Language games in the Dayak tribe: a study of meaning and language structure

Permainan bahasa pada suku Dayak: kajian makna dan struktur bahasa

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Abstract
This study examines the dynamics of language use, particularly the Dayak Maanyan language in Kalimantan, using the framework of language games in Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. This study focuses on analyzing the orientation of thought in the use of the Dayak Maanyan language, outlining the rules of games in its expressions, and evaluating the compatibility of Wittgenstein's concept of language games with the Dayak Maanyan language. Utilizing a qualitative approach through literature studies, data were collected from various relevant scientific publications on the Dayak language and culture, as well as Wittgenstein's theory of language games. The findings reveal that the Dayak Maanyan language, through its diverse dialects and communicative practices, serves not only as a tool for communication, but also as a medium for strengthening social identity and preserving cultural traditions. This language reflects the cultural values and social structures of the Dayak community, in which the meaning of language emerges from its contextual use in daily life and specific social practices. These results align with Wittgenstein's philosophical concept, which emphasizes that meaning arises from use. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, meaning, and social practices in multicultural societies, particularly in the Dayak community.

Abstrak
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji dinamika penggunaan bahasa, khususnya bahasa daerah Dayak Maanyan di Kalimantan, dengan menggunakan kerangka permainan bahasa dalam filsafat bahasa Ludwig Wittgenstein. Penelitian ini berfokus pada analisis orientasi pemikiran dalam penggunaan bahasa Dayak Maanyan, memaparkan aturan-aturan permainan bahasa dalam tuturan tersebut, serta mengevaluasi kesesuaian antara konsep permainan bahasa Wittgenstein dan bahasa daerah Dayak Maanyan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi literatur, data dikumpulkan dari berbagai publikasi ilmiah yang relevan terkait bahasa dan budaya Dayak serta teori permainan bahasa Wittgenstein. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa bahasa Dayak Maanyan, melalui ragam dialek dan praktik komunikasinya, tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai alat komunikasi, tetapi juga sebagai sarana penguatan identitas sosial dan pelestarian tradisi budaya. Bahasa ini mencerminkan nilai-nilai budaya dan struktur sosial masyarakat Dayak, di mana makna bahasa terbentuk melalui konteks penggunaannya dalam kehidupan sehari-hari dan praktik sosial tertentu. Temuan ini sejalan dengan konsep filsafat bahasa Wittgenstein yang menekankan bahwa makna muncul dari praktik penggunaan. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi dalam memahami hubungan antara bahasa, makna, dan praktik sosial dalam masyarakat multikultural, terutama dalam konteks masyarakat Dayak.

A. Introduction

Language is a symbolic system used by humans to communicate, express thoughts, emotions, and culture. According to Saussure (2013), language consists of langue, a structured system of arbitrary signs used by a particular society, and parole, which refers to the concrete realization of language in the form of speech or writing. From a structuralist perspective, language is viewed as a structure in which the elements are interrelated, with each sign comprising a signifier and signified aspect. This concept affirms that the meaning of language is conventional and socially agreed-upon. Language functions as the primary medium of human communication and serves as a manifestation of culture and identity within society. Regional languages, as part of the cultural heritage, play an essential role in preserving local values and traditions. In Indonesia, one of the distinctive regional languages is the Dayak language, which is spoken by various sub-ethnic groups in Kalimantan.

Chomsky (1957) adds a cognitive dimension to the concept of language by introducing the theory of generative grammar. He argued that humans have an innate ability to produce and understand sentences that they have never heard before. According to him, language reflects linguistic competence–a mental potential that enables individuals to generate and comprehend an unlimited range of utterances. On the other hand, a pragmatic perspective, as proposed by Wittgenstein (1986), views language as a social practice. Wittgenstein introduced the concept of language games, suggesting that the meaning of words and sentences can only be understood within the context of their use. Language, in his view, represents the world and is also employed to carry out specific social actions.

