

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Indonesia is rich in ethnics, cultures and languages. According to Ethnologue (2022), there are about 723 languages in Indonesia. Of these, about 300 languages are found in Western half of New Guinea Island (Indonesian Papua, Papua Tengah, Papua Pegunungan, Papua Selatan and Papua Barat Provinces). There are about more than 1300 languages on the Island of New Guinea (Papua New Guinea and Indonesian Provinces, many of which are in danger of dying due to less in use and scantily documented, (Palmer, 2012). That means language loss is happening on this island.

Mee language is one of these languages which is used by the Mee people indwelling in Wissel Lakes regions (which is now referred to as MEPAAGO). The speakers of the language inhabit in regencies of Paniai, Deiyai, Dogiyai, some in Intan Jaya and Nabire. According to the 1989 census, 47% of Papuan migrants to major cities in Papua are Mee people (Howay and Yaam 1994 in Putri, 2012). The language is also used by the Mee communities in the cities of Timika, Jayapura, Wamena and others.

According to Doble (1987) as quoted by Kobepa (2015), Paniai is located between 135^0 25 and 137^0 east longitude (BT) and 3^0 25 and 4^0 10 south latitude (LS) with an altitude of 1500 meters above sea level. However, the number of speakers can be predicted to decline due to the opening of the new district government centers since 1997.

Map 1: Mee speaker locations



The source of map: Kobepa (2015:139). Article, *Kala Lampau Terdekat dalam bahasa Mee*

The term Mee is often referred to as Ekagi or Ekari in the previous literature, but this name is no longer used by the Mee themselves. The Mee language also consists of several dialects, namely the Paniai dialect, the lake Tigi dialect, and the Mapia dialect (Doble 1960). My paper focuses on near future in Paniai dialect of Mee language.

As also will be shown in the literature review in the chapter 2, there are not many studies done on this language. That means many interesting grammatical issues have not been discussed yet in this language, including but not restricted to tense, aspect and modality. In this paper, I would like to look at one topic, namely near future. According to Kobepa (2015), there are 6 tenses in Mee, one of which is the topic of my thesis entitled 'Near Future in Paniai Dialect of Mee language'. Near Future is marked with *neg-* or *-p-g-*.

1.2 Limitations of the Problem

As indicated above, Mee seems to have more one tense, but in this paper I would like to present a description of forms and meanings of near future. Near future here refers to marking on verbs about the events or activities that are going to take place in the near future. Near future is differentiated from far future because Mee has different forms for showing activities taking place in the far future.

1.3 Formulation of the Problems

Based on the background and the limitations of problem above, I formulate the problem of my discussion as follows:

- a. What are forms of near future in Paniai dialect of Mee language?
- b. What do these forms mean?

To answer the first question, I would like to analyze the data and describe the form or forms of near future. To answer the second question, I will analyze the forms to find the meanings and uses of the form or forms of near future.

1.4 Objectives of the Research

The research objectives above are then formulated into these objectives:

- a. To describe the forms of near future tense in Paniai dialect of Mee language.
- b. To analyze the data to find out meanings and uses of the forms.

1.5 Significance of the Research

This research has theoretical significance and practical significance.

a. Theoretical significance

Typologically speaking, it is rare to have more future tenses than in the past, therefore, it is often distinguished between past and nonpast, for example in Chácobo (Tallman & Stout, 2018). What this indicates is that there are more tenses in past than in present or future. So, making distinctions between near future from far future, since it is rare, is something interesting theoretically.

b. Practical significance

The findings of this research are expected to be able to contribute to the teaching and learning process. It is also hoped that it could help me as a researcher who will become an English teacher to the speakers of Paniai dialect of Mee language. It may also be helpful for Mee speaking students learning languages that have tenses such as English. This research is expected to give some contributions to the teaching and learning process of English for the following parts:

1). For the English Teachers

The findings of this study are to help language teachers teaching the Paniai dialect of Mee speaking students. It is hoped that these findings will make teachers aware of the similarities and differences and can design appropriate syllabus and materials.

2). For the researcher

This is very helpful for me as a researcher who will become an English teacher and can also help me in learning the Paniai dialect of the Mee language.

3). For the students

Students can also be helped in turn with this finding because now they can be aware of tenses in Mee and but also in English.

4). Young people of Mee

This research is also expected to motivate the young generation of Mee to preserve their language and learn English as an international language.