

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, and significances of the study.

1.1. The Background of the Study

Toponymy is a study of names that can concern their origin, meaning, typology, or use. Place names can contain representations of the physical characteristics of an area, as a means of remembering certain figures, containing hope, or as a reminder of events related to the history of the region. Toponyms arise from processes within society themselves that are consents and have been widely accepted by society itself (Irina: 2022). Toponymy is part of human life and its linguistic intelligence. This is also evident in the regional naming which includes the names of place in North Tapanuli. This study tries to raise this through the lens of ecolinguistic studies which is the realm of linguistics that examines the role of linguistics in studying ecological problems and the sociocultural environment. For this reason, these names are classified by involving sociocultural factors that shape meaning, both connotative and denotative meanings.

The naming of geography or better known as toponymy is inseparable from linguistic problems. Naming is a symbolization of the existence of human efforts to recognize and understand everything complex and diverse. This is inseparable from the role of language as a barrier to every object found around it and as a revealer of cultural concepts related to reason and taste. The development of reason and taste

makes humans have the ability to give identity to things around people, just like the naming of geography. One of the embodiments of culture as identity and culture as knowledge is toponymy. Toponymy is the study of place names (geography) given to physical and cultural appearances, such as places, cities, rivers, mountains, bays, islands, headlands, lakes, plains, and so on. Such naming is necessary for mapping or writing documents, and in other daily activities so that speakers can easily re-recognize the object.

This time the use of toponymy in Tarutung, North Tapanuli will be discussed in this study. North Tapanuli is one of the regencies in North Sumatra Province, Indonesia whose capital is in Tarutung. Tarutung is one of the favourite destinations in North Sumatra. In this town, it can be found the perfect blend of history, cultural heritage and modern comfort with the epic natural landscapes. A large number of local people in Tarutung are Batak Toba who speak in Batak Toba language. Tarutung is the center of government in North Tapanuli. Tarutung is quite unique, because it is surrounded by mountains like a fortress. Tarutung is in the middle of a valley known as the Silindung Valley/ Rura Silindung.

Tarutung, in its development, as experienced in various other city areas, is influenced by two aspects, namely internal aspects and external aspects. Internal aspects are factors that come from within, including the natural growth of the population and the existence of several types of urban area activities, for example: the development of industrial areas such as the mining industry, both oil and gas and non-oil and gas, which triggers the emergence of various other activities and will eventually spur the development of the city area itself. External aspects are

factors that come from outside, namely the increase in population due to the "attractiveness" of the city, resulting in an increase in the tourism sector which makes the activities of Tarutung area grow.

As a developing area, Tarutung has development potential in its geographical namings. The naming of an area is essentially part of the development of urban architecture and the formation of identity as an orientas point that has a life force and is able to be known throughout the changing times, as well as rooted from and in the lublic structure, economy, culture of the community and the city. The naming of an area is one of the important things for the identity of the city as well as an orientation point that affects the ease of mobility.

Tarutung, which is a tourist destination in North Sumatra, currently has a variety of natural, cultural, and historical potentials. The tourism potential can be explored and preserved as one of the assets in supporting the development of the tourism sector. Tourism that is rich in history can improve the economy of the government and local communities. The history of the development of the spread of Christianity is attached to every historical relic in Tarutung such as churches, HKBP head office complexes and interesting monuments to visit with a historical tour.

Ecolinguistics will describe the lexicon of regional names in Tarutung that have close proximity to the physical and social environment of the ethnicity, such as: physical/ geographical conditions, flora and fauna found in the living environment of the ethnic community, as well as cultural objects and those related

to key events/ conditions related to the birth of a person. The lexicon associated with the physical environment and the social (cultural) environment, in line with Sapir's opinion in Fill and Mühlaüser (2001:4), says that the lexicon or vocabulary of a language very clearly reflects the physical environment and social environment of the speaker of the language. The lexicon of a language is seen as a complex inventory in which are contained various thoughts, interests, and other things that take center stage in the communication of the language. In addition, the lexicon can also serve as a characteristic of the physical environment and cultural environment of its speakers. Furthermore, it is the lexicon devices that indicate the existence of verbal symbolic relationships between speech and its environment, such as place names, flora names, fauna names, and other names of cultural objects. Looking at the various reasons that have been explained above, the focus of this research is how the name of region in Tarutung came about and what cultural elements are contained behind the name of those regions.

However, in terms of assigning names to a region, there are no clear criteria for the use of the names of national heroes and Batak Toba community figures, as well as historical objects in its naming, especially if it is associated with Tarutung as an old city full of history. So it is considered necessary to give new names or change the names for street, recreational places, parks and other similar places for the public while still paying attention to the history of the nation's struggle, heroism and characteristics of the city.

The theoretical gap in ecolinguistic analysis of place names refers to the lack of systematic and comprehensive research on how place names reflect and

shape the ecological and cultural relationships between people and their environments. While there is a growing body of literature on ecolinguistics, which explores the interconnections between language, environment, and culture, the study of place names as a specific linguistic phenomenon has received less attention.