Language is not merely a tool for communication but also a reflection of the social and cultural realities of a society. From the perspective of the philosophy of language, every form of speech and language practice holds a meaning closely tied to the context in which it is used. The Dayak language, which has developed across various regions of Kalimantan, not only represents cultural identity, but also shapes the mindset and behavior of its speakers. To gain a deeper understanding of the meaning and function of the Dayak language, a philosophical approach is required to uncover the meanings behind this linguistic phenomenon. One relevant approach to exploring the relationship between language and sociocultural practices is Wittgenstein's philosophy of language theory.

The dynamics of the Dayak language are not merely a linguistic phenomenon but are also closely tied to the identity and existence of the communities that use it. The Dayak language belongs to the Austronesian family and displays significant variation across different regions and communities. This linguistic diversity is reflected in the distinct languages and dialects used by the Dayak people such as Dayak Ngaju, Dayak Benuaq, and Dayak Maanyan (Pey et al., 2023; D. L. Putri & Subiyanto, 2023; Septiana et al., 2019). Each language has its own grammatical structure, lexical variations, and cultural influences, which have been explored in various studies. Borneo is a crucial point in Austronesian linguistic history, serving as a "crossroads" for Austronesian languages and other cultures in the Southeast Asian region (Adelaar, 2006). These languages are spread across Kalimantan, Malaysia, and Brunei, encompassing a range of dialects and sublanguages that, despite their diversity, share similar phonological, morphological, and syntactic structures, indicating a common historical origin. However, comparative studies remain limited, so a comprehensive understanding of the Dayak linguistic system has not yet been achieved (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). The role of language in maintaining Dayak identity is crucial as it serves as a means of passing down oral traditions, rituals, and ecological knowledge (King, 1993).

In this context, Wittgenstein's philosophy of language provides a framework for viewing language as a social practice and not merely a symbolic system. In his work Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein argues that the meaning of language is not inherent, but arises from its everyday use, in line with the concept of language games. This concept implies that the Dayak language acquires meaning and relevance when actively used in various contexts of community life. In Dayak society, language is used not only as a tool for everyday communication, but also as a medium for rituals, the expression of customs, and as a marker of group identity. Therefore, the meaning of the Dayak language can only be deeply understood by considering the surrounding cultural and traditional context. A Wittgensteinian perspective can aid in analyzing the Dayak language by observing language games within the community, such as customary expressions, forms of greeting, prayers, and the use of metaphors in ritual activities.

The Dayak regional language is a culture rich in meaning and symbolism. In the context of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, studying this language becomes especially relevant when connected to the concept of language games. Wittgenstein argues that language functions not only as a tool for communication, but also as a means of social interaction with its own specific rules and context, similar to a game with its own set of rules. This research aims not only to broaden the understanding of the Dayak language as a linguistic phenomenon but also to demonstrate that language practices in local communities

possess their own structures and rules, equivalent to other language games. Thus, the Dayak regional language is worthy of study, as well as a place in modern language philosophy discourse as a concrete example of Wittgenstein's concept of language games.

In contemporary philosophical studies, Wittgenstein's philosophy of language has become an essential paradigm for understanding meaning, language, and reality. Previous research has explored Wittgenstein's ideas and their applications to various objects and phenomena. Wittgenstein's concept of language games is often used to develop critical judgment and intellectual independence, as seen in Edwards' study, which compares *Philosophical Investigations* with Hermann Hesse's *The Glass Bead Game* (Edwards, 2023). In the context of Indonesian politics, Wittgenstein's language games are used to discuss identity politics and the post-truth era, highlighting the importance of recognizing diverse language games to maintain national unity. This concept is applied to emphasize the objective reality of Indonesia's pluralism and the need for mutual respect among games of different languages (Wangge & Wijanarko, 2023).

