AN ANALYSIS OF THETA ROLES OF VERBS IN THE MAH MERI LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

The Mah Meri language, one of the severely endangered languages of Malaysia is facing the threat of extinction. In order to save valuable information and heritage, this research focusses on the Theta Roles in relation to the verbs in the Mah Meri language. Using Radford's (1997 & 2009) approach in analysing Theta Roles and the verbs, this study explores the interview data of a Mah Meri native speaker. Two main ideas which are thoroughly examined in this thesis are the Theta Roles and the structural entity of verbs and their related nouns in order to understand the sentential constructions. Thus, in the primary research question, the Theta Roles examined are the Agent, Theme, Experiencer, Benefactor, Instrument, Goal and Locative. These Theta Roles are examined in relation to the verbs found in the data of the study of the Mah Meri language. The second research question addresses the structure of verbs found in the Mah Meri language. In order to fully understand the verb structures, the morphological entities of affixes such as prefixes and suffixes are studied. Moreover, the word order of the sentential constructions are also analysed according to actives and passives. This is done in tandem with analyzing the pronouns in relation to the placement of verbs in a Mah Meri sentential construction. In short, this thesis aims to document the language of Mah Meri in order to preserve the language heritage of Mah Meri.

ABSTRAK

Bahasa Mah Meri adalah salah satu daripada bahasa yang hampir hilang di Malaysia yang sedang menghadapi ancaman kepupusan. Untuk menyelamatkan pelbagai khazanah ilmu dan juga tradisi, kajian ini memfokuskan aspek Peranan Theta yang berhubungkait dengan kata kerja di dalam bahasa Mah Meri. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan Radford (1997 & 2009) dalam menganalisa Peranan Theta dan kata kerja, kajian ini meneroka data wawancara seorang penutur bahasa Mah Meri. Dua ide utama yang diolah secara teliti adalah Peranan Theta dan juga entiti struktur kata kerja bersertakan bahagian kata benda yang relevan. Di dalam persoalan kajian yang pertama, Peranan Theta yang dianalisa adalah Agen, Tema, Pengalami, Penerima Dapatan, Instrumen, Halatuju dan Lokasi. Kesemua Peranan Theta ini dianalisa berhubungkan dengan kata kerja yang diperoleh di dalam data kajian bahasa Mah Meri ini. Persoalan kajian kedua merujuk kepada struktur kata kerja yang dijumpai di dalam bahasa Mah Meri. Untuk memahami struktur kata kerja dengan sepenuhnya, entiti morfologi seperti imbuhan, yakni kata imbuhan awalan dan imbuhan akhir dikaji. Tambahan lagi, penyusunan perkataan (word order) di dalam struktur ayat juga dikaji mengikut ayat aktif dan ayat pasif. Ini dibuat bersama analisa kata gantian diri. Analisa kata gantian diri ini dikaitkan dengan penempatan kata kerja di dalam ayat Mah Meri. Secara ringkasnya, tesis ini bertujuan untuk mendokumenkan bahasa Mah Meri untuk memelihara khazanah bahasa Mah Meri.

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In the name of Allah, Most Gracious and Merciful, I begin this thesis by addressing and thanking everyone who has been an integral part of this thesis. First and foremost, I am very grateful to the Lord of All Universes, for all His blessings. *Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is knowing of all things.* (24:35)

Without any doubt, this thesis would have not been made possible if not for many individuals of whom I share the privilege to have met in my lifetime. First of all, I would like to thank Dr. Kais Amir Kadhim, for his not only sharing his thoughts and expertise, but also for meeting the challenging demands of being my supervisor. His concerns have not only made me better as a student but also as a human being. Secondly, I would like to thank the people from JKAOA including Puan Fairus Yahya, En Zainal Abidin Hj Ali, En Sargi bin Bakam, En Mohd Jiwa, Pn Suraini and other individuals involved. Their assistance in my thesis journey has been wonderful. I would also like to thank the Mah Meri people of Pulau Carey in both Kampung Sg Bumbun and Kampung Sg Rambai especially that of Tok Batin Sidin, Tok Batin Salleh, Pn Faridah, Ajin, Daud and all the members of their family. Without them, this thesis would have not materialised, and I would like to thank them for being ever so obliging and welcoming me into their homes. Besides that, I would also like to thank Encik Rashid Isa for providing me with a wealth of information on the Mah Meri

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Adjectival Phrase
AUX	Auxiliary
COMP	Complementizer
CP	Complementizer Phrase
DET	Determiner
DP	Determiner Phrase
ESM	Extended Standard Model
GB	Government and Binding
GBN	Given Before New
I-Language	Internalised Language
IP	Inflectional Phrase
JKOAM	Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli Malaysia
LCA	Linear Correspondence Axiom
LF	Logical Form
LSLT	Logical Structure of Linguistic Theory
NP	Noun Phrase
P&P	Principles and Parameters
PF	Phonetic Form
PRO	Pronominal
PV	Particle Verbs
QP	Quantifier Phrase
RRL	Repeated Rhymed Lines
RTM	Broadcasting Department of Malaysia
SLI	Specific Language Impairment
SPKR	Skim Pembangunan Kesejahteraan Rakyat
S-Selection	Semantic Selection
TGG	Transformational Generative Grammar
TLD	Typical Language Development
TP	Tense Phrase
UG	Universal Grammar
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VP	Verb Phrase
VPISH	VP- Internal Subject Hypothesis

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Chapter I provides the general overview of the research. Firstly, it relates to the background of the study and the preambles leading up to the research. It also discusses the problem or research gap that is evident in the current field. Furthermore, this chapter emphasises the purpose, objectives and the research questions of this research. Moreover, it also delineates the significance of this research. Besides acknowledging the scope and limitations, Chapter I also puts forth the theoretical definitions that will be used in this study generally. The last component that is discussed in this chapter is the organisation of the thesis.

1.2 Background Of The Study

In this section, the background of the study of the Mah Meri language is examined. Firstly, Section 1.2.1 covers the aspect of Mah Meri as one of the identified endangered languages in Malaysia. In this section, the term 'Severely Endangered' is explained and elaborated with examples. Consequently, Section 1.2.2 provides the relevant information regarding the efforts made by the Malaysian government in order to protect and preserve the heritage of the Mah Meri people. It also denotes the perspectives of Malaysians with regards to preservation of the Aslian languages.

1.2.1 The Mah Meri Language as an Endangered Language

This research is stemmed deeply within the language settings of the Malaysian country. Although Malay language is acknowledged as the official language of Malaysia, Lewis (2009) reported that Malaysia has 139 individual languages. However, he informed that only 137 languages are considered to be living languages while two of them recorded no account of speakers. From the total number of 137 languages, 25 languages are identified as endangered languages. These 25 endangered languages range from the lowest level of endangerment up to the highest level. The language of Mah Meri is categorised as one of the languages to be severely endangered (Moseley, 2010).

The term 'endangered' suggests that these languages are no longer learned by children in order to ensure its survival (Krauss, 2007). In order to understand the meaning of 'severely endangered', Krauss mentioned that the languages in this category have a decline in the number of speakers. He added that in the severely endangered languages, the youngest speakers were of grandparental generation or middle-aged people who are in the age span of approximately 35-60 years old. Following Krauss, Walsh (2005) also stated a similar prediction. Walsh's views are in line with Krauss's prediction which states that most available languages are facing death while the remaining languages are most likely to be endangered.

The language of Mah Meri is spoken by the Mah Meri people. As seen in Figure 1.2.1, the Mah Meri people are also known as the Besisi people. The Mah Meri people are part of the large Aslian community existing in Malaysia. They mostly reside in the West Malaysian peninsular in the state of Selangor. Most of them are in Carey Island in Klang,

Selangor. Nonetheless, there are also Mah Meri people belonging to the Sepang district in Hulu Langat.

Figure 1.2.1: Mah Meri as a Severely Endangered Language –Adapted from *UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger http://www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/index.php*

1.2.2 The Clarion Call for the Safeguarding the Aslian People and Heritage

The Aslian people garnered a considerable amount of spotlight in the Malaysian scene especially over the past several years. Among the focus given to the Aslian people are in terms of economic and intellectual development. As an example, in the Ninth Malaysian Plan, the Aslian people were addressed by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi. In order to increase the betterment of the Aslian people, he proposed programmes with two types of purposes. The first idea was to eradicate the existing rural and urban poverty amongst the Aslian people. The second plan was to accelerate the development of the Aslian community through programmes designed to generate income opportunities. One example of the revelant programmes are such as *Skim Pembangunan Kesejahteraan Rakyat* also known as SPKR.

The following is an excerpt from the former Prime Minister's speech (2006) in the Ninth Malaysia plan:

> The main focus of the poverty eradication programme is to build the capacity of the poor by improving their access to education and skills training, instil positive thinking and build self-confidence and motivation. This will encourage active involvement of the poor in economic activities. To facilitate the involvement of the poor in development and economic activities, the Government will facilitate access to financing and provide better infrastructure. Special programmes will be implemented to address rural poverty and urban poverty among the Bumiputera in Sabah and Sarawak as well as the Orang Asli community. (p. 33)

In 2011, the Tenth Malaysian Plan highlights the plan to further strengthen the efforts of the previous Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi. In the Tenth Malaysian Plan, Malaysia's current Prime Minister Dato' Sri Haji Mohammad Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak has continued the efforts in the progress of the Aslian heritage. He proceeded by initiating more plans to eradicate poverty amongst the Aslian people. Such examples were by fortifying their standards of living by facilitating easier access to basic amenities and also through tailor-made programmes to suit the specific needs of the Aslian community. Hence, these plans are considered one of the efforts put forth by the Malaysian government in order to ensure the preservation of the Aslian people. By making lives better for the Aslian people, the plans most likely would generate a healthy growth of Aslian people including that of Mah Meri. The preservation of the Mah Meri people is in line with Crystal's assertion (2002) of the causes of language death. To elucidate this statement, Crystal provided several reasons which cause languages to die. Amongst them are the deaths of the languages' speakers which are caused by natural causes, habitat destruction and diseases to name a few. To quote Crystal, "Obviously, a language dies if all the people who speak it are dead; so any circumstance which is a direct and immediate

threat to the physical threat of some or all of a community is…the bottom line" (p. 70). Thus, indirectly, the Mah Meri language can be prevented from extinction as long as there are living native speakers of the Mah Meri language.

Besides that, Crystal also mentioned one of the ways to preserve the language is through the technological equipments and utilisation. It is also observed that Malaysian researchers of the Aslian community have also made initiatives to safeguard the heritage of the Aslian people. As an example, Tai Kent Lim (2010) has made a Digital Repository System in order for the purpose of Aslian heritage documentation. In his thesis, he emphasised that many efforts have been made by the Malaysian government to preserve the Aslian heritage. One of these efforts is seen through the construction of Aslian museums. Nonetheless, he emphasised that the key to preservation is through the availability of easy access of resources for the public. Thus, more can be done for the purpose of Aslian heritage preservation including its language through online websites, online dictionaries and so forth.

In the perspective of the Malaysian citizen, Rohaty Mohd Majzub and Maisarah Muhammad Rais (2011) cited that the lecturers and students are generally keen on preserving the dying language of the Aslian people. Based on the focus group of the study, numerous reasons and recommended strategies for preserving the endangered languages are provided by the participants. To clarify, participants are in favour of preserving the endangered languages due to the idea of preserving identities and maintaining diversity as well as socio-political stability in the country. These participants believe that Malaysian citizens should play a part in preserving languages especially those languages unique to the minority groups as languages are the roots of the people. Two major themes are observed in the suggestions by the participants to preserve endangered languages. The first theme

relates to possible joint efforts of the government, non-government organisation and the media to effectively protect the endangered languages. In the second theme, it is determined that necessary implementation of educational policies is recommended. Hence, it can be understood that the preservation of the Aslian heritage has attracted attention on the national scale in Malaysia.

However, the preservation of the Aslian heritage also received international attention. To illustrate, Dato' Seri Utama Dr. Rais Yatim, the current Minister of Information, Communications and Culture emphasised that the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) acknowledged the valuable art of Mah Meri carvings such as masks and statues. This important statement was made in his speech in Kampung Sungai Bumbun in March 16, 2010 during the Mah Meri Ancestral Day or more commonly known as *Aik Moyang*. Subsequently, the Minister also declared that under the Malaysian Constitutional Act 153, the rights and privileges of the Aslian people are protected. Relating to this act, he outlined that the maintenance of Mah Meri culture is also subsumed in this act.Furthermore, he also proposed of possibilities of safeguarding the Mah Meri heritage. Following this, he beckoned the people to learn about the Mah Meri community besides visiting them annually especially in the case of *Aik Moyang* to pay tribute and respect to the Mah Meri people. His other suggestion includes a possible documentary of the Mah Meri people to be produced by the Broadcasting Department of Malaysia (RTM). The possibility of a documentary can be realised to acknowledge the Mah Meri people and their heritage and also to promote the Mah Meri culture to the Malaysian society.

An extract of Dato Seri Utama Dr. Rais Yatim's speech (2010) can be seen below:

> Kepada rakan-rakan dari Jabatan yang mempunyai projek di sini, berhubung terus dengan tuan Pegawai Daerah kita, dengan Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli kita, agar kampong ini kita jadikan kampong contoh. Dan setiap tahun, ayuhlah kita datang ke kampong ini menemui rakan-rakan kita dan memberi penghormatan kepada penduduk di sini, bahawa hari menghormati moyang itu adalah sesuatu yang kita tunggu-tunggu bersama untuk menjayakan seni budaya kita. Mungkin juga RTM selepas ini boleh membuat satu dokumentari tentang Hari Moyang di sini. (pp. 6-7)

Referring to the previous extract, it is postulated that the Minister is concerned for the government agencies and Malaysian citizens in general to understand and furthermore preserve the lifestyle and culture of the Mah Meri people by remembering *Hari Moyang* or Ancestral Day. Although language preservation might not directly be the focus in his speech, it is undeniable that official processions in the Mah Meri community are conducted using the Mah Meri language. Hence, by documenting official ceremonies like Ancestral Day, language preservation is indirectly preserved. Language preservation is a necessity in upholding the heritage of people.The reason is due to language being an inherent part of any culture. In Brezinger's remark, he mentioned that people must be conscious of the the fact that heritage does not preclude language. In contrast, language is the foundation of people's heritage that must be preserved.

As stated by Brezinger (2007) with regards to language preservation:

> Without proper scientific documentation, the decline of these languages will result in the irrecoverable loss of unique knowledge that is based on specific cultural and historical experience. Furthermore, the speech communities themselves will often suffer from the loss of their heritage language as a crucial setback of ethnic and cultural identity. (p. 4)

Due to the lack of long-term documentation of Mah Meri languages from all aspects of linguistics, steps are needed for the creation of the Mah Meri long-term documentation. Hence, the preservation of Orang Asli language should be the main priority in order to

preserve their heritage as language plays a dominant role in understanding culture. The loss of the Mah Meri language as an Aslian language would be a major loss for the Aslian people alongside the Malaysian languages as well.

1.3 Statement Of The Problem

In this section, the problem statements regarding the research are discussed in detail. In section 1.3.1, the study explores the problem of the death in Mah Meri language documentation. This also includes the general lack of current syntactic studies. In Section 1.3.2, another problem statement relates to the lack of dynamicism of syntactic studies perspectives. Hence, in this section, the study shows that literature reviews only focus on other syntactical aspects of the language.

1.3.1 A Dearth in the Documentation of the Syntax of Mah Meri Language

Section 1.3.1 discusses the apparent need for documentation to add towards the literature of the Mah Meri. Even though the Mah Meri language was recorded and documented in previous studies, many of these studies were mainly focussed on language origins and classifications. Such an example would be the earlier works of Thomas A. Sebeok (1943) and Geoffrey Benjamin (1976). In their studies, both linguists were focussed on the classification of languages in Malaysia. However, in these studies, the aspects of the studies were excluded in terms of the syntactic perspective in the Mah Meri language.

Nonetheless, the syntax of Mah Meri was explored in the study of Peh See King and Salleh Masri Arshad in 1981. In recent times, the syntax of Mah Meri language was also a focal point for Choi Kim Yok in a group research headed by Asmah Haji Omar (2006). The research made by Peh See King and Salleh Masri Arshad focussed on collecting data at Kampung Sungai Bumbun in Pulau Carey in the district of Klang. In comparison, Choi

Kim Yok's study on syntax focussed on the area of Kampung Bukit Bangkong in the district of Sepang. Although the foci concentrated on the syntactic structure of active and passive structures, the syntactic structures were limited to the scope of the aforementioned areas.

In another study to analyse syntax, Fazal Mohamed Mohamed Sultan (2009) has analysed another Aslian language named the Bateq language. His study focussed on using the X-Bar Theory propagated by Chomsky's Government and Binding (GB) theory. Unfortunately, this study has not been replicated by any linguists for the language of Mah Meri.

Thus, in conclusion, the lacking of syntactical studies in Mah Meri needs to be addressed immediately. It is with the finding of the evident shortage of studies combined with the lack of other theories in analysing syntax which makes this study worthwhile to pursue. It is hoped that this study could prompt more researches in the area of syntax especially in the endangered languages of Malaysia.

1.3.2 The Need to Analyse Syntax of Mah Meri Language through a Different Scope

The second reason for this research to be realised is due to the need to analyse the syntactic properties of the Mah Meri language through a different research scope. From the available studies, the researcher has found none related to the Theta Roles of the Mah Meri language. Thus, this thesis suggests the use of Theta Roles in order to examine the language of Mah Meri in detail. The study of Theta Role is essential in understanding the predicates of each sentential construction available in the language. More specifically, it highlights the role of each predicate. Understanding the role of each predicate is a necessary element in order to understand the syntactic structure which is also related to the semantic

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understanding. In short, this thesis can be used to enhance understanding of the Theta Roles of the Mah Meri language. Furthermore, researchers specialising in Theta Roles can utilise this research for comparative studies of Theta Roles as well as the structures of other parts of speech which are related to the study of Theta Roles.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop a structured knowledge development in the syntactical studies in Malaysia concerning endangered languages especially that of the Mah Meri. Secondly, it is to contribute more in terms of the different paradigms of syntactic knowledge to the Aslian languages through the use of Theta Roles. Ultimately, this project is to support and preserve the Aslian heritage through scientific linguistic studies. Thus, this study is imperative to enhance the development of research on the Orang Asli in line with the concept of the government policy to uphold the rights of the Aslian people and their heritage. Moreover, this research is to also to make available literature reviews of the Mah Meri language in general and the syntax of Mah Meri specifically. This research would be a valuable asset to future researchers in the field who are interested in comparing Aslian syntax besides to further develop researches in the area of Mah Meri languages. This study is also to fulfil the gap that underlies within the studies of syntactic knowledge especially of Theta Roles in the Mah Meri language.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This study is divided into two objectives. Firstly, it is to establish the Theta Roles in relation to the verbs in the Mah Meri language. Secondly, is to analyse the nouns and structures of verbs which are related to the understanding of the Theta Roles of Mah Meri language.

1.6 Research Questions

a) What are the Theta Roles found in relation to the verbs in the Mah Meri language in Carey Island?

b) What are the structures of verbs and nouns related to the understanding of the Theta Roles found in the Mah Meri language in Carey Island?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is pertinent to enhance and add to the volume of the literature of the Mah Meri language in which there is a dearth of linguistic studies. In the long term, this study will contribute to the protection of the Aslian heritage by being part of language preservation system besides contributing substantial knowledge to the body of the syntactic literature. Moreover, this research will be a point of reference for researchers with syntactic interests as well as the public domain who are interested about the Mah Meri language in general.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The primary focus of this study is analysing the Theta Roles and the structures of Mah Meri verbs. Due to time and other research constraints, this study focuses on a single case study in order to gauge the Theta Roles and structural entities of Mah Meri verbs. Even though the single case study is rich with data, it may be that the findings do not necessarily apply to all members of the community in the Mah Meri especially those members belonging to a different geographical location as well as age and education. Nonetheless, this study takes necessary precaution to reevaluate the data in order to ensure its validity and reliability. Another limitation is the scope of the study itself in this thesis.

As this study is only focussed on mainly analysing Theta Roles, it is only a partial description of the Mah Meri language. In short, although it sheds light on the analysis of Theta Roles, it may not give a complete picture of the Mah Meri language itself.

1.9 Theoretical Background

In this particular section, the thesis highlights the terms predominantly featured in this study. They are divided into several categories which are 1) Theta Roles 2) Verbs and 3) Structures of Verbs 4) Pronouns 5) Affixes 6) Active Voice and 7) Passive Voice. In this section, general descriptions are given foreach term for the benefit of the readers. These terms and ideas would be further developed and discussed in the preceding chapters of II and IV.

1.9.1 Theta Roles

The understanding of Theta Roles is crucial on a lexical level to analyse its syntactic relations for the computation of syntactic structures. Theta Role refers to an argument in a sentential construction with a predicate partake. The term Theta Roles is categorised into many types namely: a) Agent b) Experiencer c) Theme d) Goal e) Recipient f) Source g) Location h) Instrument and lastly, i) Beneficiary. All of these Theta Roles are determined by the most prominent role that they possess in a particular sentence. In Chapter II, the explanations of each form of Theta Roles are provided with their particular examples.

1.9.2 Verbs

The second term which is pertinent to this study is 'verb' or its plural form 'verbs'. Verbs are one of the parts of speech in a sentential construction. Verbs are considered as an important constituent as it explains the predicate related to the arguments involved in a

sentence. Further examples and illustrations regarding these verbs are covered substantially in Chapter II.

1.9.3   Structure of Verbs

The next term 'Structure of Verbs' is closely related the term in 1.9.2. A verb or a predicate can be further classified into three main categories such as: a) Transitive b) Intransitive and c) Ditransitive. These classifications are determined by understanding the type of transitivity and the valency of the argument or also known as the argument structure. This term refers to the morphological properties found in each verb. In order to understand the structures of verbs, morphological constituents such as the affixes and suffixes are examined in this study. These items are crucial in understanding whether a verb is in its base or derived form. This term is discussed in length in Chapter II and IV respectively.

1.9.4   Pronouns

In this thesis, the term 'Pronoun' is related to any given term to replace the arguments. These substitutions of pronouns take place for arguments are usually noun or noun phrases.

1.9.5   Affixes

The term 'Affix' refers to a word stem. A word stem is a morphological feature which attaches itself to another word. An affix is called a bound morpheme which means that it is a fixture which could not stand on its own and must be attached to a word. Affixes may attach itself in any section of a word. Usually, the affixes are seen in the initial position of a word and these affixes are called prefixes. In contrast, the affixes which

position themselves in the final part of the word are identified as suffixes. This attachment may cause the word to be changed semantically.

1.9.6 Active Voice

The term 'Active Voice' refers to any sentential constructions which has the subject or argument performing the action or predicate.

1.9.7 Passive Voice

The term 'Passive Voice' denotes any sentential constructions which has an action or a predicate committed on an argument by another argument.

1.10 Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The focal point of Chapter I is particularising the introductory part of the thesis. The second chapter reviews relevant previous studies that are related to this study. The third chapter describes the methodology of the study. The fourth chapter presents the findings from the research based on the research questions. Chapter IV also attempts to provide the answers to the Research Questions of this study based on discussions and examples. Lastly, Chapter 5 gives the summary and conclusion for this study. Furthermore, it provides recommendations for future research. All the relevant documents, appendices and bibliography are included at the end of this thesis.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter II, the main focus is providing relevant reviews of literature pertaining to this study. Therefore, two main themes are distinguished in this chapter. The first theme comprises of the theoretical linguistic knowledge associated with this study. Amongst them are inclusive of the theories of Theta Roles, verbs, structures of verbs, pronouns, affixes besides active and passive voices. Meanwhile, the second major theme involves the theme of Aslian studies which include the Mah Meri literature reviews. In this particular topic, the study's focal point is concerned with the literature reviews on the Mah Meri language as well as other Aslian languages. The literature are divided and categorised into linguistic researches on Mah Meri and the latter being linguistic researches on other Aslian languages.

2.2 Primary Theme: Studies In Relation to the Theoretical Linguistic Knowledge of the Study

Section 2.2 involves explicating the theoretical framework of any linguistic terminologies that are vital in understanding this thesis. As previously mentioned, some of the linguistic terminologies that are specifically highlighted are Theta Roles, verbs, structures of verbs, pronouns, affixes besides active and passive voices. The order of the presentation of linguistic terminologies and their relevant studies take place in the following sections in the following sequences. Firstly, in Section 2.2.1, the term of Theta Roles are explicated in this section. This section is followed by Section 2.2.2 which relates to the studies of verbs and structures of verbs. This section covers all the relevant literature

reviews pertaining to the studies of verbs and also the verb structures. In Section 2.2.3, studies consisting of pronouns are focussed on by providing relevant literature reviews. Next, Section 2.2.4 explores on studies which are analysing affixes. This following discussion is covered in Section 2.2.5. In Section 2.2.6, studies which are related to voices are presented. Hence, all of these sections are covered below in the aforesaid sections.

