

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Problem

Language will always be interesting to study because it is a lasting legacy of a culture that is played out by either native speakers or other nations. The science of linguistics is not just about studying language, but involves a more in-depth exploration of how language functions, develops, and relates to human cognition and society. (Householder & Hockett, 1959) describes linguistics as a complex habitual system that includes various subsystems such as grammar, phonology, and semantics. Based on the object of study, linguistics consists of several branches and sub-branches such as phonetics, syntax, semantic, pragmatic, stylistics and many others.

Aceh is a province located on the northern tip of the Island of Sumatera, Indonesia. The capital of the province is Banda Aceh and it has 18 districts, one of which is Pidie. The district with Sigli as its capital has the second largest population in Aceh and consists of 23 sub-districts and 730 villages. Some of the sub-districts in Pidie district include: Tangse, Batee, Pidie, Mane, Titeue, Grong-grong, Mila and others. The dialect used in Pidie itself is quite similar to some dialects in other districts such as Banda Aceh, North Aceh, Aceh Jaya and others.

Acehnese, an Austronesian language spoken primarily in Aceh province, presents a rich linguistic landscape. Despite its significance as a regional language with unique morphosyntactic and semantic features, linguistic research, especially on the role of semantics in Acehnese, is still relatively limited compared to other languages in Indonesia. In fact, understanding semantic structures in this language not only

contributes to theoretical linguistics, but also has implications in language teaching, translation, and natural language processing.

Semantic roles refer to the functions played by various elements in a sentence, including subjects, objects, and predicates. Semantic role as the role acquired by an entity based on its position in the sentence. An understanding of semantic roles is essential in linguistics as it can help how to identify the way meaning is constructed in sentences. In Acehese, sentence structure can differ significantly from other languages, which shows how semantic roles can vary based on cultural and linguistic context. Semantic roles allow for a clearer understanding of how participants relate to actions in sentences, which makes a significant contribution to theoretical linguistics and applied language studies.

Semantics is a multifaceted field that focuses on the study of meaning in language. Semantic theory focuses as a discipline of meaning in language which is also one of the branches of linguistics (Hurford, 2007). The study of semantics focuses on how meaning is formed, understood, and used in communication at the level of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences.

*Semantic Roles and Valency in Acehese Language* aims to explore and understand by identifying semantic roles, arguments and predicates that will be presented in a valence focus on Acehese language. Through the analysis of semantic roles, this research is expected to contribute to the development of linguistics and support efforts to preserve local culture. In addition, the results of this study can be used as a reference for teaching Acehese in schools and other cultural programs and

strive to provide new insights into the linguistic richness of the Acehnese language and strengthen the position of local languages in the context of growing globalization.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Based on this background, this research is focused on answering the following questions:

1. What is the sentence structure of valency one and valency two in Acehnese?
2. What are the semantic roles associated with valency one and two in Acehnese?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

This study aims to examine and describe the relationship between sentence structure and semantic role in Acehnese, focusing on valency one and valency two.

The specific objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To analyze and describe the sentence structure of valency one and valency two in Aceh language.
2. To identify and explain the semantic roles associated with valency one and two in Acehnese sentences.

## **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This research will be limited to the analysis of semantic roles by using the theory of valence one and two in Acehnese language, especially Aceh Pidie dialect. The research will adopt the theory of semantic roles proposed by Charles W. Kreidler in his book entitled *Introducing English Semantics*. The focus will be on how the roles are identified and applied with the aim to provide a deep and focused understanding of how semantic roles function in sentence structure in either one or two valency.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of linguistics, especially in the field of semantic analysis. The results of this study will not only enrich the linguistic repertoire but can also be used as a reference for the teaching of Acehese language and the maintenance of local culture. In addition, a better understanding of the role of semantics in the Acehese language can help in the development of more effective communication tools as well as strengthen the cultural identity of the Acehese people. Through an in-depth exploration of the role of semantics in Acehese, it is hoped that a broader understanding of the uniqueness and richness of local languages in Indonesia can be developed.

## CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Semantic Role Theory

#### 2.1.1 Definition of Semantic Role

Semantic role is a concept used in linguistics to describe the function played by an entity in the context of a statement or sentence. According to (Fillmore, 1968), semantic roles can be seen as categories that classify arguments based on their role in an event or circumstance. In this case, semantic roles include not only subjects and objects, but also other elements such as instrument, location, and purpose.

For example, in the sentence *Arif geukoh naleung ngen sadeup* ‘Arif cut the grass using a sickle’, *Arif* ‘Arif’ functions as the agent, *naleung* ‘grass’ as the patient, and *sadeup* ‘sickle’ as the instrument. In Acehnese, these semantic roles can also be identified, although there may be variations in their usage. This shows that each language has a unique way of expressing semantic roles, which is one of the focuses in this study.

#### 2.1.2 Semantic Role Classification

Semantic role classification has become an important topic in linguistic studies. According to (Van Valin, Robert D., 1999), semantic roles can be grouped into several categories, such as agent, patient, recipient, benefactive, instrument, etc. (Kreidler, 1998, p. 69-277) mentions several categories of semantic roles including:

- Actor: The entity that performs the action.

- Affected: The entity affected by the action.
- Goal: The goal of the action.
- Source: The origin of where something comes from.
- Instrument: The tool or means used to perform the action.

This classification helps in understanding how the various arguments in a sentence function and interact with each other to form meaning.

In the context of Acehnese, this classification of semantic roles will be analyzed to see if there are differences or similarities with other languages. For example, does the term 'agent' in Acehnese have the same function as in English? This study will attempt to answer this question by providing relevant examples from everyday usage in Acehnese.

### 2.1.3 Argument

In semantics, an argument is an important component that serves to complete the meaning of a predicate in a sentence. Arguments can be defined as elements needed to explain who or what is involved in the action or state stated by the predicate. An argument is a phrase that fills a meaning slot in a situation stated by a predicate and specifies its essential details (Larionov, Chistova, Shelmanov, & Smirnov, 2019).

For example, in the sentence *Budiman geubaca buku* 'Budiman read a book', *Budiman* 'Budiman' is the subject argument, while *buku* 'book' is the object argument that completes the meaning of the predicate *geubaca* 'read'.

#### 2.1.4 Predicate

A predicate is the part of the sentence that states the action, state, or nature of the subject. In semantic analysis, predicates contain information about the relationship between the subject and other arguments. Predicates are usually represented by verbs, but can also include adjectives or other phrases that provide more information about the subject. Like the statement (Kimmelman et al., 2019) language is fundamentally concerned with predication, where all languages use predicates to link entities (also called arguments) with events and/or properties. Therefore, predicates have an argument structure, i.e. the number and type of arguments required and the way they are accommodated in the syntax. For example, in the sentence *Mak geutaguen bu* ‘Mom cooks rice’, the word *geutaguen* ‘cooks’ serves as a predicate that describes the action performed by the subject *Mak* ‘Mom’.

#### 2.1.5 Relationship Between Argument and Predicate

Arguments and predicates are closely related in sentence structure. The predicate determines the number and type of arguments needed for the sentence to be complete. For example, a transitive predicate such as ‘give’ requires two arguments, namely the subject and object, while an intransitive predicate such as “sleep” requires only one argument, namely the subject. Therefore, understanding the function of arguments and predicates is important in analyzing the structure and meaning of sentences in various languages.

According to (Lestari & Mulyadi, 2023), an argument in a sentence is a mandatory element. The presence of this argument depends on the nature or semantic characteristics of the verb that acts as a predicate in the syntactic structure of the

sentence. The argument structure represents the relationship between the semantics and syntax of the predicate (which is generally a verb). It contains lexical information regarding the number of arguments, their syntactic type, as well as their hierarchical organization that is required to be mapped into the syntactic structure.

#### 2.1.6 Valency

(Kreidler, 1998, p.67) says that a proposition consists of a predicate and a number of arguments, also known as referring expressions. The specific number of arguments associated with a predicate is referred to as valency. Valency can range from zero to three. The meaning of a predicate is not only affected by its valency, but also by the semantic roles assigned to its arguments.

