

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Language is so vital for people in entire world. It helps them communicate everything they need. Its contribution is also enjoyed by Toba Batak people. Batak people is one of tribes live in Indonesia. The Toba Batak people occupy the territory of Humbang, Toba Holbung and Muara (Vergouwen, 1964). This Toba Batak actually is a lucky tribe compared to other tribes in Indonesia. Different from other tribes which have language but do not have writing system, Batak people have both spoken and written language.

Even for spoken language, Toba Batak language has its own characteristic especially when it is performed at special event such as wedding , birth and death ceremony. For these three events, special language is used and it is stated by selected people only. Therefore there is a tendency that not all Batak people know about it. The special language used during these three different events is *umpasa*.

*Umpasa* is a kind of oral literature among Toba Batak with some sort of wishing or requesting for Lord's blessing. *Umpasa* itself is a precious heritage of Bataknese which is handed down from one generation to other generation. Before the writing system is invented the *umpasa* is learned orally from the speakers by the listeners at a special event. Eventually by the invention of writing system both in Latin and aksara Batak, all *umpasa* can be learned or read from books at the reader's wish. The request which is uttered through this *umpasa* will vary based on the objective of ceremony or event. If it is stated at wedding ceremony, the



request is due to the prosperity and having more children. But when it is stated at *mangapuli*, people will be able to see the different request.

*Mangapuli* is an event performed after the funeral. *Mangapuli* is the *adat* ceremony of Toba Batak people. It is especially conducted for condoling the family of dead person. However not all Toba Batak people perform this event especially when the dead people and his family are Moslem.

Of course this leads to a very serious question. What makes some of Toba Batak people who are Moslem do not perform this event anymore? It is important to explain that culture is contributed by many cultural factors. Some of them are the condition of surrounding where the culture does live, usually it is called as geographical boundaries or constraints. Other factors are social agreement, arbitrary, religion background, educational background, government's political will and of course the effect of high technology development (Hudson, 1985: 4-7). Those factors are believed to be the foundation of Batak people in conducting their life. Linguistically this way named as the philosophy of life.

In line with the condition above, Toba Batak people treat death phase quite unique. For Toba Batak people, the status, age and the way some one is dead will affect the choice of *umpasa* and the choice of people to deliver the *umpasa*.

In general Toba Batak people categorize death into six categories namely: *Mate Tilahaon*, *Mate Purpur*, *Mate Punu*, *Mate Mangkar*, *Mate Sarimatua* and *Mate Saurmatua* (Simanjuntak, 2008). *Mate Tilahaon* means the person's condition of death when he/she is still young and does not get married yet. For Batak people marriage is a very important phase in one's life. No matter how old some one or how rich some one, when he dies before he gets married he is still be



categorized as *Mate Tilahaon*. *Tilahaon* means the death ceremony will not be conducted before the burial or he/she does not deserve to get honor of his family, both from father and mother sides. *Mate Purpur* means the condition of death of some one who has got married but still does not have any children yet. *Mate Punu* refers to death condition of some one who has got married but having female children only. For Toba Batak people, male descendant is a must since only male can continue the existence of *marga*. *Mate Mangkar* is the death of some one who has children (male and female) but none of them has got married. *Mate Sarimatua* is the death of some one who has got grand children from his male and female children but not all of his children got married. And the last is *Mate Saurmatua*, this is the death condition that is expected by every Toba Batak people but only several people are lucky enough die in this condition. People are categorized *Mate Saurmatua* when he/she is in the state of having children from his/her male and female children and all of them are still alive the time he dies.

Back to the first discussion that *umpasa* is uttered only for a very special event including at *mangapuli*. In addition, the state of delivering *umpasa* will not be available before food served means all people who gather together at this *mangapuli* event will eat first food prepared by the coming family. The *umpasa* will be stated before and after or during eating time.

So far the writer notices three main characteristics anytime this *mangapuli* is performed. Firstly, those who utter *umpasa*, are the representative of the father's side which consists of *dongan tubu* and *pamoruon* and mother's side which consists of *hula-hula* and *pariban*. But who will be given the first priority to utter the *umpasa* is still not clear yet. Secondly, foods brought along by the



coming family varies based on family relationship. When foods come from mother's side, the kinds are rice, gold fish and vegetables. But when they come from father's side, kinds of foods are rice, fork – which is cut off into two different forms – named *Sangsang* and *Tudu-tudu ni Sipanganon* (*ulu, osang, ihur*), soup and vegetables. It is important to note that even gold fish and *tudu-tudu ni sipanganon* will not be eaten except after they have been placed and given to the parents of the dead person. And in the process of giving the *tudu-tudu ni sipanganon umpasa* is uttered. Thirdly, *umpasa* sometimes uttered before eating time, but in other occasion it is uttered after eating time. But what makes it different, this is a thing to be observed.

Other things that are not clear yet are: 1) Whether there is different *umpasa* uttered by the representative of *dongan tubu* and *pamoruon* and *hula-hula* and *pariban*. 2) Whether there is different *umpasa* uttered at *mangapuli* for those persons whose member of family die in condition of *Mate Tilahaon*, *Mate Purpur*, *Mate Punu*, *Mate Mangkar*, *Mate Sarimatua* and *Mate Saurmatua*.

## 1.2 The Problems of the Study

As it has been stated above, Batak people categorize death into six different categories but to any kind of category a group of people want to go in order to condole the left family of the deceased, the name of condolence is the same that is *mangapuli*. However the selection of *umpasa* to be uttered during the *mangapuli* takes place will be based on the kinds of death the coming family involves. Here, it is important to note that the scope of *umpasa* is restricted to the *umpasa* text. Text is any linguistic unit which is functional in a context. Linguistic



unit itself is any unit of language such as a sound, word, phrase or group of words, clause, paragraph, passage, book and so on. But in this study, the *mangapuli* to be investigated is limited to *mate tilahaon* only due to the limited time and effort the writer has. Therefore to answer what makes Toba Batak people differ the death and *umpasa* to utter, the problems of study are offered by the following:

1. What life philosophy of Toba Batak is coded in the uttered *umpasa* text of *mangapuli*?
2. How are the life philosophical concepts of Toba Batak linguistically realized in the uttered *umpasa* text of *mangapuli*?
3. Why are the life philosophical concept of Toba Batak realized the way they are?

### 1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the formulation of the three research problems above, the research objectives can be stated as follows:

1. To find out the life philosophy of Toba Batak coded in the uttered *umpasa* text of *mangapuli*.
2. To investigate the way the life philosophical concept of Toba Batak linguistically realized in the uttered *umpasa* text of *mangapuli*.
3. To search the reason of Toba Batak realized their philosophical concept the way they are.



#### 1.4 The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study have two general significances, theoretical and practical significance.

From the theoretical significances are:

1. It will add more horizon to the application of linguistics to other studies.
2. As an idea for other researchers to investigate other tribe's philosophy of life revealed on the death condition.

From the practical significances are:

1. To educate Toba Batak people in general the youngsters of Toba Batak people particularly to appreciate their own culture.
2. To give an opportunity to other tribes to learn about the way the life philosophy of Toba Batak people linguistically coded in *umpasa*.

#### 1.5 The Scope of the Study

This study deals with an investigation of the way the life philosophical concepts of Batak Toba linguistically realized in the *umpasa* text uttered during the *mangapuli* of *mate tilahaon* and the reason why the *umpasa* realized the way they are.



