

**Lexical Items of Flora and Fauna in Local Languages:  
An Ecolinguistics Study**

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**Abstract**

Ecolinguistics study is becoming more popular year by year since many researcher, linguists, and other experts do some researches. Wendel's (2005:51) definition of ecolinguistics formulated that the ecological approach to language takes into consideration the complex network of relations occurring between environment, languages and people speaking these languages. Since ecolinguistics related to environment, language and people speaking the language, this research is aimed to discuss about the local languages, Hokkian and Tio Cu related to the environment. The data used in this article is the lexical items for fauna and flower. After conducting small observation, the researcher concludes that the knowledge of lexical items for flora and fauna in local languages, Hokkian and Tio Cu, is less because of environment factors. This means that the language of Hokkian and Tio Cu had been influenced by Bahasa Indonesia as national language. This happened as in the era before the year of 2000, Chinese were not allowed to use their Chinese name, languages (Mandarin or local languages), culture, etc.

Keywords: Ecolinguistics, lexical items, fauna, flora, language

**INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this paper is to serve the investigation of two local languages in the activities related to environment. The activities are the lexical items of Flora and Fauna (animals and plants) in the perspective of environment related to the ecolinguistics. Every language has its own culture that relates to the environment. The study of language related to environment is known as ecolinguistics. Wendel (2005:51) formulated that the ecological approach to language takes into consideration the complex network of relations occurring between environment, languages and people speaking these languages. From the definition, it is clear that environment, language and people as the user have a close relation. This study discusses and highlights two local languages to be investigated to the activities that coded in environment. There are so

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many local languages in Indonesia such as Batak, Java, Karo, etc. Since, the researcher is Chinese from Hokkian ethnic the researcher chooses two local languages, they are Hokkian and Tio Cu languages. Tio Cu language is chosen because of the researcher's mother is Tio Cu ethnic. Then, the investigation deals with the flora and fauna lexical items that coded in the environment. Hence, this investigation deals with the knowledge of lexical items for both fauna and flora based on the age categories.

## DEFINITIONS OF ECOLINGUISTICS

Ecolinguistics was originally defined in 1972 by the Norwegian linguist Einar Haugen "as the study of interactions between any given language and its environment" (Haugen, 1972: 57). Then, Haugen understood language ecology as an approach to linguistics. Later, current interpretations of ecolinguistics differ widely. Many linguists relate the term 'ecology' to context or language environment in order to describe problems associated with the language which is embedded either in a sociolinguistic, educational, economic or political setting and is not decontextualized. In this sense 'ecology' becomes a very fashionable term used for placing a language or some linguistic investigations concerning the given language within the confines of a certain scientific field; in this case 'ecology' simply becomes a metaphor. In the present work Wendel's (2005:51) definition of ecolinguistics formulated that the ecological approach to language takes into consideration the complex network of relations occurring between environment, languages and people speaking these languages.

## DATA AND DISCUSSION

The researcher collects the data by interviewing his relatives, colleagues, and peer group. There are many data but on this occasion, the researcher only uses 2 data for each fauna and flora as a sample. After collecting the data, the researcher comes to some analysis and discussions.

### Data 1. Natural Environment – Fauna

#### 1. Pelus or dudung fish

*Mua hu* means *ikan pelus* (Java) and *ikan dudung* (Indonesia).

*Mua hu* has the same language for both Hokkian and Tio Cu but difference in pronouncing/intonation.

This phrase sustainability should be maintained because the knowledge of lexical items on fauna related to the age groups is less nowadays. The researcher himself uses Indonesia language as the second language made an interview to another people, about 40s, and the result was less people knew about this phrase and only certain people had the knowledge of the lexical item "*ikan pelus/ikan dudung*". This phrase also has material culture that can function to keep our blood pressure normal, improving our memory, etc.

#### 2. Pangolin

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The word “pangolin” means *trenggiling* (Indonesia). In Hokkian language is called as “*la li*” and for Tio Cu, *lak li*. Many people still have the knowledge of the lexical item but when it comes to both Hokkian and Tio Cu, only a few people have the knowledge. For people under 19, a teenager, this word is unfamiliar.

## Data 2. Natural environment – Flora

### 1. Mint leaf

Mint leaf or *Daun Mint* usually known as *Po ho* or *Po'o* for Hokkian and Tio Cu. The intonation for Tio Cu is usually falling. There are so many material culture can be found for *Po ho* such as healing stomachache, headache, cough, sore throat, avoiding stress, and so on.

### 2. Guava

Guava is also known as *Jambu Klutuk* or *Jambu Kelutuk* in Bahasa Indonesia. *Pak kia* is the phrase in both Hokkian and Tio Cu. The lexical item of *pak kia* still can be exist but only a few people have the knowledge of it.

After having the data above, the researcher comes to some discussions:

1. The knowledge of lexical items for flora and fauna in local languages, Hokkian and Tio Cu, is less because of environment factors. This means that the language of Hokkian and Tio Cu had been influenced by Bahasa Indonesia as national language. This happened as in the era before the year of 2000, Chinese were not allowed to use their Chinese name, languages (Mandarin or local languages), culture, etc.
2. Code mixing and code switching play an important role in this situation because of the lack of knowledge of lexical item neither for flora and fauna that cause this happened.

## CONCLUSION

After analyzing data and coming to discussions, the researcher issue what will happen if knowledge of lexical items less in every communication? Should we have language maintenance or environmental consciousness to tackle this issue? These questions can only be answered to the society in having the language planning and also the environmental consciousness. The researcher hopes that the society will aware and conscious that language, culture, and environment are connected each other and the environmental consciousness can be achieved in the future.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher himself feels really grateful to his lecturer, Prof Amrin Saragih, M.A., Ph.D. for asking the students to have a mini research to the knowledge of lexical items for flora and fauna coded in environment of local languages, because for days and years, we are unconscious that we have to have environmental consciousness in order to maintain the language. Hence, this mini research present and introduce the various

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subject of ecolinguistics to the reader and the researcher hopes that this paper can give more information for those who are interested in it.

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