Language games illustrate how coordinated discourse, and action can emerge within the evolutionary context. Wittgenstein's ideas are applied to signaling games, demonstrating how meaningful discourse can self-organize, highlighting the adaptability and evolution of language. This approach shows that language is not static, but continuously evolving to fit the needs of communication and interaction within varying contexts, supporting both adaptability and nuanced understanding among its users (Barrett & VanDrunen, 2022). Few studies have discussed Ludwig Wittgenstein's language games on cultural phenomena, specifically regional language forms. So far, the researcher has only found a thesis by Argatha (2016). Ludwig Wittgenstein's language games are used as a theoretical basis to describe the essence and meaning of *the Tindih Tertib-Tapsile*. The concept of language games is being explored and mastered in various regions. The theoretical reconstruction of Wittgenstein's ideas continues to provide insights into functional language game models, emphasizing their ongoing relevance (Sagatova, 2021). Furthermore, Harahap (2018) found that slang is used as a language game in communities, such as the Brigata Curva Sud, gay communities, *klitih* groups, and *waria* (transgender women) in Yogyakarta, functioning as a secret language and social identity. In the gay and *waria* communities, some vocabulary shares similarities but differs in meaning, illustrating Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblances, whereas this is not observed between the Brigata Curva Sud and *klitih* groups. Each community follows its own rules of the language game, reflecting a way of communicating and maintaining group cohesion according to existing traditions.

Meanwhile, researchers have not found any research related to Dayak regional languages in Kalimantan from the perspective of Ludwig Wittgenstein's language games. Researchers will compare whether local languages, especially those in the Dayak Maanyan tribe, contain the concept of family resemblances and rules of games, similar to the results of research conducted by Harahap (2018) that the Prokem language that exists in the community is included in the concept proposed by Wittgenstein in his philosophy of language. Researchers see the importance of context and language practices in shaping meaning, and how understanding language can simultaneously reflect and construct the social reality of the Dayak community. Thus, this article is expected to contribute to the study of the philosophy of language and offer a new perspective in understanding the richness and complexity of the Dayak language and culture.

B. Method

This study used a qualitative approach, with library research as a method for data collection and analysis, as outlined by (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach was chosen because it is suitable for gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of meaning and the use of the Dayak language through the lens of Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, particularly the concept of "meaning as use" in social practice. Library research enables researchers to use relevant scholarly literature as the primary data source, including journals, books, and articles, to construct a solid theoretical foundation and comprehensive analysis. In this study, primary data were collected from various scientific publications related to the Dayak Maanyan regional language in terms of linguistic, socio-cultural, ethnolinguistic, sociolinguistic, and Wittgenstein's theory of language and meaning. The selection criteria for literature are based on topic relevance, scientific validity, and compatibility with the theoretical framework used. The literature includes studies in linguistics, anthropology, and the philosophy of language to ensure interdisciplinary analysis. Additionally, this research considers comparative references related to the application of the concepts of language games, rules of games, and family resemblances in other communities to enrich the interpretation of research findings and provide contextual perspectives.

This analysis employs Wittgenstein's theoretical framework to understand the Dayak language as more than just a communication tool but as a medium for strengthening social identity and preserving tradition. Using a library research method, this study connects the concept of language games with the role of language in traditional ceremonies, communal deliberations, and religious practice. These results are expected to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between language, meaning, and social practices in multicultural societies.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Social and Cultural Context in the Use of Dayak Maanyan Language

The Dayak Maanyan language is one of the cultural riches that play a central role in the life of the Dayak Maanyan tribe. More than just a means of communication, this language reflects collective identity, as well as being a means to understand and preserve social and cultural values that live in society. This language plays an important role in maintaining social harmony, instilling moral values, and preserving customs that have been passed down from generation to generation. In everyday life, the Dayak Maanyan language is used to maintain harmonious relationships between individuals. The communication patterns of the Dayak Maanyan tribe prioritize refinement and politeness in speech acts, especially in the context of rejection or situations with the potential to cause conflict. The use of these expressions shows respect for social harmony and community solidarity, which are the main foundations of community life.

