LANGUAGE AND CULTURE: KINDSHIP SYSTEM OF BATAK SIMALUNGUN ETHNIC

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ABSTRACT

Batak Simalungun is one of ethnics in Indonesia, exactly located in North Sumatra province. 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 Simalungun ethnic create the kinship system, especially the terms of address, (2) to describe the use of terms of address in Batak Simalungun ethnic, and (3) to analyze the terms of address semantically fit into Indonesian language. The data of the terms of address were gathered from two qualified informants. They are considered qualified informants because they are native speakers (52 and 65 years old), got experience in leading cultural ceremonies of Batak Simalungun. To have a deeper understanding of the terms of address, both the informants were asked some questions by the writer. 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 Simalungun were used by Simalungun people when they speak among themselves using Simalungun 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 Simalungun; Marga (family name); Addressing

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 short, 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 Simalungun language it is bukku. For the plural form, (books) is buku-buku in Indonesian language and bukku-bukku in Batak Simalungun language. Seeing this example, Indonesian language and Batak Simalungun 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 bapa in Batak Simalungun language. The plural form of bapak is parbapaon but in Batak Simalungun language, if bapa is repeated (bapa-bapa), 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 Simalungun 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, The writers curious to investigate the Kinship System of Batak Simalungun Ethnic, 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 Simalungun 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 be discussed in the following section (the result and discussion section).

In Indonesian language, the word for uncle is paman. But in Batak Simalungun, the word for paman has 4 (four) classification, namely: Bapa tua (father’s older brother), Bapa Tongah/Bapa Anggi (father’s younger brother), Kela (father’s sister’s husband), and Tulang (mother’s brother). Seeing this fact, it can be inferred that Batak Simalungun 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 Simalungun 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.

**METHOD**

Batak Simalungun 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 (52 and 65 years old), got experience in leading cultural ceremonies of Batak Simalungun. 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.

**ANALYSIS**

3.1. Kinship system of Simalungun Ethnic

Kinship System of Batak Simalungun Ethnic in this paper refers to the terms of address used by Batak Simalungun 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 Simalungun 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 ‘Siahaan’, automatically all his children are Siahaan. 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. It usually called ‘Pariban’. The same terms can have different function, for example Bapa tua. 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 Simalungun people can see it from their marga (family name).
3.2. The Use of Terms of Address in Batak Simalungun 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 Simalungun Ethnic, as one of ethnic in Indonesia, is very rich in terms of address. For example, uncle. In Batak Simalungun ethnic, uncle is classified into 4 classifications, namely : (1) Bapa tua (father’s older brother and mother’s older sister’s husband), (2) Bapa Tongah & Bapa Anggi (father’s younger brother and mother’ younger sister’s husband), (3) Tulang (mother’s brother) and (4) Kela (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 Bapa tua. Bapa tongah/ Bapa anggi 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, Bapa tua, Bapa tongah, and bapa anggi (father’s older brother and younger brother) can substitute father’s position but Bapa tua, Bapa tongah, and bapa anggi ( 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.

Boto and Botou is used by brothers and sisters. The man calls his sister boto and the woman calls her brother botou. 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 bridge’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 Simalungun 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 Simalungun (as one of ethnic in Indonesia) views the world differently. It happens because Batak Simalungun 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 kind relationships. The same approach also happens to Batak Simalungun but a little bit different. As it was elaborated before that the term uncle is classified into 4; Bapa tua, Bapa tongah/bapa anggi, tulang and kela. The parents usually teach their children to call those who have no blood or marga relationship using kela. 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 kela 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 kela 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 boto is used by man and woman. While Lae is between man and man and eda is between woman and woman. In Batak Simalungun, 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 Simalungun Ethnic make the people understand how to behave appropriately in their daily lives.

3.3. Semantic Analysis of Terms of Address

As it was stated previously, the term of address uncle is classified into 4 classifications, namely; Bapa tua, Bapa tongah/bapa anggi, tulang and kela. Bapa tua 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, Bapa tua consists of two words; Bapa and tua where Bapa means father and tua means old. Literally, it means older father. It might be happened because this ethnic belongs to patriarch. Bapa tongah/bapa anggi is used to address father’s younger
brother or mother’s younger sister’s husband and Inang tongah/inang anggi for their wives. Tongah means tengah and anggi means kecil.

Another term of address form is Tulang and Atturang 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. kela is another kind of uncle. kela is used to address father’s sister’s husband and Nambora for his wife.

In relation to the word inang tua 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. Inang tongah/inang anggi 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 usa itself has no meaning.

In Indonesian language there is a word muda which means young. If we relate this to Indonesian language, the word tongah is close to the sound tengah which means younger than bapak tua and anggi means younger than bapak tua and bapak anggi. But in Batak Simalungun, young means anggi. If this word is combined with the word inang it becomes Inang anggi. While the daughter of my brother is addressed maen or parumaen. 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 Namboora which is used to address my father’s sister. Boru means woman. Boru preceded by prefix “Nani” 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. Oppung dalahi (grandfather) and oppung daboru is addressed to my mother’s parents while my father’s parents is Oppung dalahi means grandfather and tutua means grandmother. The word oppung dalahi consists of 2 words; oppung means grandfather or grandmother and dalahi means a man.

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

One interesting way in which people use 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 Simalungun language. The word Bapak in Indonesian language is bapak (father), it does not mean that bapa-bapa 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 hanima bapanim which literally means you our father and hanima inang nami, you our mother. Hanima, in this context refers to plural form. In other context, the word Hanima can also function as singular form, for example, if a child talks to his father or mother, s/he says: hanima to show politeness. In short, the word hanima 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 Simalungun 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 Simalungun people who were born outside North Sumatera, particularly Raya, usually use Indonesian language when they interact each other or to other ethnics. When they interact among Batak Simalungun 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 Simalungun 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 interprets 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.

_Botou_ 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. _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 Simalungun, 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 Simalungun 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 writer’s daily communication, someone use Indonesian language to her close friends who have different ethnicities with her (they are Javaneses) but she (a woman) still use _boto_ and _eda_ if I was talking about her older brother and his wife. In Indonesian language, older brother is called _abang_ and his wife is _kakak ipar_ or _kakak_. Seeing this, her friends might conclude that _boto_ means _abang_ (big brother) and _eda_ means _kakak_ (big sister). To show their intimate, all close friends (men and women) call my brother and his wife as she does (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 Simalungun 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 Simalungun language is vagina). They prepare 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.

**CONCLUSION**

Kinship System of Batak Simalungun 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 Simalungun 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 Simalungun 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.

**REFERENCES:**


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