Taboo in Angkola Language:
Prohibited Communication among Family Kinships

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ABSTRACT

The research is the performance and participation in communication prohibited in Angkola society, which is then referred to as taboo language in family relations in a sociopragmatics framework. This research aims to find personal communication patterns prohibited in Angkola Language (AL), to find out performance, communication patterns, values and reasons for the prohibition so that there is an effort in cultural sustainability. Another aim is to re-awaken the younger generation applying values and norms in AL amidst current developments, and the era of communication freedom. Qualitative approach using ethnographic methods was carried out within the sociopragmatics framework. Participants involved in AL considered taboo in communication are: 1) The wife/husband of the in-laws; 2) Siblings, especially siblings of different gender; 3) Daughter-in-law to her son-in-law; 4) Son-in-law to his daughter-in-law; 5) In-laws (husband's father and wife's mother); 6) The wife of our younger brother; and 7) Our aunt's daughter. The performance patterns carried out by the participants: 1) being silent, not answering; 2) using indirect sentences; 3) coding (clearing throat, small cough); 4) using simple, short words; 5) mediating of surround objects; 6) leaving the conversation location; 7) not joking; 8) tending to be serious; 9) giving good, polite answers; 10) avoiding jokes, teases, and long conversations; 11) using a third person intermediary; and 12) making small talk. Reasons of the waning language taboo culture is due to globalization, the widespread use of social medias, the openness of information in current modern era.
Keywords: Angkola Language, prohibited communication, sociopragmatics, taboo

INTRODUCTION

Communicating is the right of every human being, speaking and conveying thoughts as well as opinions are also the part of human rights. The rights must be protected everywhere around the world. In fact, however, not everyone is allowed to communicate freely in a society since it's influenced by their cultural customs, traditions and a habit in a language area. Each tribe or culture owns different 'values' one another which then raising distinctive communication patterns inside these social groups. Generally, there is no prohibition on talking to anyone among members of society throughout the world. Common communication patterns are not influenced by status or gender as well. Communication occurs between two or more participants then called as interpersonal communication.

On the other hand, there is a culture which influences interpersonal communication patterns. Term of 'culture' defines as a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, science, law, customs, abilities and habits acquired by humans as the members of society (Setiadi, 2011). Language is part of a culture and Indonesia is a country that owns various ethnical languages.

According to the Basic Data on Language and Literature of Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia has around 718 local languages and Indonesian language itself is the official national language. Despite being understood and spoken by more than 90% of Indonesian people, Indonesian language is not the mother tongue for most speakers. Most Indonesian people use one of the 718 languages stated above as their mother tongue language or first language (Nasution & Mulyadi, 2022).

In terms of communication prohibitions in the family kinship system, researchers did not find research related to this communication taboo. However, in line with the explanation above, there is a culture that prohibits interpersonal communication within family relationships. The taboo of communication occurs in a tribe on Sumatra Island, Indonesia. The name of tribe is Angkola in North Sumatra province, Indonesia. This is one of the unique to Indonesian cultural treasure.

Due to the importance of communication and language for humans, it is impossible to limit or prohibit the language activities, particularly in the recently modern period. Moreover, having to talk to inanimate objects, not to the person you are talking to (humans) is something weird and illogical nowadays. However, humans who live in community groups that form their social background certainly have a cultural structure and own values as well as norms that are different from other communities.

From the description above, the formulations of the problems in this research are: (a) Who is prohibited (taboo) from direct communication in Angkola society? (b) What are the language patterns used by speakers of the Angkola community when they have to talk to family members who are prohibited (taboo)? (c) What is the meaning of this prohibition (taboo)? (d) How far do Angkola people know about this prohibited communication?

Anthropolinguistic theory was used in this research because studying oral traditions will explain the meaning and patterns of oral traditions that are researched holistically (Sibarani, 2004). This research analyzed the forms of communication performance and participation prohibited in the Angkola community, which are then referred to as taboo language in the family relations of the community. This research also found the meaning (indexicality) of inter-kinship communication patterns of Angkola language (AL).