2.2.1 Literature Review Regarding Theta Roles

In Section 2.2.1, studies or literature reviews regarding Theta Roles are given. In order to give a thorough understanding of Theta Roles, the definition of this particular terminology is given. Theta Roles is closely regarded in the study of verbs in analysing languages. This is due to the prominent role of Theta Roles with regards to the understanding of the lexicon or word in the sentential construction. The understanding of Theta Roles is pertinent in order to understand the syntactic structure. To elaborate further, a Theta Role can be determined if it the semantics of the argument and predicate are logical. To determine whether a sentential construction is semantically logical, the process of selectional restriction is utilised. As this study adopts the views of Radford (1997 & 2009) in analysing the thesis, a section is presented in order to explain the application of the theory. Besides that, other reviews of literatures which are related to Theta Role are also offered in Section 2.2.1.

2.2.1.1 The Theta Role Framework According to Radford (1997 & 2009)

As a background to the study, the framework of Radford (1997 & 2009) is provided for the readers for a clear understanding. Radford (1997 & 2009) refers to Theta Role also as Thematic Role. Hence, this term is used interchangeably in his point of view. In his opinion, Theta Role or Ө- role discusses the semantic role played by an argument in

relation to its predicate. Generally, linguists have tried to have a universal typology of the semantic roles made by arguments in light of their predicates. Radford (2009) featured some of the theta roles which are considered by linguists to be universal in nature. This study lends support to the list of roles played by arguments with respect to predicates are featured below in Radford's study (2009).

Role	Gloss	Example
THEME	Entity undergoing the effect of some action	*Mary* fell over
AGENT	Entity instigating some action	*Debbie* killed Henry
EXPERIENCER	Entity experiencing some psychological state	*I* like syntax
LOCATIVE	Place in which something is situated or takes place	He hid it *under the bed*
GOAL	Entity representing the destination of some other entity	John went *home*
SOURCE	Entity form which something moves	He returned *from Paris*
INSTRUMENT	Means used to perform some action	He hit it *with a hammer*

Table 2.2.1: Adapted from Radford (2009) Theta Roles

In lieu of the roles featured above in Table 2.2.1, readers are able to comprehend that arguments can take on different roles depending on the situation. Such roles as stated as 'Theme', 'Agent', 'Experiencer', 'Locative', 'Goal', 'Source' and 'Instrument'. Examples of these roles can be seen under the Example column in Table 2.2.1 with reference to the italicized words. One of the most common arguments found in sentences are such as Themes and Agents. For Themes, 'Mary' is the affected by the action or predicate of 'fell'. Conversely, Agents are considered to be the entity which propagates a certain action to an object.

Furthermore, in Radford's opinion, the theta roles follow a constraint under the Theta Criterion under Chomsky's 1981 view. This principle is the understanding that each argument bears one and only one theta-role, and each theta-role is assigned to only one and only one argument (Radford, 1997, p. 273). Hence, from this particular statement, it is

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implied that in order for linguists to analyse Theta Roles, two parts of speech must be present: the argument and the predicate. Besides that, these Theta Roles must be semantically meaningful and logical in relation to the particular argument in the sentential construction. Without these elements, the Theta Role cannot be analysed.

2.2.1.2 Other Studies in Relation to Theta Roles

Although generative grammarians indicate that the terms of 'Theta Role' and 'Thematic Relation' are interchangeably used, Carnie makes a distinction between the two terms. According to his views, Carnie states that the Theta Roles are referring to "a bundle of thematic relations associated with a particular argument" (p. 222). In contrast, the term 'Thematic Relations' is known as the semantic relation between the argument and the predicate. Having mentioned that Thematic Relations is the semantic relation between the argument and predicate, it is important to note that there may be more than one possible Thematic Relations for an argument with a predicate. Nevertheless, according to Carnie, there can only be a single Theta Role for each argument. Hence, an argument may have many possible Thematic Relations but only assumes only one type of Theta Role.
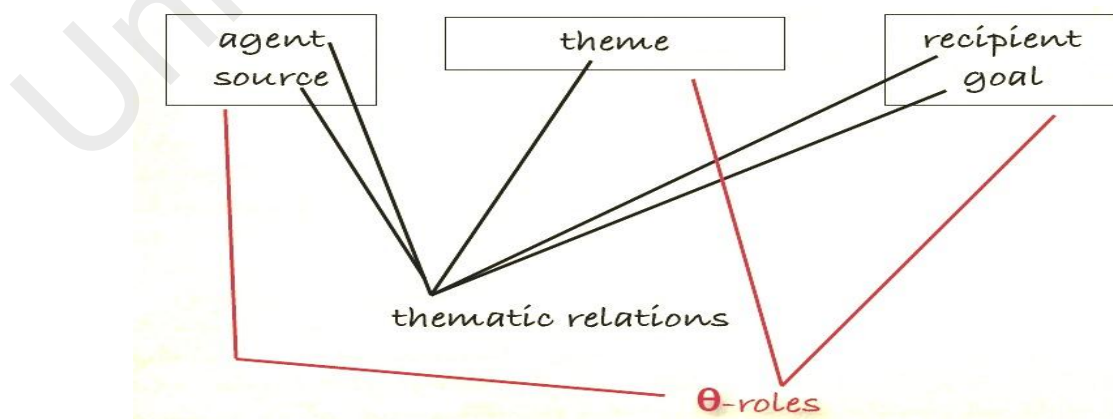
Figure 2.2.1 Theta Roles vs. Thematic Relations

From Figure 2.2.1 above, it is seen that although there are five thematic relations linked to the argument of Theme, for example, the definite Theta Roles are only three. Hence, each argument only assumes one prominent and syntactically dominant role of Theta Role. If one argument has more than one Theta Role, it is considered ungrammatical in the opinion of Carnie. Hence, this is a marked difference from the understanding of Carnie. Nevertheless, even though Carnie pointed out that though he might not necessarily agree with the terms of 'Theta Role' and 'Thematic Relations' used interchangeably, he did not object to the practice entirely. This is due to the norm of the situation of interchangeably using the Theta Role and Thematic Relations terminologies. However, both Radford and Carnie agree on the basis of analysing Theta Roles. To illustrate, both of them stress that in order to analyse Theta Roles, utmost importance must be given to predicates and arguments. Both elaborated that recognition of predicates and arguments are essential to identify the argument's Theta Role.

In Luraghi and Parodi (2008), the term 'Theta Role' is expressed through the symbol Ө- role. In their book, they mentioned that the term Theta Roles refers to the semantic roles. Furthermore, they express that in the Tranformational Generative Grammar or known as TGG, the relations of semantics between the verbs and their arguments that are already designated in terms of Theta Roles. To further elaborate this point, a Theta Role is a semantic role which has a Noun Phrase or Determiner Phrase by default. These Noun Phrases or Determiner Phrases might assume the role of Agent, Patient, Theme, Experiencer and Beneficiary to name a few. It is further elaborated that the argument assumes their specific Theta Role during the process of Merge. However, Luraghi and Parodi have stated that no agreement was made to specifically define these Theta Roles and also to specifically define any other labels.

Haiden (2005) highlighted a feature combination in order to understand the Theta Roles. The reason to utilise this particular feature combination is to analyse the types of Theta Role such as Agent, Experiencer and so forth. The feature combination involves the application of clusters in parentheses. This parenthesis exists to indicate whether the predicates involve the physical and mental aspects. Haiden explained that if the predicate related to the Theta Role concerns any of the physical or mental aspects, the cluster grid would project a [+] sign for each aspect. Consequently, the cluster grid assigns a [−] sign for aspects which are not present in the Theta Role. Hence, if the physical and mental aspects are absent from the Theta Role, the cluster grid would assign two [−] signs. One of the examples cited by Haiden is the cluster grid of [c+m+]. In the specific cluster grid of [c+m+], the Theta Role can be interpreted as an Agent. Hence, this particular Theta Role has volitional control of the event.

Following Haegeman's definition of Projection Principle, Jubilado (2009) stated that all these lexical properties of arguments is required to be represented at all syntactic levels to fulfil the Projection Principle. In the Projection Principle, all lexical information is syntactically represented. He further discussed that these lexical information may be represented by involving syntactic categories (c-selection or categorical selection) or by semantic categories (s-selection or semantic selection). In this case, thematic relations and arguments are concerned with the latter, s-selection or semantic selection.

In Terence Parsons' paper (1995), he stated the past issues of the Thematic Relations. The aim of his paper was to improve on the current theory by addressing some pertinent issues. In this particular study, he highlighted certain semantic notions with regards to the analysis of each Theta Role. He provided critical and thorough explanation as to these claimed problems such as the analysis of Theme and Benefactive. He gives an

example related to the selling of a car and debunked Dowty's argument of saying that Thematic Relations in general has a defective criterion.

This is explicated in the excerpt below.

Dowty (1989: 105-106) raises a difficulty for traditional criteria for roles. As an example, he argues that if I sell you a car for $5, then since the $5 changes possession just as surely as does the car, it satisfies popular accounts of Themehood just as much as the car does. But if $5 is the Theme, then we can interchange Themes in the logical forms proposed above…this problem disappears if we take seriously the definitions proposed above. Was the selling *of* the car? Yes. Was the selling of $5? No. Then, the car is the Theme and the $5 is not. The fact that both of these changed possession is irrelevant.

(1995, pp. 640-641)

Even though Parsons indicated that the issue of Thematic Relations and arguments are generally problematic by citing problems such as a) Defective Criteria b) Homonyms of Prepositions and c) Treating Thematic Relations as Properties, he did not discount the notion of Thematic Relations either. To support this argument, he came up with a definite list of definitions for the thematic roles and its arguments. According to Parsons, although the set of definitions might not bring desired analysis, the problems as stated previously are put seen now in a clear perspective. According to his list of Thematic Relations and their meanings, he believed that the problem of understanding what arguments constituted as agent, experiencer, theme, source, goal, instrument or benefactive could be answered through slotting the particular arguments in the proper position of "e" or "x". As an example, the role of Experiencer is determined as "x experiences e" (p. 639). Hence, this paper brought some important discussions related to the issues surrounding Thematic Relations.

In another study by Tanenhaus, Carlson and Trueswell (1989), the earlier problems regarding Thematic Relations are mentioned. Similar to the some studies of the 1980s era, the issue whether Thematic Relations should be exclusively in the field of semantics or syntax is debated on. Although they did not offer to provide any suggestions regarding the topic, they provided the definition of Thematic Roles as the "possible semantic roles that may be played by the subcategorised complements of a verb" (p. 212). To clarify this statement, they give the example of the verb 'put'. Through the verb 'put', they demonstrated that earlier mentioned complements as the subject noun phrase, object noun phrase and locative prepositional phrase.

In another article by Dryer (1985), he discussed and proposed arguments to disclaim the Theme Hypothesis (TH) as proposed by Anderson (1977), Wasow (1980), Horn (1981), Williams (1981) and Bresnan (1982). The hypothesis for TH is that the subject of an adjectival passive or able-adjective must be the theme of the verb from which the subject is formed. Thus, Dryer mentioned that this hypothesis is insufficient due to its inability to account for the themes which have adjectives. He mentioned that TH failed to account for the themes which are evident in adjectival passives. Hence, he stressed that TH should not exist for that purpose as they failed to identify the problem in the adjectival passives.

In Woo's study (2007), a marked distinction is made between those arguments which are assigned Theta Role and Case. In her analysis of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth language, she asserted that one of the light verbs of the language should be assigned a Case instead of a Theta Role. In her findings, the Theta Role is considered void as the light verb is actually related to a functional element. Besides that, she also demonstrated that it is a verbal element which takes objects. Hence, Woo's study is one of the studies indicating both use of Theta Roles and Case assignment.

Miyamoto's study (2008) theorises about binding conditions which relates to the study of Theta Roles. Although the study does not focus on Theta Roles entirely, Miyamoto explicated a few examples regarding the Internal and External Theta Roles of the argument '*Taroo'*. Here, she also explicated of the processes involved in order to receive the Internal and External Theta Role according to the Binding Conditions mentioned in her paper.

In another study, Collins (2001) employed a study on the language of Hoan in order to verbs. In order to explicate the Theta Roles found in Hoan language, he assumed the theories of inalienable and alienable possessions. Possessives are known as a debatable topic with regards to Theta Roles as some linguists regard nouns with the absence of predicate cannot be assigned a Theta Role. Nevertheless, it is interesting to denote that Collins might imply that he views Hoan possessives to have predicates. This is supported by his agreement of Gruber's viewpoint which is "inalienable nouns are themselves predicates" (p. 457). Hence, it is determined that due to the theory of predicate existing in the inalienable nouns, then, the Theta Roles can be determined. Nevertheless, more theories are needed in support of this finding.

In short, there are many researches on thematic relations and arguments. Thus, we can safely conclude from the findings above that although on the surface level they may pose some problems, thematic relations and arguments are handy when constructing analysis on the semantic level. These relational processes are useful especially to understand the syntactic structures even if ongoing debates on whether syntax and semantics should be mixed or left separately (Emonds, 1991).

2.2.2 Literature Review Regarding Verbs and Structures of Verbs

In this section, reviews of literature are given regarding to the studies of verbs and also the structures of verbs. Section 2.2.2 firstly talks about relevant studies of verbs from the past years until recent years. In the second part of Section 2.2.2, relevant studies with a focus on structures of verbs are presented.

Firstly, the term 'verb' is discussed. Section 2.2.2 discusses the aforementioned term in a broad sense by determining its definitions. Following the discussion of verb, the features of a verb is also identified in this section. To further elaborate on the topic, studies or researches on verbs are highlighted in order to give a thorough understanding of the topic. In the second part of the verb discussion, further detailed studies indicating the types of verbs are examined. Also known as part of the structures of verbs, the verb types which are mainly covered in this study are Transitive, Ditransitive and also Intransitive. Nevertheless, this study also examines the Applicative verb type.

Firstly, the term 'verb' is also known by another term which is 'predicate'. Often, linguists use 'verb' and 'predicate' interchangeably. Many linguists are in the opinion that verbs essentially are used to denote actions (Abdullah Hassan et. al, 2006; Jubilado, 2009 and Radford, 2003).In the study of linguistics, verbs are one of the parts of speech known to be a common feature in all languages. It generally denotes an action or an event initiated by a participant. Most of the linguists, if not all, agree to the general term of 'verb' and 'predicate' to be used interchangeably. One of the linguists, Radford (2009) uses the term 'verb' and 'predicate' interchangeably. The term 'predicate' or also known as 'verb' is defined by Radford (2009) as an expression denoting activities. On the other hand, an argument refers to the expression denoting a participant in the relevant activity or event.

From his definitions, it is implied that the predicate and argument are both present in the sentential construction in order to determine a Theta Role. Radford also further categorised the predicates into two types. These predicates are divided into the one-place predicate and the two-place predicate. Referring to the first type, the one-place predicate is categorised as a predicate which only takes on one argument. In contrast, the two-place predicate refers to a predicate which has two arguments.

According to Tallerman (2005), verbs are the events or more technically known as the predicate of a sentence. She further explained that verbs are one of the main parts of speech such as nouns and adjectives. Tallerman mentioned that verbs are divided into three different types. She stipulated three types of verbs which are intransitive, ditransitive and intransitive verbs. According to Stutzman, she stated verbs are related to the whole predicate. She expressed this view by saying, "...the verb phrase has a much wider definition, being equivalent to the whole predicate of the sentence, including adverbials and objects…" (p. 1, 1997).

Many linguists maintain that verbs are an important feature in the lexical category. Taylan (2002) disclosed a good summarisation of verbs in his particular study of Turkish verbs. In his view, the role of a verb plays an important part as the lexical category that can host a series of grammatical morphemes, as well as the assigner of case to its arguments. His agreement on verbs being the most important structure is accentuated with his remarks, "In fact, it will, probably, be not far-fetched to state that...the verb that constitutes the backbone of sentence structure and hence its core element…being the source of different types and levels of information..." (pp. 1-2). From this statement, it is understood that verbs are constituents which are highly important as the sentences are highly dependent on them. The verbs are likened to glue that hold the pieces or constituents together by existing in the

sentential construction. In short, the verb constituents are the core essence of the sentence as well as giving out various types of information.

In another view, Carnie (2007) also explicated that verbs are also a main feature of a language. He denotes that besides nouns and adjectives which have been proposed earlier by Tallerman (2005), Carnie also mentioned adverbs to be part of the main parts of speech. Nevertheless, focussing on verbs, Carnie believes that verbs are often combined with affixes. He gives examples of derivational suffixes and inflectional suffixes that are present in the English language. Nonetheless, it is reminded that linguists should understand that there is the possibility that a language might not have the feature of affixes in their language.

In relation to another idea, Culicover (2009) proposes that verbs also exist in the bare form. This term is used interchangeably with 'base form' to denote the state of the verb without the morphological features which will eventually change the verb meaning. Hence, he uses the English word example of 'talk' to be the bare verb for the other type of inflected verbs such as 'talks' and 'talked'. The verbs 'talks' and 'talked' are considered as a third person singular present tense verb and a past tense verb respectively. According to Culicover, all verbs are essentially bare forms in their original form.

In relation to understand verb structures, many linguists try to map out the structure of the verbs. Although there are many studies and numerous ways to map out the structure of verbs, only a few are mentioned in this section. In order to explicate the cartography or the structure of verbs, Radford devised two types of maps. The first type is named 'Traditional Bracket Technique' and the latter is known as 'Labelled Tree Diagram'. Below are examples of the way Radford (2009, p. 40) uses two techniques namely the Traditional Bracket Technique and Labelled Tree Diagram to explicate the verb phrases.

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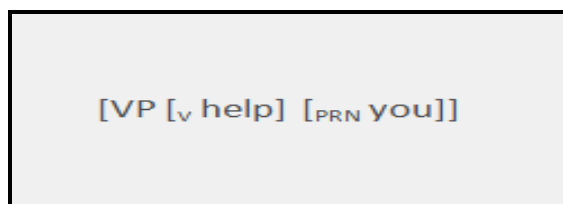
Figure 2.2.2: Traditional Bracket Technique
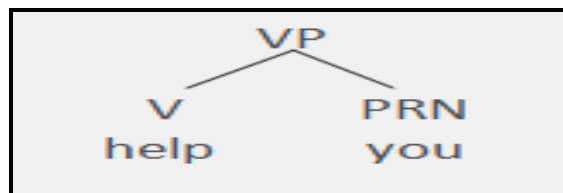
Figure 2.2.3: Labelled Tree Diagram

As seen in the Figures 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 above, Radford propagated the use of Traditional Bracket Technique and also the Labelled Tree Diagram. Even though both are used to map out the structure of verb in syntax, there are marked differences between the two types of maps. Firstly, the notation of both maps is different. The Traditional Bracket Technique uses a horizontal notation while in Figure 2.2.3, it is seen that the Labelled Tree Diagram denotes a vertical notation.

In a study by Jubilado (2009), he uses the projection of VPISH or Verb- Phrase-Internal Subject Hypothesis in order to map out the verb phrases. He asserted that a verb phrase is composed of a specifier, verbal head, and the complement. Furthermore, he commented that while the specifier and complement are usually optional, the verbal head is obligatory. In his doctoral dissertation, he gave three structures of verb phrases from the most basic to the sophisticated projections of verb phrases using Verb Phrase-Internal Subject Hypothesis (VPISH). In short, the computations of verb phrases are exemplified by him to show the concept of maximal projection, dominance and merge processes.

Both examples of Radford (2009) and Jubilado (2009) show that computations are used to map out verbs. The importance of these maps is to show the structure of the verb

component itself. However, it is vital to note that these computation or projection systems do not only apply to the parts of speech of verb. Besides verbs, these maps can be used to explicate projection or computations of any aspect of the constituents in a sentence. As an illustration, refer to the Ackema and Neeleman (2003) example given below for Determiner Phrase, Noun Phrase and Adjectival Phrase constituents. The acronyms for these phrases are DP, NP and AP respectively.

[DP a [NP [AP big] house]]
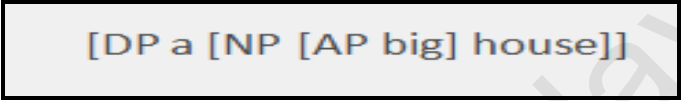
Figure 2.2.4: Traditional Bracket Technique used for other types of constituents: DP, NP and AP

Additionally, the tree bracket diagram could also be used for other different constituents that are found in a sentence. Next, Figure 2.2.5 below represents a tree diagram used to map out constituents in the Salish language (Davis, 2005).
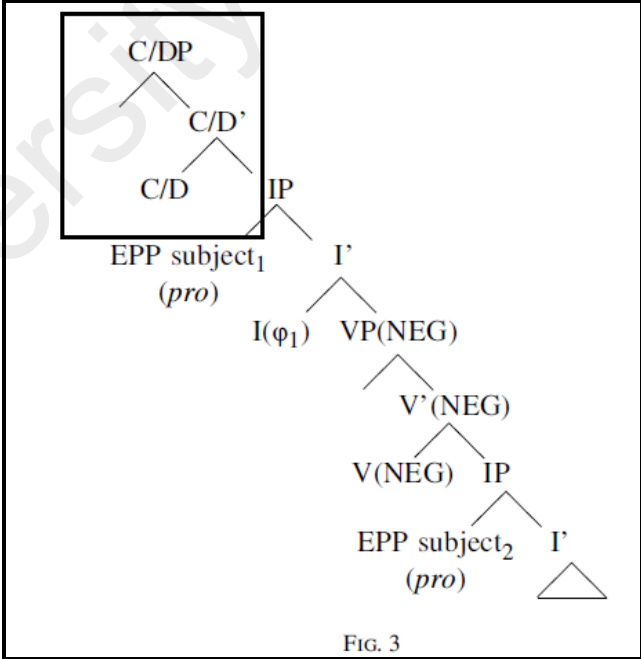
Figure 2.2.5: An adapted version of Figure 3 from Davis (2005) example of Salish tree diagram computation

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The adapted tree diagram above highlights that the tree diagram is used to map out all constituents be it verbs or even a Complement or a Determiner as well as an Inflectional Phrase.

On another note, some distinguished linguists further elaborated on the issue of languages having universal verbs to denote actions. For example, Swadesh (1950) developed a vocabulary test to record the similarities of vocabulary from 30 Salishan languages and dialects. In the final list in 1970s, Swadesh made a 100-word list which is used especially for field linguistics or lexicologists to compile lexical items which consists of nouns, verbs, anaphors as well as adjective. Some of the universal verbs highlighted in the list were 'sleep', 'kill', 'die', 'come', 'walk' and 'give'. These universal verbs are found in all languages as these are some of the present events or actions which exist in any human's daily life.

Not only that, a similar theme is discussed in a paper by Robins (1952) regarding verbs and nouns in relation to universality. He hypothesised that the issue of verb universality to have its basis from the previous grammarians. He speculated that previous grammarians might have accepted it from the antiquity of Latin and Greek. To support his claim, he cited Brøndal in relation to this matter. In discussing the issue of universality of verbs in linguistics, he mentioned that reference to Aristotelian aspects of substance, quantity, quality and relation must be considered. He further elaborated his claim that universality of verbs exist due to the ability of translation. Nonetheless, Robin asserted that it is important to regard this issue as a scientific problem as linguistics itself is a scientific study. Thus, it is considered crucial to further study the issues at hand by getting more data or resources that can bolster the claim of verb universality claims.

Some researchers argue that verbs are not a universal feature in languages as mentioned by Greenberg (1986) in Evans and Levinson's article (2009). In short, Greenberg stated that *"...Examples would be that languages had nouns and verbs (although some linguists denied even that)..."* as a reply to Osgood's challenging statement (refer to Evans and Levinson, 2009).

To counter this statement of verbs not being part of a universal feature in languages, it is best that we refer to Baker (2003) with his arguments. In his book, he explored the ideas of researchers regarding any verbless languages. From this, he concluded that even though exploring the idea of a verbless language is plausible, he conceded that it is highly undeniable that verbs exist in languages. He corroborated his claim by putting forward the use of the Jingulu language. Although Jingulu, known as one of the Australian languages, is claimed to be a verbless language by some linguists, he posits that the case might be the opposite. Using the affix *–ajkal* as an evidence for possible verb existence, he posits his finding.

The following is an excerpt from Baker's argument regarding verbs in the Jingulu language:

> In contrast, the affix –ajkal derives agentive nominals that refer to the doer of the action named by the root. The existence of these systematic derivations strongly suggests that the verbal roots themselves have agent and patient arguments to start with.

`
> (Baker, 2003, p. 93, *Lexical Categories: Noun, Verbs, Adjectives*)

Furthermore, this precludes the suggestion that some languages are verbless. As stated by Baker (2003) again, "...Even Jingulu, then, has a lexical category of verbs. While one can imagine that a language might not have verbs within my theory, I have failed to find an actual language that instantiates this possibility..." (p. 94). Besides that, Taylan

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(2002) quoted Schachter (1985) by mentioning that verbs are one of the two lexical categories that is recognised to be universal and exists in all the languages of the world. As a consequence, the stand of this thesis is that verbs are in fact a universal feature found present and are inherent in all languages.