In addition, the Dayak Maanyan language is the main medium for instilling moral values through proverbs. These expressions often contain teachings on honesty, cooperation, and respect for fellow human beings and nature. These proverbs are not only a guideline in daily life but also a means of education for the younger generation to know and appreciate their cultural heritage. This language also has a special function in various rituals and traditional ceremonies such as marriage, death, and religious rituals. In this context, the Dayak Maanyan language is used to convey prayers, mantras, or sacred utterances that are believed to have spiritual power. The use of this ritual language shows a close relationship between the Dayak Maanyan people and their ancestors and universe and illustrates the depth of their cultural spirituality.

As a means of cultural preservation, the Dayak Maanyan language is a medium for conveying folk tales, myths, and legends. Through these stories, the community passes on history, local wisdom, and an outlook on life to the next generation. In addition, this language also reflects the close relationship between the community and their environment, as seen from the vocabulary rich in terms of local flora and fauna. This shows the community's deep knowledge of its ecosystem and local wisdom in maintaining the balance of nature. However, like many other regional languages, Dayak Maanyan faces major challenges in the modern era. The influence of national and foreign languages, lack of documentation, and minimal use of this language among the younger generation are threats to its sustainability. Therefore, preservation efforts must be carried out through education, teaching the younger generation, and linguistic documentation. Integrating this language into modern media is also a strategic step toward maintaining its existence.

The Dayak Maanyan language is not just a means of communication but an integral part of the identity and pride of the Dayak Maanyan people. Preserving this language means maintaining the sustainability of priceless cultural values, traditions, and local wisdom while enriching the diversity of Indonesian culture. The following is an explanation of the social and cultural context in the use of Dayak Maanyan Language.

The speech act of refusal in the Dayak Maanyan language is a form of social interaction that reflects the importance of politeness and harmony in the relationships between individuals. Research shows that the Dayak Maanyan tribe uses various refusal strategies adjusted for age, social status, and topic of conversation. Rejection can be conveyed directly using the word *puang* (no), or indirectly through reasons, praise, criticism, or even gratitude. These strategies are designed to maintain social balance by avoiding potential threats to the "face" of the interlocutor (M. Putri et al., 2023).

The right choice of language to refuse an invitation or request reflects the level of social and cultural sensitivity of the Dayak Maanyan tribe. Politeness is an important value in this interaction, so that refusal is seen not only as a negative response but also as a way to maintain good relations. The use of this language demonstrates how social norms and customs shape the communication patterns of the Dayak Maanyan tribe. This speech act of refusal not only illustrates the individual's awareness of social relations but also how language functions as a tool to convey emotions and desires in a polite and culturally acceptable way.

Dayak Maanyan proverbs are part of an oral tradition that is full of moral and social values. The proverbs not only function as educational tools but also as social controls that maintain the order of community life. In proverbs, advice, criticism, and praise are used to direct the behavior of individuals and communities. The values contained in the proverbs, such as hard work, honesty, discipline, and social concern, reflect the Dayak Maanyan culture, which upholds solidarity and responsibility (Basori et al., 2023).

In addition, proverbs are used in various traditional events such as wedding ceremonies and religious rituals. In this context, the language of proverbs shows a distinctive structure, such as the use of metaphors, antonyms, and parallelisms that beautify speech. As a means of communication, proverbs not only convey moral messages but also become a medium that connect individuals with their communities. Thus, proverbs become a symbol of local wisdom that is passed down from generation to generation as well as a tool to preserve traditional values.

Ritual language, especially in the form of *riak*, plays an important role in the Dayak Maanyan tradition. *Riak* is used by Wadian, the ritual leader, to communicate the stages of the ceremony to the participants. This language has unique characteristics that differ from everyday language, with the use of special morphology and beautiful word choices. *Riak* not only functions as a means of communication, but also becomes a medium that connects humans with the spiritual world. In this context, Wadian plays an important role as a mediator between humans and the supernatural world (Septiana et al., 2019). Ritual language also reflects the cultural dynamics of the Dayak Maanyan tribe. In some ceremonies, the ritual language begins to adopt elements of Indonesian and Banjar. This reflects the existence of dynamic cultural interactions where the Dayak Maanyan tribe adapts to a multilingual environment without losing the essence of its traditions. Through ripples, the Dayak Maanyan tradition is not only preserved but also strengthened as a cultural identity that remains relevant amid changing times.

