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ADDRESS FORMS IN NTB LANGUAGES: A CRITICAL LOOK AT THE EURO-CENTRIC POWER AND SOLIDARITY DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL RELATION

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ABSTRACT

Studies on address forms have focused on European cultures and most of them strongly support Brown and Gilman's (BG) theory that singular and plural forms of address forms, particularly pronouns, are respectively associated with solidarity and power. Such a conclusion implies that in life only the two dimensions persist. Though widely assumed to be universal, it needs to be rexamined further with non-European linguistic and cultural praxis. This paper will explicate the limitation of the theory and offers a new dimension in it by using linguistic and cultural phenomena from West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) communities. Data for the study were collected through observation, interview and elicitation of address forms in three major languages in NTB: Sasak, Samawa and Mbojo. The analysis is descriptive by identifying address forms in the languages, classifying them following the BG theory, and explaining them to show the incompatibality of the BG theory to accommodate data in the NTB languages. The study shows that the investigated languages, like European languages, have two major forms of address: pronouns and names. Like the European, the NTB languages make use of singular and plural pronouns as indices of solidarity and power relationship. Like the former, the latter also make use of various forms of names: kin term + first name, nick names and pseudo-names. Unlike the former, the latter languages, however, offer various address forms for mutual power as well as non-reciprocal solidarity relationship and these forms are non-existent in most European languages and cultures. Elaborating the mechanisms governing the use of these forms in the NTB languages, the study will propose the need for the dimension of respect (i.e. mutually equal power and non-deprogatory solidarity) as a new factor in the use of address forms.

Keywords: address forms, solidarity, power, respect

INTRODUCTION

Indexical functions of language can be served with various forms. As Silverstein (1979), Lucy (1993a) and studies in Lucy (1993b) have shown, many, if not all, languages contain indexical forms that change their meanings and value depending on the event of speaking. Studies in the ethnography of speaking (e.g. Duranti and Goodwin, 1992; Auer and Di Luzio, 1992; Di Luzio, Gunthner, and Orletti, 2001) have indicated that in order to understand and use these forms, participants need to be able to compute the parameters of the use of language in a specific context. Lucy (1993a) has exemplified that the denotational meaning of the pronoun "I" in English depends on knowing the identity of the person uttering the instance of "I" as a form that indexes an aspect of the speech event and as part of its meanings.

I will show below that "I" for an example could take various forms and each represent the same what Lucy (1993a) identified as denotational meaning (i.e., the index of speakership) but they are different in their social connotation. There are still many other indexical forms defined essentially with respect to regularities in the use of language and language codes. In this paper, the focus is on the language codes (i.e. address forms). Before discussing their roles as indices of social relations, we have to look at theoretical concepts developed in previous studies on address forms and how they relate to the concepts of social equality (i.e. solidarity) and distance (i.e. power) particularly mono-lingual and monocultural European studies. Then, we have to examine whether these concepts work perfectly well with similar studies in multiethnic and multilingual non-European contexts. After surveying various address forms used in West Nusa Tenggara communities and the social identities of their referents, we will be able to establish their functions as an indexical means of representing current social relations as well as constructing and negotiating the intended ones. As my concept of social relation is similar to that of co-membership in interethnic encounters, co-construction of social relation by means of address forms as well as other linguistic forms constitutes an act of interethnic solidarity.

ADDRESS FORMS: THE EURO-CENTRIC SOLIDARITY AND POWER DIMENSIONS

The study of pronominal forms of address is generally agreed to have begun in 1960 with a classic article by Roger Brown and Albert Gilman (1960) suggesting a close association between pronouns and two fundamental social dimensions: 'power' and 'solidarity.' Power, in their view, results from a number of sources: physical power in the body, economic power from accumulation of wealth, superiority of age and sex, and institutional power from participation in social institution such as church, the state, the army,

and the family. Solidarity, on the other hand, comprises a different set of symmetrical relationships among individuals; for example, attending the same school, working in the same profession, speaking the same language, or acquiring similar behavioral dispositions. To Feher (1997) and Bogoch (1994), these relationships can also include mutual participation in the same political parties, practice of the same sports, religion and culture, living in the same neighborhood, and sharing of the same birthplace and childhood memory. To Brown and Gilman (1960: 258), solidarity can increase through roughly objective similarities and social contacts where subjective discursive similarities are co-constructed. They also believe that in interactions where power among participants is not equal, the relationship is asymmetrical and the power semantic is non-reciprocal. Thus, the party with a superior power addresses his interlocutor with T (*Tous*, singular) but he receives V (*Vous*, plural). To a great extend, this assumption is belived to be universally acceptable but a critical examination is necessary particularly from non-European languages and cultures.