The research aims to find personal patterns (who to whom) prohibited from communicating. By knowing the performance and communication patterns that are prohibited (taboo), the value and reasons for the prohibition having been dismantled. This research is functioned to revitalize the values in order that there is cultural sustainability in society. This research also functions to re-awaken the current generation to apply values and norms amidst the era of freedom in communication.

1. Taboo Language

Taboo literally means a social or religious custom that prohibits or forbids discussion of certain practices or disallows anything associating with certain people, places, or things. Taboo is defined as 'a prohibition' and these taboos are found in human culture and any religion. The word taboo was firstly introduced in 1777 by an English explorer, Captain James Cook. Taboo is taken from the word *tapu* (meaning: not allowed), which was used in Tonga, the Polynesian Islands. Since it was firstly introduced, the taboo concept has never changed. However, the spread of the concept of taboo outside the Polynesian islands broadened the understanding of this original concept. This expansion took the form of sanctions for violations of taboo matters (Humaeni, 2015; Ullman, 2007). Nasution & Mulyadi (2021) concluded that taboo and swear words are prohibited in a religious context. Someone who does this will receive punishment from society or sin in a religious context, as punishment from God. Therefore, taboo words are words or phrases that are generally considered blasphemous, obscene, vulgar, or offensive.

The taboo context, however, is not just words, phrases or sentences as expressions of insults. Taboo is also something that is forbidden, taboo also arises from the extremity of the human value system. Taboos include; 1) the sacred (unclean) character of a person or object; 2) the type of prohibition that arises from the nature; and 3) the purity or impurity resulted from breaking the prohibition (Vogel, 2014).

The differences in cultural are essential things which affect how people talking and acting. They use several different words semantically or pragmatically if only compared to other cultures. For instance; in language of Batak people, speakers intensively utter "bagudung" meaning as "rat" to mock someone due to their ignorance, laziness (Nasution et al., 2023). A family becomes part of a language and culture. Therefore, this research related something that was taboo or forbidden in communication within the scope of family relations in Angkola community.

2. Anthropolinguistics

Studying humans and culture as a whole is commonly called Anthropology. Then, Anthropolinguistics is a science which combines cultural sciences with linguistics discussing language uses variations in related to developments over time, differences in places of communication, kinship systems, the influence of ethnic habits, beliefs, and customs (Lafamane, 2020).

The language process in anthropolinguistic studies is the nature of language in the form of orality and language itself as a language tool, and both are the object of study. In this case, the distinction between language as performance and language as a communication tool becomes notable (Sibarani, 2015a).

As a part of human culture, language cannot be separated from one another. This is in line with the definition of anthropology, namely the science of humans and humans must use language to communicate. Sibarani (2015b) stated that the study of language in the field of anthropolinguistics is related to the role of language in the intricacies of human life. In studying language, culture, and other aspects of human life, the focus or main concern of anthropolinguistics is emphasized on three important topics, they are performance, indexicality, and participation (Duranti, 2009).

a. Performance

Performance is the actual use of language in social interactions surrounding language activities. Performance pays attention to other principles such as the speaker's attention, perception, and abstract

memory that automatically arise when the language uttered. Performance is an ability to use language which always accompanies it. It is a dimension that always presents in humans functioning as a control in the use of that language itself.

Through the concept of performance, language is understood in the process of communicative activities, actions and performances requiring creativity. Language as a lingual element that stores cultural resources cannot be understood separately from language performances or activities. Finnegan in Lubis (2019) described that performance in oral culture was a special mode of human communication and action that differentiates it from the normal way of everyday life. Performance can be found in many structured, organized and planned conditions and situations.

b. Indexicality

Indexicality is about signs in a language. According to Duranti (1997), signs were divided into two types, i.e.; arbitrary signs and natural signs. The arbitrary sign is a sign having no relationship between the form and the thing it produces. For example, the symbol of a language sound that has nothing to do with the sound produced by the human speech organs, but the symbol of the language sound can be understood by a community because there has been an agreement about it. On the other hand, natural signs have a close relationship between the sign or symbol and the phenomenon it shows.