Overall, the use of Dayak Maanyan reflects the close relationship between language and culture. In the speech acts of refusal, proverbs, and ritual language, language plays a role as a means of communication as well as a medium for preserving social and cultural values. The Dayak Maanyan language reflects social harmony, community solidarity, and respect for traditions. Despite facing modernization and cross-cultural interaction, the Dayak Maanyan tribe was able to maintain its cultural identity through wise adaptation. Thus, the Dayak Maanyan language becomes a symbol of the local wisdom that continues to live and is relevant to the lives of its people.

2. Language Games in the Dayak Maanyan Language

Dayak are a large ethnic group residing in the regions of Indonesia, Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak), and Brunei Darussalam on the vast island of Borneo/Kalimantan. The Indonesian territory of Borneo is divided into four provinces: West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, and South Kalimantan. Approximately 450 Dayak groups live in the Indonesian region, totaling 3.7 million people as of 2010. The largest groups include the Dayak Ngaju, Dayak Penan, Dayak Murut, Dayak Maanyan, and Dayak Lawangan. There are about 22 Dayak language dialects, and except for Dayak Ngaju, which has around 710,000 speakers, no other dialect has more than 100,000 speakers. Unlike the dynamic situation on the island of Java, the teaching of Dayak languages in schools remains underdeveloped due to numerous dialectal variations, limited human resources, and the slow progress of research on grammar and vocabulary. The vast and difficult-to-access geography of Kalimantan hampers the Dayak community in developing their culture and language to a level comparable to that of Javanese or Sundanese. Additionally, the Dayak community lacks a body of classical literature, as its folklore is largely rooted in oral traditions. All of these factors delayed the implementation of Dayak local content in school curricula, which only began in 2011 (Gumilar, 2016).

In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein proposed that language is a social activity closely related to "language games," referring to the context in which language is used as well as the rules and ways of thinking that shape meaning in particular situations. The Dayak language, with its diverse dialects and communicative functions, reflects the complexity of the Dayak culture itself. Each dialect contains specific rules and meanings that can be understood only within a particular cultural context. Thus, understanding the Dayak language as a "language game" emphasizes that the meaning of their language cannot be separated from their way of life, customs, and local traditions.

Another aspect that emerges in Wittgenstein's thought is that there can be resemblance and connection, and not in the sense that rules apply universally. This resemblance reflects the realities found in various human lives, including language games, leading Wittgenstein to state the following. This intricate network of overlapping and intersecting similarities—whether in broad strokes or minute details—can best be described as "family resemblances." Just as family members share various characteristics such as build, facial

features, eye color, posture, and temperament, these qualities overlap and crisscross in unique ways, forming a pattern of resemblance. Similarly, games can be seen as a family connected through these complex interwoven similarities, rather than by a single defining feature (Wittgenstein, 1986).

Wittgenstein's perspective highlights how language functions within specific social contexts and may be less effective outside its original context. In formal schools, particularly in areas without native speakers or Dayak language experts, teaching the Dayak language is challenging. The language games of the Dayak language differ from those of more commonly taught languages, especially due to limited human resources and grammatical expertise. This illustrates that language requires a social setting that allows the active role of the Dayak community to continue sustaining and developing their "language games."

In speech acts of refusal in Tanjung Tanah and Dayak Maanyan, refusal is not just a linguistic expression, but a part of a pattern of social interaction that is rich in cultural nuances. Wittgenstein argued that the meaning of a word or sentence can only be understood in the context of language games, namely the social rules in which the words are used. The Tanjung Tanah dialect of Kerinci employs refusal strategies such as providing reasons, criticism, and empathy, reflecting the social hierarchy between the speaker and the addressee. These strategies aim to maintain politeness and avoid conflict. For instance, providing reasons is more commonly used when addressing individuals with a higher social status (Marniati & Jaafar, 2022). Wittgenstein would see this as an example of how the rules of the language game differ depending on power and status relations in society.

