

Language and Culture: Kinship System of Batak Toba-Samosir Ethnic

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Abstract— The statement that structure of a language determines the way in which the speakers of that language view the world is still debatable. In relation to this, the objectives of this study are: (1) to describe how Batak Toba-Samosir ethnic create the kinship system, especially the terms of address, (2) to describe the use of terms of address in Batak Toba-Samosir ethnic, and (3) to analyze the terms of address semantically fit into Indonesian language.

The result of the study shows that the kinship system was created based on blood, marga (family name) and the relationship in the society. The terms of address of Batak Toba-Samosir were used by Batak people when they speak among themselves using Batak language or Indonesian. Sometimes they also use the terms of address when they speak to other ethnics. Semantically, some of the terms of address can be analyzed but some do not. In short, they create them arbitrary. Besides, other ethnics sometimes use the terms of address inappropriately because they make an analogy to Indonesian language, and consequently it breaks the communication.

Keywords—Kinship; Batak toba-samosir; Marga (family name); Addressing

I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between culture and language is related to Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. One of the strongest statements is that the way in which we think about the world is influenced by the language we use. In line with this, Kramsch [2: 11] quoted Sapir's hypothesis, claims that the structure of the language one habitually uses influences the manner in which one thinks and behaves. Their claim was based on their study on contrasting the grammar of Average European (SAE) and Hopi. In SAE the activity or event is a fixed time. Therefore events occur, have occurred, will occur. But Hopi provides a process orientation of the world. For example ; *They stayed ten days*. In Hopi this sentence becomes *They stayed until the eleventh day* or *They stayed after the tenth day*. The same thing also happens in countable noun.

In relation to countable noun, the formulation of Indonesian language and Batak language is generally the same, that is by stating the number before the noun or by repeating the noun itself. For example, *book*. In Indonesian language it is *buku* while in Batak language it is *bukku*. For the plural form, (*books*) is *buku-buku* in Indonesian language and *bukku-bukku* in Batak language. Seeing this example, Indonesian language and Batak language

formulates the plural form in the same way. But in some cases, especially in terms of address, it does not work. For example, *father* (*bapak* in Indonesian) and *amang* in Batak language.¹ The plural form of *bapak* is *bapak-bapak*, that is by repeating the noun itself. But in Batak language, if *amang* is repeated (*amang-amang*), it does not mean that this word is in plural form but it has another meaning, that is *husband*. To put it differently, plural form in Batak language is the same as Indonesian but there are some terms of address that look plural but they have another meaning, consequently it might break communication when other ethnics make the formula as they do in Bahasa Indonesia. Each of them will be elaborated deeper on the result and discussion section below.

Boas as quoted by Duranti [1: 55] stated that people classify the words arbitrary. His famous example is different words for *snow* in Eskimo. *Aput*, expressing snow in the ground; *qana*, falling snow, *pipsirpoq*, drifting snow, and *qimasqsug*, a snow dirt. Words for *snow* in Eskimo became a standard reference in the popular and scientific discussions of the relationship among language, culture, and thought. In this case, there might be a cultural motivation for the development of lexical distinctions.

This institution was later modified by Whorf who argued that if a language encodes a particular experience of the world, its use might predispose its speakers to see the world according to the experience encoded in it. In relation to Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, I am curious to investigate the Kinship System of Batak Toba-Samosir Ethnic group, that is the terms of address since they are richer than the terms of address in Indonesian language. In addition, some of the formula in plural forms are different from those in Indonesian language that might break the communication.

Fasold [4: 3] stated that the terms of address are really part of complete semantic systems having to do with social relationships. This statement is not true in some cases. In Batak Toba-samosir ethnic, for example, there is uncertainty in the terms of address system. Semantically, some of them can be analyzed and some do not. In other words they create them arbitrary. Each of them will

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be discussed in the following section (the result and discussion section).

