

LINGUISTICS VITALITY, LANGUAGE SHIFT AND SOCIAL CHANGE OF THE REJANG LANGUAGE OF BENGKULU: A CASE STUDY OF THE USE OF TERM OF ADDRESS AMONG THE YOUTH

Ngudining Rahayu

*Departement of Language and Art Education
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Bengkulu University
E-mail: ngudiningrahayu@unib.ac.id*

Abstract: This study is intended to find out the use of the term of kinship as the term of address in speech acts among the youth of the Rejang ethnic group in Bengkulu. The research subjects were the Rejang native speakers of 15-30 years old. This research is based on sociolinguistics study. The data are utterances that contain elements of the term of address that refers to the kinship relationship between speakers and interlocutors. The data obtained from a number of selected informants through participatory observation, interview and recording. The results of the research as follows: (1) in the speech act, the youth of the Rejang tend to use the general term to address the interlocutors without notice to the kinship relationship between himself or herself and the addressed; (2) the youth of the Rejang didn't recognize anymore the terms of kinship in the Rejang language which refers to kinship relationship, both from marriage relations and from blood relations; (3) the replacement of the term of kinship as a term of address with a general terms regarded as the extinction of those concept among the youth of the Rejang; in other words, it was a language shift phenomenon in the specific domain of the Rejang language; (4) the phenomenon of the extinct of the concept of kinship among the youth of the Rejang shows the decline of the Rejang language vitality and social change of the Rejang ethnic group.

Keywords: *Term of Address, Language Vitality, Language Shift, Social Change, Rejang*

Language is a social phenomenon (Boas 1964; . The use of language by a particular group of community members, for example the use of terms of address, reflects social relations between the speaker and the interlocutor. In utterances, the term of address refers to certain references, namely individuals, who socially have a certain status and position based on gender, age, occupation, religion, social position, kinship relations or marital relations. The choice of using the term is related to the speaker's language capacity, i.e. the vocabulary that can be used as a term of address, in addition to his knowledge of social relations.

This study focused on finding the tendency of vocabulary choices to address by young people of the Rejang ethnic groups in everyday conversation. This research based on sociolinguistic approach Fasold 1984; Firth 1964; Fishman 1972a, 1972b; Appel and Pieter Muysken, 1988). The basic assumption is that the choice of vocabulary usage for address in everyday conversation related to the language capacity of the speaker and his knowledge of social relations. A lexicon, because it is no longer recognized by the speaker, is replaced by another lexicon as the term of address in the conversation. For example, the word *minen* means that the uncle's wife (the father's sister or mother's sister) is replaced with the word *bibi* which means (a) the little mother's sister or litle father's sister or (b) a woman who is younger than the mother or father. The word *minen* refers to individuals who have marital relations but not genealogical relations with the speaker. In meaning (a) the word *bibi* refers to individuals who have genealogical relations with the speaker, and in the meaning of (b) the word refers to individuals who only have social relations but do not have either genealogical relations or marital relations.

Theoretically, the extinct of a number of lexicons to speakers of a language means the loss of a number of concepts to the speaker. In this context, the concept in question is social relations, kinship, and marriage that describes the organization or social structure of the speaking community. On the one hand, the loss of a number of lexicons, in this context is the lexicon of kinship relations, indicating a decrease in the vitality of the language concerned. On the other hand,

this phenomenon also shows social change Fasold 1984; Firth 1964; Fishman 1972a, 1972b; Appel and Pieter Muysken, 1988).

Method

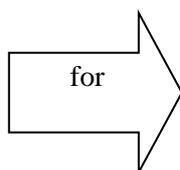
This research is based on sociolinguistics, focused on the use of the term of address in everyday utterances among youth of Rejang ethnic groups in Bengkulu. The subjects of this research were Rejang ethnic youth, aged 18-35 years, native speakers of Rejang language, some who lived in the village and some others lived in the district or sub-city cities. Research data is in the form of utterances that contain the terms of address, both in the form of kinship terminology and other lexicons that can be used to address. In addition, the data of this study are also in the form of knowledge of research subjects about kinship relations and Rejang ethnic social organization. Data collection was conducted through interviews with and recording utterances from the research subject, and to the kinship terminology and lexicon questions to a number of informants as well. Data analysis is carried out by utilizing semantic principles (Leech 1981) to see the reference shift and the principles of discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995, 204) to see the phenomenon of social shifts.