The Dayak Maanyan Paju Epat community expresses refusal either directly using the word *puang* (no) or indirectly through reasons, criticism, or even praise. The choice of refusal strategy is influenced by the social context, including the age of the interlocutor and topic of conversation (M. Putri et al., 2023). Wittgenstein might suggest that these expressions are part of a language game designed to create a balance between expressing the speaker's feelings and maintaining harmony in social relationships.

Dayak Maanyan proverbs reflect cultural values, morals, and the outlook on the life of the community. According to Wittgenstein's theory, these proverbs can be considered a form of language game that educates individuals to understand social rules and community norms. Such proverbs have a pragmatic function: regulating individual behavior in society through advice, sarcasm, or praise (Basori et al., 2023). The parallel structure in proverbs reflects the beauty of language, which functions as a tool of persuasive social control. Wittgenstein would highlight that the meaning of these proverbs lies not only in the words, but in the cultural context and social interactions in which the proverbs are used. Philosophically, proverbs also reflect the concept that language is not only a means of communication but also a tool that shapes people's mindsets and perspectives on the world. Wittgenstein often emphasized that "language is a form of life," which is very clearly seen in the use of Dayak Maanyan proverbs.

The *Riak* ritual language in the Dayak Maanyan tradition has unique forms and functions, such as rhyming patterns and parallel structures that distinguish it from everyday languages (Septiana et al., 2019). Wittgenstein would see the use of language in this ritual as a form of language play that is bound by sacred rules. In the *Riak* tradition, language forms, such as the pantun, have two layers of meaning. The first two lines describe the natural conditions or environment of the Dayak Maanyan community, while the last two lines convey the purpose of the ritual. This structure creates aesthetic harmony while emphasizing cultural meaning (Septiana et al., 2019). In Wittgenstein's language game, this reflects the special rules that distinguish sacred language from everyday language. *Riak* not only serves as a notification in rituals but also as a medium to engage the audience in a collective experience. This is in accordance with Wittgenstein's view that language not only describes the world but also creates a form of life in which communities collectively understand meaning through participation in rituals.

The meaning of language is always contextual and can only be understood within the rules of each community's language game. Wittgenstein rejects the idea that language has intrinsic meaning outside of its use in a particular context. In rejection (Kerinci and Dayak Maanyan), social rules, such as hierarchy and politeness norms, dictate how speakers express themselves. This indicates that the meaning of language is entirely determined by the rules of the social game.

Petatah-Petitih and *Riak* emphasize that language is a medium for expressing cultural values. Wittgenstein would highlight that these linguistic forms and structures are an integral part of the language game that shapes the identity of the community. In *Riak's* ritual language, meaning is created through aesthetic forms and cultural associations that strengthen the relationship between humans, the community, and spirituality. Wittgenstein would see this as an example of how language games create symbolic realities that enrich human life.

Wittgenstein's language game perspective shows that language is a tool that reflects and shapes the social, cultural, and spiritual realities of society. The meanings of speech acts, proverbs, and ritual language are entirely contextual, depending on the social and cultural rules in which the language is used. Wittgenstein provides a powerful conceptual framework for understanding how language is not only a tool for communication, but also a way for humans to understand and live their lives in diverse contexts. Language games are Wittgenstein's way of explaining that language has multiple functions and variations that cannot be understood singularly. In language, words function as moves in a game following specific rules. This means that each context or form of life has unique language rules. For instance, the word *chase* would have a different meaning in the context of a children's game than in a legal context (Wittgenstein, 1986).

Wittgenstein's philosophy is generally divided into two periods. His early philosophy, or Wittgenstein I, is represented in his work *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, while his later philosophy, or Wittgenstein II, is found in Philosophical Investigations. The concept of language games is a key element in Philosophical Investigations, just as the picture theory is central to the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Wittgenstein believed that to understand the meaning of a sentence in philosophy, we need to examine how that sentence is used within the context of specific language activities. This view arose because the same sentence can have different uses depending on the activity taking place and the context in which it is spoken (Finch, 1977).