In Indonesian language, the word for uncle is *paman*. But in Batak Toba-Samosir, the word for *paman* has 4 (four) classification, namely: *Amangtua* (father's older brother), *Amanguda* (father's younger brother), *Amangboru* (father's sister's husband), and *Tulang* (mother's brother). Seeing this fact, it can be inferred that Batak Toba-Samosir ethnic view the world easier than those of English and Indonesian.

Whorf in Wardhough [6: 217] stated that the relationship between language and culture was a deterministic one. Whorf does not go all the way to say that the structure of a language completely determines the way its speakers view the world but no individual is free to describe nature with absolute impartiality but is constrained to certain modes of interpretation even he thinks himself most free. In other words, even though someone is free to describe the world, it is still constraint how he interprets it. Based on this statement it can be interpreted that different experience will view the world differently.

In this paper, it will be elaborated the terms of address of Batak Toba-Samosir ethnic and it will be analyzed why they do so. Furthermore, it will be analyzed whether the terms of address fit into Indonesian language forms. By analyzing this, it can be seen whether the way in which we think about the world is influenced by the language we use.

II. METHODOLOGY

Batak Toba-Samosir is one of ethnics in Indonesia, exactly located in North Sumatra province. The data of the terms of address were gathered from two qualified informants. They are considered qualified informants because they are native speakers (67 and 72 years old), got experience in leading cultural ceremonies of Batak Toba-Samosir. To have a deeper understanding of the terms of address, both the informants were asked some questions by the writer, for examples ; *How do you call your mother's brother, sister, your father's older brother, young brother, etc.* Furthermore, to know whether the terms of address fit into Indonesian language, some sentences produced by other ethnics when they interact to Batak people using Indonesian language were recorded. The procedures of gathering the data are: (1) Noting all the terms of address mentioned by the informants, (2) All the drafts were then given to the informants. This is done for verification, (3) Rewriting the data based on the feedback, and (4) Analyzing the data semantically.

III. THE RESULT OF THE RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Kinship system of Batak Toba-Samosir Ethnic

Kinship System of Batak Toba-Samosir Ethnic in this paper refers to the terms of address used by Batak Toba-samosir ethnic group. Based on the data gathered from the qualified informants, they are created based on blood, marriage, *marga* (family name), and based on their relationship in the society. Kinship System of Batak Toba-Samosir Ethnic based on *marga* (family name) have an important role. The same *marga* are forbidden to get married even though, biologically, there is no relationship among them at all. On the way around, marriage can be happened for those who have blood relationship. For example, A is *marga* 'Nainggolan', automatically all his children are Nainggolan. It happens because this ethnic belongs to patriarch. Then, if A has a sister and his sister has a son, this son can get married to his daughter. The same terms can have different function, for example *Amangtua*. This is a term for my father's older brother and for my mother's older sister's husband. My father's older brother can function as my father but not my mother's older sister's husband. Batak people can see it from their *marga* (family name).

3.2. The Use of Terms of Address in Batak Toba-Samosir Ethnic

In reality every ethnic has kinship system. Wardhough [6: 223] stated that kinship systems are various, and some systems are richer than others. Batak Toba-Samosir Ethnic, as one of ethnics in Indonesia, is very rich in terms of address. For example, *uncle*. In Batak Toba-Samosir ethnic, *uncle* is classified into 4 classifications, namely : (1) *Amangtua* (father's older brother and mother's older sister's husband), (2) *Amanguda* (father's younger brother and mother's younger sister's husband), (3) *Tulang* (mother's brother) and (4) *Amangboru* (father's sister's husband).

In relation to the description above, it can be seen that the same terms of address have different function. As it was stated that *Amangtua*, *Amanguda* are used to address father's brothers or mother's sisters' husbands) but in a formal ceremonies, only father's brothers can substitute father's position. For example, if the father cannot attend cultural ceremony, *Amangtua* and *Amanguda* (father's older brother and younger brother) can substitute father's position but not *amangtua* and *amanguda* (mother's sisters' husbands). In other words, the same address does not have the same function or position in the cultural ceremony. To know the differences of this, people usually make a brief explanation.