The concept of indexicality originates from the thoughts of American philosopher, Charles Sanders Pierce who differentiated signs into three types. They are index, symbol, and icon. An index is a sign indicating that there is a natural and existential relationship between the signifier and the signified. The concept of index (indexicality) is applied to linguistic expressions such as demonstrative pronouns, personal pronouns, temporal expressions and spatial expressions. This category can be extended to linguistic expressions, such as demonstrative pronouns; *this, that*, personal pronouns; *I, you,* temporal expressions; *now, later, yesterday,* and spatial expressions; *up, down, front, back.* These expressions are called indexicality and have been widely used in communication.

c. Participation

The participation referred here is closer to participation in face-to-face interaction in the context of a conversation (conversation or speech event). According to Wortham & Reyes (2020), every speech event has several components. These components are

participants consisting of a speaker, a recipient (an addressee) and often one or several listeners (an audience or overhearers). This also includes messages, which are conveyed in several ways to connect the speaker and recipient, using coded symbols. Non-verbal expressions and signs indicate conversational events have rules (organization) of at least beginning, middle and end, and the expressions are more complex in poetic patterns. Conversations have social consequences and give rise to social actions.

The most basic rule in the practice of speaking in an interaction is the turn-taking rule. This includes the possibility of a response from one participant who is able to show what is said and done is a response to what someone said and did (Schegloff, 2007).

The concept of participation views language as a social activity that involves speakers and listeners as social actors. Participation has a vital and important role when communicating because the information obtained from a participation performance will be able to describe the communication pattern of the speaker (Lubis, 2019).

METHOD

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods. This research was conducted within a sosiopragmatic framework, studying language within a culture of society using language by their meaning then called pragmatic. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews and participant observation (Spradley, 2016; Spradley, 1997).

Sociopragmatics is the study of local conditions and more specific local conditions regarding the use of a language. As described by Leech, sociopragmatics is said to be "the sociological interface of pragmatics" or also the science of pragmatics which is discussed from a sociological perspective (Leech, 2016; Burton, 1985).

The data collected in this research is qualitative data, namely language data and language use data. Language data is in the form of words, phrases or sentences in AL that are used between participants in a family environment where direct communication is prohibited. Primary data was obtained through observation and in-depth interviews with the informant. The informant is Mr. Tongku Humala Muda Siagian (age 45 years old). He is a traditional figure in Angkola District and is widely known to be active in the South Tapanuli Traditional Institutions Communication Forum (FORKALA).

The criteria for determining informants are: 1) Male or female; 2) not senile; 3) basic education of at least elementary school – junior high school; 4) middle social status; 5) farmers/laborers; 6) proud of

his idiolect; 7) able to speak Indonesian language; and 8) physically and mentally healthy (Djajasudarma, 2006; Mahsun, 2005).

Secondary data was obtained from the answers of respondents aged under 20 years and over 21 years old. Secondary data is data or information collected by others (researchers, organizations recognized as acceptable by the system, etc.) for records or other purposes. This secondary data is primary data that has been further processed and presented either by the primary data collector or by other parties, for example in the form of tables or diagrams (Olabode et al., 2019; Umar, 2013).

