

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Language is a structured system used to express ideas or emotions through agreed signs, sounds or symbols that have clear and understandable meanings. Language serves as a fundamental tool in human interaction, allowing for communication and exchange of thoughts. In addition, language also has an important role in facilitating between individuals and also acts as a place to preserve traditions, share knowledge, and foster relationships within the community. Busro (2015: 11). In addition, Devianty (2017:4) states that language is a communication tool used to share thoughts, feelings, ideas, and intentions with others. This means that humans can communicate with others easily because of language. Aside from being a communication tool, language also functions as a means to convey an idea or ideas, feelings, and information between individuals. In a cultural context, language is often a medium to convey symbols of unity for its speakers. Language also has a cognitive role in shaping the way people think and perceive the world around them. In conclusion, the function of language is not only limited to communication, but also includes cultural, identity, and cognitive roles that shape a person's identity and perspective.

Rote language dialects are classified into seven dialect groups namely Dela, Oenale-Dela (West Rote); Landu, Rikou, Oepao (East Rote); Bilbaa, Diu, Lelenuk; Termanu, Talae, Keka, Pada, Bokai, Korbafo (Central Rote); Ba'a, Lole; Dengka, Lelain; and Tii (Grimes et al., as cited in Tamelan, 2021). Within the language, there are various dialects that show linguistic variation based on geographical,

social or cultural location. These dialects not only enrich the language but also provide an overview of the values and norms adopted by the people on the island of Rote. One cultural expression that is often performed on the island of Rote is the *Kebalai* tradition, a dance that is often performed together as a form of performance art and symbolic communication.

Kebalai dance is one of the traditional traditions that has an important role in the daily life of the community, especially in the form of dance and singing. Manu & Tampake (2023:4) state that *Kebalai* is a dance that is usually performed in groups by the Rote people in various events or activities. This dance is a form of performance art that combines movement with poetry as a medium for conveying messages, thus creating deep meaning and distinctive aesthetics. Metaphors in *Kebalai* describe human origins, peace, life values, and life journeys, such as birth, marriage, and death. Through meaningful chants and dance movements, this tradition conveys symbolic messages about human relationships with others, nature and the Creator. For example, the circular movements used in *Kebalai* dances are often seen as a metaphor for life's continuous cycle. On the other hand, the chants that accompany the dance often use symbols of nature to reflect unity, harmony and hope. The use of metaphors in the *Kebalai* tradition not only enriches cultural expression, but also serves as a tool to maintain and transfer customary values to the next generation.

Metaphor is the understanding and experience of something through something else. Therefore, one can understand new things through other things that have been known before. Lakoff & Johson (1980) said that a person's experience is cultural and can be the background of every human's experience. Thus, it can be said that to

understand metaphors both orally and in writing, one needs to use prior knowledge to understand the meaning behind the metaphorized word, phrase, or clause. Furthermore, Ngongo & Benu (2020), Metaphor is not just a linguistic phenomenon; it also requires cognitive skills as it encompasses the entire human thought process. This process involves interpreting and understanding the deeper meaning behind a word, phrase, or sentence found in a particular text or context. Metaphor involves both language and cognition, as it demands the ability to connect abstract ideas with tangible concepts, bridging linguistic expression with human perception and experience. For example, “*The road ahead was a ribbon of moonlight*”. '**The road**' is likened to a path that carries one's journey or life, and in this context the road symbolizes the direction or destination being traveled. '**Ahead**' indicates foresight, the future, or a journey still to be undertaken. '**Was**' is a linking verb that equates 'the road' with the metaphor of '**a ribbon of moonlight**', indicating a direct relationship between the two concepts. In addition, '**a ribbon**' is a long, thin, and shimmering object. In this metaphor, the ribbon symbolizes a road that looks narrow and shines under the moonlight. The '**moonlight**' gives a soft, glowing, and magical effect, adding an air of beauty, tranquility, or mystery to the '**ribbon road**'. Overall, this metaphor creates the image of a moonlit road, as if it were a soft, shimmering ribbon. It gives a poetic feel, depicting a peaceful and magical nighttime atmosphere, and gives a romantic or hopeful sense of direction.

The reason why the researcher wants to research metaphors in *Kebalai* dance is because this is a cultural tradition of the Rote people that contains many philosophical and symbolic values. By analyzing the metaphors in this dance, we can reveal how the Rote people interpret and preserve their cultural identity through

works of art. With this research, the author can contribute to the study of linguistics and cultural anthropology to show how metaphors function as a bridge between language, culture, and cognition. So as to preserve indigenous cultural heritage while enhancing broader linguistic and cognitive theories to deal with language loss due to globalization. In addition, the results of this study can serve as materials for more contextualized language learning, helping learners understand the close relationship between language and culture in everyday life.

1.2 Research Problems

1. What are the metaphors in '*Kebalai*' chanting in the Ba'a dialect?
2. What are the types of metaphors in '*Kebalai*' chanting in the Ba'a dialect?
3. What are the implications of metaphors in '*Kebalai*' chanting in the Ba'a dialect for language learning?

1.3 Aims of Study

1. To find out the metaphors in '*Kebalai*' chanting in the Ba'a dialect.
2. To find out the types of metaphors in '*Kebalai*' chanting in the Ba'a dialect.
3. To find out the implications of metaphors in '*Kebalai*' chanting in the Ba'a dialect for language learning

1.4 Significance of Study

1.4.1 Implication

This research only focuses on metaphors in Rote language, especially Ba'a dialect. According to Lakoff & Jhonson (1980), metaphor is not only a tool of poetic imagination and rhetoric that develops and they divide the concept of metaphor into three types of metaphor, namely: structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, and ontological metaphors.

1.4.2 Application

The result of this study expected to give information to:

1. The result of this study expected to give information about metaphor in Ba'a dialect and can help the readers who are interested with the similar topic about metaphor especially in Ba'a dialect.
2. The result of this study hopefully will help other researchers who want to conduct further research dealing with metaphor in Rote language especially in Ba'a dialect.