In a study focussing on Chinese verb phrases, Pan Yanhong (2010) in her doctoral dissertation analysed verb phrase. This study concentrates on the language of Qinzhou Zhuang. This dissertation adopts a Lexical Functional Grammar also known as LFG to analyse the findings. To elaborate further, Pan Yanhong researched on a lesser-studied language of an Austroasiatic language named the Qinzhou Zhuang dialect. In investigating the research, the researcher opted for Lexical Functional Grammar as the theoretical framework as she claimed that it is suitable for her study. Based on the framework, the researcher proposed the structure of Verb Phrases to be sorted out in the order of: a) main verb b) pre-verbal and c) post-verbal. In short, this research highlighted eight types of verbs such as the benefactive, instrumental, manner, motion, posture, purposive, resultative and sequential. Moreover, this dissertation also compared and contrasted the two languages of Qinzhou Zhuang and Thai amongst many other aims.

In another doctoral dissertation, Goldberg (2005) in her thesis concentrated on verb stranding in the verb phrase. Her thesis examined the theoretical aspects related to VP Ellipsis. In her research, the VP-Ellipsis in other languages is investigated through the outline of the English language. To further elaborate, languages such as Irish, Hebrew and Swahili are analysed to be cases of V-Stranding VPE whereas Japanese and Korean languages are recommended to be treated only as null-type arguments.

One of the other recent researches on verbs focussed on the structure of the complex verb in Palauan. Nuger (2010), in his study emphasises mainly on this research to provide

a detailed description of the Palauan verbal complex through syntax and morphology and inevitably to contribute to the syntactical theory of mood, tense, aspect and syntactic Case. In a report by Chung, it is stated that this dissertation employed the Minimalist Theoretical framework by Chomsky as well as some elements from Distributed Morphology by Halle and Marantz. Amongst the findings, his research suggests that verbal complex does not occur across all languages. Coupled with this finding, he also showed extensive class of intransitive verbs in the Palauan language that could be formed by verbalizer morphemes.

On a slightly different angle, research was also done on verbs of children who suffered autism, SLI and TLD. Shulman and Guberman (2007) studied and compared the acquisition of verbs by different types of groups: those with autism, SLI, known as Specific Language Impairment and TLD, known as Typical Language Development. They identified 13 participants from each group and compared and contrasted the results. From the experiment, the researchers found that children who were diagnosed with autism seemed to respond with a relatively intact syntactic ability. On the other hand, Lind and Bowler (2009) also researched on syntax on autistic children in their notion of adapting assumptions of false belief.

In a doctoral thesis, Karim Achab (2006) conducted a research on verbs in the Amazigh language. His focus concentrated on the internal structure of verb meaning and their changes. This study focussed on the verbs of quality, unaccusatives, spatial configurative verbs as well as causatives. By adapting the Chomskyan framework of Minimalist Program, he has successfully discussed the changes of state in all verb types.

To summarise, verbs can be defined through several ways and its attributes are many. Some of the verbs are clearly different in its attributes from one language to another.

Due to this, this section further incorporates studies of specific types of verbs in the second part of Section 2.2.2. Relevant studies are discussed in relation to the studies of verb structures. These structures include but not limited to the prominent types of verbs such as Transitives, Intransitives and Ditransitives. As the main focus of this section is to explicate on transitives, intransitives and ditransitives, the other verb structures are discussed minimally. These examples include a section on Zero Argument verbs by Culicover (2009) and Matthews (1981).

2.2.2.1 Verb Structures of Transitive, Intransitive and Ditransitive Verbs

Many linguists agree that the main verb structures are divided into three main types (see Tallerman, 2005). These main types of verbs are identified as the transitive verb, intransitive verb and also the ditransitive verb. In a general view, the differences between these verbs are the number of arguments taken by each type. Hence, the structure of the verb differs according to the type of verb structures.

Regarding the first type of verb structure, transitives are one of the most common types of verb structure. Transitives are known as verbs which take on an objective case (Verspoor & Sauter, 2000; Radford, 1997). Simply defined, transitives are verbs which require one or more objects. The term 'objects' can be redefined as 'arguments' in this thesis. The transitive verb needs to have at least one argument in order to be classified as a transitive verb. Hence, transitivity occurs only when complements such as the arguments are present. This understanding has been the view for many linguists with regards about transitivity.

Nonetheless, Bowers (2002) have challenged this view by stating that transitives should be considered as a personal property and not one that relies on an external argument. He further implores that transitivity is similar to predication as a substantive syntactic category and stressed that transitivity cannot be reduced to 'more basic categories or

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mechanisms' even though he admits that he is not excluding the whole idea for basic categories or mechanisms to be analysed. Nevertheless, he proposed for refinements in the theories in the categories within transitive verbs.

Kissock (2003) concentrated on transitivity and objecthood in her study. Her analysis is made based on the Rotuman language. To clarify, the transitive and intransitive verbs are examined by analysing Churchward's study of the Rotuman Grammar and Dictionary (1940). Kissock observed the three categories of verbs as demonstrated by Churchward such as a) Intransitive b) Informal transitive and c) Formal transitive. Nonetheless, Kissock (2003) in her article has pointed out a severe deficiency in which the Rotuman marker is used for the purpose of indicating transitive verbs.

Besides that, Chung (2008) in her article examines the Indonesian clause structure from an Indonesian perspective. From her article, she offered the view that transitives that are active or passive can be placed before the subject matter. In short, transitives can be plainly said to have been the transference of action from the theta role of Agent to Patient in an argument. Her perspectives offered a different understanding than those of the usual predicament that mention that transitives only occur in passive constructions. In this particular article, Chung enlightened that these transitives in the Indonesian voice systems can be reanalysed as actives.

Ditransitive verbs are verbs which are transitive in nature such as the transitive verbs. Nevertheless, unlike the transitive verbs, the ditransitive verb takes on two arguments. In Jubilado and Manueli's paper (2009) concentrating on the Malay and Cebuano language, both ditransitive verbs of the languages are analysed. The ditransitives are analysed from a Minimalist Programme approach. According to Jubilado and Manueli

(2009), ditransitives are referred as triadic verbs which are a type of predicate with three arguments in relation with its arguments or thematic structures. The three arguments are further divided into two subcategories: a) Two internal arguments and b) One external argument. They defined it further by mentioning that ditransitives are actually transitive verbs with two objects usually traditionally defined as direct object and indirect object. One of their many findings is that they gathered that while Cebuano ditransitives are bound to agentive affixes, the Malay ditransitives can operate with its bare form.

In Nikki Adams's (2010) doctoral dissertation on Zulu Ditransitives, she studied in detail the ditransitives of the Zulu language, one of the Bantu languages. In her dissertation, she analysed the ditransitives through several features: a) object-marking b) long and short verbal alternation c) passivization and d) Wh-phrases. She made interesting discoveries that during the occurrence of the applicative verb, it immediately follows the verb root and has the form of –el-. Using Minimalist Program as her main aspect of framework, she also noted that her examples consisted of ditransitives that occur due to the use of applicatives. Even though she generated a lot of findings, there are limitations to her study in which is the problem of the significant relationship between low and high applicative languages in order to analyse and understand the nature of ditransitives in Zulu language.

In another study about ditransitives, Ozón (2009) used corpus linguistics as his framework in his doctoral dissertation. His work analysed alternating ditransitives that are present in English. Ozón's work is a departure from the usual dissertation in a sense that he applied linguistic evaluations to his work using computations as well. From his quantitative data of corpus linguistics, he was able to support his GBN which is the Given Before New principle through empirical and statistical data. Although he indicated some doubts about

his corpus statistical data, he proposed and welcomed the linguists to verify the data in case of any discrepancies of accuracy and relevancy values.

Another similar type of verb to that of the transitive verb is the applicative verb. Similar to transitive and ditransitive verbs, applicatives also take on arguments. Nevertheless, applicatives defer in a way as they take more than 2 arguments. In short, applicatives are defined as a verb which takes more than two arguments. In Youngmi Jeong's (2007) study, she concentrated on the verb type of applicatives. Using the Minimalist perspective, she analysed the structure and interpreted the applicatives in a language. She provided a definition and a short background to the history of applicatives. She highlighted that applicatives are understood as a "construction in which a verb bears a specific morpheme which licenses an oblique, or non-core, argument that otherwise be considered a part of the verb's argument structure." (2007, p. 2). In her historical description of the word 'applicative', she cited findings from Carochi (1645/ 1983: 63) that this term first appeared during the 17th century when missionary grammarians of Uto-Aztecan languages made reference to "Verbos Applicativos" as the verb which is intended toward another person. Later, she mentioned Marantz was responsible for the term 'Applicatives' to refer to verbal inflections by adding an extra object to the verbal argument structure. This was done in his studies of Bantu languages. In Jeong's book, she further discussed new issues on high and low applicatives and provided some findings about how applicatives could be divided into those two categories.

In relation to high and low applicatives, Adams (2010) in the The Zulu Ditransitives Verb Phrase mentions that she adopted the attributes by quoting Pylkkänen's division of applicatives into two types: a) High applicatives and b) Low applicatives. Further

elaborations mentioned that high applicatives assume an object and an event as opposed to low applicatives in which relates two objects.

To continue, applicatives can also be defined as morphologically-bound verbs such as verbs with circumfixes which entail extra arguments or thematic roles such as benefactive and goal theta markers. In addition, Jeong also discussed other thematic roles such as the malefactive, instrumental, locative and source for appliatives. Often occurring in rich environments, these verbs have one argument and thematic relation added to their structure (relate to Jubilado, 2009). In comparison to the ditransitive, the applicatives take more roles and arguments. While ditransitives hold two sets of arguments, the applicative verbs have three arguments which are projected onto the syntactic structure.

Besides transitive verbs, intransitive verbs are predicates which possess only one argument. In a similar understanding, intransitive verbs possess the valency of 1. Carnie (2007) stated that valency is another term for argument structure. He also mentioned that the terms 'valency' and 'argument structure' are used in an interchangeable manner. In his elaboration, he cited that intransitive verbs occur when no arguments would follow the verb as they would be preceding the verbs. His samples of intransitive verbs could be examined from the Table 2.2.2 below.

Transitivity	Valency	Example
Intransitive	1 argument	smile, arrive
Transitive	2 arguments	hit, love, kiss
Ditransitive	3 arguments	give, put

Table 2.2.2: Transitivity and Valency

Thus, in comparing the transitive and ditransitive verbs, from the table it is understood that intransitive verbs only have the valency of 1 argument. A couple of

examples postulated by him were such as the verbs 'smile' and 'arrive'. Therefore, if the verb 'smile' occurs in a sentence like 'He smiles', it can stand on its own and does not need to take on objective cases. This view lends support to Davidse & Lamiroy (2002) that the theta role of agent is self-autonomous as it can regulate and in Hovav's words "bring about" their own acts. Ultimately, it is understood that intransitives do not cause causatives as it is sufficient for intransitives to stand on their own and for its semantic meaning to be understood. However, with reference to Table 2.2.2, this study believes that the verb 'smile' can also take on a transitive mode if we were to say 'He smiled at her.' In this case, the verb 'smile' has taken on to be a transitive verb with the valency of two arguments. Besides Carnie, Radford also utilises this table in order to study valency. Thus, this table remains a helpful item in classifying verbs.

In a paper presented by Chung (2000) related to argument structures of English Intransitive verbs, Chung presented six types of intransitives of which are a) Unergatives b) Unaccusatives c) Verbal passives d) Adjectival passive e) Middle and f) Unaccusatives/ Ergatives. The intransitives in this research were based upon the syntax of English language. In light of the findings, Chung noted that through the use of operational features like argument suppression, argument deletion, externalisation, event argument, external and internal argument, it is unnecessary to use thematic role labels used by Marantz, Zubirazarreta and Rappaport and Levin. The researcher also asserted that the relative theory does not work in the case of this research's type of six types of intransitive constructions such as used in Grimshaw and Chung's works. Nonetheless, the justification for not using the thematic roles could not be accepted in this research due to the notion of difficulty to "define them clearly" (p. 420, 2000). Furthermore, the acknowledgement of thematic role's

convenience is evident in the study even though Chung is not in favour of using thematic roles.

In dealing with intransitives, Dehe (2002) in her book Particle Verbs in English: Syntax, Information Structure and Intonation, she classified intransitives as one of the particle verb constructions that are evident in the literary works of D.H. Lawrence and Oscar Wilde while analysing the rest of the other structures using the Minimalist Program approach.

The samples of intransitive verbs are given below:

i)   Unexpectedly, another opportunity *turned up*.
ii) Granny would never die. She would *live on*.   (D.H. Lawrence, *The Virgin and the Gypsy*)
iii) His feeling of terror has *passed away*...   (Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*)

(2002, p. 2)

In the examples featured above, Dehe demonstrated that the particle verbs of the intransitive type to be those like 'turned up', 'live on' and 'passed away'. In this particular work, Dehe is generally interested to analyse the syntax of Particle Verbs (PV) which occur in English and to find out evidences from speech productions and intonation patterns as well.

In a similar case, Campana (2000) in his chapter in this book about modern techniques and approaches to analyse transitivity has a study on the classification of intransitive verbs. As compared to Dehe (2002), he classified them to have only two types which consist of the unergative and unaccusative/ergative verb. He explained that these unergative verbs in nature specifies an Agent in the sentence's argument whereby the

unaccusative singles out a Theme. Campana explicated the unergatives verb such as 'sing' and 'cry' in comparison to the unaccusatives such as 'appear' and 'arrive'.

The unergative verb is part of an intransitive verb. However, the difference between unergatives and other type of intransitives is that it takes only the Agent or Experiencer as the Theta Role. Hence, unergative verbs assume only one argument that functions as the logical and grammatical subject. Subjected to the lexical semantics of the verb, the unergative verb is assigned the agent or the experience as the theta role. Jubilado (2009) has stipulated that these unergative verbs are devoid of internal arguments in their argument or thematic structure. He provided examples of Malay unergative verbs such as the following:- a) *berjalan* b) *berenang* and c) *faham* d) *menangis*. He also included a few sample sentences that illustrate that a sentence like '*Adik sedang menangis'* to have only one thematic relation each. In the case of sentence A, *Adik* which takes on the meaning of 'younger brother' is considered to assume the Theta Role of Experiencer. He further explained that unergatives could also be categorised into motion verbs and psych verbs. For example, the verbs 'walk', 'swim' and 'run' are considered motion verbs. By definition, motion verbs indicate movements. On the other hand, verb such as 'cry' could be understood as a psych verb as it signifies or denotes emotion or mental states. Other verbs which are similar to this are such as 'groan' in which has an agent subject but seems to assume no object (Radford, 1997).

Even though the definition is clear cut, many issues still arise in discussing unaccusative and unergative verbs. Such issues are such as methods in differentiating these verbs and even notions of new ways of classification. As it is not within the scope of this thesis, readers can opt to refer to Alexiadou's book *Theoretical Approaches to Universals* (2002) for more information.

Thus, as shown by the studies, it is clear that theories of intransitive verbs are revisited and relooked from time to time. Although there are many possible theories of what constitutes an intransitive verb, this research would mash and adopt some of the views that have been stated earlier in relation to the relevance of the study.

In another definition, unaccusative are subtypes of intransitive verbs which assign only one theta role and do not assign an unaccusative case (Jubilado, 2009; Carnie, 2007). Moreover, it is pointed out that unaccusatives have passive predicates without actually having passive morphological instances. Carnie further provided examples to show the difference between unaccusatives as opposed to that of the regular intransitive verb: unergative.

Below are the sample sentences:

i)   Stacy danced at the palace.
ii) Stacy arrived at the palace.
iii) Stacy danced a jig.
iv) *Stacy arrived a letter.

(Carnie, p. 45, 2007)

In the context above, the first and third sentence above show 'arrived' in sentence II as an unaccusative verb as compared to 'danced' as an unergative verb. From this example, the unaccusative verb in sentence II has 'Stacy' as the theme that is in the object position of the sentence. Moreover, 'Stacy' in sentence II does not have an external theta role as compared to 'Stacy' in sentence I. Carnie also pointed out another salient point in differentiating unaccusatives are that they a) Cannot take a direct object and b) Make allowances for alternative word order. Examples that unaccusatives cannot assume a direct object can be seen from sentence IV above. Unlike the verb 'danced' in sentence III, the verb 'arrived' in sentence IV is deemed ungrammatical if it were to take on an object.

Besides that, unaccusatives also allow an alternative word order or also known as 'There-Inversion' (more explanation can be found in Carnie, 2007). Thus, unacussatives can be construed as such.

Kuno and Takami (2004) contributed to the study of unaccusative verbs. In summary, they challenged the There-Inversion in their book about functional constraints grammar. This book gives an insight about the distinction between the unergative and unaccusative verbs. In Chapter II of the book, Kuno and Takami discussed how there are restrictions in this method. Following Burzio (1986), Belletti (1988) and Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995), they suggested that only verbs which represent appearance or existence can be subjected to the There-Inversion checking method.

The hypothesis is represented below:-

Unaccusative Restriction on the There-Construction: Only unaccusative verbs denoting existence   or

appearance can appear in the there-construction. No ergative (and transitive) verbs can.

(Kuno and Takami, p. 11, 2004)

On another point, the unaccusative verb in a larger case can also take different Theta Roles. Such an example is given by Radford (1997) with these sentences:

a) Someone *broke* the window as compared to

b) The window *broke*.

(Radford, 1997 & 2009)

As highlighted above, the verb 'broke' here denotes that it can take on the complement of a transitive verb and the in sentence (b), the window *broke* was the subject of an intransitive verb. Thus, in a different situation, Radford assumes that unaccusatives/ unergatives can

very much be changed to be an accusative verb. He exemplified this clearly by showing the verb *broke* in situation (a) as opposed to its state of being unaccusatives in situation (b).

In Abbot-Smith and Tomasello's article related to the frequency and semantic similarities on children's learning of grammar (2010), experiments were made by involving children to find out the acquisition of grammaticality for novel verbs that they hear. Dubbed as a 'litmus test' by the researchers to find out the notion of grammatical productivity concentrating on the ability of children to transfer their knowledge of grammatical pattern or rules to a new learnt verb, this article sheds an interesting insight. In this study, Abbot- Smith and Tomasello found out that from the kindergarten children from Liepzig had a harder time in acquiring unaccusatives in caused- motion events rather than unaccusatives which are psych verbs.

Besides that, there are some researches which highlight unaccusative languages. These languages are such as Indonesian (Chung, 2008), Malay (Jubilado, 2009), European Portuguese (Costa, 2004) and also Mohawk (Baker, Anderson & Bresnan, 2003). Although it is evident that unaccusative verbs do occur in other languages besides English, it can be generally assumed from the present literature reviews that the occurrence of these verb types are not on par as compared to the accusative verbs.

In contrast to the studies above, Culicover (2009) explicated that is another type of verb besides that of intransitive, ditransitive and transitive. In his book, he claimed that there is a verb type named 'Zero Argument' verb. In this particular discussion, he explicated that zero argument verbs relate to predicates without any arguments. For example, he mentioned examples such as the verb 'rain'. He elaborated that the predicate is not assigned any arguments due to the expletive pronoun present. Hence, he gives an

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example of 'It rained' (p. 20). By understanding this verb, the verb cannot assign any Theta Role to 'it' due to it being an expletive. This means that the pronoun 'it' does not refer to any real entity. These kinds of pronouns are used usually in weather verbs or in time expressions in the English language.

In a similar discussion, Matthews (1981) discovered a verb entitled 'zero valency' verb. His examples are akin to that of Culicover (2009) which exemplifies the verb 'rain' or 'pluit' to have no element. He further expressed that this kind of predicates are dependent in nature. In his words, "For a subject presupposes a predicator…but a predicator does not presuppose a subject: in the same way that a construction can be objectless" (1981, p. 103).

2.2.3   Literature Review Regarding Pronouns

Section 2.2.3 concentrates on any studies regarding pronouns. The studies of pronouns are presented from the early years until the recent years. Each of the following literature review regarding pronouns can be read below.

In a study made by McGinn (1991), he emphasised interesting findings regarding the research of pronouns. He stated that in the Toba Batak context, the pronouns indicate the level of politeness and also the speaker's hierarchy in society. In the findings, he noted that some of the pronouns are such as 'ho' and 'hamu'. It is understood that the pairing of the pronouns would determine the level of both speakers. As an example from his paper, if the pronouns of 'ho' and 'ho' are exchanged for both speakers, hence, this indicates that both the Toba Batak speakers are of the same social equality or the same intimacy.

In an earlier study made by Müller (1854), the same finding is found for the Malay language. The pronouns in the Malay language also denote the level of politeness and hierarchy of the speaker and the addressee. On another note, he also discovered the types of

pronouns in the Malay language. To exemplify, the pronouns found are possessive pronominal suffixes, demonstrative pronouns and interrogative pronouns. Some examples of pronominal suffixes are such as *–ku*, *-mu* and *–na*. The pronominal suffixes are bound morphemes which indicate the pronouns. Nevertheless, these pronouns actually are a form of contraction from the word 'aku' and 'kamu'. However, the researcher cannot locate the contraction form of *–na*, as this particular possessive pronominal suffix does not exist anymore in the Malay language currently. The examples of demonstrative pronouns are such as 'ini' and 'itu' while the interrogative pronouns are known as 'apa'.

In a recent paper presented by Normala Othman (2010), she addressed the complexities of the pronoun usage among Malaysians. In her particular study, she focussed on the youth in Malaysia in order to gauge their preferred pronouns. It is determined from her study that two factors contribute to the preference of pronouns. Amongst them are the factors of relationship proximity and gender of addressee. To further elaborate, she demonstrated from her samples that Malaysian female youths, unlike Malaysian male youths, sometimes used English pronouns such as 'I' and 'you' with unfamiliar addressees. In contrast, with those whom they see as familiar addressees, they used the Malay pronouns of 'aku' and 'kau'. In the normal circumstances in Malay society, these type of pronouns might indicate rudeness if used with someone who is unfamiliar or of higher status.

2.2.4   Literature Review Regarding Affixes

Section 2.2.4 revolves around the studies of a morphological feature named affixes. As previously mentioned, affixes include many types. The ones that are studied in this thesis are namely prefix and suffix. Nevertheless, other literature reviews regarding other types of affixes are also provided in this section.

As mentioned in Chapter I, the term 'prefix' refers to the morphological structure which is bound to a verb by attaching itself in the initial position. This particular prefix is inherent in many languages. For example, according to the study by Merrifield (1959), the structure of the Kiowa language, the verbs are attached to the bound morpheme of prefix. In this particular language, Kiowa is demonstrated to be a language rich with prefixes. To support this claim, over 80 prefixes are found in the language. Some of these examples include *gya-, a-, ma-* , *e-* and *ba-* to name a few.

Besides that, a study by Li (2009) indicated a similar finding in the language of Saaroa. She found that prefixes are often attached to adverbial verbs. Besides that she also found that these prefixes often look similar to one another if they have the same predicate. However, there are notable differences. To illustrate further, the prefixes of Saaroa include *ku-, ka-, a-* to name a few. Besides that, numerous other studies also show the existence of prefixes (see Hooi and Nomoto, 2009; Ryan, 2010; Bickel et. al, 2007 & Kinkade, 1967).

In contrast, suffixes are known as the morphological feature which is known as a bound morpheme that attaches itself to a verb in the end position. In the English language, this feature is very common especially to indicate tenses. As illustrated by Radford (1997), the suffix *–s* is a prominent feature in the English language that attaches itself to a verb. Moreover, the suffix *–s* indicates the particular grammatical constraint indicating a single argument of the 2nd person form in the present tense.

In Muysken's research (2011), he analysed that the Quechua language borrowed numerous suffixes from the Spanish language. Among the borrowed suffixes from the Spanish language are such as *–kpi, -shpa, -sqa, -shka* and many more. With these findings,

he asserted that people of different languages that come into contact may lead to the borrowing of lexicon. Hence, this includes the borrowing of suffixes into a language.

2.2.5 Literature Review Regarding Voices

Section 2.2.5 consists of studies in relation to the studies of voices. Some of the studies are taken from the earlier years into the current years. In contrast, some of the current studies are also covered in this section. With regards to active voice, it is defined as a contrast of passive form by indicating an active verb. It is an unmarked voice for clauses which a features a transitive verb. This is commonly found in many languages such as Malay, English, French, German and so forth. To further elaborate, Moravcsik (2006) stated that an active sentence constitutes of "a sentence where the more active semantic participant is expressed as the subject and the less active one is expressed as a direct object" (p. 237). She exemplified this statement by having the sentential construction of 'The man fixed the computer'. In this example, the argument of 'the man' is seen to be the active semantic participant while the direct object of 'computer' is seen as the less active semantic participant. In contrast, a passive sentence is when the less active semantic participant becomes a subject. Moravcsik highlights another example to clarify this statement: 'The computer was fixed by the man'. In this sentence, the previous less active semantic participant of 'computer' is now made the subject.