These important observations were then followed by further investigation of the use of non-pronominal address forms such as nickname, first name, title, and last name. Brown and Ford (1961) showed that the use of FN (First Name) and TLN (Title + last name) in English functions in the same way as the respective use of T and V pronouns in other European languages. Reciprocal use of TLN indicates distant and formal relationship among participants. Reciprocal use of FN, on the contrary, suggests a greater degree of intimacy and solidarity. In a non-reciprocal address, TLN is used to a person of superior social status and FN to the person of inferior status. Other researchers critical of this deterministic conclusion (e.g. Wales, 1983; Kramer, 1975; Ochs, 1993), but Brown and Gilman (1960) and Brown and Ford (1961) have indeed suggested the dynamic use of address forms. They argue that between new acquaintances interaction begins with TLN, but, with the increase of intimacy and solidarity and the subsequent decrease of distance and power, mutual FN becomes the norm of interaction. Thus, FN and TLN is respectively linked to solidarity and power pronouns. Brown and Ford (1961) assume this linkage is universal. This belief, as other experts (e.g. Agha, 1994; Wales, 1994; Bogoch, 1994; Deakins, 1992; Delisle, 1986) have indicated, such a binary division of social phenomena cannot comprehensively accommodate social relationships in a situation where power and solidarity are more explicitly detailed in more refined dimensions of status equality, shared solidarity and social inferiority. This situation is more common in Asian communties as they have more intensive day-to-day social interaction.

Though the works of Brown and his colleagues have been criticized on the weak connection between address forms and macro-sociological changes in society (Agha, 1994; Wales, 1994), they have indeed inspired similar studies in other languages. Ervin-Trip (1972 [1969]) studied social factors in selection of address forms in American English academic settings and found that speakers could select a form from a number of alternatives available with linguistic repertoires of the speech community and this selection is interdependent with social and situational relationship among communicative participants. Again, the relationship is binary: power and solidarity. Other studies like Friedrich (1972) appointed a broader scope of address form studies. To him, selection of address forms is, like the choice of other linguistic elements, sensitive to macro-sociological variables (e.g. age, generation, sex, kinship status, group membership, and relative authority), and speech event variables (e.g. topic, content, and social affection) and these variables are, once again, expressed in terms of power and solidarity.

Brown and Gilman's (1960), Brown and Ford's (1961), and Ervin-Trip's (1972) pioneering studies of address forms have motivated further studies of the linguistic phenomena in other languages of the world. A number of more recent works have devoted immense amounts of time and energy to the surveys of address forms in languages other than Indo-European languages such as Italia (Parkinson and Hajek, 2004), Hindi (Pathak and Jain, 1996), Greek, Chinese and Korean (Kroger and Wood, 1992). These studies support the universality claim although more refined culturally specific dimensions also exist. Dickey (1996), on the contrary, questioned its universal applicability and argued that not all societies are divided in solidarity-power dimensions: Ancient Greek lacked a T-V distinction because everybody, except a servant, was addressed in FN regardless of power deference. Such a situation was created by the Greek assumption of democracy and individual power sharing and as a result solidary forms were used. Again, this indicates the Greek preoccupation with socio-political power and sharing membership of a Greekos community and whether this phenomenon is also shared by non-European communities still need further scrutiny.

Delisle (1986) in her study of German *du* and *Sie* in inter-group encounters argued that selection of forms is dependent upon the nature of a social network. She found that in a group where V form is the group norm, T form becomes addressee's exclusion from group membership. On the contrary, in a group where T form is the norm, V form signal non-membership position. Delisle, therefore, claimed that T and V forms are not always identical with intimacy-distance dimensions. A similar example is found among French upper-class where V forms are used as overt enactments of co-membership (Foley, 1997) and in

Javanese linguistic etiquette (Geertz, 1960) where the ability to use high language is seen as a sign of nobility. This indicates other dimensions also exist in other communities: co-membership and nobility. One might then question what dimensions there governing the use of address forms in NTB languages, what forms there are, and how these forms are used to contextualize intended social relations. This are the main foci of the section below.

ADDRESS FORMS IN THE NTB LANGUAGES

The study was conducted as part of a larger project documenting language contacts and intercultural interaction in NTB funded through *Hibah Bersaing* and *Hibah Strategis Nasional* reported partially in Yusra and Lestari (2011) and Lestari and Yusra (2010). Data for the study were collected through either participant or non-participant observation, elicitation of address forms, and recorded interview of speakers of the three major languages in NTB: *Sasak*, *Samawa* and *Mbojo*. The analysis is descriptive by identifying address forms in the languages, classifying them following the BG theory, and explaining them to show the in-compatibility of the BG theory to accommodate data in the NTB languages.

The study show two major address forms are used names and pronouns and these forms are presented in the tables below. The tables show four major forms of address in the languages: first names (FN/NN), title and nicknames (TNN), kin terms (KN), and pronouns. In what follows, these forms will be defined and elaborated in terms of speaker, addressee and referent power and solidarity: when power is on the speaker, it is non-existent with the addressee or vice versa. For ease of comparison, I have used the same names (i.e. *Siti Aminah* and *Aminullah*) as well as the pronouns.