After publishing Tractatus, Wittgenstein re-evaluated his concepts of language, leading to the development of *Philosophical Investigations* (1986). Here, he shifted from a formal approach and introduced the concept of "language games." In Philosophical Investigations, Ludwig Wittgenstein presents the idea of language as a form of social activity, known as the concept of language games. For Wittgenstein, the meaning of language is neither essential nor fixed; rather, it arises from its use in specific social contexts. He also emphasized that language is contextual and functions to meet the needs of everyday life, or "forms of life."

According to Wittgenstein, the meaning of a word can only be understood if we grasp the "game" in which it is used. In this sense, the Dayak language cannot be fully comprehended through literal translation alone; it requires a deep understanding of Dayak cultural context. These rituals and customary practices reflect the relationship between words and actions, which Wittgenstein saw as an essential aspect of language. He introduced the term form of life to describe a particular way of living that shapes the understanding and use of language. For the Dayak community, language serves not only as a communication tool but also as a representation of their way of life. The use of Dayak language is intertwined with the community's spiritual values and social norms, such as reverence for nature and ancestral respect.

For example, words in the Dayak language related to nature, such as terms for rivers, forests, and mountains, are not merely nouns; they reflect the community's spiritual relationship with the natural world. Here, it is evident that the Dayak language cannot be separated from the form of life of its people—just as Wittgenstein described that language can only be understood within the context of the social and cultural life that uses it. Wittgenstein argued that the meaning of a word is determined by how it is used. This is particularly relevant in the context of the Dayak language, where certain words and expressions derive their meaning only within specific customary and ritual contexts. For instance, certain terms or expressions may not be translatable into other languages without losing their significance, as their meanings are contextual and closely tied to particular social practices.

The use of language in Dayak rituals serves as a concrete example of Wittgenstein's idea that "meaning is use." In rituals, words function to perform actions, such as bestowing blessings, seeking ancestral protection, or marking social transitions within the community. Wittgenstein's perspective illustrates that no language can be fully understood outside the social and cultural context from which it arises. In the case of the Dayak language, this means that it cannot be comprehended solely through literal translation. To deeply understand the Dayak language, one must grasp the way of life, beliefs, and cultural values of its people. This implication also highlights the limitations of the concept of universal language. In line with Wittgenstein's thinking, the Dayak language has its own language games that do not always align with or can be translated into other languages. This underscores the importance of linguistic plurality and the acceptance of diverse meanings within a multicultural context.

From the perspective of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, the Dayak language can be understood as a form of language game that represents the values and way of life of the Dayak people. Understanding this language can only be achieved through participation and comprehension of its social and cultural context. The concepts of language games and forms of life articulated by Wittgenstein emphasize that the meaning of the Dayak language emerges from its use in everyday life and specific social practices. Thus, Wittgenstein's philosophy of language provides a relevant framework for understanding that language is not merely a system of signs or a means of communication, but also a reflection of the life, culture, and values of the community that uses it.

3. Philosophical and Social Implications: the Relationship between Language, Meaning, and Social Practice

Language is a social and cultural phenomenon that reflects the values and norms of society. As explained in the context of Dayak Maanyan, language reflects the mindset, behavior, and character of the community through the use of proverbs. These proverbs not only function as a means of communication, but also as social controls that can educate, shape attitudes, and strengthen community solidarity. In the Dayak Maanyan ritual, as seen in the use of *Riak*, language has a sacred dimension and differs from everyday language. Linguistic forms, such as the *pantun*, are used to convey messages and cultural meanings, showing the relationship between humans and spirituality. This shows how meaning in language is not only oriented towards informative functions but also toward aesthetics, symbolism, and ritual functions.