Besides that, another type of voice is the passive voice. Nomoto and Kartini Abd Wahab (2012) in their study highlighted a stimulating adversative passive in standard Malay language identified as the verb *kena*. In their research, they stated that the voice of *kena* can be construed in both passive and active form. This is asserted by the non-existence of a morphological voice marker. Hence, the data helps to understand the voice of *kena* as

both active-passive instead of the previous literatures which have identified as a passive marker. Hence, they have also proven *kena* having a cohort voice as well putting forth the argument that it can be combined with a prefix such as *ter-*.

According to Radford (1997), the term 'passivation' is a movement operation whereby the complement of a verb becomes its subjects. As an example, the sentential construction of 'The jewels were stolen' is explicated. As seen in the previous example, the noun or argument 'The jewels' bears the complement of the verb 'stolen'. Hence, it is understood here that 'the jewels' have assumed the position of the subject instead of its normal position of 'object' in active voices.

In another study by Van den Berg (2007), he explained that passives can be determined in two ways: by a language's morphosyntactic properties or its pragmatic function. He further clarified that a passive clause is defined as a "semantically transitive clause" (p. 55) bearing either an agent, a patient or a telic verb. Besides that, he also stressed on three features of a passive construction. Firstly, he mentioned that patients are usually placed and case-marked as the subject of an active clause. Secondly, he stated that an agent is omitted or demoted to an oblique role such as an instrument or locative. Thirdly, the verbs usually bear a special marking of an affix, auxiliary verb and the verb is usually an intransitive verb.

2.3   Secondary Theme: Mah Meri Literature

In the second part of this literature review, the researcher would change the focus to the subject of study: the Mah Meri language itself. In this section, some studies which are highlighted are that of Asmah Haji Omar et. al (2006), Kruspe (2011) and Kruspe & Hajek (2009) to name a few. For the first part, Asmah Haji Omar et. al (2006) has extensively

researched on the Mah Meri language by conducting a research which analyses all the parts of the language in a general manner including that of syntax. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, the syntactical analysis uses a traditionalist method in analysing the Mah Meri syntactical components. On the other hand, one of prominent researchers in the Aslian field, Kruspe is well-known for her works that dealt with the phonetics of the Mah Meri language. Hence, these are a few of the works that are discussed in this section.

2.3.1 Linguistic Studies on the Mah Meri Language

It is unfortunate to note that the linguistic studies on the Mah Meri language are limited in nature, if not practically scarce. In general, there are a few Mah Meri linguistics study available for researches namely in the area of phonology and phonetics, also a bit on the grammar of the Mah Meri language itself. For syntactic studies, it is to the researcher's knowledge that only one such study exists for the Mah Meri language specifically. All of these would be covered in the following paragraphs.

The language of Mah Meri was analysed to be an Austroasiatic Mon-Khmer language in previous times. This view was supported by Asmah Haji Omar (2006) and Sebeok (1943). Following Blagden's study, Sebeok discussed the Mon-Khmeric origins of the Sakai language[1]. He mentioned of Blagden's arrival at this conjecture by presenting morphological, lexical arguments and numerical systems analysis. Nevertheless, in recent times, the Mah Meri language is said to have adopted the Austronesian features of Malay language (Asmah Haji Omar, 2006).

The derogatory use of the word 'Sakai' was often misused in previous literature to denote the people of Mah Meri and also other Aslian people. As a result, many researchers have termed the language of Mah Meri or the 'Sakais' in the past. Hajek (1996) pointed out

the flaws of the Ethnologue in citing the Lowland Semang language. He indicated that this applied to the Lowland Semang language to be general. Quoting Hajek, *"Lowland Semang should now be eliminated from the future editions of Ethnologue"* (p141, 1996) as they have been inappropriate described and wrongly cited.

One of the most notable studies on the language of Mah Meri is headed by Asmah Haji Omar with her team from the University of Malaya. As a result of the research, a book entitled Bahasa Mah Meri was published. This book is a valuable asset to know the basic grammatical structures and vocabulary of the Mah Meri language. In this research, several aspects were highlighted: a) Ethnography of the Mah Meri people in Kampung Bukit Bangkong b) Phonetics and Phonology c) Phonemes d) Morphology e) Verb Phrase f) Adjectival Phrase and g) Syntax to name a few. However, each of these categories was not explored in detail as its main aim is to provide a general account. In this book, Choi Kim Yok (2006) had given a traditional account of syntactic structures of the Mah Meri language. Such accounts of the syntactic structures of its sentences are divided into the a) Declarative Sentences b) Sentences with a Null-Subject c) Theme-Rheme d) Negative Sentence e) Passives f) Interrogatives as well as g) Imperatives.

In another research about Mah Meri language, Peh See King and Salleh Masri Arshad (1981) have researched on the syntactic structures of the Mah Meri people in Kampung Sungai Bumbun in Carey Island in their research report related to the aspects on the syntactic dialect of the Mah Meri language. Similar to Choi Kim Yok's study, the syntax of the Mah Meri language was concentrated on the aspects of traditional grammar. Similar accounts of Interrogatives, Passives, Actives were given although this study is more in-depth. Other than that, the research had different subjects than that of Choi Kim Yok's as they were concentrated in Kampung Sungai Bumbun. In terms of participants, both studies

researched on native speakers who were above 40 years old. On top of that, they were also willing participants.

Besides that, Kruspe has researched on the Mah Meri language through its phonetics and phonology. One of her publications was on the phonetics of the Mah Meri language in Mah Meri (2009) with John Hajek. In this particular article, Kruspe and Hajek have indicated that the Mah Meri language was without a written tradition. Thus, this research fulfils the dearth of literature on the phonetic forms or written representations of the Mah Meri language. In another work closely related to the Mah Meri language about the registers in Mah Meri (Stevens, Kruspe & Hajek, 2006), it is found that the language of Mah Meri shows a two-way register system. As a preliminary finding, the researchers found that the Mah Meri language's registers to be akin to the complexity of other Mon-Khmer languages. In another publication, a dictionary of the Mah Meri language was published by Kruspe (2010). In this particular research, Kruspe has enlisted Mah Meri lexicons from her research in the Mah Meri community in Bukit Bangkong. Similarly, Asmah Haji Omar (2006) has also made a dictionary of the Mah Meri language. This dictionary emphasises two types of translation: Malay and English. This publication was derived out of the lexical items found in their research. In a study by Nambiar & Govindasamy (2010), they have indirectly researched on the ethical issues surrounding the linguists in the event of collecting data from the Aslian people in Malaysia including that of the Mah Meri people. This research is helpful in indicating the possible challenges that a linguist might have in getting respondents or participants for research.

All in all, these are some studies that have been done on the language of Mah Meri. Although there are only a few, the researcher believes that more studies could be conducted for the Mah Meri language particularly because there is a growing need for the preservation

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as well. By preserving the Mah Meri language, it will also preserve their heritage as language is part of any culture's heritage.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

Chapter III discusses about the methodology of research in this particular study. To explicate further, Section 3.1 discusses on the research design of this study. In this section, the type of research adopted for this thesis is explained thoroughly. Section 3.2 highlights the process for interview permission while Section 3.3.explicates the criterias of the research participant. To continue, Section 3.4 examines the participant's background including the participant's name, age and other background information relevant to the study. Section 3.5 examines the type of data collection. In relation to this study, this data collection is explained in three separate parts. These parts are divided into the pre-interview section, during interview section and lastly, post-interview section. Section 3.6 discusses the procedure of analysing data. In this particular section, the coding and segmentation of the data and elicitation of the data are discussed in two separate parts. Section 3.7 elucidates some examples from the sample of the data collection. Lastly, Section 3.8 provides the summary of the chapter.

3.1   Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative mode in order to fulfill the study's purpose and objectives. To clarify, it utilizes one main qualitative strategy which uses the some elements of case study approach. Nevertheless, this study also combines some elements of ethnography as part of its design. According to Creswell (2009), case studies "are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or

one or more individuals" (p. 13). He further elaborated that these researches are circumstantial in terms of time and activity. Following Becker, Fidel believes that through the case-study approach, a researcher can properly acquire the knowledge of the phenomenon from an exploration of a single case. In contrast, Creswell (2009) defines the term 'ethnography' as a "strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting…by collecting, primarily, observational and interview data" (p. 13). To further elaborate, this study uses some of the case-study elements to ask one individual to explore in depth about the language of Mah Meri. In contrast, the ethnographic approach is used during the pre-interview stage in order to understand about the culture of Mah Meri people and also to have a background when setting the interview questions. Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that this study remains largely a qualitative study which has the elements of case study, ethnography and interviews without being a full-fledged type of either case study or ethnography.

The case study approach relates to examining only one particular participant as the source of information. This view is in line with the opinion of Asmah Haji Omar (2008). To elaborate, she mentioned that the studies of phonology, morphology and syntax of languages only require the researcher to have one or two informants. In order to select the participant, the researcher uses the snowball sampling for the purpose of participant selection. This sampling method is selected due to the consideration of the timeframe and also to gain trust in a short period of time. To explain further, the researcher needs to collect the data in a limited timeframe. Hence, the snowball sampling method is useful in terms of getting participant recommendation from individuals who are familiar with the settings and the people. As for the second reason of gaining trust in a short period of time, the researcher needs to use this sampling in order for the participant to trust the researcher.

Due to the time and other constraints, the researcher needs to collect the data in the stipulated timeframe effectively. As the community might view the researcher as an outsider, the introduction of the researcher by a familiar individual can help to instill trust in a shorter amount of time.

For the ethnography approach, it is used to gain insight of the participant's cultural settings among themselves. As mentioned previously, this particular approach is used during the pre-interview stage for the researcher to be familiarised with the research settings. This is done during the preparation of a Mah Meri engagement ceremony and also during the engagement ceremony itself. As the research setting is the home of the participant, it is not only crucial but noteworthy to understand their important worldviews, behaviour, way of communication and so forth. The observation is used to not only comprehend their cultural settings but also to generate ideas for the interview of the participant.

3.2   Procedure of Gaining Interview

This research was conducted by gaining the access from respective authorities first. Firstly, an application to conduct a research was forwarded to the Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli Malaysia (JKAOA) with a recommendation from the Postgraduate Studies of Faculty of Languages and Linguistics. Follow-ups were made via phone and email with the respective personnel.

3.3   Selection of Research Participant

This study emphasises four main aspects in the selection of a research participant. Adopting the views of Asmah Haji Omar (2008), the researcher selected the research participant based on these following criteria: age, condition of oral organs of speech and

also the fluency of language. In addition to this, the researcher made an additional criterion which is the fluency of both target language of Mah Meri and the language of interview which is the Malay language.

To elaborate, the age is an important aspect as mentioned by Asmah Haji Omar (2008). Some of the reasons include the maturity of the researcher in terms of the target language. As the analysis requires a detailed understanding of the language, it is recommended by Asmah Haji Omar for an adult aged 40 to 60 years old who has mastered the aspects of phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis. She asserted that the mastery of a language takes more than 20 years. Nonetheless, she warned that it is not advisable for researchers to consult speakers who are more than 80 years old. This is to avoid any problems related to forgetfulness or senility that may arise due to the age factor.

Secondly, the condition of the oral facilities of speech is important. As the researcher relies on the accuracy of the data, it is of utmost importance that the utterance of the speaker is audible and clear for the purpose of analysis. Besides that, fluency of language is crucial as well. In this research, the objectives are grounded in language and syntactic knowledge. Hence, any data that is produced from the speaker should be accurate and original in relation to the Mah Meri language.

Lastly, the researcher also requires the participant to be fluent in both Mah Meri and standard Malay language. This is due to the researcher's inability to speak Mah Meri fluently. Therefore, it is a must for the participant to be able to understand and communicate in the Malay language with the researcher.

3.4   Details of Selected Participant

Section 3.4 explicates the details of the interview participant. Firstly, the participant is named Salleh, with a title of 'Tok Batin'. In determining his background, he is known as the Head of the Village for Kampung Sungai Rambai situated in Carey Island. Furthermore, he is in his 60s and is currently residing in Kampung Sungai Rambai with his wife, children and in-laws. He stated that his languages are Mah Meri and Malay, though he can manage a minimal amount of terms in spoken English. As for written language, it was related to the researcher that he had learned to write Jawi for a short period of time. Furthermore, he was educated in the school until Standard 5.

3.5   Types of Data Collections in Three Stages

This section explicates the types of data collections done in the three stages of the research. In Section 3.5, these types are explained by dividing them into three sections. Firstly, in Section 3.5.1, the pre-interview stage involves library research and also conducting interviews with expert individuals of the Mah Meri studies and also a native Mah Meri speaker. Besides that, the observation period and short introductory interview with the research participant is also conducted during this stage. Secondly, Section 3.5.2 relates to the data collection during the interview process with the research participant. Lastly, Section 3.5.3 relates to the data collection involved in the post-interview period. Here, the researcher seeks the expert help in order to verify the participant's interview data.

3.5.1   Pre-Interview Stage

The pre-interview stage involves five types of data collection. Firstly, the researcher conducted a library research in the Orang Asli Museum in Gombak in order to look for previous literature reviews of the Aslian people, specifically the Mah Meri people. Besides

that, a library research was also conducted in the main library of University of Malaya and also the satellite library of Faculty of Languages and Linguistics of University of Malaya. All of these library researches were done in the space of one year from 2011 to 2012. The main aim of the library research was to collect as much data to understand the background of the Mah Meri people.

Secondly, expert individuals in the area of Mah Meri studies were also referred to for a thorough understanding. Firstly, an interview was conducted with Encik Mohd Jiwa Zulkifli of the Orang Asli Museum in Gombak. This interview was conducted in the Orang Asli Museum in Gombak itself. Pertinent issues regarding the Aslian people in general and also specifically the Mah Meri people were dealt with during the interview. Conducted in the year of 2011, the interview lasted around two hours. Besides that, he highlighted the cultural sensitivities of the Aslian people when he briefed the researcher about the proper manners and behaviour in conducting a research. Furthermore, the researcher also interviewed another expert of the Mah Meri studies, Encik Rashid Isa. The interview with En Rashid Isa took place in the Mah Meri Cultural Village in Carey Island in the year 2012. In order to gauge the important details of the Mah Meri people, the researcher spent about two hours in the interview.

Moreover, a preliminary interview with a Mah Meri speaker was conducted as well. The researcher also interviewed Tok Batin Sidin bin Bujang in the year 2011 at his home in Carey Island in order to understand the culture of the Mah Meri people. The interview was conducted in two hours. Much information was gained in determining the social setting, education, work, and other matters related to the Mah Meri people. Besides that, he also gave comments on the Mah Meri language in general.

In the last stage of the pre-interview, the researcher was introduced to the participant of the research, Tok Batin Salleh in Kampung Sungai Rambai. By the snowballing technique, En Rashid Isa not only recommended the research participant but only introduced the researcher to the participant. The introduction was done during the preparation of an engagement ceremony in their village. After the introduction, a short interview session was conducted with Tok Batin Salleh in order to familiarise the participant with the researcher. Besides that, the fluency of Malay language is also gauged during the interview. The reason to gauge this is explained thoroughly under Section 3.4. Besides that, the researcher also observed the Kampung Sungai Rambai community during the preparation of the engagement ceremony and also on the engagement day. Therefore, the interview and observations were done in the year 2012.

3.5.2   During Interview Stage

Section 3.5.2 covers the data collection during the interview stage with the selected participant. Tok Batin Salleh, the Head of Kampung Sungai Rambai was the participant for this particular study. The data collection of the interview involves getting responses from Tok Batin Salleh in the Mah Meri language. In particular, the researcher's focus was to ask questions in relation to the participant's life such as food, entertainment, culture, and so forth. The interview was conducted on two occasions in November 2012. The first interview was conducted a week after the engagement ceremony event. This is to take into consideration of the participant who might be busy with the ceremonial processes which were done after the engagement ceremony. The second interview with the participant was conducted in the following week after the first interview. Both of these interviews were conducted at his home in Kampung Sungai Rambai, Carey Island.

To elaborate, firstly, the interviewer establishes the verbal consent for the requirement of the research. In order to gain his verbal consent, the interviewer states the purpose and objectives of the research to the participant. Besides that, the interviewer also asked his permission to record the interviews via mp3 player for the purpose of documentation. After the consent was gained, the researcher proceeded to the next step.

After gaining the consent, the interview was conducted based on the familiar themes in the participant's life. These themes were selected due to their general universal feature. For example, one of the themes was food. A sample question in relation to this particular theme is *'Apakah makanan kegemaran Tok Batin?'* which means 'What is your favourite food, Tok Batin?'. All of these questions are a mixture of open-ended questions and close-ended questions in order to gain a lot of input from the participant. Other themes include family, work and also cultural ceremony.

Next, the details of the interview are explicated. In this paragraph, some of the details are the choice of languages besides indicating a sample question and response. Firstly, the choice of language is standard Malay and Mah Meri. To clarify, the interviewer asks the interview questions in the standard Malay language and the participant responds in the Mah Meri language. This is to generate natural spoken data of the Mah Meri language. This can be seen in the example below.

i) Q: *Apakah makanan kegemaran Tok Batin*?

    A: *E'ed suka nasi pulut wajik.*

In the sentential construction above, the sample addresses the languages used in this study. From the question, it is seen that the researcher uses Malay to query the participant. From his reply, it is seen that the participant is using the Mah Meri language. The question

is translated as 'What is your favourite food, Tok Batin?'. His response was in the Mah Meri language which was then translated to mean 'I like pulut wajik rice.' The complete set of questions and responses are given in the appendices. In summary, all of the interview questions were asked in the first interview with the participant.

In the second round of interview, the researcher sought to verify the data collected in the first interview after a week. As previously mentioned, all the responses in the first round were all naturally spoken in the language of Mah Meri by the participant. The transcribed sentences are transcribed in verbatim or word-by-word by the interviewer. After this process takes place, the interviewer asks the participant whether the sentential constructions are correct before proceeding to find out the meaning of each Mah Meri word. This is to counter any technical errors or misunderstandings that might have occurred during the process interview. Hence, the data collection in the second interview is longer than the prior interview due to the difficulty to hear and transcribe the meaning onto each word and to verify them repeatedly with the participants. All in all, the verification of meaning and the sentential constructions with the participant process took 1 day for the researcher to complete.

3.5.3   Post-Interview Stage

In this section, the data collection during the post-interview stage is explicated. The data collection involves verification and modification of the earlier collected data if necessary. For the purpose of the post-interview stage, two speakers of the Mah Meri language were consulted to validate the interview data. They are namely Puan Faridah and Encik Ajin. Although their names were sampled using the method of snowball sampling by the recommendation of Tok Batin Salleh, they volunteered to become the verifiers of the

data before the researcher even asked for their help when they knew about the research. Hence, the process of data verification took half a day for the researcher to consult both native language consultants. Besides verifying the data, they also gave extra information denoting the use of the verbs in other types of situation.

3.6   Procedure of Analysing Data

In this section, the procedure of analysing the data is given. This section is divided into two parts. Firstly, Section 3.6.1 explains about the coding and segmentation adopted by the researcher in this study. This section is further elaborated in Section 3.6.2 by explicating the elicitation according to the study's aim of explicating Theta Roles.

3.6.1   Coding and Segmentation

This section relates to the coding and segmentation style in this study. In the first line of the coding, the words are transcribed according to the language of Mah Meri in a standard alphabetical font for the purpose of easy facilitation of reading. In the second criteria, the researcher divides the target structures of sentential constructions into three different levels. The first level indicates the transliteration of the Mah Meri language. Furthermore, the second level exemplifies the translation of the Mah Meri language to the Malay language. The purpose of the Malay language translation is to highlight the similarities between the current Mah Meri language to that of the standard Malay language. This issue is discussed further in Chapter IV. The third level is a translation of the Malay language to the English language. This is for the users to understand the words in the English language, the language in which this thesis is written in. In the last level, a gloss is given to understand the particular translation in its full sentential construction. The example a sentential construction is given below according to this coding and segmentation style.

1- Transliteration: e'ed   beh   nasi pulut wajik sendiri
2- Literal translation in Malay: saya   buat nasi pulut wajik sendiri
3- Literal translation in English: I   make rice pulut wajik   myself
4- Gloss/ Interpretation in English: 'I make *pulut wajik* rice myself.'

3.6.2   Elicitation According to Radford (1997 & 2009)

After the completion of coding and segmentation of data, the researcher proceeds to elicit the data according to the needs of the research. As this research has two main objectives, the elicitation process is done accordingly to suit the needs. To reiterate, the two main objectives are:-

1) To establish the Theta Roles in relation to the verbs in the Mah Meri language

2) To analyse the structures of verbs and nouns which are related to the understanding of the Theta Roles of Mah Meri language.

Regarding the two research objectives above, it is crucial that the researcher understands the parts of speech especially noun and verbs of the Mah Meri language in order to analyse the data. As previously stated, this was done through the verification of the data with the native Mah Meri speakers. However, it is also important to note that it has been confirmed by the native Mah Meri speakers that the most of the structures of the sentential construction are similar to that of Malay language. Furthermore, from the data, it is apparent that even the lexical items are mostly the same or similar sounding. Hence, as the researcher is a native Malay speaker, the researcher is able to identify and analyse most of the nouns and verbs from the sentential constructions in the data.

The next step in order to elicit the data is to understand the terminologies of the Theta Roles according to Radford (1997). Hence, in referring to his understanding of Theta

Roles, the researcher determines the arguments with predicates accordingly. Following Radford, his theory of Theta Roles is summarised below.

Role	Gloss	Example
THEME	Entity undergoing the effect of some action	*Mary* fell over
AGENT	Entity instigating some action	*Debbie* killed Henry
EXPERIENCER	Entity experiencing some psychological state	*I* like syntax
LOCATIVE	Place in which something is situated or takes place	He hid it *under the bed*
GOAL	Entity representing the destination of some other entity	John went *home*
SOURCE	Entity form which something moves	He returned *from Paris*
INSTRUMENT	Means used to perform some action	He hit it *with a hammer*

Table 3.6.2: Radford's Understanding of Theta Roles

Therefore, relating to the table above, the sentential constructions in the data pays close attention to the arguments. Arguments, which are also known as nouns are identified in the Mah Meri language. Once the argument is identified, the predicate related to the arguments are analysed. For example, if the researcher examines the sentential construction in Section 3.5.1, *E'ed suka nasi pulut wajik,* it is clear that there are two arguments in this particular sentential construction. The argument *e'ed* assumes the role of Experiencer while the argument *nasi pulut wajik* undertakes the role of Theme.

In relation to the second objective of the study, the analysis focusses on the three main verb types of language, namely Transitive, Ditransitive and Intransitive. This is also following Radford's understanding of transitivity and valency. Further reading can be seen in Chapter II of this study.

Hence, all the sentential construction with arguments and predicates are analysed according to their semantic relation to one another. This research also addresses the verb

structures of the Mah Meri language that are having Theta Roles by examining their transitivity and valency. Other aspects like Pronouns are taken into account accordingly.

3.7   Samples of Data Collection

In this section, several samples of the data collection are given to illustrate the sentential constructions in the Mah Meri language. This can be seen in the following examples below.

    a)   ngki   macam   macam   kejak   kabe   (Mah Meri)
          dia   macam   macam   kerja   buat   (Malay)
          he   various   work   do   (English)
          'He (has) done various work.'

    b)   bila   e'ed   hagak   suroh   gendei   masak   nasi   pulut   wajik (Mah
          Meri)
          bila   saya   nak   suroh   isteri   masak   nasi   pulut   wajik (Malay)
          when   I   want   ask   wife   cook   rice   pulut   wajik
                                                                        (English)
          'When I want (it), (I) ask (my) wife (to) cook *pulut wajik* rice.'

    c)   e'ed   hagak   beli   barang   kemas   (Mah Meri)
          saya   nak   beli   barang   kemas   (Malay)
          I   want   buy   thing   jewellery (English)
          'I want to buy jewellery.'

    d)   selalu   e'ed   cok   pekan   Banting   (Mah Meri)
          selalu   saya   pergi   pekan   Banting   (Malay)
          always   I   go   town   Banting   (English)
          'I always go (to) Banting town.'

    e)   e'ed   nyut   dei eh   doh   yal   (Mah Meri)
          saya   balik   petang   air   pasang (Malay)
          I   return   evening   water   high   (English)
          'I return (in the) evening (when the) tide is high.'

    f)   kenon dah   ningkah   (Mah Meri)
          anak   dah   berkahwin (Malay)
          child   already   marry (English)
          '(My) child (is) already married.'

g)   ngki   sekolah   deh   tingkatan   limak   (Mah Meri)
     dia   sekolah   sampai tingkatan   lima   (Malay)
     she   school   until   form   five   (English)
     'She (was) schooling until form five.'

h)   Bakhtiar   sekolah   deih   tingkatan   ma   (Mah Meri)
     Bakhtiar   sekolah   sampai tingkatan   dua   (Malay)
     Bakhtiar   school   until   form   two   (English)
     'Bakhtiar (was) schooling until form two.'

i)   ngki   kait   nyu   dak   (Mah Meri)
     dia   kait   kelapa ada   (Malay)
     he   pluck coconut has (English)
     'He has plucked the coconut.'

