dance.

7. Riung language

There is a common appeal in traditional singing to take care of the poor in the expression: *Wina walu ana kalok* 'woman widow and child orphan'; to respect *ata mali tora mali* meaning 'person heal, act heal', that is traditional healers or ask for God's help: *Nio kos tal wulan*, literally 'summon god, star moon'.

The Riung people hold rituals to inaugurate new house, village and garden.

8. Sika language

These examples are taken from mantras concerning rice.

A'u wali a wetin, a'u wali a wewar means 'I go sprinkle, I go wet' (with coconut water) to cleanse rice plants.

Petat ha guru wain, birat ha lio lamem means 'Female rice is opened, male rice is unfolded'.

A'u nora hoban bura, hēleng leu 'ihin bait, 'ihin bait a'u hēle means 'I bring offering of white rice to drive away bitter harvest, bitter harvest go away'.

The following line is an advice to children to find safety with parents.

Niat 'waun naha plipin, e'i inan pirin; lěrot wawa naha plulu, e'i aman korok means 'When night darkens must return here on the side of mother; when sun goes down must be under arm here on the side of father'.

The Sika people observes celebrations of harvest highlighted with communal dining and circle dancing called *saka lele*.

9. So'a language

Koba pea da něnga bhera-bhera, wonga wowa da něnga zowa-zowa . This line is part of a ritual song to accompany a cleansing ceremony marked by splashing one another with water and followed by communal circle dance called *dheli So'a*. The quotation describes the flowering liana wrapped around the head of dancers, that sway with every movement.

The festival *dheli* is a venue to strengthen solidarity, family ties and meeting of eligible bachelors and young ladies. The *So'a* people also stage traditional boxing called *sagi* after harvest.





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