Ito or *Iboto* is used by brothers and sisters. The man calls his sister *ito* or *iboto* and vice versa. In a formal ceremony, the role of daughters and sons (especially who have got married) is different but not the term of address. Seeing the term of

address, it seems they have equal position but in fact not.

Based on blood, it can clearly be seen from the marriage. In wedding ceremony, the term of address based on blood and marriage is badly needed. Every person in this event has a special role. Based on his position, every body (especially who has got married) automatically knows his/her role, what s/he should do. During this ceremony, all the people who have the same *marga* with the groom is called *paranak* and those who have the same *marga* with the bride is called *parboru*. By knowing this position, they will behave differently during the ceremony; the language they use, the position of seat, etc.

In giving the speech, the representative of groom will address the bride family and those who have the same *marga* with the bride's father *parrajaon*. The basic root of this word is *raja* means king. Therefore, groom's family should respect the big family of bride including those who have the same *marga* with the bride. In Indonesian language, the father of the bride and the groom address each other using *besan* but in Batak Toba-Samosir this word is divided into two; *parrajaon* and *lae*. *Lae* is term of address used by the bride's father to address the groom's father. Indonesian and Batak Toba-Samosir (as one of ethnic in Indonesia) views the world differently. It happens because Batak Toba-Samosir allows them to categorize what they think differently from Indonesian speakers.

Wardhough [6: 224] stated that children are sometimes taught to use *uncle* for close friends of their parents. In other words, their children call uncle to the people who has no kin relationships. The same approach also happens to Batak Toba-Samosir but a little bit different. As it was elaborated before that the term uncle is classified into 4; *amangtua*, *amanguda*, *tulang* and *amangboru*. The parents usually teach their children to call those who have no blood or *marga* relationship using *amangboru*. This term is considered more polite than *tulang* in this culture. But based on blood or marriage relationship *tulang* is the one who must be respected by all his sisters' children. People prefers using *amangboru* than *tulang* in social relationship because they consider it more polite. In ancient time, *tulang* and his daughter can not refuse if his sister's son wants to marry his daughter. It is considered taboo. Based on this culture the term of address *amangboru* is used to make positive face because he is not in position to fulfill everything what his sister's son asks for. The same address *ito* is used by man and woman. While *Lae* is between man and man and *eda* is between woman and woman. In Batak Toba-Samosir, it is not polite to call adult's name. In other words, this address is showing the politeness. To put it differently, the terms of address of Batak

Toba-Samosir Ethnic make the people understand how to behave appropriately in their daily lives.

3.2. Semantic Analysis of Terms of Address

As it was stated previously, the term of address *uncle* is classified into 4 classifications, namely; *Amang tua*, *Amanguda*, *Tulang* and *Amangboru*. *Amangtua* is addressed to father's older brother and mother's older sister's husband and *inangtua* for their wives. If we analyze each of them semantically, this word might be created based on its root. For example, *Amangtua* consists of two words; *amang* and *tua* where *amang* means father and *tua* means old. Literally, it means older father. It might be happened because this ethnic belongs to patriarch. *Amanguda* is used to address father's younger brother or mother's younger sister's husband and *inanguda* for their wives. Not like *amangtua* and *inangtua*, *amanguda* and *inanguda* consists only one word because *uda* itself has no meaning.

Another terms of address form is *Tulang* and *Nantulang* for his wife. It only refers to mother's brother. It is difficult to analyze linguistically or non linguistically why the people use this word to call his mother's brother in that way. Therefore, it can be concluded that the people create this word arbitrary. *Amangboru* is another kind of uncle. *Amangboru* is used to address father's sister's husband and *Namboru* for his wife. The word *Amangboru* consists of two words; *amang* means father and *boru* refers to woman.