Result and Discussion

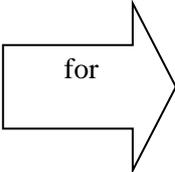
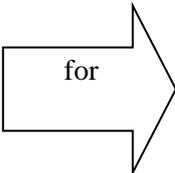
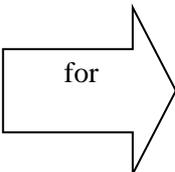
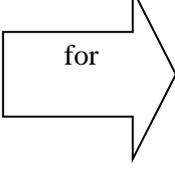
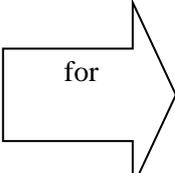
Based on speech data and kinship terminology and lexicon lists received through the interview, the following phenomena are found. First, in the speech act, the youth of the Rejang tend to use the general term to address the interlocutors without notice to the kinship relationship between himself or herself and the addressed. A common phenomenon is replacement. The lexicon of *tamang* “aunt’s husband (mother’s sister or father’s sister)” for example, is no longer used to address the interlocutor who has a kinship relationship with the speaker. To address the intended interlocutor, the word *mamak* “uncle” is used (father’s younger brother or mother’s younger brother or adult male younger than father or mother). In utterance *Kumu coa majok Yan, mamak?* (You don’t invite Yan, uncle?) the speaker uses the *mamak* to address the interlocutor. In the case of the above speech, the other person is “the speaker’s aunt’s husband”. In such cases, the speaker and the interlocutor have kinship relationships. The appropriate designation according to the relation is *tamang*. Another example is utterance *Des, be ko tmulung uku tnelek bajau* (Des, later help me turn clothes on clothesline). Des, is the nickname of Desmi, the sister of the speaker’s husband. Between Desmi and the speaker there is a marriage relationship, and in this connection the term of address for Desmi is a *segadis* or *gadis*. Furthermore, in the following utterances, there appears the lexicon replacement for the term *gindo*. *Gindo* is a term for a sister or older brother-in-law or male-in-law (woman speaking). *Wak, keme ngucep daw trimo kasiak atas kedatangan wak* (Wak, we thank you very much for coming). In almost all the utterances obtained, the lexicon used to address the interlocutor who has kinship relations with the speaker is replaced by a non-kinship lexicon. This phenomenon shows that Rejang young people no longer pay attention to kinship relations and use kinship lexicons to address the interlocutor. On the contrary, young people tend to use the non-lexicon based on age and sex relations.

Furthermore, the youth of the Rejang didn’t recognize anymore the terms of kinship in the Rejang language which refers to kinship relationship, both from marriage relations and from blood relations. Based on the list of questions provided for research subjects, it was found that Rejang young people no longer recognize kinship lexicons to address the interlocutors in the kin relations in everyday conversation. They address the other person who has a certain kinship relationship with them using a non-kinship lexicon. The following is a table that shows the replacement of the term of address.

asoak; adik
“little brother or sister”
“the younger person”



upik
“wife’s younger sister” (man speaking)
kuyung
“wife’s younger brother” (man speaking)
segadis; gadis
“husband’s younger sister” (woman speaking)
sebujang; bujang
“husband’s younger brother” (woman speaking)

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>kakak; ayuk “old brother or old sister” “the older person”</p> |  for | <p>kaken “husband’s older brother” (woman speaking) “wife’s older brother” (man speaking) “wife’s older sister” (man speaking) dayang “husband’s older sister” (woman speaking)</p> |
| <p>mamak “younger brother of father or mother” “younger man of father or mother”</p> |  for | <p>tamang “the husband of the aunt” mamak “father’s or mother’s younger brother”</p> |
| <p>bibi “younger sister of father or mother” “younger woman of father or mother”</p> |  for | <p>minen “mamak’s wife” bibi “younger sister of father or mother”</p> |
| <p>bibi; wak</p> |  for | <p>nyai “younger or older sister of father-in-law” (man and woman speaking)</p> |
| <p>mamak; wak; bapak</p> |  for | <p>kyai “younger or older brother of mother-in-law” (man speaking) gindo “younger or older brother of mother-in-law or father-in-law” (woman speaking)</p> |