Social practices such as refusing an invitation or offer also depend heavily on cultural norms expressed through certain linguistic strategies. Research on the speech act of refusal, both in the Dayak Maanyan and Tanjung Tanah languages, shows that refusal is greatly influenced by social status, age, and the context of the interaction. For example, refusal expressions can use reasons, apologies, or compliments to maintain social harmony.

From a broader perspective, language is considered an instrument of wisdom that documents an outlook on society's life. Through typical expressions, such as *Riak* in the Dayak Maanyan tradition, there is an implied philosophical meaning of the relationship between humans and nature, fellow humans, and divine power. This confirms that language not only conveys messages, but also creates meaningful relationships in society.

Similar to how *the prokem* language acts as a medium for linguistic innovation, certain dialects of the Dayak language are also experiencing revival and evolving into new forms. In some communities, aspects of Dayak are incorporated into contemporary slang through social media and cultural events, fostering the creation of hybrid languages in which Dayak and Indonesian elements merge. This process mirrors the way *prokem* integrates vocabulary from diverse regional and foreign languages.

The concept of language games introduced by Wittgenstein offers an interesting perspective on how language is used in specific social contexts. This concept is relevant in the study of the *prokem* language, which thrives in Yogyakarta, and the Dayak Maanyan regional language. Both demonstrate that language is not merely a tool for communication, but also a means of reflecting and reinforcing the social, cultural, and traditional identity of its users. *Prokem* language, as used by communities such as Brigata Curva Sud, gay groups, *waria* (transgender women), and *klitih* groups in Yogyakarta, represents a unique example of language games (Harahap, 2018). Each of these communities has a distinctive vocabulary and rules of usage that serve to maintain the exclusivity of communication and strengthen group solidarity. In these communities, *prokem* language functions as a tool for asserting identity and conveying messages in secrecy. The rules and structures shaping *prokem* language align with Wittgenstein's concept of the "rule of the game," where the meaning of language is entirely dependent on the underlying social context and interactions.

On the other hand, the Dayak Maanyan regional language in Kalimantan can also be understood through Wittgenstein's concept of language games. This language is used not only as a means of communication but also as a medium to preserve cultural traditions and reinforce the social identity of the Dayak Maanyan tribe. For instance, the use of proverbs and *riak* in religious rituals reflects unique social and spiritual rules. The use of this language in customary practice shows that its meaning can only be understood within the cultural framework surrounding it, consistent with Wittgenstein's idea that the meaning of language arises from its use in practice.

Both cases, *prokem* language and the Dayak Maanyan language, illustrate the presence of "family resemblances," as Wittgenstein described. Although they differ in form and function, both involve rules of use that reflect the culture and traditions of their respective communities. Whether in the modern and dynamic *prokem* language or the traditional and sacred Dayak Maanyan language, both demonstrate that language mirrors the evolving nature of social life. Thus, Wittgenstein's concept of language games is not only relevant to understanding contemporary linguistic phenomena, such as *the prokem* language, but is also highly applicable in examining regional languages such as Dayak Maanyan. This highlights that language, in all its forms, is intrinsically connected to how humans live their lives, whether in the context of rich traditions imbued with meaning or modern expressions that showcase social creativity.

D. Conclusion

This study shows that the Dayak Maanyan language plays a profound role as a means of communication, a medium for strengthening social identity, and preserving cultural traditions. Using Wittgenstein's language game theory framework, it was found that the meaning of the Dayak Maanyan language emerges from the context of its use in everyday life, such as in proverbs, speech acts, and ritual language. This language reflects the cultural values, spirituality, and social norms of the Dayak Maanyan community, and functions as a means of education and preserving local wisdom. The Wittgensteinian approach emphasizes that the meaning of language cannot be separated from its social practices. In the Dayak Maanyan context, language not only conveys messages, but also creates symbolic relationships between humans, nature, and spirituality. This study emphasizes the importance of preserving the Dayak Maanyan language as part of a rich cultural heritage and contributes to the study of the relationship between language, meaning, and social practices in multicultural societies.

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