In relation to the word *inangtua* as it is elaborated above (consists of two words; *inang* (mother) and *tua* (old), literally, it means older mother. Logically it is accepted because in daily activities, all my mother's sisters or mother's brothers' wives are also my mother. It happens because in this culture, the blood or descent is tightly related. *Inanguda* is addressed to mother's younger sisters who have got married or father's younger brother's wife. This word consists only one word because *uda* itself has no meaning. In Indonesian language there is a word *muda* which means young. If we relate this to Indonesian language, the word *uda* is close to the sounds *muda* which means young. But in Batak Toba, *young* means *poso*. If this word is combined with the word *inang* it becomes *Inang poso*. But *Inang poso* or *inang naposo* is another term of address in Batak Toba Samosir. *Inang na poso* is addressed to the wife of *amangnaposo*. *Amang naposo* is my brother's son (I am a woman). While the daughter of my brother is addressed *maen* or *parumaen*. If we make an analogy of *amang naposo* (address form to my brother's son) it should be *inangnaposo* to address my brother's daughter. In conclusion, logical structure is not appropriate in this case. It might be so because this ethnic is strongly influenced by blood of father not mother. Term of address *maen* or *parumaen* (my daughter in law)

is used to address my brother's daughter because in ancient time it is a must to marry my son to my brother's daughter. In ancient time it is considered taboo if my brother and his daughter refuse to get married to my son. Nowadays, it is not a must anymore but this address is still used. Another term is *Namboru* which is used to address my father's sister. *Boru* means woman. *Boru* preceded by prefix "Nam" which is similar to prefix *nan* in the word *nantulang* (my *tulang*'s wife), which refers to woman.

Another classification of terms of address is grand father and grand mother. These are classified into two classification. *Ompung doli* (grandfather) and *ompung boru* is addressed to my mother's parents while my father's parents is *amanta* (pronounced *Amatta*) means grandfather and *inanta* (pronounced *inatta*) means grandmother. *Ta* in this address form is derived from the word *hita* means we. The word *hita* functions as a subject of a sentence and it becomes *ta* if it functions as a possessive pronoun. It also can be used to other nouns, for examples. *Jabutta* (our house), etc. *Amatta* means our father. Implicitly, my father's parents is also my parents but it is not my mother's parents because Batak Toba-Samosir ethnic belongs to patriarch.

The word *ompung doli* consists of 2 words; *ompung* means grandfather or grandmother and *doli* means a man. If the word *doli* is repeated it will be *doli-doli*. The word *doli-doli* looks plural but not. In Indonesian language *doli-doli* is *bujang* which means a single man (a man who has not got married yet). Batak Toba Samosir avoid using the word *bujang* even though they speak Indonesian because it is a taboo word (means vagina).

Another term is *Inangbaju*. *Inangbaju* is addressed to mother's younger sister who has not got married yet. When she gets married the term of address becomes *inanguda*. The word *inangbaju* consists of 2 words; *inang* (mother) and *baju* (cloth). Literally, it means a mother who is wearing clothes. The things that need to answer is : Does it mean that when they get married they do not wear clothes anymore?. Or does it mean that when they get married and make love without wearing cloth? It is still questioning to determine the way people create this word.

Mother's younger sister who has not got married is called *inangbaju* and it becomes *inanguda* when she gets married while *Inangtua* is used to address mother's older sister whether she has got married or not. It might be happened because in ancient time it is forbidden or taboo to get married before older sister. Nowadays it is considered not taboo anymore but this term of address is still used.

C4.The Use of Terms of Address Using Indonesian Language.