(Hasan, 2024) also says that valency is a verb property that determines the number and type of arguments it requires. He also says that the valency of a verb determines the number of roles it can express. For example, trivalent verbs can express three thematic roles such as agent, patient, and instrument. Divalent verbs can express two roles, namely agent and patient. Meanwhile, monovalent verbs can only express one role, which is agent.

For example, the verb 'cook' requires two roles, namely agent and affected. The verb 'sleep' only requires one role, namely as an actor. Therefore, understanding the functions of arguments and predicates is important in analyzing the structure and meaning of sentences in various languages.

## 2.2 Related Research

### 2.2.1 Previous Studies on Aceh Language

There have been many studies on the Acehese language, both language-related, and language structure-related. For example, a study by (Zulbaidah, 2022), examined the use of Acehese among the younger generation, especially university students, and identified factors that influence the decline in the use of the language. The results showed that the lack of use of Acehese in their environment had an impact on cultural identity. This research shows the importance of paying attention to the Aceh language which is feared to be extinct so that it provides an initial illustration that the Aceh language deserves further research to avoid adverse effects on the Aceh language.

(Taib 2014) examines a study that discusses the function, category, and semantic role in Acehese sentences. This research can provide insight into how these roles are represented in Acehese sentence structures and shows the importance of paying attention to context in analyzing semantic roles in Acehese.

### 2.2.2 Semantic Role Analysis in Other Languages

Studies on semantic roles are not only limited to Acehese, but have also been conducted in various other languages. For example, research by (Jackendoff, 1990) on English shows how semantic roles function in forming sentence structures. This finding provides the basis for further research on the role of semantics in other languages, including Acehese.

The study by (Ringo, Sipangpang Anggun Daniela, uliana Sari, & Astuti, 2024) is also relevant for Semantic Roles in Acehnese research as it shows how semantic roles can influence social interaction. The study highlights the importance of semantic understanding in communication, as well as how the use of appropriate words can improve communication effectiveness.

A comparison between semantic roles in Acehnese and other languages can provide new insights into how meaning is constructed in various linguistic contexts. It can also help in the development of existing theories regarding semantic roles and their applications in different languages.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

This research will use a theoretical approach that examines the relationship between predicates and arguments to determine semantic roles. The theory of semantic roles developed by Kreidler will be the basis for identifying the roles that exist in Acehnese. The study of semantic roles in Acehnese is an important area in linguistics, especially in understanding how meaning is organized and expressed in sentences.

(Kreidler, 1998, p.67) explains that semantic role is the role played by an entity in the context of a sentence as the function performed by the components in a sentence to indicate their relationship to the action or state expressed by the predicate. He divides semantic roles into several categories, see Table 2.1 bellow:

**Table 2.1**

<b>Actor</b>	The role of an argument that performs some action without affecting any other entity.
<b>Affected</b>	The role of an argument that undergoes a change due to some event or is affected by some other entity.
<b>Affecting</b>	The role of an argument that, without any action, affects another entity.
<b>Agent</b>	The role of an argument that by its action affects some other entity.
<b>Associate</b>	The role of an argument that tells the status or identity of another argument, the theme.
<b>Effect</b>	The role of an argument that comes into existence through the action of the predicate.
<b>Place</b>	The role of an argument that names the location in which the action of the predicate occurs.
<b>Theme</b>	The role of an argument that is the topic of a predicate that does not express action - a stative predicate.

These categories become the foundation of this research which will be discussed in detail in chapter IV.

This theoretical framework is expected to provide clear guidance in analyzing the data obtained from this research. By using this approach, it is expected to find certain patterns in the use of semantic roles in Acehnese that may not be seen in other languages.

## 2.4 Gloss

Gloss is an annotation that explains the meaning or function of each word part in a sentence, especially when discussing the structure of a foreign language or a language that is not yet widely known. In this research, gloss will be presented in the form of abbreviation which is the result of shortening the form of words or phrases without changing their basic meaning. Abbreviation plays a supporting role in this research which functions as an explanation or translation of words to make language delivery more efficient and easy to understand. All abbreviations found in this study were taken based on the explanation from the dictionary *A Dictionary Of Linguistics And Phonetics* by (Picard, 2004).