The replacement of the term of kinship as a term of address with a general terms regarded as the extinction of those concept among the youth of the Rejang; in other words, it was a language shift phenomenon in the specific domain of the Rejang language (cf. Appel, and Pieter Muysken 1988; Fasold 1984; Fishman 1972a, 1972b). The phenomenon of the extinct of the concept of kinship among the youth of the Rejang shows the decline of the Rejang language vitality and social change of the Rejang ethnic group (UNESCO 2003).

The terms *upik, kuyung, sebujang, segadis, asoak, sister, kaken, dayang, brother, ayuk, tamang, mamak, minen, aunt, nyai, kyai, gindo, wak, bapak* in the Rejang ethnic kinship structure (cf. Levi-Strauss 1964) point to the concept of ‘insider and outsiders’ based on the principle of exogamy. Insiders and outsiders point to the origin of a person (husband or wife) who are different *petulai* (descent unilaterally on the basis of exogamous marital forms, cf. Sidik 1980; Marsden 1975). The dichotomy of *upik - adik / asoak, kaken - ayuk / older brother, mamak - tamang, bibi - minen*, socially describes the principle of exogamy, namely marriage that requires brides to come from different *petulai*, so the mention of individuals who are not blood related is semantically distinguished with individuals who have blood relations.

The phenomenon of the extinct the kinship terminology among young people in Rejang is in line with social changes that have taken place since the first half of the twentieth century, namely from patrilineal to matrilineal (Jaspan 1964). Since that time, the concept of *beleket* or *jujur* (Marsden 1975, 257-258; Hazairin 1936, 41-46; Sidik 1980)² tends to be abandoned, whereas the

² Marsden menjelaskan sebagai berikut, “*The jujur is a certain sum of money, given by one to another, as a consideration for the person of his daughter, whose situation, in this case, differs not much from that of a slave to the man she marries, and to his family. His absolute property in her depends, however, upon some nice circum-stances. Beside batang jujur (or main sum), there*

concept of *semendo tambik anak* and *semendo rajo-rajo* or *semendo mardiko* (Marsden 1975; Sidik 1980) tends to be more popular for ethnic Rejang people. The concept of *semendo rajo-rajo* (marriage which prioritizes agreement between the two parties in dowry, a bilateral residence based on marriage). Consequently, the concept of *petulai* has changed or shifted its meaning today. The limits of dwelling are no longer genealogical but rather geographical. “Outsiders” no longer mean “people from different *petulai*” but “people from different villages or ethnic groups (for example Javanese, Sundanese, Pasemah, Batak).” In short, the replacement of kinship terms in utterances, a phenomenon of language shift in line with Rejang’s ethnic social change from unilateral to bilateral.

Conclusion

The data shows that the replacement of the term of kinship in the speech of the Rejang youth to address the interlocutor who has a both marriage and blood relations. The replacement phenomenon shows the extinct of the kinship lexicon and those concept among the youth of the Rejang. Specifically, the replacement of the term of kinship also means there are a language shift phenomenon in the specific domain of the Rejang language. Besides that, the phenomenon of the extinct of the concept of kinship among the youth of the Rejang shows the decline of the language language vitality and social change of the Rejang ethnic group.

