

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

MILIK PERPUSTAKAAN
UNIMED

Language is a system of arbitrary and conventional symbols by means of which human beings as members of a social group participate in cultural and communication activities. In our daily activities, we use language as a medium to express our ideas, emotions, thoughts, imaginations and our whole inner life. Mastering a language is very essential to any individual in any society since it would be more beneficial to him to enable him to express his ideas in relevant possible situations. Language is a learned, shared and an arbitrary system of vocal symbols through which human beings in the same speech community or subculture interact and hence communicate in terms of common cultural experience and expectation. Language as a communication system is part of the cultural system and it has a close relationship to all cultural aspects.

The human culture will not exist and be sustainable without the use of language. Therefore, languages are factors that form the basis of culture. Culture in general is the sum total of the learned, shared and transmitted, patterned and systematized ways of someone who goes about meeting the problem raised by his environment. A culture can be said as the total way of life of a society, that is, a group of people who are seen to bound together by common experiences and expectations. Culture is not to be seen as just the things or tools that someone fashions to make himself more efficient in coping with his day-by-day, year-by-year problems, but as

all of his attitudes, assumptions, beliefs and values, the products of his head and heart as well as of his hands.

Human cultures are all alike in furnishing the set of systematized answer to the universal problems of human existence, but the answers are all different and each culture is therefore unique. Each individual of our species is born into a society, we are devoid of instincts, and we must learn to become human by internalizing the culture of our group. Language itself is a system of human culture, in fact, the system is important, the system through which others are principally reflected and transmitted. Once language is in man's possessions, culture and his unique adaptive mechanism, become possible. Without language there could be no culture, and man remained hominoid; with language and culture he could and did become hominy.

If we talk about culture, actually we will have to talk about society. Since, it is impossible for any culture to exist if there is no society. In this case the relationship between cultures with a group of society is often viewed unique. In sociolinguistic view, the unique relationship between cultures and social group is often described through a unique process between them that sometimes they have the same strength. On one side, the development of attitude and social behavior is always influenced by culture that is determined by attitude of the group of society. To formulate the unique relationship between society and culture, this relationship is like the relationship between mother and child. As a mother, the cultural play out gives guidance to a group of society; on the other hand as a child the existence of culture depends on the society. So among them a close relationship cannot be separated. So cultural process

will never stop evolving since the life of society always moves following the social needs.

1.1 The Background of the Study

Indonesia consists of thousands of islands big and small occupied by over 200.000.000 of people of different ethnic groups. Each area has its own culture such as Sumbawa, Lombok, Java, Bugis, Toraja and North Sumatera. One of the ethnic groups having in North Sumatra is Batak Toba. Batak Toba consists of 5 sub ethnic groups namely, Batak Toba, Batak Simalungun, Batak Karo, Batak Pakpak Dairi and Batak Angkola Mandailing.

The specific of woven cloth in Batak Toba worn for specific occasions is Ulos. Ulos for Batak ethnic group is made from yarn; it is not just a piece of cloth but it is also believed as having special meaning in the cultural life of the Batak society. This Ulos is an element in all Batak culture, which is expressed by all members of the sub ethnics groups.

In this research, the writer is interested in the values Batak culture assigned to Ulos and Umpasa which are always found in Toba Batak cultural ceremonies such as in a wedding ceremony and giving a name ceremony to a child, in which along with Umpasas. Ulos plays an important role. With that role in mind, the writer intends to understand deeper and delves into the roles of Ulos and Umpasas in Toba Batak culture. One of the uniquenesses of Toba Batak culture must have some beneficial or sourced intentions of the giver. Otherwise, it would be a worthless gift. The presentation of Uloses are always followed by enunciating Umpasas. That is the

background of this research that is the values Toba Batak culture assigned, as it is her culture herself. Viewed from language use, Umpasa is a poetic tradition and the writer always observes, that it has been a habit in each traditional ceremony in Toba Batak society, presenting Ulos is followed by pronouncing Umpasas.

1.2 The Focus of the Study

The topic in this study is focused on the themes of Umpasas allotted to the birth of a baby ceremony, the wedding ceremony and funeral ceremony in which the roles of Ulos take part. The themes of Umpasas are analyzed according to the rules of the cultural events. The native speaker's knowledge of the Toba Batak language being investigated can be used to explore in depth how the theme of Umpasa and the role of Ulos are actually intended to attain spiritual cultural goals. These cultural events are performed among the Toba Batak Christians people, and until today these cultural events are still conducted or practical.

1.2.1 The Research Problems

The problems to be explored can be stated in the following questions:

1. What are the interpretations of the theme of Umpasa in each cultural event (the baby's birth ceremony, the wedding ceremony and the funeral ceremony) in the Toba Batak society?
2. What are the roles of Ulos in each cultural event (the baby's birth ceremony, the wedding ceremony and the funeral ceremony) in the Toba Batak society?

1.2.2 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To describe the interpretation of the theme of Umpasa in each cultural event that includes the baby's birth ceremony, the wedding ceremony and the funeral ceremony in the Toba Batak society.
2. To describe the role of Ulos in each cultural event that includes the baby's birth ceremony, the wedding ceremony and the funeral ceremony in the Toba Batak society.

1.3 The Significance of the Study

A study that is designed to discover some intended results should have some significance. In this study, it is hoped that it will be give some relevant contribution to:

- The members of the Toba Batak society who want to improve their knowledge especially in the culture.
- Toba Batak society who want to maintain well the values Toba Batak culture.
- Toba Batak people who want to practice the traditional ceremony of Toba Batak culture as they should prepare themselves by mastering Umpasa and knowing Ulos role in each cultural event.
- Other writers or readers who are interested in culture and want to investigate other aspects of the values Toba Batak culture.