In terms of power dimensions, the names and pronouns in the NTB languages can be classified into speaker, addressee, and referent power (see Tabel 1). But there are forms (see Table 2) that do not fill neatly into the power-solidarity dimensions. The forms in Table 2 have one thing in common, that is, the notion of respect. In the studies of address forms, it has been falsely assumed to be equality between the participants. Equality, however, is closely related to intimacy and solidarity, none of which is relevant to the forms. Take for example the TTN in the table. Speakers of these forms assume power for themselves but cannot claim equality and solidarity with the addressees or the referents due macrosociological reasons. In this way, they have to respect themselves and at the same time show respect to the addressees or the referents. In the case of the Mbojo KN, speakers cannot address someone with the forms unless they are at least as old as the addressees or the referents. Thus, calling a male Mbojo person *Ompu (La) Rifi* (the grandfather of Rifi), the speaker is not claiming that he is older than a person named Rifi but he is as old as his grandfather. Superficially, it looks like solidarity, but note that a Mbojo wife uses this form to show respect to her husband whom she cannot claim solidarity with. Thus, the notion of solidarity is no longer relevant here.

If the examples above are not sufficiently convincing, take a look at the pronouns. The forms of *ite* in the Sasak language, *diri* in the Samawa language, and *ndai* in the Mbojo language have something to do with social distance. Using these forms, the speakers lower themselves from the addressees but their position is high enough that they deserve to be treated with respect. As a result, the addressee will address them with similar forms. This is not power in the BG theory, but it is, rather, respect, which has not been accounted for in it. In fact, the use of *sami, diri,* and *ndai* respectively in Sasak, Samawa, and Mbojo languages are indices of respect and have nothing to with power at all.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that the NTB languages, like European languages, have two major forms of address: names and pronouns. Like the European, they make use of singular and plural pronouns as indices of solidarity and power relationship. Like the former, the latter also make use of various forms of names: kin term + name, nick names and first names. Unlike the former, they offer various address forms for mutual power as well as non-reciprocal solidarity relationship and these forms are non-existent in most European languages and cultures. Elaborating the mechanisms governing the use of these forms in the NTB languages, the study proposes the need for the dimension of respect (i.e. mutually equal power and non-deprogatory solidarity) as a new factor in the use of address forms.

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Tabel 1. Address Forms in the Power-Solidarity Dimension

No.	Power Dimension	Forms	Language		
			Sasak	**Samawa**	**Mbojo**
1	Speaker	**FN**	*Siti Aminah, Aminullah*	*Siti Aminah, Aminullah*	*Siti Aminah, Aminullah*
		NN	*Minoq, Minah, Nung, Nullah*	*Minoq, Nollah, Nong*	*Mina, Ami*
		TNN	-	-	-
		KN	-	-	-
		Pro	*Aku (1SG), Kami (1PL), niye (3SG), niye pade (3PL)*	*Aku (1SG), Kami (1PL)*	*Nahu (1SG), Nami (1PL), Nami doho (1PL),*
2	Addressee	**FN**	-	-	-
		NN	-	-	*Mene, Emo*
		TNN	*Guru Minah/Nullah, Inaq Tuan Minah, Mamiq Tuan Nullah*	*Guru Minah/Nollah, Inaq Tuan Minah, Mamiq Tuan Nollah*	*Bu Mene/Pa'a Emo Umi Mene, Aji Emo*
		KN	*Papuq/Inaq/Bi/Kak Minah, Papuq/Amaq Nullah/Kak Nung*	*Papuq/Inaq/Bi/Kak Minah,Papuq/Amaq Nollah/Kak Nong*	*Wai/manca/kaka Mene Ompu/dua/dae Emo*
		Pro	*Tiang (1SG), side (2SG), plungguh (2SG), ite pade (2PL),*	*Kaji (1SG), sia (2SG),*	*Mada (1SG), Ita (2SG),*
3	Referent	**FN**	-	-	-
		NN	-	-	*Mene, Emo*
		TNN	*Guru Minah/Nullah, Inaq Tuan Minah, Mamiq Tuan Nullah*	*Guru Minah/Nollah, Inaq Tuan Minah, Mamiq Tuan Nollah*	*Bu Mene/Pa'a Emo Umi Mene, Aji Emo*
		KN	*Papuq/Inaq/Bi/Kak Minah, Papuq/Amaq Nullah/Kak Nung*	*Papuq/Inaq/Bi/Kak Minah,Papuq/Amaq Nollah/Kak Nong*	*Wai/manca/kaka Mene Ompu/dua/dae Emo*
		Pro	*Wayah (3SG)*	*dia (3SG)*	*Sia (3SG)*

Table 2. Forms Unaccounted for in the Power-Solidarity Dimension

No	Forms	Language		
		Sasak	**Samawa**	**Mbojo**
1	**FN**	-	-	-
2	**NN**	-	-	-
3	**TNN**	*Hajjah Minah, Haji Nullah, Bu Minah, Pak Nullah*	*Hajjah Minah, Haji Nollah, Bu Minah, Pak Nollah*	*Haji Mina, Bu Mina, Haji Ami, Pak Ami*
4	**KN**	-	-	*Ina (La) Tima, Wai (La) Dai, Muma (La) Ana, Ompu (La) Rifi*
5	**Pro**	*Ite (1SG), Ite (2SG), Plungguh sami (2PL)*	*Diri (1SG), Sia sami (2PL), diride (2SG), dirimu (2SG), dirine (3SG)*	*Ndaiku (1SG), ndaimu (2SG), ndaina (3SG),* kaso-forms

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