References

- Appel, Rene and Pieter Muysken. 1988. *Language contact and Bilingualism*. Reprinted. London: Edward Arnold.
- Boas, Franz. 1964. “Linguistics and Ethnology”, in Dell Hymes (ed.), *Language in Culture and Society: a reader in linguistics and anthropology*. New York: Harper & Row Publisher. (15-26).
- Fairclough, Norman. 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis. The critical study of language*. London and New York: Longman.
- _____. 2004. *Analysing Discourse. Textual Analysis for Social Research*. New York: Routledge.
- Fasold, Ralph. 1984. *The Sociolinguistics of Society*. New York: Basil Blackwell.

are certain appendages or branches, one of which, the tali kulo, of five dollars, is usually, from motives of delicacy or friendship, left unpaid, and so long as that is the case, a relationship is understood to subsist between the two families, and the parents of the woman have a right to interfere on occasion of ill treatment: the husband is also liable to be fined for wounding her; with other limitations of absolute right. When the sum is finally paid, which seldom happens but in case of violent quarrel, the tali kulo (tie of relationship) is said to be putus (broken), and the woman becomes to all intents the slave of her lord” Sementara itu, Hazairin menjelaskan konsep jujur sebagai “Bij dit huwelijk moet de familie van den man de lèkèt betalen aan de familie van de vrouw. Volgens de adat is het bedrag van de lèkèt 80 realen groot. Behalve dit bedrag moet de man nog de lèkèt-ornamenten geven. De voornaamste dezer ornamenten zijn: een tombak, een kris-tanda-semangat, zoogenaamd als vervanging van het mes dat bij de geboorte van het meisje gebruikt werd om haar navelstreng door te snijden; een kris-lengkap, dat is een kris, die bedekt met drie soorten metalen plaatjes, namelijk gouden, zilveren en aso-aso plaatjes. Aso-aso is een alliage van goud en brons; een kris-rego-ampat, dat is een kris ter waarde van 8 realen; een sewar-betepang; wanneer de aanstaandevrouw de jongste dochter der familie is, (si boengsoe), dan wordt de ornamentatie vermeerderd met een pedang (zwaard)... Maar één karaktertrek hebben ze gemeen, ze dienen allemaal als magische middelen om den band tusschen de vrouw en haar familie door te snijden, eenerzijds om haar in het familieverband van den man op te nemen. De belèkèt-vrouw, (getrouwd volgens de adat djoedjoer) verbreekt de banden met haar eigen familie om geheel opgenomen te worden in het familie van den man.” Wink, menyebut dengan istilah koopprijs untuk jenis adat kulo jujugh (Wink 1926, 30-31).

- Firth, J.R. 1964. "On Sociolinguistic Linguistics," in Dell Hymes (ed), *Language in Culture and Society: a reader in linguistics and anthropology*. New York: Harper & Row Publisher. (66-72).
- Fishman, Joshua A. 1972a. *Language in Sociocultural Change*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- _____. 1972b. *The Sociology of Language. An Interdisciplinary Social Science Approach to Language in Society*. Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers.
- Hazairin. 1936. *De Redjang. De volksordering, het verwantschaps-, huwelijks- en erfrecht*". Bandung: A.C. NIX & Co.
- Hymes, Dell (ed). 1964. *Language in Culture and Society: a reader in linguistics and anthropology*. New York: Harper & Row Publisher.
- Jaspan, M.A. 1964. *From Patriline to Matriline. Structural Change among the Redjang of Southwest Sumatra*. Canberra: Australian National University. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis.
- Leech, Geoffrey. 1981. *Semantics. The Study of Meaning*. Second edition-revised and updated. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1964. "Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology,' in Dell Hymes (ed.), *Language in Culture and Society: a reader in linguistics and anthropology*. New York: Harper & Row Publisher. (40-53).
- Marsden, W. 1975. *The History of Sumatera*. A reprint of the third edition, introduced by John Bastin. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Rahayu, Ngudining. 1995. *Bahasa Rejang di Kabupaten Rejang Lebong: sebuah kajian geografi dialek*. Universitas Indonesia, unpublished Magister thesis.
- Sidik, Abdullah. 1980. *Hukum Adat Rejang*. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.
- UNESCO. 2003. *Language Vitality and Endangerment*. Document submitted to the International Expert Meeting on UNESCO Programme Safeguarding of Endangered Languages.
- Wink, P. 1926. "De Onderafdeeling Lais in de Residentie Bengkoeloe", VBG LXVI/2.