Ecolinguistic analysis of place names involves examining the linguistic, cultural, and ecological dimensions of place names to understand how they reflect and construct the relationships between people, places, and environments. This includes analyzing the semantic, syntactic, and phonetic features of place names, as well as their historical, cultural, and ecological contexts.

Theoretical gaps in this area include a lack of systematic methods for analyzing place names, a limited understanding of the ecological dimensions of place names, and a lack of cross-cultural comparisons. To address these gaps, future research should develop more rigorous methods for analyzing place names, incorporate more ecological perspectives into ecolinguistic analysis, and compare place name systems across different cultures and environments. By doing so, we can gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which place names reflect and shape our relationships with the natural world.

The research gap in ecolinguistic analysis of place names in Tarutung, North Tapanuli refers to the lack of detailed and comprehensive research on how place names in this region reflect and shape the ecological and cultural relationships between the local Batak community and their environment. While there has been

some previous research on Batak place names, it has primarily focused on their historical and linguistic dimensions, with less attention paid to their ecological and cultural significance.

In contrast to previous research, this research involves analyzing the ways in which place names reflect the local ecology, such as the names of plants, animals, and geographical features. By examining the semantic and phonetic features of these place names, researchers can gain insights into the local Batak community's ecological knowledge and practices. This research involves as well exploring the cultural significance of place names, such as their role in traditional stories, myths, and rituals. By examining the historical and cultural contexts of these place names, researcher can gain insights into the local Batak community's cultural identity and values.

The development and growth of Tarutung shows progress so that to facilitate, introduce and achieve a more perfect relationship (communication), especially for new residential areas that are built more modern, it is necessary to give new names or change names for roads, recreational places, parks and other similar places for the more modern public as well. This condition has the potential to obscure previous names that have historical significance so that documenting efforts are needed. Documenting names that have historical significance is carried out by examining toponymy as a cultural representation of local wisdom in Tarutung. This is an effort to develop community knowledge about local wisdom values in line with the level of understanding and knowledge of the community

which is relatively low to regional naming (toponymy) so that it remains sustainable and maintained.

Along the way, toponyms and identities contain other important things, such as historical roles and memories for individuals or groups in the toponym's environment, so that the study of toponyms is widely analyzed through fields of science such as anthropolinguistics and ethnolinguistics. But this time, this research will examine toponymy through ecolinguistic studies, which analyze language forms and their use in relation to environmental factors.

This research is limited to the meaning of research in the realm of meaning which concerns cognitive meanings in semantic patterning or semantic patterns of regional names in Tarutung. The meaning of the place names in Tarutung will be reviewed from the semantic perspectives. Semantics is a term used for the field of linguistics that studies the relationship between linguistic signs and the things they mark or in other words, a field of study in linguistics that studies meaning or meaning in language (Chaer, 2009: 2). The semantic scope so far is simply the meaning or meaning with respect to language as a means of verbal communication. Semantic knowledge will make it easier to choose and use words with the right meaning in conveying information to the general public. In semantic analysis, language is unique and has a close relationship with the culture of the people of its speakers. Thus, a result of analysis in a language, cannot be used to analyze other languages (Chaer, 2009: 4). Semantics examines the use of words in existing social and cultural contexts with real meaning.

The purpose of this study is to study and provide an in-depth description of regional toponymy in North Tapanuli, especially in Tarutung as a linguistic phenomenon to find out the nature of linguistic aspects in it. In addition, this study aims to find out the human life of its speakers through its language. With this research, it is hoped that the treasures of local knowledge of the local community can also be explored through their language as a manifestation of the unity of collective identity.

1.2. The Research Questions

With reference to the background of the study, the problems are formulated follows:

1. What are the origins of meanings in place names in Tarutung, North Tapanuli?
2. How are the meaning realized in the name of places in Tarutung, North Tapanuli?
3. Why are the meanings in names of places as the ways they are?

1.3. The Objectives of the Study

In relations to the problems, the objectives of the study are:

1. to elucidate the original meanings that are in place names in Tarutung, North Tapanuli.
2. to analyze how the meaning of place names in Tarutung, North Tapanuli are realized, and

3. to explain the reasons for the naming of places in Tarutung, North Tapanuli.

1.4. The Scope of the Study

This research aims to investigate the toponymy of place names in Tarutung, North Tapanuli, North Sumatera, from the perspective of ecolinguistics and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as proposed by Halliday (2014).

1.5. The Significances of the Study

The findings of this research are expected to be useful, both theoretically and practically.

a. Theoretically

1. It is expected that findings of the study will be useful to enrich the new horizon to the theories of linguistics, particularly in ecolinguistics study,
2. to be a reference for other studies about the toponymy of regional names in Tarutung, North Tapanuli.

b. Practically

1. It is also expected that findings of the study practically relevant to the Toba Batak to better maintain and preserve Tarutung,
2. local government of North Tapanuli in making policies in the tourism sector, and
3. local government of North Tapanuli in determining the city boundaries.