3.8   Summary of the Chapter

As a summary, Chapter III focusses on the presentation of research design and interview permission process. Besides that, it also provides information relating to the criteria of participant selection and the details of the participant. Furthermore, the types of data collection are analysed in three stages: pre-interview, during interview and post-interview. Furthermore, the procedures of analysing data in this study are explicated through the process of coding, segmentation and elicitation. To provide a clearer picture, a set of sentential constructions are given in the next section. Hence, this chapter hopes to contribute to the scientific knowledge regarding the methodology of this study.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

4.0   INTRODUCTION

This chapter constitutes the findings and results of this study. It aims to answer the research questions posed in the beginning of this thesis. Primarily, it addresses the Theta Roles or Thematic Relations in this study. Section 4.1 discusses the various Theta Roles or Thematic Relations found in this data and exemplification is given to support the findings. The secondary aspect of this chapter entails the structures of verbs found in the Mah Meri language. Thus, Section 4.2 argues on the various types of verbs and its related morphological structures. These structures of verbs or also known as verb structures are crucial in understanding the language of Mah Meri.

4.1   Introduction to Research Question 1: What Are the Theta Roles or Thematic Relations of the Mah Meri Language?

Theta Roles or Thematic Relations is the key focus of this research. As previously mentioned, Theta Roles or Thematic Relations are crucial in understanding the participants' roles in relation to the predicate. In this study, it is found that the Theta Role or Thematic Relation that has the most appearance is Agent. Additionally, the findings show that the Theta Roles of Theme, Experiencer, Benefactor, Instrument and Locative are present in this data. However, the noticeable difference between the Theta Role of Agent with the rest of the Theta Roles is that the latter occur in lesser frequency than that of Agent. The explanation for this finding is discussed in the end of this Chapter. All the Theta Roles are divided into its specific subheadings and are examined with its supporting sentential constructions.

4.2   The Theta Roles In The Mah Meri Language

In this study, all the Theta Roles or Thematic Relations in the Mah Meri language are present. To understand the syntax of a Mah Meri sentence, Theta Roles or Thematic Relations play a pertinent role in deducing the initial level of understanding a sentential construction. The semantic understanding of the constituents can determine whether a sentential construction is syntactically correct. Hence, the Theta Roles are addressed in the following order: 1) Agent 2) Theme 3) Experiencer 4) Benefactor 5) Instrument and 6) Locative.

4.2.1   Agent

Section 4.2.1 discusses the Theta Role or Thematic Relation of Agent found in this research. All sentences which bear the Theta Role or Thematic Relation of Agent are featured in this section. The related verbs which are linked to this section include 1) *Kabe/ Beh* 2) *Masak* and 3) *Hagak* to name a few.

4.2.1.1 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Kabe/ Beh*

a) e'ed   beh   nasi   pulut   wajik   sendiri (Mah Meri)
    saya   buat   nasi   pulut   wajik   sendiri (Malay)
    I   make   rice   pulut   wajik   myself (English)
    'I make *pulut wajik* rice myself.'

b) kedo   e'ed   yang   beh   wajik   untuk   e'ed (Mah Meri)
    isteri   saya   yang   buat   wajik   untuk   saya (Malay)
    wife   I   that   make   wajik   for   I   (English)
    'My wife makes *wajik* for me.'

c) ngki   gol   beh   nake   (Mah Meri)
    dia   ambil   buat   itu   (Malay)
    he   take   make   that   (English)
    'He takes (and) makes that.'

d) ngki   macam   macam   kejak   kabe   (Mah Meri)
   dia   macam   macam   kerja   buat   (Malay)
   he   various   work   do   (English)
   'He (has) done various work.'

To begin, the verb *kabe* or *beh* has the same semantic denotation. The only difference is that *kabe* is the complete form of the verb while *beh* is a contraction of the aforementioned verb. In the sample sentences of 4.2.1.1a and 4.2.1.1.b, the predicate or verb *beh* is linked to the Theta Role of Agent. To reiterate, an Agent is identified as someone who initiates an action and could be capable of volition. In the sentential construction of 4.2.1.1a, the noun *e'ed* is deciphered as the Agent who is initiating the action of making *pulut wajik* rice. In contrast, the sentential construction of 4.2.1.1b shows the noun *kedo e'ed* as the Agent. Similarly to sentence 4.2.1.1a, 4.2.1.1b also has an Agent who is capable to make *pulut wajik* rice and acts out on her own volition.

However, in the sentential construction of 4.2.1.1c, it is established that the Agent is the noun *ngki*. *Ngki* is described as an Agent that is capable of volition and able to initiate the action. The same pattern emerges with the noun constituent *ngki* in the sentence of 4.2.1.1d. Similarly, *ngki* in this sentential construction is also the initiator and acts with volition.

4.2.1.2 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Masak*

a) bila   e'ed   hagak   suroh   gendei   masak   nasi   pulut   wajik
   bila   saya   nak   suroh   isteri   masak   nasi   pulut   wajik
   when   I   want   ask   wife   cook   rice   pulut   wajik
   'When I want (it), (I) ask (my) wife (to) cook *pulut wajik* rice.'

In the sentential construction of 4.2.1.2.a, the constituent assuming the role of Agent is the noun *gendei*. In relation to the verb *masak* which means cook, *gendei* is acting by her

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own volition in the act of cooking. In another example, the verb *masak* is linked to the

Theta Role of Agent through a noun constituent. The sentence below shows the example.

e'ed   masak   gulei   goreng   kari   (Mah Meri)
saya   masak   gulai   goreng   kari   (Melayu)
I   cook   gravy   fry   curry (English)
'I cook gravy, fry (fried food) and curry.'

From the sentential construction above, it can be identified that *e'ed* is the noun

constituent linked to the verb *masak*. This is due to the fact that *e'ed* is the initiator of the

action. Additionally, the noun constituent *e'ed* commits the act of *masak* voluntarily by his

own accord. Thus, from the given example, it is confirmed that *e'ed* is the Agent in this

sentential construction.

4.2.1.3 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Hagak*

a) bila   e'ed hagak   suroh   gendei   masak   nasi   pulut   wajik (Mah Meri)
   bila   saya nak   suroh   isteri   masak   nasi   pulut   wajik (Malay)
   when   I   want   ask   wife   cook   rice   pulut   wajik (English)
   'When I want (it), (I) ask (my) wife (to) cook *pulut wajik* rice.'

b) e'ed   hagak   cok   laut   ari   ujan   telok   ketam (Mah Meri)
    saya   nak   pergi laut   hari hujan cari   ketam (Malay)
    I   want   go   sea   day   rain   find   crab (English)
   'I want (to) go (to the) sea, (the) day (was) rain(ing) (to) find crab.'

c) e'ed   hagak   beli   barang   kemaih (Mah Meri)
    saya   nak   beli   barang   kemas (Malay)
    I   want   buy   thing   jewellery (English)
   'I want to buy jewellery.'

In the sentential construction of 4.2.1.3a, it features the same sentence as in 4.2.1.2.

In this sentence, two verbs are featured. Previously, the verb discussed in relation to

determine the Agent is *masak*. However, in this sentential construction, the verb *hagak* is

taken to examine the Theta Role of Agent. In this particular sentence, the noun *e'ed* is the

Agent who is acting on his own volition in the quest for *pulut wajik* rice.

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Next, the sentential construction of 4.2.1.3b, the noun *e'ed* assumes the role of an Agent. In particular, *e'ed* now has the volition of desiring to go to the sea. Therefore, this noun constituent can initiate the action of *hagak*.

In the last sentential construction of 4.2.1.3c, *e'ed* is also the Agent by having the volition of *hagak*. The noun *e'ed* expressed his want of buying jewellery and it is a possibility for *e'ed* to commit the aforementioned act.

4.2.1.4 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Suroh*

Another predicate involved in the sentential construction in 4.2.1.2 and 4.2.1.3 is the verb *suroh*. With reference to the same sentence featured in number 4.2.1.2 and 4.2.1.3, the verb *suroh* which means 'ask' is related to the noun constituent of *e'ed*. This adds to the number of predicates related to *e'ed*. As demonstrated earlier, the noun *e'ed* shows its capability to have the action of wanting the *pulut wajik* rice. Meanwhile, in the next verb *suroh*, *e'ed* proves to also be the initiator of the action of asking for the *pulut wajik* rice.

4.2.1.5 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Beli*

In this section, the verb discussed in relation to the Agent Theta Role is *beli*. As seen in sentence 4.2.1.5a below, the Theta Role which assumes the role of Agent is the noun *e'ed*. It is shown that *e'ed* is capable of volition of the action *beli*. Therefore, *e'ed* can also be understood as the initiator of the action of buying groceries in a particular supermarket or a grocery shop.

a) e'ed   beli   barang hak pasaraya   ataupun   kedai runcit (Mah Meri)
   saya   beli   barang di pasaraya   ataupun   kedai runcit (Malay)
   I   buy   grocery at supermarket or   shop   grocery (English)
   'I buy grocery at (the) supermarket or grocery shop.'

b) e'ed   hagak beli barang kemaih
   saya   nak   beli barang kemas
   I   want buy   thing   jewellery
   'I want to buy jewellery.'

4.2.1.6 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Cok*

Another verb linked to the Theta Role of Agent is the verb *cok*. In the example below, the Agent is identified by the noun *e'ed*. In this case, *e'ed* is understood as the participant in which is involved in the action of going to Banting town. This is due to the Agent's own volition in committing the act of going to the aforementioned town. Besides that, the noun *e'ed* is also the initiator of the action *cok*.

a) selalu e'ed cok pekan Banting (Mah Meri)
   selalu saya pergi pekan Banting (Malay)
   always I go town Banting (English)
 'I always go (to) Banting town.'

Hence, the sentential construction shows *e'ed* as the initiator or participant who by his own volition frequents the town constantly. Below are other different sentential constructions involving the Theta Role of Agent in other situations utilising the verb *cok*.

b) ngki cok leh (Mah Meri)
   dia pergi lah (Malay)
   he go (English)
 'He goes.'

c) hik cok leh gol bara kei (Mah Meri)
   awak pergi lah ambil barang itu (Malay)
   you go take thing that (English)
 'You go (and) take that thing.'

d) e'ed hagak cok laut ari ujan telok ketam (Mah Meri)
   saya nak pergi laut hari hujan cari ketam (Malay)
   I want go sea day rain find crab (English)
 'I want (to) go (to the) sea, (the) day (was) rain(ing) (to) find crab.'

All of the sentences above reveal different constituents or participants representing the role of Agent. From the data above, sentences 4.2.1.6b, 4.2.1.6c and 4.2.1.6d has the noun constituent of *ngki*, *hik* and *e'ed* respectively. These noun constituents carry the meaning of 'he', 'you' and 'I'.

In sentence 4.2.1.6b, *ngki* acts as an Agent as the participant is able to commit to the act of going. Furthermore, *ngki* also constitutes as the initiator of this action. In a similar

setting, the noun constituent of *hik* conveys the role of Agent as well. *Hik* shows the ability or has the volition to commit the act of going in order to retrieve things.

In contrast, the last sentential construction demonstrates the noun constituent *e'ed* as the Agent. This is proven by the constituent's ability of committing the act of *cok*. Furthermore, *e'ed* is able to initiate this action by his own willpower.

4.2.1.7 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Caik*

In the sentential construction using the verb *caik*, it is found that the accompanying Agent is *e'ed*. The participant *e'ed* is seen to commit the act of *caik* or find. Furthermore, the Agent is the initiator of this action. This can be gathered from the following sentence below.

a) kadang   kadang   e'ed   caik   udang   caik ka   bawal   ka   ngaik (Mah Meri)
   kadang   kadang   saya   cari   udang   cari ikan   bawal   ikan ngaik (Malay)
   sometimes   I   find   prawn   find fish   pomfret fish ngaik (English)
   'Sometimes I find prawn, pomfret fish, or ngaik fish.'

In the sentence above, the noun constituent *e'ed* assumes the role of the Agent. *E'ed* is considered the Agent as he is able to commit the particular act by his own will. The action of finding prawns and fishes are made possible with the Agent as the initiator.

4.2.1.8 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Naik*

The verb *naik* is used with the Theta Role of Agent. In the example below, the noun constituent of *e'ed* is the initiator of the action *naik*. Besides that, participant *e'ed* is also capable of the action riding a boat.

a) e'ed   naik   pahuk   (Mah Meri)
   saya   naik   perahu (Malay)
   I   ride   boat   (English)
   'I ride (a) boat.'

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4.2.1.9 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Nyut*

    a) e'ed   nyut   dei eh   doh   yal   (Mah Meri)
        saya   balik petang   air   pasang (Malay)
        I   return evening water   high   (English)
        'I return (in the) evening (when the) tide is high.'

    b) hinong ngki nyut (Mah Meri)
        sekarang dia   balik   (Malay)
        now   she   return (English)
        'Now, she (has) return(ed).'

As shown above, sentences 4.2.1.9a and 4.2.1.9b show two different constituents taking the role of Agent. Both noun constituents are *e'ed* and *ngki* respectively. In 4.2.1.9a, *e'ed* plays the role of an Agent in the action of *nyut* or returning. In comparison to 4.2.1.9b, the Agent Theta Role is taken by the noun constituent *ngki*. *Ngki* or in this case, 'she' is capable of the action *nyut*. Furthermore, as exemplified in sentence 4.2.1.9b, *ngki* also has initiated the action of *nyut*.

4.2.1.10 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Gol*

The Theta Role of Agent is also apparent in a few sentential constructions which include the verb *gol*. This verb carries the meaning of 'take'.

    a) e'ed hagak ka   bawal   gol   jaring bawal (Mah Meri)
        saya nak   ikan bawal   ambil jaring bawal (Malay)
        I   want fish pomfret take   net   pomfret (English)
        'I want (a) pomfret fish, (so) I take the pomfret net.'

    b) hik   gol   barang   nakei (Mah Meri)
        awak   ambil barang   itu   (Malay)
        you   take   thing   that (English)
        'You, take that thing.'

    c) nake   gol   moyang   (Mah Meri)
        itu   ambil   moyang   (Malay)
        that   take   ancestor (English)
        'That (person) takes (the) ancestor.'

In the featured sentential constructions above, each sentence has a different constituent representing the Theta Role of Agent. In sentence 4.2.1.10a, the noun

constituent *e'ed* is the Agent for the action of *gol*. In the following sentence of 4.2.1.10b, the noun constituent *hik* is represented as the Agent. In contrast, sentence 4.2.1.10c shows a problem in the Agent representation. In this particular sentence, there is no apparent argument which takes on the predicate of *gol*. This is because the only particular constituent that is present is an expletive *nake*. Thus, even though it may be understood from the interview that the speaker is referring to a person, *nake* cannot be constituted an Agent because an expletive cannot assume a Theta Role as it is not an argument and does not refer to any entity.

4.2.1.11 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Ningkah*

The next verb discussed in relation to the Theta Role of Agent is *ningkah*. In the sentence featured below, the noun constituent *e'ed* is present as the role of the Agent. *E'ed* has the volition to commit the act of *ningkah* and is considered the initiator of the aforementioned action. This can be seen in the sentence below.

a) e'ed   ningkah tahut   sembilan belah   enam puluh tujoh (Mah Meri)
   saya   kahwin tahun   sembilan belas   enam puluh tujuh (Malay)
   I   marry   year   nineteen   sixty   seven (English)
   'I married (in the) year nineteen sixty seven.'

In the next sentential construction, the verb *ningkah* shows a different initiator as the constituent which is performing the action of *ningkah*. In sentence 4.2.1.11b, the noun constituent *kenon* assumes the role of an Agent. *Kenon* is seen to enter the prospect of marriage by her own volition.

b) kenon dah   ningkah (Mah Meri)
   anak   dah   berkahwin (Malay)
  child   already marry (English)
  '(My) child (is) already married.'

The last sentential construction below features the verb *ningkah* with another different noun constituent. In sentence 4.2.1.11c below, the noun constituent is *mah*. *Mah* is

linked to the verb as the Agent. This is due to the volition in which *mah* possesses in the action of *ningkah*.

c) mah nake asal   ningkah   hagak daun nipah semua   dak (Mah Meri)
   orang itu kalau   berkahwin nak   daun nipah semua   ada (Malay)
   person that if   marry   want leaf palm everything have (English)
   'That person if (he is getting) married, wants a palm leaf (and) have everything.'

Thus, these are different noun constituents which take the role of an Agent in relation to the verb of *ningkah*.

4.2.1.12 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Nerimanya*

In the specific example below, the verb *nerimanya* relates to the meaning of 'accept'. The identified noun constituent to carry the role of Agent is *e'ed*. *E'ed* assumes the position of an Agent due to being the initiator of the action of accepting a wife. By being an Agent, it is also understood that *e'ed* is participating in the action with volition.

e'ed nerima   nya   tahut nakei (Mah Meri)
saya menerima   nya   tahun itu (Malay)
I   accept   her   year that (English)
'I accepted her that year.'

Therefore, as clearly seen from the sample above, the Agent is the noun constituent *e'ed*.

4.2.1.13 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Beranak-Anak*

The next verb discussed in relation to the role of Agent is the verb *beranak-anak*. This Theta Role is found in sentential construction below.

lepas tu ngki   beranak anak   sampai   tujuh (Mah Meri)
lepas tu dia   beranak anak   sampai   tujuh (Malay)
after that she   give birth to children until   seven (English)
'After that, she gave birth to children until (there were) seven.'

As illustrated in the sentence above, the noun constituent *ngki* acts as an Agent in the particular action of giving birth to children. Thus, it is understood that *ngki* also

assumes the role of an initiator besides having the volition to carry out the aforementioned predicate.

4.2.1.14 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verbs *Sekolah* and *Bersekolah*

In relation to the verb *sekolah* which carries the meaning of attending school, there are a few sentences in which can illustrate the examples of the Theta Role of Agent. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in the usual context, *sekolah* is used as a noun and not a verb. However, in the following sentential constructions, it is found that sekolah acts as a verb and does not assume the role of a noun.

a) sekolah dei   kenon suluk sekolah menengah des   empek (Mah Meri)
   sekolah dulu   anak sulung sekolah menengah   sampai empat (Malay)
   school before child first   school secondary   until   four (English)
   'Previously in school, (my) first child (was) schooling in upper secondary (level) until level four.'

b) ngki sekolah des   darjah   enam   (Mah Meri)
   dia   sekolah sampai darjah   enam   (Malay)
   he   school   until   standard six   (English)
   'He (was) schooling until standard six.'

c) ngki sekolah des   tingkatan limak (Mah Meri)
   dia   sekolah sampai tingkatan lima   (Malay)
   she   school   until   form   five   (English)
   'She (was) schooling until form five.'

d) kenon mui   dak   bersekolah   (Mah Meri)
   anak   pertama dah   bersekolah   (Malay)
   child first   already schooling   (English)
   '(The) first child (is) already schooling.'

e) Hanum sekolah hala   (Mah Meri)
   Hanum sekolah masih   (Malay)
   Hanum school   still   (English)
   'Hanum (is) still schooling.'

f) Bakhtiar   sekolah deih   tingkatan ma   (Mah Meri)
   Bakhtiar   sekolah sampai tingkatan dua (Malay)
   Bakhtiar   school   until   form   two (English)
   'Bakhtiar (was) schooling until form two.'

In this section, there are two versions of the verb which are *sekolah* and *bersekolah*. In the sentential construction of 4.2.1.14a, the identified noun constituent assuming the role of Agent is *kenon suluk*. In the next sentence of 4.2.1.14b, the identified Agent is the noun constituent *ngki*. The third sentential construction of 4.2.1.14c, the identified Agent is also *ngki*. Next, it is determined that the noun constituent *kenon* is the Agent in the sentential construction of 4.2.1.14d while the sentential construction of 4.2.1.14e shows *Hanum* as the Agent. In sentence 4.2.1.14f, the noun constituent *Bakhtiar* assumes the role of an Agent. All of the Agents in the sentential constructions show them as initiators of the schooling action.

The highlighted Agents which are *kenon suluk*, *ngki*, *kenon*, *Hanum* and *Bakhtiar* are all classified as the initiators of the action. Moreover, these Agents are also able to act upon an action with volition.

4.2.1.15 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Kejak*

In this section, the Agents related to the verb *kejak* are identified in the following sentences below. The Agents found in the data below are *ngki* and Daman. Further details regarding the theta roles are discussed below.

a) ngki kejak dah   kejak   sendighik (Mah Meri)
   dia   kerja dah   kerja   sendiri   (Malay)
   he   work already work   alone   (English)
   'He (has) worked already, (he) works alone (self-employed).'

b) Daman   kejak   sendirik (Mah Meri)
   Daman   kerja   sendiri   (Malay)
   Daman   work   alone   (English)
   'Daman works alone.'

c) ngki kejak teik   rompot   dak (Mah Meri)
   dia   kerja   potong rumput   ada (Malay)
   he   work   cut   grass   has (English)
   'He has worked (before by) cutting grass.'

d) Daud   kejak   mesin   rumput   hak   Banting   sampai   ke   Tembuk (Mah
   Meri)
   Daud   kerja   mesin   rumput   di   Banting   sampai   ke   Tembuk
   (Malay)
   Daud   work   machine grass   at   Banting   until   to   Tembuk. (English)
   'Daud works (with) machine grass at Banting until Tembuk.'

In the sentential construction 4.2.1.15a, the noun constituent of *ngki* is the Agent

committing the act of *kejak*. This means that Agent is capable of the action as well as

executing the action with volition. In the sentential construction of 4.2.1.15b, the noun

constituent acting as the Agent is *Daman*. *Daman* is understood to be a person who is

capable of the action kejak and also able to execute it with volition. In the sentential

construction of 4.2.1.15c, the noun constituent *ngki* is the Agent. *Ngki* executed the action

of *kejak* in the past and is able to perform the aforementioned action with volition. Lastly,

the sentence of 4.2.1.15d shows the noun constituent *Daud* as the Agent committing the act

of *kejak*. Thus, *Daud* is also capable of performing the action of *kejak* by his own choice.

4.2.1.16 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Ngayil*

a) ngki   ngayil   dak   macam   macam   (Mah Meri)
   dia   mengail   ada   macam   macam   (Malay)
   he   fishing   has   various   (English)
   'He fishes (for) various (things).'

In the sentential construction above, the verb *ngayil* is linked to the Theta Role of Agent.

The noun constituent which acts as the Agent in this sentence is *ngki*. *Ngki* plays a role in

executing the action of *ngayil*. By default, Agent also has the volition to perform the action

of *ngayil*.

4.2.1.17 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Teik*

The next verb, *teik*, which carries the meaning of 'cut' is examined by the Theta

Role of Agent. In the example below, the ascertained Agent is the noun constituent *Daman*.

Daman refers to a person who is acting out the action of *teik*. The role of Agent carries the

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understanding that the noun constituent is capable of performing the action of *teik* besides doing so with volition. The sentential construction can be seen below.

a) Daman   teik   rompot   dak   (Mah Meri)
   Daman   potong rumput   ada   (Malay)
   Daman   cut   grass   has   (English)
   'Daman has cut grass.'

4.2.1.18 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Kait*

The next Theta Role of Agent is examined in the sentential construction featuring the verb *kait*. The verb *kait* carries the meaning of 'to pluck'. In the next particular sentence, the responsible Agent is the noun constituent of *ngki*. *Ngki* is demonstrated to have the volition to perform the action of *kait*. Furthermore, *ngki* is also the initiator of the action *kait*. This can be seen in the example of 4.2.1.18a below.

a) ngki   kait   nyu   dak   (Mah Meri)
   dia   kait   kelapa ada   (Malay)
   he   pluck   coconut has   (English)
   'He has plucked the coconut.'

In contrast, the next sentential construction of 4.2.1.18b, the Agent is also the noun constituent of *ngki*. The noun constituent of *ngki* is the initiator of the action *kait* and also acts with volition. The following illustrates the example of the Agent used in the sentential construction with the verb *kait*.

b) ngki   sekarang   kait   pelei   nyu   (Mah Meri)
   dia   sekarang   kait   buah   kelapa   (Malay)
   he   now   pluck   fruit   coconut   (English)
   'He now plucks the coconut fruit.'

4.2.1.19 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Berlemol*

The verb *berlemol* is demonstrated to have an Agent as the Theta Role. The noun constituent found in the sentential construction below is *ngki*. As an Agent, *ngki* possesses the power to commit the act of *berlemol*. In order to commit to the act, *ngki* is also able to

perform the act with volition. Below is the sentence which demonstrates the Agent *ngki* in relation to the verb *berlemol*.

a) ngki   dah   berlemol
    dia   dah   bersuami
    she   already has a husband
    'She already has a husband.'