One interesting way in which people use the terms of address is the word that looks plural. In Indonesian language, the plural form is usually formed by repeating the word; *bapak* (father) and *bapak-bapak* (fathers). But this does not happen to Batak-Toba language. The word *Amang* in Indonesian language is *bapak* (father), it does not mean that *amang-amang* means *bapak-bapak* (fathers) but husband. The same thing also happens to the word *inang* which means *ibu* (mother). *Inang-inang* does not mean *ibu-ibu* but wife. When the people want to use term of address in plural form, for example, *bapak-bapak*, they use another term *hamu amanami* which literally means you our father and *hamu inanami*, you our mother. *Hamu*, in this context refers to plural form. In other context, the word *Hamu* can also function as singular form, for example, if a child talks to his father or mother, s/he says :*hamu* to show politeness. In short, the word *hamu* as plural or singular can be seen based on the context. This is in line with the previous statement given some some experts [3: 364], and Watts [5:1-3], that context determines the politeness.

There is a word in Indonesian that Batak people avoid when they speak Indonesian language because it is considered taboo, for example *bujang* (single). They prefer to have a long term *belum menikah* which means has not got married yet.

Batak people who were born outside North Sumatera, particularly Samosir, usually use Indonesian language when they interact each other or to other ethnics. When they interact among Batak people the terms of address are fully understood by them because their parents teach them. One thing that can break the communication is the use of term of address *tulang*. When Batak people use Indonesian language and use this term of address, other ethnics might get confused because *tulang* in Indonesian language means bone. For example, if Batak people say in Indonesian language, *Tulang saya tinggal di Medan*, (He means "My uncle leaves in Medan"), the other ethnics who don't know this term of address may think that there is something wrong with the speaker because they interpretes it as, "My bone leaves in Medan". Batak people prefers to use *tulang* than *paman* because what they think might be different from what the listeners think. Therefore they usually make a brief explanation, for example: my *paman*, my father's older brother; my *paman*, my sister's brother, etc. Nowadays many young generation cannot speak Batak language (especially who are growing up outside North Sumatra province). In reality, even though these Batak people use Indonesian language, they still use terms of address of Batak. This is done in order to have right interpretation since Batak language has more terms of address than those of Indonesian.

Ito is used to address older or younger brother and *eda* for his wife. (I am a woman). In other words, this term of address is used to address woman or vice versa. *Lae* is another term of address which is used by man to address other man while *eda* is used by a woman to address other woman. In Batak Toba –Samosir, it is not polite to call adult's name. To put it differently, this term of address is showing the politeness.

As it was mentioned before, the way to change singular into plural is generally the same in Indonesian and Batak Toba-Samosir language but in some cases they are totally different because they have different meaning if they make the same analogy (as it was elaborated before). Besides this, another wrong analogy also happens to other terms of address. For example, in my daily communication, I use Indonesian language to my close friends who have different ethnics with me (they are Javanese) but I (I am a woman) still use *ito* and *eda* if I was talking about my older brother and his wife. In Indonesian language, older brother is called *abang* and his wife is *kakak ipar* or *kakak*. Seeing this, my friends might conclude that *ito* means *abang* (big brother) and *eda* means *kakak* (big sister). To show their intimate, all my close friends (men and women) call my brother and his wife as I do (I am a woman). The purpose of my friends, especially they are men, are not met since my brother and his wife do not feel comfortable.

There is also a term of address in Indonesian language which Batak people avoid using them even though they use Indonesian language, that is *bujang* (a single man or unmarried man) because it is a taboo word (*bujang* in Batak Toba language is vagina). They prefer to use sentence like; *he is still single or he has not got married yet*. It can be concluded then that people prefer to have a sentence than a word even though it is more simple.

IV. CONCLUSION

Kinship System of Batak Toba-Samosir Ethnic is based on blood and marriage, *marga* (family name) and social relationship. Some of the same terms of address can be used to address different relationships. To know this, it can be seen from the context. Kinship system of Batak Toba-Samosir ethnic is created because of the culture. In other words culture makes people create the terms of address. Since the terms of address of Batak Toba-Samosir ethnic is richer than that of Indonesian and English, they view the world much easier. Based on the description above it can be concluded that speakers from different culture view the world differently.

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