4.2.1.20 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Telok*

The sentential construction which features the verb *telok* takes on the Theta Role of an Agent. In each of the sentences below, the Theta Roles of Agent is seen paired with the predicate of *telok*.

a) e'ed   ari ujan telok ketam (Mah Meri)
    saya   hari hujan cari   ketam (Malay)
    I   day rain find   crab   (English)
  'I find crab (in) rainy days.'

b) e'ed   ketam telok   henong   hok   (Mah Meri)
    saya   ketam cari   sekarang susah (Malay)
    I   crab   find   now   difficult (English)
  'I find (it) difficult to find crab now.'

c) e'ed   telok   laut   (Mah Meri)
    saya   cari   laut   (Malay)
    I   find   sea   (English)
  'I find (the) sea.'

d) e'ed   telok   lok   jap   (Mah Meri)
    saya   cari   kayu dulu   (Malay)
    I   find   wood previously (English)
  'I find wood previously.'

e) e'ed telok lok   pahuk   (Mah Meri)
    saya   cari   kayu perahu   (Malay)
    I   find   wood boat   (English)
  'I find boat wood.'

From sentential construction of 4.2.1.20a to the last sentence of 4.2.1.20e, it is gathered that the same noun constituent applies for all the sentences. The noun constituent assuming the role of the Theta Role of Agent is *e'ed*. *E'ed* assumes the role of Agent in each sentential construction as *e'ed* is the initiator for all the actions involved. As

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highlighted in all the sentential constructions, the mentioned actions are such as finding crabs, the sea and boat wood. *E'ed* also acts or performs the action with volition.

4.2.1.21 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Hap*

In the next sentential construction involving the verb *hap*, the noun constituent found as the Agent is *ngki*. In this sentence, *ngki* refers to a person who has not finished her studies. The Agent is the initiator of the action and also is in complete control of her actions. Thus, the Agent acts by her own will. This can be seen from the sentential construction below.

a) ngki   belum   hap   sekolah   dei   (Mah Meri)
   dia   belum habis sekolah   sampai (Malay)
   she   not yet finish school   until   (English)
   'She has not finished school yet.'

4.2.1.22 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Geteik*

In this section, the verb *geteik* is discussed with the Theta Role of Agent. The following sentences illustrate the use of Agent in relation to the verb *geteik* which denotes the meaning of 'reside' or 'live'.

a) Hanom   hak   geteik   asrama   (Mah Meri)
   Hanom   di   tinggal asrama   (Malay)
   Hanom   at   live   boarding   (English)
   'Hanom lives at (the) boarding.'

b) ngki   geteik   asrama   ngot   (Mah Meri)
   dia   tinggal asrama tidak   (Malay)
   he   live   boarding not   (English)
   'He does not live (at the) boarding.'

In sentential construction of 4.2.1.22a, the noun constituent assuming the role as Agent is the noun constituent *Hanom*. *Hanom* is a person assuming the role of an Agent in the action of *geteik*. The action of *geteik* is performed by *Hanom* by her own choice. Furthermore, this noun constituent is also considered the initiator of the action of living at a boarding place.

In contrast, the next sentence shows a different noun constituent as the Agent. The Agent in sentential construction of 4.2.1.22b is the noun constituent *ngki*. However, unlike *Hanom*, *ngki* opts to not live at the boarding. Therefore, this action demonstrates *ngki* has to choice and willpower to act as he wishes. Thus, by not living at the boarding, *ngki* assumes the role of an Agent.

4.2.1.23 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Kaghak*

In relation to the verb *kaghak*, the research gathers two noun constituents assuming the Theta Role of Agent. Both of the Agents in the two sentences show the same noun constituents which is *ngki*. The sentential constructions can be seen below.

a) ngki tingkatan ma kaghak dah (Mah Meri)
 dia tingkatan dua tinggal dah (Malay)
 he form   two leave already (English)
 'He left during Form 2.'

b) ngki kaghak bandar nohok (Mah Meri)
 dia tinggal bandar ini   (Malay)
 he leave city this   (English)
 'He left this city.'

In the first sentential construction of 4.2.1.23a, the noun constituent *ngki* assumes the role of an Agent. As demonstrated in the example above, the noun constituent *ngki* shows volition as the Agent withdraws out of school by his own accord. It also indicates that the Agent is able to initiate his own actions. Correspondingly, the same situation also applies to the sentential construction of 4.2.1.23b. The noun constituent *ngki* also illustrates the ability to *kaghak* the city. This action exemplifies that he is the initiator of the action. Besides that, he is also capable of making his own decisions and choices.

4.2.1.24 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Panggil*

The Theta Role of Agent is found in relation to the verb *panggil*. The verb *panggil* which means 'call' is used with the role of Agent. The following sentential construction below elucidates this example.

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a) kadang   kadang   wak   panggil   kejak   (Mah Meri)
   kadang   kadang   bos   panggil   kerja   (Malay)
   sometimes   boss   call   work   (English)
   'Sometimes, boss calls (for) work.'

In the sentence above, it is clear that *wak* is the initiator of the action of *panggil*. Besides initiating the action *panggil*, *wak* also demonstrates the ability to act upon his own accord. Thus, he is performing the aforementioned action with volition.

4.2.1.25 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Berendan*

The next verb discussed in relation to the Theta Role of Agent is the verb *berendan*. The verb *berendan* is paired with the noun constituent *e'ed*. The noun constituent of *e'ed* assumes the role of Agent as she is performing the action of *berendan* by her own will. Furthermore, *e'ed* also shows that she is the initiator of the *berendan*. The following sentential construction below clarifies the example.

a) e'ed   berendan   ubu   (Mah Meri)
   saya   menganyam   obor   (Malay)
   I   weave   obor   (English)
   'I weave *obor*.'

Thus, the sentence above shows the Agent *e'ed* in relation to the verb *berendan* or known as 'weave'.

4.2.1.26 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Asah*

a) ngki   asah   jemoi   (Mah Meri)
   dia   asah   gigi   (Malay)
   she   grind   teeth   (English)
   'She grinds (her) teeth.'

The sentential construction above displays *ngki* as the noun constituent assuming the role of Agent. *Ngki* assumes the role as she is the initiator of the action *asah*. The action *asah* is performed by *ngki* with volition. Thus, the Agent in relation to the verb *asah* which means 'grind' is *ngki*.

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4.2.1.27 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Gok*

The next sentential construction involves the verb *gok* which means cut. This verb is paired with the Theta Role of Agent. In the example below, the Agent is the noun constituent *e'ed*.

a) e'ed   gok   lok   (Mah Meri)
   saya   potong kayu (Malay)
   I   cut   wood   (English)
   'I cut wood.'

From the sentence above, it is illustrated that the noun constituent *e'ed* initiates the action of *gok*. Additionally, *e'ed* performs the action of cutting wood by his own choice. Thus, the Agent for *gok* is the noun constituent *e'ed*.

4.2.1.28 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Nari*

The next item discussed is the Agent present in the sentential construction with the verb *nari*. *Nari*, meaning 'dance', is linked to the Theta Role of Agent in the sentential construction of 4.2.1.28 below.

a) hik   nari   je   nari   malu   de   (Mah Meri)
   awak menari je   menari malu   jangan (Malay)
   you   dance just dance ashamed don't (English)
   'You just dance, don't be ashamed.'

Thus, from the sentence above, it is evident that *hik* is the Agent which is capable of the action *nari* with volition. The noun constituent *hik* is also able to initiate the action of *nari* should the person wills. Thus, the choice is ultimately up to the Agent.

4.2.1.29 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Hum*

The next sentential construction discusses the verb *hum* in relation to the Theta Role of Agent. The deduced Theta Role of Agents in the following sentences are such as *pengantin*, *ngki*, *mak*, *kedo*, and *lemol*.

a) pengantin   sedang   hum   (Mah Meri)
   pengantin   sedang   mandi (Malay)
   bride & bridegroom   are   bathe (English)
   'The bride and bridegroom are bathing.'

b) ngki   hum   pek   puluh   (Mah Meri)
   dia   mandi pukul   sepuluh(Malay)
   he   bathe   hour   ten   (English)
   'He bathes at ten.'

c) ngki   hum   do   mawar   (Mah Meri)
   dia   mandi   air   mawar   (Malay)
   he   bathe   water   rose   (English)
   'He bathes (in) rose water.'

d) mak   kedo   lemol   cok   hom   uwet   sial   (Mah Meri)
   emak   isteri   suami   pergi mandi buang sial   (Malay)
   mother   wife   husband go   bathe   throw   bad omen (English)
   'The mother, wife and husband bathe to throw the bad omen.'

In the sentential construction of 4.2.1.29a, the noun constituent responsible of assuming the Theta Role of Agent is *pengantin*. The noun constituent of *pengantin* performs the act of *hum* with volition. Besides that, *pengantin* also acts as the initiators of the action *hum*. Conversely, in the sentential constructions of 4.2.1.29b and 4.2.1.29c, these sentences show a different noun constituent as the Agent. The same featured noun constituent in both sentences is *ngki*. As demonstrated in the examples, *ngki* is responsible for the action of *hum*. To illustrate, *ngki* is the argument that acts out the action of *hum* with volition. Moreover, *ngki* is also the initiator of the action. In contrast, the noun constituents of 4.2.1.29d show three Agents initiating the action of bathing. These noun constituents are that of *mak*, *kedo* and *lemol*. All of these noun constituents act by their own decisions and initiate the action of *hum* by themselves.

4.2.1.30 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Berkumpul*

The next sentential construction displays a Theta Role of Agent linked to the verb *berkumpul*. The sentence reveals the noun constituent of *mah* undertaking the role of an Agent. The example can be seen below.

a) mah   berkumpul   mang   (Mah Meri)
   orang   berkumpul   semua (Malay)
   people   gathered   all   (English)
   'All (the) people gathered.'

From the sentence above, it is understood that *mah* is the noun constituent performing the action of *berkumpul*. The verb *berkumpul* which conveys the meaning of 'gathered' is committed by *mah* with volition. The aforesaid action is also initiated by the noun constituent *mah*. Therefore, the role of Agent is taken up by *mah*.

4.2.1.31 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Uwet*

In the following sentential construction, the verb *uwet* evidently has a Theta Role of Agent. The noun constituent which carries out the role of an Agent is *lemol*. This can be identified from the sentential construction below.

a) lemol   uwet   sial   (Mah Meri)
   lemol   buang sial   (Malay)
   husband throw bad omen (English)
   '(The) husband throws bad omen.'

From the example above, the noun constituent of *lemol* is acknowledged as the Agent. This is due to the fact that *lemol*, meaning husband, initiates the action of *uwet* or throwing bad omen. Furthermore, *lemol* also undertakes the action of *uwet* by his own will. Thus, *lemol* is the Agent for the sentential construction of 4.2.1.31.

4.2.1.32 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Piyok*

The Theta Role of Agent is also found in the sentential construction involving the verb *piyok*. This verb is shown to be interconnected with the noun constituent of *e'ed* in the example below.

a) e'ed   piyok   lagu   irama   Jobok   Deli (Mah Meri)
   saya   dengar lagu   irama   Melayu Deli (Malay)
   I   listen   song   rhythm Malay   Deli (English)
   'I listen (to) song (with) Deli Malay rhythm.'

In the sentential construction above, the noun constituent *e'ed* is the initiator of the action of *piyok*. *Piyok* or 'listen' is an action done by the Agent *e'ed* voluntarily by his own volition. Therefore, the action of *piyok* is committed by the noun constituent.

4.2.1.33 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Pantun*

The next verb deliberated with the Theta Role of Agent is the verb *pantun*. This verb which confers the meaning of 'sing' is examined in the sentential constructions below.

a) mah pantun budak (Mah Meri)
   orang nyanyi budak (Malay)
   person sing   child (English)
   'The person singing (is a) child.'

b) hik   pantun leh   (Mah Meri)
   awak nyanyi lah   (Malay)
   you   sing   (English)
   'You sing!'

Following the sentential constructions of 4.2.1.33a and 4.2.1.33b, there are two different noun constituents in both sentences. In the first sentential construction, the noun constituent *mah* acts as the Theta Role of Agent. As an Agent, *mah* commits to the act of pantun by her own will. Besides making her own decision, *mah* is also the initiator of the action mentioned above.

In comparison, *hik* acts as the corresponding Theta Role of Agent in relation to the verb *pantun*. Similarly to *mah*, *hik* is the initiator of the action. Moreover, *hik* is involved in the action through her own will and decision. Thus, from the two sentential constructions, the noun constituents which are the Agents are *mah* and *hik*.

4.2.1.34 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Piksa*

In relation to the verb *piksa*, the noun constituent involved as the Agent is *ngki*. This example is illustrated from the sentential construction below.

a) ngki   piksa   barang   kemaih   rantai   (Mah Meri)
   dia   periksa barang   kemas   rantai   (Malay)
   he   check   thing   jewellery necklace (English)
   'He checks the jewellery thing- necklace.'

In the sentence above, *ngki* initiates the action of *piksa.* In addition, *ngki* is also committing the action of jewellery checking by his own decision. Thus, the Theta Role is therefore assumed by the noun constituent *ngki*.

4.2.1.35 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Cado*

In the next Theta Role of Agent, the noun constituent of *ngki* constitutes as the Agent for the sentential construction involving the verb *cado*. The following example is illustrated below.

a) ngki   cado   do   (Mah Meri)
   dia   minum   air   (Malay)
   he   drink   water (English)
   'He drinks water.'

In relation to the sentence above, the noun constituent responsible for the action above is *ngki*. The assumption of the Theta Role by *ngki* is evident due to the characteristics of an Agent present. Firstly, *ngki* assumes the role of an Agent due to his ability to act upon the action of *cado* with volition. Secondly, he is also the initiator of the action. Therefore, *ngki* undertakes the role of an Agent.

4.2.1.36 Theta Role of Agent in Relation to the Verb *Naca/ Ca*

The next verb discussed with the Theta Role of Agent is the verb *naca*. To clarify, the verb *naca* and *ca* are both bearing the same semantic meaning which means 'eat'. However, like the previous verb of *beh*, *ca* is a contracted version of *naca*. The verb *naca* is linked with the noun constituent of *hanyam* and *ngki* respectively. The following sentences below demonstrate the findings.

a) hanyam   naca   beras   (Mah Meri)
   ayam   makan beras   (Malay)
   chicken   eat   rice   (English)
   '(The) chicken eat rice.'

b) ngki   ca   nasik   (Mah Meri)
   dia   makan   nasi   (Malay)
   he   eat   rice   (English)
   ' He eats rice.'

In the sentential constructions of 4.2.1.36a and 4.2.1.36b, two different constituents are found in the aforementioned constructions. Firstly, the Agent found in the 4.2.1.36a is the noun constituent *hanyam* or chicken. In this sentence, *hanyam* acts upon the action of *naca* with volition. Besides that, *hanyam* is understood as the initiator of the action of *naca*.

In comparison to the sentence 4.2.1.36b, the action *ca* is committed by a person. To elucidate, the noun constituent *ngki* is the initiator of action *ca*. Moreover, the action of eating rice is also made by *ngki* by his own will or decision. Thus, the noun constituent assuming the role as an Agent in the sentence 4.2.1.36b is *ngki*.

4.2.2   Theme

Section 4.2.2 explores the Theta Role or Thematic Relation of Theme in this study. All sentences which possess the Theta Role or Thematic Relation of Theme are featured and discussed in this particular section.

4.2.2.1 Theta Role of Theme in Relation to the Verb *Suka*

a) e'ed   suka   nasi pulut   wajik   (Mah Meri)
   saya   suka   nasi pulut   wajik   (Malay)
   I   like   rice pulut   wajik   (English)
   'I like *pulut wajik* rice.'

b) budak   budak e'ed suka   kuih   wajik (Mah Meri)
   budak   budak saya suka   kuih   wajik (Malay)
   child   child I   like   dessert wajik (English)
   'My children like *wajik* dessert.'

c) e'ed   suka   lagu   Jobok   (Mah Meri)
   saya   suka   lagu   Melayu   (Malay)
   I   like   song   Malay   (English)
   'I like Malay songs.'

From the following sentential constructions above, there are three noun constituents which are identified as the Theta Role of Theme. For instance, the noun constituent of *e'ed* is the Agent for the sentential construction of 4.2.2.1a. In the next sentence, the noun constituent *budak- budak e'ed* assumes the role of Theme. Consequently, in sentence 4.2.2.1c, the noun constituent *e'ed* is acknowledged as the Theme of that particular construction. Therefore, all of these aforesaid noun constituents are each linked to the verb *suka* as the Theme for each sentential construction.

4.2.2.2 Theta Role of Theme in Relation to the Verb *Kabe/ Beh*

The other verb which is closely related to the Theta Role of Theme is the verb *beh*. The verb *beh* is linked to some noun constituents assuming the Theta Role of Theme such as *kuih wajik*, *wajik* and *kejak*. The following sentences exemplify these noun constituents as the Theme for each example.

a) e'ed   beh   sendiri   kuih   wajik   (Mah Meri)
   saya   buat   sendiri   kuih   wajik   (Malay)
   I   make   myself   dessert   wajik   (English)
   'I make *wajik* dessert myself.'

b) kedo   e'ed   yang   beh   wajik   untuk   e'ed   (Mah Meri)
   isteri   saya   yang   buat   wajik   untuk   saya   (Malay)
   wife   I   that   make   wajik   for   I   (English)
   'My wife makes *wajik* for me.'

c) ngki   macam   macam   kejak   kabe   (Mah Meri)
   dia   macam   macam   kerja   buat   (Malay)
   he   various   work   do   (English)
   'He (has) done various works.'

In the sentential construction of 4.2.2.2a, the noun constituent assuming the Theta Role of Theme is *kuih wajik*. In sentence 4.2.2.2b, *wajik* undertakes the role of Theme whereas in sentence 4.2.2.2c, *kejak* is the identified Theme. For each Theme, it is

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understood from the sentences that each identified noun constituent is undergoing an action. As an example, in sentence 4.2.2.2a, *kuih wajik* is undergoing the action of being made by the other noun constituent *e'ed*. Sentences 4.2.2.2b and 4.2.2.2c also show *wajik* and *kejak* as entities that are experienced or perceived.

Thus, the following examples above show that the Themes linked to the verb *kabe* or also known as *beh* are *kuih wajik*, *wajik* and *kejak*.

4.2.2.3 Theta Role of Theme in Relation to the Verb *Beli*

The next verb that is explored to find the Theta Role of Theme is the verb *beli* which denotes the meaning of 'buy'. The following examples below illustrate the Theta Role of Theme in different sentential constructions.

a) e'ed   beli   barang   hak pasaraya   ataupun kedai   runcit (Mah Meri)
   saya   beli   barang   di   pasaraya   ataupun kedai   runcit (Malay)
   I   buy   grocery   at   supermarket or   shop   grocery (English)
   'I buy grocery at (the) supermarket or grocery shop.'

b) e'ed   hagak   beli   barang   kemaih   (Mah Meri)
   saya   nak   beli   barang   kemas   (Malay)
   I   want   buy   thing   jewellery   (English)
   'I want to buy jewellery.'

In the sentential construction above, it is found that the Theme for sentence 4.2.2.3a is the noun constituent *barang* while in latter sentence of 4.2.2.3b, *barang kemaih* is the Theta Role of Theme. In both examples, the noun constituents*barang* and *barang kemas* are entities which undergo movements. This can be seen from both sentences 4.2.2.3a and 4.2.2.3b.

4.2.2.4 Theta Role of Theme in Relation to the Verb *Hagak*

a) e'ed   hagak   cok   laut
   saya   nak   pergi   laut
   I   want   go   sea
   'I want (to) go (to the) sea.'

b) e'ed   hagak beli barang   kemaih
   saya   nak   beli barang   kemas
   I   want   buy   thing   jewellery
   'I want to buy jewellery.'

In the two sentences above, the noun constituents undertaking the position of

Theme are *laut* and *barang kemaih* respectively. In the sentential construction of 4.2.2.4a,

the noun constituent of *laut* is the entity which is experienced or perceived by *e'ed*. In

comparison, the sentential construction of 4.2.2.4b exemplifies *barang kemas* as the entity

which is the object of perception of the noun constituent *e'ed*. Thus, it is evident that both

laut and *barang kemas* are Themes as they undergo a psychological aspect of change

through the noun constituents of *e'ed*.

4.2.2.5 Theta Role of Theme in Relation to the Verb *Caik*

The verb *caik* is pertinent in discussing the Theta Role of Theme. The verb caik,

meaning 'find' shows many examples of Theme in a sentential construction. The following

sentence below elucidates the idea.

a)   kadang   kadang e'ed caik udang caik ka   bawal   ka   ngaik (Mah Meri)
      kadang   kadang saya cari udang cari ikan bawal   ikan ngaik (Malay)
      sometimes   I   find prawn find fish pomfret fish ngaik (English)
      'Sometimes I find prawn, pomfret fish (and) ngaik fish.'

From the sentential construction above, the identified Themes are such as

the noun constituents *udang*, *ka bawal* and *ka ngaik*. From the above sentence, it is

understood that these noun constituents are experienced by the finder. For an example, the

experience of *caik udang* or finding prawns is an experience which *e'ed* undertakes.

Correspondingly, the other noun constituents such as *ka bawal* and *ka ngaik* are also the

entities in which are perceived by *e'ed*. Therefore, the Themes present in this sentential

construction are *udang*, *ka bawal* and *ka ngaik*.

4.2.2.6 Theta Role of Theme in Relation to the Verb *Keghat-Keghat*

a) air   mawar   mawar   keghat   keghat   (Mah Meri)
   air   mawar   mawar   dikerat   kerat   (Malay)
   water rose   rose   slice   slice   (English)
   '(For the) rose water, the rose (petals) are sliced.'

In the sentential construction above, the verb *keghat-keghat* is affecting the noun constituent *mawar*. From the sentence, it is understood that *mawar* undergoes an action. In this case, the noun constituent *mawar* undertakes the action of being sliced. Hence, the Theme of this sentence is *mawar* or rose as it is affected by the action.

4.2.3   Experiencer

In this section, the Theta Role or Thematic Relation of Experiencer is explored in this study. All sentences which bear the Theta Role or Thematic Relation of Experiencer are featured in this section.

4.2.3.1. Theta Role of Experiencer in Relation to the Verb *Suka*

The Theta Role of Experiencer can be seen in the sentential construction related to the verb *suka*. The verb *suka* or 'like' is paired with the Theta Role of Experiencer as *suka* is a feeling.

a) e'ed   suka   nasi   pulut   wajik   (Mah Meri)
   saya   suka   nasi   pulut   wajik   (Malay)
    I   like   rice   pulut   wajik   (English)
   'I like *pulut wajik* rice.'

b) budak   budak   e'ed   suka   kuih   wajik   (Mah Meri)
   budak   budak   saya suka   kuih   wajik   (Malay)
   child   child   I   like   dessert wajik   (English)
   'My children like *wajik* dessert.'

c) e'ed   suka   lagu   Jobok   (Mah Meri)
   saya   suka   lagu   Melayu (Malay)
    I   like   song   Malay   (English)
   'I like Malay songs.'

Closely related to the predicate *suka* is the Experiencer of each particular sentential construction. In relation to the particular sentences above, 4.2.3.1a demonstrates the noun

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constituent *e'ed* as the Experiencer. Next, the Experiencer for the sentence of 4.2.3.1b is the noun constituent of *budak-budak e'ed*. Lastly, the identified Experiencer for 4.2.3.1c is *e'ed*.

From the sentences above, it is clear that the Experiencers are the ones who experience or perceive the events. In this case, the sentential constructions indicate that *e'ed* and *budak-budak e'ed* are the ones who perceive the idea of liking either *pulut wajik* rice, *wajik* dessert or Malay songs.

4.2.3.2 Theta Role of Experiencer in Relation to the Verb *Rasa*

    a) e'ed   rasa   nasi   pulut wajik lawan kopi sedap (Mah Meri)
       saya   rasa   nasi   pulut wajik dengan kopi sedap (Malay)
       I   feel   rice   pulut wajik with   coffee tasty (English)
      'I feel (that) *pulut wajik* rice with coffee (is) tasty.'

In the above sentential construction, the Theta Role of Experiencer is discussed with the verb *rasa*. The verb *rasa*, meaning 'feel', is perceived by the Experiencer *e'ed*. In this example, *e'ed* is the perceiver of the action *rasa*. Thus, it can be clarified from the above example that the Theta Role of Experiencer is *e'ed*.

4.2.4   Benefactor

Section 4.2.4 discusses the Theta Role of Benefactor found in a sentential construction. The relevant sentential to the discussion is discussed below.

4.2.4.1 The Theta Role of Benefactor in Relation to the Verb *Beh*

In relation to the Theta Role of Benefactor, the verb *beh* is examined in a sentential construction. This can be identified from the example below.

    a) kedo e'ed   yang   beh   wajik   untuk   e'ed (Mah Meri)
       isteri saya   yang   buat wajik   untuk   saya (Malay)
       wife   I   that   make wajik for   I   (English)
      'My wife makes *wajik* for me.'

From the sentential construction, it is determined that the Theta Role of Benefactor is the noun constituent *e'ed*. The noun constituent *e'ed* is the Benefactor of the *wajik*

dessert which is made by his wife for him. Thus, *e'ed* is the entity for whom the aforementioned action of *beh* occur.

4.2.5 Instrument

Section 4.2.5 explores the Theta Role of Instrument found in the sentential constructions. The discussion following the Theta Role of Instrument is featured below.

4.2.5.1 Theta Role of Instrument in Relation to the Verb *Naik*

The Theta Role of Instrument is found in the sentential construction involving the verb *naik*. There are two examples which link the verb *naik* with the Theta Role of Instrument. This example is elucidated in the given examples below.

a) e'ed   naik   pahuk   (Mah Meri)
   saya   naik   perahu (Malay)
   I   ride   boat   (English)
   'I ride (a) boat.'

b) Daud   ke   kejak   naik   moto   (Mah Meri)
   Daud   ke   kerja   naik   motor   (Malay)
   Daud   to   work   ride   motorcycle (English)
   'Daud rides (the) motorcycle to work.'

In the sentential constructions of 4.2.5.1a and 4.2.5.1b, there are two different Instruments linked to each sentential construction. For the first sentence of 4.2.5.1a, the involved noun constituent is *pahuk*. *Pahuk* or 'boat' is considered the Instrument as it is the entity with which action occurs. In this example, the action of *naik* occurs with the Instrument of *pahuk*.

In another similar setting, the noun constituent assuming the role of Instrument in 4.2.5.1b is *moto*. From the sentence above, the action of *naik* only occurs with the entity of *moto*. Therefore, it is deduced that two examples of Instruments found are such as *pahuk* and *moto*.

4.2.6   Locative

The Theta Role of Locative is one of the categories of Theta Roles discussed in this study. The sentential constructions which are linked to this category involve the verb *kejak*, *beli*, *sekolah* and *geteik*. The following examples show the following Locatives in their own respective settings.

4.2.6.1 Theta Role of Locative in Relation to the Verb *Kejak*

The Theta Role of Locative is found to be linked with the verb *kejak*. In the sentential construction below, the identified locatives are the noun constituents *Banting* and Tembuk. The following sentence below illustrates this example.

a) Daud kejak mesin   rumput hak Banting sampai ke Tembuk. (Mah Meri)
   Daud kerja mesin   rumput di Banting sampai ke Tembuk. (Malay)
   Daud work machine grass   at Banting until   to Tembuk. (English)
   'Daud works (with) machine grass at Banting until Tembuk.'

The above examples illustrate that *Banting* and *Tembuk* is the place where the action has taken place. Thus, the Locatives in this sentential construction are *Banting* and *Tembuk*.

4.2.6.2 Theta Role of Locative in Relation to the Verb *Beli*

In the next sentential location, it is determined that the noun constituents assuming roles of Locatives are *pasaraya* and *kedai runcit*. The following sentence below show the Locatives in their environments.

a) e'ed beli   barang hak pasaraya   ataupun   kedai runcit (Mah Meri)
   saya beli   barang di pasaraya   ataupun   kedai runcit (Malay)
   I   buy grocery at supermarket or   shop grocery (English)
   'I buy grocery at (the) supermarket or grocery shop.'

From the illustrated example above, it is evident that the noun constituents of *pasaraya* and *kedai runcit* are the Locatives in which *e'ed* commits the action of *beli*. Thus, the places involved in this sentential construction are the supermarket and the grocery shop.

4.2.6.3 Theta Role of Locative in Relation to the Verb *Sekolah*

In this particular sentence, the noun constituent undertaking the role of a Locative is *Sekolah Teluk Datuk*. This can be examined from the sentential construction below.

a) ngki   sekolah hak Sekolah   Teluk Datuk   (Mah Meri)
   dia   sekolah di   Sekolah   Teluk Datuk   (Malay)
   she   school   at   School   Teluk Datuk   (English)
   'She schools at Teluk Datuk School.'

From the sentential construction of 4.2.6.3, the noun constituent which assumes the role of Locative is clearly stated. This is because the action of *sekolah* takes place in the aforementioned Locative. Hence, *Sekolah Teluk Datuk* is the responsible Theta Role of Locative in the sentential construction of 4.2.6.3.

4.2.6.4 Theta Role of Locative in Relation to the Verb *Geteik*

In the next Theta Role of Locative, the verb *geteik* is discussed by analysing the sentential constructions of 4.2.6.4a and 4.2.6.4b below.

a) ngki   geteik   asrama   ngot   (Mah Meri)
   dia   tinggal asrama   tidak   (Malay)
   he   live   boarding not   (English)
   'He does not live (at the) boarding.'

b) Hanom hak   geteik   asrama   (Mah Meri)
   Hanom   di   tinggal asrama   (Malay)
   Hanom   at   live   boarding   (English)
   'Hanom lives at (the) boarding.'

In both sentential constructions of 4.2.6.4a and 4.2.6.4b, the noun constituents *asrama* are identified as the Locative for each example. Both highlight the aspect that *asrama* are places in which an action occurs. Thus, it can be concluded that the noun constituent for each sentence assumes the role of a Locative.

4.2.7   Goal

For this section, the last category of Theta Roles is covered through the explication of sentences. As previously discussed, the Theta Role of Goal is defined as the entity

towards which the motion takes place. Besides that, it may involve an abstract motion. The findings show that verbs which are linked to Goal are *beh*, *cok*, and *gol*. However, the last example is highlighted to show the preposition of *ke* acting as a replacement of a verb. The following examples below expound the related Goals with the verbs in their respective settings.

4.2.7.1 Theta Role of Goal in Relation to the Verb *Beh*

In the sentence below, it is found that the Theta Role of Goal is present. The Theta Role of Goal is found to be the noun constituent *e'ed*. The noun constituent of *e'ed* is the end goal of which the action of *beh wajik* is intended. The noun constituent of *e'ed* is classified as a non-abstract goal as *e'ed* is a person. To illustrate, the sentence involving the Theta Role of Goal is given below.

a) kedo e'ed yang beh wajik untuk e'ed (Mah Meri)
   isteri saya yang buat wajik untuk saya (Malay)
   wife I that make wajik for I (English)
   'My wife makes *wajik* for me.'

From the sentence above, it is concluded that the Theta Role of Goal is situated at the end of the sentential construction. The noun constituent of *e'ed*, also known as the Theta Role of Goal, is used with the other noun constituents such as *kedo e'ed* and also *wajik*.

4.2.7.2 Theta Role of Goal in Relation to the Verb *Cok*

Another verb which is related to the Theta Role of Goal is *cok*. *Cok*carries the meaning of 'go'. In this section, the related sentential constructions which feature the verb *cok* with the Theta Role of Goal are shown below.

a) selalu e'ed cok pekan Banting (Mah Meri)
   selalu saya pergi pekan Banting (Malay)
   always I go town Banting (English)
   'I always go (to) Banting town.'

b) hik   cok   leh   gol   bara   kei   (Mah Meri)
     awak pergi lah   ambil barang itu   (Malay)
     you   go   take   thing   that (English)
     'You go (and) take that thing.'

c) e'ed hagak cok   laut ari ujan telok ketam (Mah Meri)
     saya nak   pergi laut hari hujan cari   ketam (Malay)
     I   want   go   sea day rain find   crab (English)
     'I want (to) go (to the) sea, (the) day (was) rain(ing) (to) find crab.'

The Theta Role of Goal can be seen in three of the sentences above. In the first sentence, the Goal is *pekan Banting*. This Goal is used with another noun constituent which is *e'ed*. In sentence 4.2.7.2b, the Goal is identified as *bara* or thing. The noun constituent *bara* is paired with another noun constituent which is *hik*. In the last sentence, it is gathered that the Goal is *laut*. Similar to the sentential construction of 4.2.7.2a, the Goal is assigned to another noun constituent which is *e'ed*. Hence, the noun constituents which assume the role of Goal are *pekan Banting*, *bara* and *laut*.

4.2.7.3 Theta Role of Goal in Relation to the Verb *Gol*

Another type of verb which can be seen to include the Theta Role of Goal is *gol*. The verb *gol*, or also known as *kagol*, denotes the meaning of 'take'. In relation to this verb, it is found that a sentential construction provides evidence for this Theta Role. This can be viewed in the sentential construction below.

a) nake gol   moyang (Mah Meri)
     itu   ambil moyang   (Malay)
     that   take   ancestor (English)
     'That (person) takes the ancestor.'

In the sentence above, the Goal is assumed by the noun constituent *moyang*. However, the noun constituent is seen to be omitted from the sentence. However, the determiner *nake* serves as a marker of a missing noun constituent. In this situation, the seemingly missing noun constituent is pursuing towards the entity of *moyang*.

4.2.7.4 Theta Role of Goal in Relation to the Preposition *Ke* Acting as a Verb

In this particular construction related to the Theta Role of Goal, there is no verb constituent involved in the Theta Role of Goal. However, it is found that the preposition *ke* meaning 'to' acts as a verb constituent. In this case, it is analysed that sentences can function with the preposition *ke* as a replacement for the verb *cok*. This finding is explicated through the sentential construction below.

a) kadang   kadang   ke   laut   (Mah Meri)
   kadang   kadang   ke   laut   (Malay)
   sometimes   to   sea   (English)
   'Sometimes (go) to the sea.'

From the example above, it is identified that the Theta Role of Goal is assumed by the noun constituent *laut*.

4.3   Discussion of Sentences without Any Theta Roles

In this last part, all the sentences without any Theta Role are discussed. These are the sentences which do not fit under any category under Radford's definition of Theta Roles. As mentioned earlier in Chapter II under section 2.2.1.1, Radford clarified that in order for Theta Roles to be analysed, the predicate and the argument must be present at all times. However, it is found that some sentential constructions in the Mah Meri language can still be logical or grammatically correct without the presence of a predicate. Hence, this section discusses in detail of the Theta Roles involved such as Agent, Experiencer, Theme, Goal, Recipient, Source, Location, Instrument and also Benefactive.

4.3.1 Discussion of Sentential Construction 1

In the sentential construction below, it is analysed that any type of Theta Role is not present. The reason for the absence of the Theta Role is due to the lack of predicate or verb in the particular sentential construction. The following sentence explicates the lack of verb in the sentence uttered by the speaker.

a) nelayan pon dak le (Mah Meri)
   nelayan pun tidak lah (Malay)
   fisherman also not (English)
   '(I'm) not a fisherman also.'

In the following sentence above, that the Theta Role is unavailable for the sentential construction above as it does not fulfil the rule of having a predicate. Thus, even though a noun constituent is present, the sentential construction cannot be analysed due to the aforementioned reason.

4.3.2 Discussion of Sentential Construction 2

The next sentential construction contains a noun constituent. However, this type of sentential construction could not have a Theta Role as it is also lacking a predicate. The following sample elucidates the lacking of Theta Role in the sentence.

a) nama kenon suluk Ajin (Mah Meri)
   nama anak sulung Ajin (Malay)
   name child first Ajin (English)
   '(The) first child's name (is) Ajin.'

The sample above indicates that no predicate is present. However, the sentential construction has a noun constituent present. This noun constituent is identified as *Ajin*. Hence, as the predicate for this sentence is unavailable, the noun constituent cannot be given a Theta Role of any kind.

4.3.3 Discussion of Sentential Construction 3

The discussion continues with another type of sentential construction. The sentence below shows the lack of predicate as well.

a) bali pon ada (Mah Meri)
   bali pun ada (Malay)
   pomelo also there is (English)
   'There is also pomelo.'

In the above sentential construction, the noun constituent which is present is *bali*. *Bali* which can be translated into a pomelo fruit cannot take on any Theta Role as there is no

predicate available. Hence, it is concluded that from the sentence above, any category of Theta Role cannot be assigned to the noun constituent *bali*.

4.3.4 Discussion of Sentential Construction 4

Further discussion of sentential constructions without any Theta Roles is discussed in this section. Like the previous sentential constructions, no verb or predicate can be determined from any of the sentential constructions. The following examplesbelow explicate the findings.

    a) nama ngki Daman (Mah Meri)
       nama dia   Daman (Malay)
       name he   Daman (English)
     'His name (is) Daman.'

    b) nama ngki Lina   (Mah Meri)
       nama dia   Lina   (Malay)
       name she   Lina   (English)
     'Her name (is) Lina.'

    c) nama   ngki Hanum   (Mah Meri)
       nama   dia   Hanum   (Malay)
       name   she   Hanum   (English)
     'Her name (is) Hanum.'

As seen above, there is no indication of any predicate in the sentential construction for all the sentences in 4.3.4. It is found that only a noun constituent is present in each sentence. As seen in 4.3.4a, the noun constituent*Daman* cannot be assigned any Theta Role as it is not linked with any predicate. Hence, *Daman* cannot be constituted for an argument of any Theta Role.

In a similar setting as 4.3.4a, the sentential construction of 4.3.4b is devoid of any predicate. Furthermore, it contains one noun constituent. In comparison, this sentential construction takes a different noun constituent. In 4.3.4b, the identified noun constituent for this sentential construction is *Lina*. Lastly, the sentence 4.3.4c also indicates the absence of any predicate. It features the same syntactic placement as demonstrated in 4.3.4a and

4.3.4b. In addition, it also includes a single noun constituent. In contrast, this noun constituent is labelled as *Hanum*.

Nonetheless, the conclusion is the same for all the sentential constructions in 4.3.4. All of these sentential constructions indicate the deficiency of verbs. Hence, none of the aforementioned noun constituents of *Daman*, *Lina* and *Hanum* can undertake any Theta Role in their respective sentences.

4.3.5 Discussion of Sentential Construction 5

The sentential construction 5 echoes the idea of an absent predicate. This finding is also prevalent in the previous discussion in relation to the sentential constructions without a verb. However, it is interesting to note that instead of one noun constituent present, the sentence featured below has two different noun constituents. To illustrate, the sentence construction is shown below.

a) Tok   Batin   darjah   enom   huk   (Mah Meri)
   Tok   Batin   darjah   enam   sahaja   (Malay)
   Tok   Batin   level   six   only   (English)
   'Tok Batin (is) only level six.'

The sentential construction above discusses the two separate entities of noun constituents. Nonetheless, it is determined that a verb or a predicate is unrepresented in the sentential construction above.

4.3.6 Discussion of Sentential Construction 6

The section is to discuss the sixth type of sentential construction found in the Mah Meri language that is not represented by any Theta Role. The sentential construction can be seen below.

a) adat   hum   penting   (Mah Meri)
   adat   mandi penting   (Malay)
   tradition bathe important (English)
   '(The) bathing tradition (is) important.'

As seen in the sentential construction above, there is no particular predicate in the sentence. However, it is seen that *adat hum* is a noun constituent. However, due to the lack of predicates, this noun constituent cannot assume any Theta Role due to the lack of predicates. Hence, this sentential construction cannot be analysed for the Theta Role.

4.4 Introduction to Research Question 2: What Are the Relevant Structures of the Mah Meri Language?

Section 4.3 discusses the relevant structures present in the Mah Meri language. This section is to understand the structures which are present in the data in relation to the discussion of the previous Theta Roles. As Mah Meri is a language which is rich with syntactic structures, the following sections would discuss some of the linguistics aspects in detail. The sections are divided into the morphological aspect and the syntactical aspect.

4.4.1 The Morphological Aspect of the Mah Meri Language

This section examines the morphological aspects of the Mah Meri language in relation to the words found in the Mah Meri language. It explains the derived words present in the Mah Meri language and the types of affixes present in the Mah Meri language. Furthermore, it gives an account of the base verbs of the Mah Meri language. In the last category of morphology, this section covers the types of pronouns in relation to the Theta Roles in this study.

4.4.1 Affixes

This section discusses the types of affixes which are demonstrated in the Mah Meri language. Two types of affixes that are examined are prefix and suffix. The related sentential constructions in relation to the prefixes and suffixes are given for illustration purposes.

4.4.1.1 Prefix

Prefixes are known as affixes which appear in the initial position of a word. Morphologically, the addition of a prefix changes the meaning of the word. Prefixes are a common feature in the Mah Meri language. Further examples are given and discussed below.

4.4.1.1.1 Prefix *ke-*

From the study, it is determined that the prefix *ke-* is present in the language of Mah Meri. This can be seen from the sentential constructions below.

a) kegemaran e'ed   nasi pulut wajik (Mah Meri)
    kegemaran saya   nasi pulut wajik (Malay)
    favourite I   rice pulut wajik (English)
    'My favourite is *pulut wajik* rice.'

b) kenon   ninin   yang   keempat   nom Bakhtiar   (Mah Meri)
   anak   lelaki yang   keempat   nama Bakhtiar (Malay)
   child   boy   that   fourth   name Bakhtiar (English)
   'My fourth son's name is Bakhtiar.'

From the sentential constructions above in 4.4.1.1.1a and 4.4.1.1.1b, it is seen that the prefix *ke-* is present in both sentences. In sentential construction of 4.4.1.1.1a, the prefix *ke-* relates to the noun constituent of *kegemaran*. The base form of this constituent is *gemar* which means 'like'. The base form of *gemar* is identified as a transitive verb which takes on the valency of 2 arguments. However, with prefix *ke-* added to the base form of the verb *gemar*, the parts of speech changes from being a verb to becoming a noun constituent.

In the second example of 4.4.1.1.1b, *keempat* is a constituent in which carries the prefix *ke-* as well. The base form of this word is *empat* which is an adjective constituent meaning 'four'. However, by adding the morphological *ke-* to *empat*, the word meaning is changed to mean 'the fourth'. Hence, by adding the prefix *ke-,* the adjective constituent can be improvised to become a noun.

4.4.1.1.2 Prefix *ne-*

The next prefix discussed in relation to the constituents is *ne-*. This is a unique feature found in the Mah Meri language. This feature is discussed below with the sample sentential construction.

a) e'ed nerima   nya   tahut nakei (Mah Meri)
   saya menerima nya   tahun itu   (Malay)
   I   accept   her   year   that (English)
   'I accepted her that year.'

In the sentential construction above, *nerimanya* derives from a base verb 'terima'. The prefix *ne-* changes the meaning of the verb. By adding the prefix *ne-*, the verb changes from 'to receive' to 'receiving'. Thus, although it is still a verb, the verb form changes as now it is now a transitive verb in which has the valency of 2 arguments which are the noun constituents of *e'ed* and *–nya*. The suffix *–nya* is explained in the later sections. However, *nerimanya* is a unique feature as it also undertakes the process of elision as seen in the example above. In this particular case, the speaker has eliminated the use of *me-* and only retained the prefix *ne-*.

4.4.1.1.3 Prefix *ber-*

One of the common prefixes in the Mah Meri language is the prefix *ber-*. The prefix *ber-* can be seen in the examples featured below.

a) lepas tu ngki   beranak anak   sampai   tujuh (Mah Meri)
    lepas tu dia   beranak anak   sampai   tujuh (Malay)
    after that she   give birth to children until   seven (English)
   'After that, she gave birth to children until (there were) seven.'

b) ngki   dah   berlemol
   dia   dah   bersuami
   she   already   has a husband
   'She already has a husband.'

In the above sentential constructions, the prefix *ber-* is present in both sentences. In sentential construction 4.4.1.1.3a, the prefix *ber-* is seen in the verb *beranak-anak*. The

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base form for this particular verb is *anak* meaning 'child'. However, when prefix *ber-* is added to *anak*, it changes from a noun constituent to a verb constituent. Thus, the prefix *ber-* influences a noun entity to become a transitive verb with the valency of 2.

In the second sentence, the prefix *ber-* is seen in the verb *berlemol*. The verb *berlemol* is a transitive verb with carries the valency of 2. However, if the prefix *ber-* is not added, *lemol* by itself carries the meaning of 'husband' and is categorised as a noun constituent. However, due to the prefix addition, the noun changes into a verb. Moreover, it also changes the meaning of 'husband' to 'has a husband'.

c) mah berkumpul mang   (Mah Meri)
   orang berkumpul semua   (Malay)
   people gather   all   (English)
   'All the people are gathered.'

In the example of 4.4.1.1.3c above, the verb *berkumpul* illustrates the presence of the prefix *ber-*. The base form of this word is *kumpul* which is a transitive verb with the valency of 2. Nonetheless, the transitive verb changed to an intransitive verb when the prefix *ber-* is added to *kumpul*. Hence, the verb constituent of *berkumpul* carries the valency of 1 and is self-sufficient by having only one argument.

4.4.1.2 Suffix

Suffixes are known as affixes which appear in the end position of a word. Morphologically, suffixes change the meaning of the word. Like prefixes, suffixes too are a commonly found in the Mah Meri language. The sentential constructions below elucidate the idea of suffix.

4.4.1.2.1 Suffix –*nya*

One of the suffixes found in the language of Mah Meri is the suffix –*nya*. In the previous example of the prefix *ne-*, the same sentential construction is used in this section in relation to the suffix –*nya*.

a) e'ed nerima   nya   tahut nakei (Mah Meri)
   saya menerima   nya   tahun itu   (Malay)
   I   accept   her   year that (English)
   'I accepted her that year.'

In the sentential construction above, the suffix *–nya* is present in the sentential construction of *nerimanya*. The suffix *–nya* is used to signify the case 'him' or 'her'. The base form for this word is *terima* which means 'accept'. The verb 'accept' is a transitive verb which carries the valency of 2. The addition of the suffix *–nya* does not change the valency in *nerimanya*. Nevertheless, the verb changes from being an infinitive form to a present tense form. Thus, *-nya* is one of the suffixes present in the Mah Meri language.

4.4.1.2.2   Suffix *–an*

Another type of suffix found in the language of Mah Meri is the suffix *–an*. The following sentential constructions below show the examples of 4.4.1.2.2a and 4.4.1.2.2b.

a) ngki   sekolah deih   tingkatan limak (Mah Meri)
   dia   sekolah sampai tingkatan lima   (Malay)
   she   school   until   form   five   (English)
 'She (was) schooling until form five.'

b) Bakhtiar sekolah deih   tingkatan ma   (Mah Meri)
   Bakhtiar   sekolah sampai tingkatan dua   (Malay)
   Bakhtiar   school   until   form   two   (English)
 'Bakhtiar (was) schooling until form two.'

The noun constituent *tingkatan* is present in both sentential constructions of 4.4.1.2.2a and 4.4.1.2.2b. *Tingkatan* is a derived noun form from the noun *tingkat*. Although essentially both denote the meaning of 'level', however the semantical reference changes once the suffix *–an* is added to the noun constituent of *tingkat*. Therefore, a speaker would use *tingkat* to refer to a floor level. However, the use of the word *tingkatan* is only deemed appropriate to signify a person's level of education. In the Malaysian context, *tingkatan* is specifically referring to a person's level of education in the secondary

school or high school. Hence, the prefix –*an* here changes the semantic denotation of the word when added.

4.4.2 Base Verb

Previously, derived verbs are discussed with the various affixes. In the Mah Meri language, the more commonly used verbs are base verbs as it is predominantly filled in with many types of base verbs. Some of the base verbs covered in this section are *beh*, *cok*, and *keboih*.

4.4.2.1 Base Verb *Beh*

In this sentential construction, the base verb of *beh* carries the meaning of 'make'. The base verb does not change its form even though the tense changes. The following construction below exemplifies the situation.

a) e'ed   beh   nasi   pulut   wajik   sendiri (Mah Meri)
   saya   buat   nasi   pulut   wajik   sendiri (Malay)
   I   make rice   pulut   wajik   myself (English)
   'I make *pulut wajik* rice myself.'

b) kedo   e'ed   yang   beh   wajik   untuk   e'ed (Mah Meri)
   isteri   saya   yang   buat   wajik   untuk   saya (Malay)
   wife   I   that   make wajik   for   I   (English)
   'My wife makes *wajik* for me.'

c) ngki   gol   beh   nake   (Mah Meri)
   dia   ambil   buat   itu   (Malay)
   he   take   make   that   (English)
   'He takes (and) makes that.'

d) ngki   macam   macam   kejak   kabe (Mah Meri)
   dia   macam   macam   kerja   buat (Malay)
   he   various   work   do   (English)
   'He (has) done various work.'

In the sentential constructions above, it is concluded that *beh* can be a transitive or an intransitive verb. In the first sentential construction of 4.4.2.1a, *beh* is considered a transitive verb. However, in the second sentence of 4.4.2.1b, *beh* is ditransitive verb as it

takes the valency of 3. The arguments in which verb *beh* takes are *kedo e'ed*, *wajik* and *e'ed*. In the third and last sentential constructions, *beh* is a transitive verb similar to the setting in 4.4.2.1a.

4.4.2.2 Base Verb *Cok*

The base verb of *cok* denotes the meaning of 'go'. The following sentential constructions are shown below.

a) e'ed   hagak   cok   laut   ari   ujan   telok   ketam (Mah Meri)
   saya   nak   pergi   laut   hari   hujan   cari   ketam (Malay)
   I   want   go   sea   day   rain   find   crab (English)
   'I want (to) go (to the) sea, (the) day (was) rain(ing) (to) find crab.'

b) selalu   e'ed   cok   pekan   Banting   (Mah Meri)
   selalu   saya   pergi   pekan   Banting   (Malay)
   always   I   go   town   Banting   (English)
   'I always go (to) Banting town.'

In the sentential constructions of the base verb *cok*, both verbs in the examples are transitive verbs. Therefore, *cok* denotes a valency of 2. The verb *cok* is used regardless of the tense and it can be used with many types of noun constituents.

4.4.2.3 Base Verb *Keboih*

One of the Mah Meri base verbs is *keboih*. *Keboih*, meaning 'die' has no other forms to indicate the tenses involved. Thus, *keboih* is used as it is to indicate the past, present or future tenses. The following sentential discussion below is shown to exemplify the *keboih* base verb setting.

a) ada   tujuh   anak   yang   keboih   ma   orang   (Mah Meri)
   ada   tujuh   anak   yang   meninggal   dua   orang   (Malay)
   have   seven   child   that   die   two   person   (English)
   'There (have been) seven children, those who died were two people.'

In the sentential construction of 4.4.2.3 above, the verb *keboih* is used to indicate the past. From the sentence, it is determined that *keboih* is an intransitive verb. This means that keboih only takes one argument. In this particular example, it is identified that the verb

is experienced by *ma orang*. In terms of the positioning of the base verb, the verb *keboih* takes an initial position. This is seen from the sentence above whereby the verb *keboih* is placed in front of the noun constituent *ma orang*.

4.4.2.4 Base Verb *Suka*

Another type of base verb that is apparent in the language of Mah Meri is the base verb of *suka*. The verb denotes the meaning of 'like'. In the Mah Meri sentential construction, many examples were found in relation to the base verb *suka*. Such examples are seen below.

a) e'ed   suka   nasi pulut   wajik   (Mah Meri)
   saya   suka   nasi pulut   wajik   (Malay)
   I   like   rice pulut   wajik   (English)
   'I like *pulut wajik* rice.'

b) budak   budak   e'ed   suka   kuih   wajik   (Mah Meri)
   budak   budak   saya   suka   kuih   wajik   (Malay)
   child   child   I   like   dessert wajik   (English)
   'My children like *wajik* dessert.'

c) e'ed   suka   lagu   Jobok   (Mah Meri)
   saya   suka   lagu   Melayu   (Malay)
   I   like   song   Malay   (English)
   'I like Malay songs.'

From the sentences above, it is clear that *suka* is a transitive verb. In sentential construction 4.4.2.4a, the two arguments involved with the verb *suka* are the noun constituents *e'ed* and *nasi pulut wajik*. In comparison, the example in 4.4.2.4b suggests that the two arguments related to the verb are *budak-budak e'ed* and *kuih wajik*. In the last sample of 4.4.2.4c, the verb *suka* is linked with the arguments *e'ed* and *lagu Jobok*. It is seen from the sentential constructions above that the verbs take place in the medial position.

4.4.2.5 Base Verb *Hagak*

The verb *hagak* is one of the base verbs found in the Mah Meri language. The verb *hagak* meaning 'want' is a transitive verb. Below are some of the examples in relation to the aforesaid base verbs.

a) bila e'ed hagak suroh gendei masak nasi pulut wajik (Mah Meri)
   bila saya nak suroh isteri masak nasi pulut wajik (Malay)
   when I want ask wife cook rice pulut wajik (English)
   'When I want (it), (I) ask (my) wife (to) cook *pulut wajik* rice.'

b) e'ed hagak beli barang kemaih (Mah Meri)
   saya nak beli barang kemas (Malay)
   I want buy thing jewellery (English)
   'I want to buy jewellery.'

In the sentential constructions above, it is evident that the base verb *hagak* is a transitive verb. This can be seen in the sentence of 4.4.2.5a, 4.4.2.5b and 4.4.2.5c. In the first sentence of 4.4.2.5a, the verb *hagak* is linked with the arguments *e'ed* and *gendei*. In the next example, *hagak* is joined with the noun constituents of *e'ed* and *barang kemaih*. As the verb *hagak* has two arguments in each of the sentence, it is thus considered to have a valency of 2. In terms of verb position, it is understood that *hagak* occupies the medial position. It can be examined from the sentences above that *hagak* takes place in between the two arguments.

4.4.2.6 Base Verb *Beli*

The base verb *beli* is found in the Mah Meri sentences. This base verb is also known as a transitive verb as it takes on two arguments. The examples in relation to the verb *beli* are shown below.

a) e'ed hagak beli barang kemas
   saya nak beli barang kemas
   I want buy thing jewellery
   'I want to buy jewellery.'

b) e'ed   beli   barang   hak   pasaraya   ataupun   kedai   runcit (Mah Meri)
  saya   beli   barang   di   pasaraya   ataupun   kedai   runcit (Malay)
  I   buy   grocery   at   supermarket or   shop   grocery (English)
  'I buy grocery at (the) supermarket or grocery shop.'

In the sentential constructions above, the base verb of *beli* is seen to have two

arguments in each example. In the sentence of 4.4.2.6a, the arguments involved are *e'ed*

and *barang kemaih*. In comparison, the sentence in 4.4.2.6b has two arguments which are

e'ed and *pasaraya*. Regarding the verb positions, the base verb of *beli* assumes the medial

position. Thus, *beli* commonly takes place in between the arguments. This is illustrated in

the two sentential constructions above.

4.4.2.7 Base Verb *Caik*

One of the base verbs in the Mah Meri language is the verb *caik*. The verb *caik* is

found in one of the sentences in the interview. The example can be seen below.

a)   kadang   kadang   e'ed   caik   udang   caik ka   bawal   ka   ngaik (Mah Meri)
   kadang   kadang   saya   cari   udang   cari ikan bawal   ikan ngaik (Malay)
   sometimes   I   find   prawn   find fish   pomfret fish ngaik   (English)
   'Sometimes, I find prawn, find pomfret fish, *ngaik* fish.'

From the sentence above, it is evident that the verb *caik* is related to the arguments

e'ed, *udang*, *ka bawal* and *ka ngaik*. Eventhough there are four noun constituents involved

in this particular example, it is seen that the verb *caik* is repeated twice in the sentential

construction.

4.4.3   Pronouns

This section discusses the pronouns which are evident in the Mah Meri language. In

the language of Mah Meri, both nouns and pronouns can be used. Pronouns are used to

replace nouns for referral. From the research, two prominent pronouns which are present

are the pronouns *e'ed* and *ngki*.

4.4.3.1 Pronoun *E'ed*

One of the featured pronouns in the language of Mah Meri is the pronoun *e'ed*. *E'ed* is a first person singular pronoun to refer to the self. It is used mainly in conversations to replace the speaker's name. Syntactically, it is usually placed in the front part of the sentence. However, it some instances, the pronoun e'ed is also placed in the medial position of a sentential construction. Below are some of the sentential constructions which exemplify the pronoun *e'ed*.

a) e'ed   beli   barang hak pasaraya   ataupun   kedai runcit (Mah Meri)
   saya   beli   barang di   pasaraya   ataupun   kedai runcit (Malay)
   I   buy   grocery at   supermarket or   shop grocery (English)
   'I buy grocery at (the) supermarket or grocery shop.'

b) e'ed   hagak beli barang kemas (Mah Meri)
   saya   nak   beli barang kemas (Malay)
   I   want buy thing   jewellery (English)
   'I want to buy jewellery.'

c) selalu   e'ed   cok   pekan   Banting (Mah Meri)
   selalu   saya   pergi pekan   Banting (Malay)
   always   I   go   town   Banting (English)
   'I always go (to) Banting town.'

From the sentential constructions above, the first two sentential constructions indicate *e'ed* to be in the initial position. However, the last sentence shows that *e'ed* can also take the medial position as well.

4.4.3.2 Pronoun *Ngki*

The next common pronoun featured in the language of Mah Meri is the pronoun *ngki*. The pronoun *ngki* is usually used in the initial position of a sentence. Similar to the Malay language, *ngki* can either be used to indicate a male or a female person. *Ngki* is a second-person pronoun which is commonly used in the language of Mah Meri. The sentential constructions below show the pronouns of ngki used in different situations.

a) lepas tu ngki   beranak anak   sampai   tujuh (Mah Meri)
   lepas tu dia   beranak anak   sampai   tujuh (Malay)
    after that she   give birth to children until   seven (English)
   'After that, she gave birth to children until (there were) seven.'

b) ngki   macam   macam   kejak   kabe (Mah Meri)
   dia   macam   macam   kerja   buat (Malay)
   he   various   work   do   (English)
   'He (has) done various work.'

From the sentential constructions above, *ngki* can assume the medial position or the initial position. Thus, it is a flexible pronoun that can be used either in the beginning of the sentence or in the middle of the sentence. This is illustrated by the examples above.

4.4.4 The Syntactic Structure of the Mah Meri Language

Under the syntactic structure of the Mah Meri language, it is commonly understood that Mah Meri language utilises an SVO syntactic structure. Nevertheless, it can also utilise a passive voice in certain cases. From this research, most of the syntactic structures related to the Theta Roles discussed are usually in the active voice rather than the passive voice. Although from previous literature reviews indicate that the passive voice exist (Asmah Haji Omar et. al, 2006), in this data, most of the voice used was in the active form by the participant.

4.4.4.1 Active Voice

In Section 4.4.4.1, the verbs *suka, cok, geteik* and *hum* in their sentential constructions are discussed as the examples of the active voice in the Mah Meri language. As previously mentioned, it is determined that the active voice is a dominant voice in the language of Mah Meri. From the data, it is seen that most of the Mah Meri sentences belong to the active voice. The relevant examples are discussed below in the following sentences.

4.4.4.1.1 Active Sentential Constructions in Relation to the Verb *Suka*

a) e'ed   suka   nasi pulut   wajik   (Mah Meri)
   saya   suka   nasi pulut   wajik   (Malay)
   I   like   rice   pulut   wajik   (English)
   'I like *pulut wajik* rice.'

b) budak budak e'ed suka   kuih   wajik   (Mah Meri)
   budak   budak saya suka   kuih   wajik   (Malay)
   child   child   I   like   dessert wajik   (English)
   'My children like *wajik* dessert.'

c) e'ed   suka   lagu   Jobok   (Mah Meri)
   saya   suka   lagu   Melayu (Malay)
   I   like   song   Malay   (English)
   'I like Malay songs.'

4.4.4.1.2 Active Sentential Constructions in Relation to the Verb *Cok*

a) selalu   e'ed   cok   pekan   Banting (Mah Meri)
   selalu   saya   pergi pekan   Banting (Malay)
   always I   go   town   Banting (English)
   'I always go (to) Banting town.'

b) e'ed   hagak   cok   laut ari   ujan   telok   ketam (Mah Meri)
   saya   nak   pergi laut hari hujan cari   ketam (Malay)
   I   want   go   sea day rain   find   crab (English)
   'I want (to) go (to the) sea, (the) day (was) rain(ing) (to) find crab.'

4.4.4.1.3 Active Sentential Constructions in Relation to the Verb *Geteik*

a) Hanom   hak   geteik   asrama   (Mah Meri)
   Hanom   di   tinggal asrama   (Malay)
   Hanom   at   live   boarding (English)
   'Hanom lives at (the) boarding.'

4.4.4.1.4 Active Sentential Constructions in Relation to the Verb *Hum*

a) pengantin   sedang   hum (Mah Meri)
   pengantin   sedang   mandi (Malay)
   bride bridegroom   are   bathe (English)
   'The bride and bridegroom are bathing.'

b) ngki   hum   pek   puluh   (Mah Meri)
   dia   mandi pukul sepuluh(Malay)
   he   bathe   hour   ten   (English)
   'He bathes at ten.'

From the sample sentential constructions above from 4.4.1.1.1 to 4.4.1.1.4, all of these sentential constructions are in the active voice. The active voice is a prominent feature as most of the verbs follow an Agent or an Experiencer before their position.

Thus, the active voice is a pertinent feature in the Mah Meri language as in the natural data collected. In the researcher's point of view, the active voice is very akin to that of the Malay language. As seen in the examples above, the gloss of Malay and Mah Meri are very much inter-related and alike. Hence, it may be early to say but the language of Mah Meri does mirror the Malay language in terms of active voice. Nevertheless, as it is contains the element of a single case study, the view does not tend to generalise the whole Mah Meri language.

4.5.1 Conclusion

The Mah Meri language evidently has all the Theta Roles as mentioned in Chapter II. In this research, the most common Theta Role found is the Theta Role of Agent. Besides that, the language is also filled with many lexical items which are unique to the language. Some of these lexical items are such as the affixes like *ber-, -an*, and so forth. Pronouns are also a feature in the Mah Meri language as well. Some of the examples of the pronouns found in the Mah Meri language are such as *hik*, *ngki* and *e'ed*. In a syntactic aspect, the language of Mah Meri is also very flexible as it can also accommodate to other languages. As explicated in this chapter, it adapts very well to the borrowing of lexical items and also morphological items such as the bound affixes previously mentioned.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1   General Preface

In general, this thesis attempts to examine the idea of Theta Roles and also the verbal structures in relation to the Mah Meri language. Under the verbal structures, all pertinent morphological structures in relation to the discussion of the sentences are discussed as well. This study successfully utilised the framework of Theta Roles and verb analysis using Radford (1997 & 2009). With this approach, this study has to the best of its ability to analyse according to Radford's understanding of Theta Roles and verb analysis.

5.2   Objectives, Purpose and Research Questions

There are two main objectives to this thesis. Firstly, it is to analyse the Theta Roles or Thematic Relations in relation to the verbs in the Mah Meri language. Secondly, it is to establish the structures of the verbs with regards to the Theta Roles in the Mah Meri language.

In a long-term planning, the purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the development of the knowledge of syntax. As previously mentioned, this thesis aspires to preserve and support the Aslian heritage through the implementation of scientific studies such as this thesis. Besides that, this study attempts to provide different perspectives of syntactic study with regards to the Mah Meri language. Besides trying to fill in the present gap in the syntactic studies of the Mah Meri, this study hopes to be of reference for future researchers interested in the studies of syntax or the Mah Meri language in general.

In order to effectively complete this thesis, two crucial questions are referred to as guides. Firstly, the question is a) What are the Theta Roles or Thematic Relations found in the Mah Meri language in Carey Island? This question addresses the main crux of the study which is the Theta Roles in the Mah Meri language. Secondly, the research question is b)What are the structures of verbs and nouns related to the understanding of the Theta Roles found in the Mah Meri language in Carey Island? In the second part of the research question, all the structures of verbs and nouns which are crucial to the understanding of the sentential constructions with Theta Roles are analysed.

5.3 Summary of the Thesis Organisation of Points

For easy reference, this thesis is organised into five different chapters. To clarify, these chapters are divided into 5 different topics. The first topic discussed is the Introduction. Secondly, it covers about the Review of Literature. Thirdly, it emphasises the type of Methodology used in this thesis. Fourthly, the Presentation and Analysis of Data is given. In the last part of the thesis, a detailed Summary and Conclusion are explicated to conclude the thesis.

In the first chapter, the thesis gives a general briefing of the organisation of the thesis. A general introduction is given to enlighten the readers of this thesis. Some of the concerns involve the general motivation of the causes to study the Mah Meri language besides to provide objectives of the study. This chapter also probes the problem involving the language of the Mah Meri. It is established that the language of the Mah Meri lacks the proper documentation in order to preserve the language. Besides that, it is found that the Mah Meri language is categorised as a Severely Endangered language. Due to this problem, Chapter I emphasises the urgent need to address this problem as the language of Mah Meri

is deteriorating. Chapter I also puts forth the research questions, the study also highlights the importance of the study while also noting its limitations. This chapter also discusses pertinent concepts or key ideas in lieu with the theoretical framework used in the thesis such as Theta Roles or Thematic Relations, verbs and structure of verbs.

In the second chapter, the review of literature elaborates the idea of Theta Roles or Thematic Relations further. Thus, the examples from researches are given to illustrate the ideas of Theta Roles or Thematic Relations in a lucid manner. Besides that, other researches involving verbs are also exemplified in this particular section. Some of them are researches involving the verb structures such as Transitives, Intransitives and Ditransitives. Various studies highlighting different aspects of these items are given as well. In the last part of Chapter II, the examples of relevant literature reviews related to the Mah Meri studies are presented. Thus, these topics are discussed in detail as well.

In the third chapter, the research methodology indicates the approach of the thesis in handling the Research Questions. This chapter elaborates on the interview methodology as well as the participant background. Besides that, the chapter gives a general overview of the methods in which the researcher validates the data.

The fourth chapter deals with the findings of the thesis. This chapter discusses each of the research questions in length by entailing relevant and necessary information assembled from the data. By extracting information from the interviews, all research questions are answered by applying the knowledge of Theta Roles. In short, the first research question discusses about the Theta Roles and structures of the verbs associated to the Mah Meri language. Some of the identified Theta Roles are the roles of Agent, Theme, Experiencer, Instrument, Goal and Locative. In the second part of the Chapter IV, the thesis

concentrates on the structures of verbs as well as other morphological items which are discussed in tandem with the Theta Roles in the Mah Meri sentential constructions. For the verb structures, they are divided into three categories such as transitives, ditransitives and intransitives. In terms of morphological items, affixes such as prefixes and suffixes are discussed. Besides that, the parts of speech such as pronouns are deliberated in Chapter IV.

In the fifth chapter, a summary and conclusion of the general preface is given in the first section. In the second part of the fifth chapter, the objectives, purpose and the research questions which are related to the research are reiterated and discussed. The third part discusses about the summary of the thesis organisation of points. In the fourth section of the fifth chapter, the detailed discussion is given with regards to the findings in Chapter IV. In the last part of the fifth chapter, the researcher's observation and comment is given on the study as well as further implication for further studies.

5.4 Detailed Discussion of the Fourth Chapter

This section highlights the findings of the research. Besides that, further examples and elaborations are given in general to support the findings. This section is divided into two parts which are the discussion of Theta Roles and the Structures of Verbs and Parts of Speech related to the Theta Roles in the Mah Meri language.

5.4.1 Discussion of the Theta Roles in the Mah Meri Language

In this section, this study discusses the Theta Roles found in the Mah Meri language. From this data, all Theta Roles are found to be present except for the Theta Role of Recipient. However, the cause is not due to the lacking of the Theta Role of Recipient in the Mah Meri language. Rather, it is the considered the limitation of the scope in this study as data is analysed based on the interviews only.

The Theta Role of Agent is a Theta Role which is existent in the Mah Meri language. From the researcher's data, it has the highest level of occurrence in the interview. The researcher observed some repeated noun constituents as Agents. Some of these noun constituents are such as *e'ed (I), ngki (he/she)* and *hik (you)*. However, other noun constituents are also found such as *kedo e'ed (my wife)*. Besides *kedo e'ed*, the researcher detected special names to have also taken on the roles of the Agent. These special names are such as *Hanom*, *Bakhtiar*, and *Daud* to name a few.

The second type of Theta Role found in the study is Theme. The Theta Role of Theme also has a high occurrence in the interview. It is seen that Theme is often paired alongside the Theta Roles of Agents. However, it is interesting to highlight that the Theta Role of Theme has the most variety of types. Unlike the Theta Role of Agent which are often the same repeated noun constituents, the Theta Role of Theme is found to be more dynamic. Some of the examples of the Theta Role of Themes are *laut (sea), barang kemaih (jewellery), udang (prawn), ka bawal (pomfret fish)* and *mawar*(rose) to name a few.

In third type of Theta Role which is the Theta Role of Experiencer, the researcher found that the Theta Role of Experiencer is very much similar to that of the Theta Roles of Agent. The same type of example is found to assume the role of an Experiencer. These examples include the use of the noun constituents *e'ed (I)*. The other noun constituent which undertakes the role of the Theta Role of Experiencer is *budak-budak e'ed (my children)*. Another particular observation in which is realised by the researcher is that the Theta Role of Experiencer is lesser to that of the Theta Role of Agent.

The fourth type of Theta Role denotes the Theta Role of Benefactor. The Theta Role of Benefactor is found to be present in the one of the sentential constructions in the

Mah Meri. The noun constituent which carries the role of Benefactor is *e'ed (I)*. In comparison, the fifth type of Theta Role of Instrument shows a different set of noun constituents assuming the role. The examples of Instrument are such as the noun constituents *pahuk (boat)* and *moto (motorcycle)*. For the last variant of Theta Role, the Theta Role of Locative shows variation as well. Some of the noun constituents found to carry this role are such as *Banting, Tembuk,* and *pasaraya (supermarket)*.

In short, all the Theta Roles are present in the data findings. However, it is gathered that the Theta Roles do not have the same amount of frequency and variation. It is also seen that the Theta Roles of Mah Meri can be quite similar sounding to that of the Malay language. This can be seen clearly in the examples with the gloss in Chapter IV.

5.4.2 Discussion of the Structures of Verbs & Parts of Speech Related to the Theta Roles in the Mah Meri Language

The next discussion reiterates the type of structures of verbs and parts of speech in relation to the Theta Roles in the Mah Meri language. In this section, the structures of verbs and other types of parts of speech in the Mah Meri language are discussed together.

From the data findings, the data reveals that there are all types of verb structures are present in the Mah Meri language. These are namely the verb structures of the transitive, ditransitive as well as intransitive. Some of the verbs which are transitive are such as the verb constituent of *suka (like), hagak (want)* and *beli (buy)*. Thus, transitivity does occur in the language of Mah Meri as these verbs show that the predicate takes the valency of 2. Besides that, ditransitive verbs are also apparent in the Mah Meri language. One of the examples include the verb *beh (make)*. However, it is important to note that the verb *beh* can also become a transitive verb should there only be two types of arguments as opposed

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to three types of arguments in the ditransitive settings. Lastly, the verb structure of intransitive also exists in the Mah Meri language. This can be seen from the example such as the verb *keboih (die)*.

In terms of other parts of speech, the research found that the Mah Meri language has a lot of morphological structures that changes the verb structures. These are found in the affixes such as *ber-, ne-* and *nya-* to name a few. These examples do not only change the lexical meaning, however, it also changes the type of parts of speech. The research also shows that the parts of speech can remain; nonetheless, it may indicate whether it is another type of tense. Another observation seen from these structures are that the affixes are seen generally paired with the Malay lexical items. Nonetheless, in some instances, such as the word *lemol (husband),* the prefix ber- is added even though *lemol* is a Mah Meri word. On top of that, all of the morphological affixes are indeed derived from the Malay language.

However, in terms of the pronouns, it is seen that the Mah Meri language largely retains the Mah Meri pronouns such as *ngki* (he/she) and *e'ed (I)*. None of the assimilation of the Malay languages takes place in this section of parts of speech in this data. Nevertheless, it can be seen that assimilation takes place in the borrowing of lexical items such as *sekolah, beli, makan* and so forth. Even though the lexical items might not be borrowed in total, it may resemble to that of the Malay language. For example, the verb *piksa* is a form of a contraction from the Malay verb *periksa* which means check.

5.5   Implication of the Study

This research implies that the Theta Role and verb structures of the Mah Meri language exist. However, it is seen to be very similar to that of the Malay language. As seen in this study, the current Mah Meri speakers have in fact forgotten some of the original

terms for the verbs in their own language besides other parts of speech. As confirmed by the participant, "*Kadang-kadang Asli dengan kebangsaan, satu-satu ada. Sebab yang dulunya memang ada sebut, sekarang ada sekolah…kita guna yang senang-senang aje.*" (Tok Batin Salleh, 2012). Reflecting on his quote, he named two reasons that might affect the language of Mah Meri. Firstly, the terms are easier to pronounce in Malay. Secondly it is also the culture of assimilation in schools such as the national schools.

Hence, it is important to note that while the researcher aims to document the language of Mah Meri to preserve the language, it may prove to be too late as most of the language has already vanished from the Mah Meri speakers' settings.

5.6   Contribution of the Study

This study has contributed to the findings of Theta Roles and also the types of verbs in the Mah Meri language. It has successfully determined the current scenario of the language scene in the Mah Meri by providing valuable information from a native speaker. As Theta Roles are not yet studied in this area, this study provides a stepping stone toward paving the development in the syntactic studies of the Mah Meri language. Besides that, the researcher believes that this research has contributed to the preservation of language of Mah Meri by documenting whatever lexical items that are left in the words.

5.7   Further Recommendation and Studies

The researcher believes that future syntacticians as well as those who want to research about the Mah Meri should explore the idea of parts of speech more in their research. This is to determine whether the aforementioned terms can be remembered by the future generation of the Mah Meri people. This is also to document the important heritage which is language which is important to any nation and culture. Perhaps, this study might

spur the Government to relook into possible programmes for revitalization of the Mah Meri languages by the native speakers as well as to make an elective subject out of the language of the Mah Meri. Further talks and cultural awareness could also be given to the Mah Meri people to make them understand of the cultural heritage of language. Any language has the ability to survive if the speakers themselves continue to use it with their families. If this action were to be passed down onto the next generation, the chance for revitalisation of the Mah Meri language is considerably higher. To quote Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Language is the archives of history".

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