This research focused on two data collection methods, namely: 1) participant observation; and 2) interviews. After the data was collected, there were four stages of research, namely; 1) domain analysis; 2) taxonomic analysis; 3) component analysis; and 4) theme analysis. They were structured to see significant differences according to the stages of data analysis. To get cultural meaning, an important principle in ethnographic interviews is not asking what the meaning is, but asking what the use is. This principle is based on the relational theory of meaning (Spradley, 1997).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research is the performance and participation in communication prohibited in Angkola society, which is then referred to as taboo language in family relations in a sociopragmatics framework. This research found the personal communication patterns prohibited in AL and found the performance, communication patterns, values and reasons for the prohibition. The findings are about to discuss on explanations below;
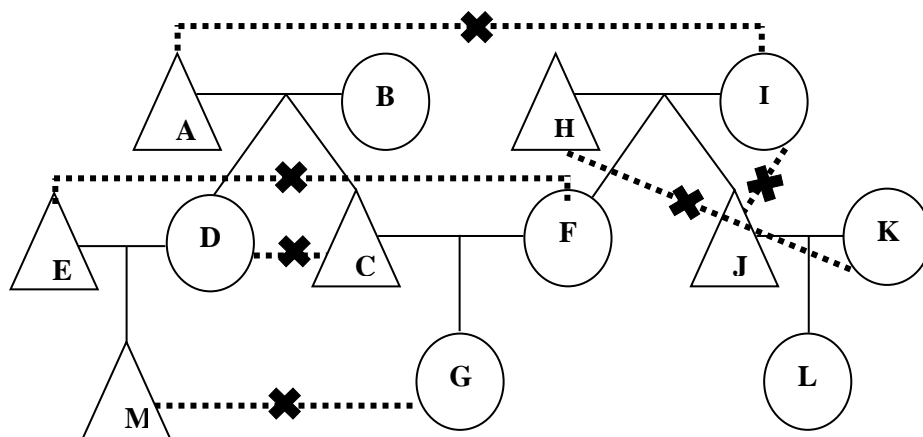
1. Inter-kinship Taboo Communication in Angkola

The results of the research obtained answers that the participants in AL who were taboo in communicating were as follows:
1. The wife/husband of the in-laws, called 'ompung bayo/halak bayo'.
2. Siblings in different genders, called 'mariboto'.
3. Daughter-in-law to her father-in-law, called 'parumaen/amangboru'.
4. Son-in-law to his mother-in-law, called 'bere/nantulang'
5. In-laws (husband's father to wife's mother)
6. The wife of our younger brother, called 'anggi bayo'
7. Our aunt's daughter, called 'boru ni namboru'

In the observations carried out by researchers, several participants were observed in their family environment and daily activities. All participants were from a large family with different homes, and communication occurred during the observation period. To make it easier understood, the relationship pattern above can be seen in the scheme in the image below with the initials of the letters. Triangular images are male, and round images are female:

Picture: 1
Observation of the Kinship Flow of Two Families

Notes:

△ : Male

○ : Female

•••••••• : Communicating Relation

✖ : Taboo/prohibited, restricted

2. Performance and Meaning of Inter-kinship Taboo Communication

The conversation that emerged in the observation was like the dialogue between E and F in data 1;

1) E: Assalamualaikum.
   Greeting in Islam

'Assalamualaikum'
F: Waalaikumsalam,   boh..   masuk   hamu!
   Answering greeting   Intj   Imp-V   2Sg
   'Waalaikumsalam, wow.. come in!'
   Ise   dongan   munu?
   Intro-Who   friend   2Sg
   'With whom do you come?'
E: Umak   ni si   ucok.
   Mother   Art   kid-N
   'Mother of kid'

Data 1 above shows a conversation between F and E who are brothers-in-law or in AL called 'ompung bayo/halak bayo'. The conversation occurring showed a normal and ordinary performance like a normal conversation. In Angkola culture, such kind of conversations are categorized as taboo (forbidden).

According to informant's explanations in interviews, it was explained that the action that should be taken was not to continue the conversation. When E says hello, F should not respond or remain silent. If E knows that only F is in the conversation location, then E should leave the house/location. If this has already happened, then talking about E and F should be done using by coding, such as clearing your throat (little coughing), or just using short simple words.

However, conversations in locations that there are other participants, can still be carried out by modifying indirect utterances. The use of the pronoun 'ninna' which means 'he said' is also a way that can be used in order that sentences are not directly conveyed (indirect speech). The word 'ninna' is used as if there were a third person involved in the conversation.

This limited discussion between *ompung bayo/halak bayo* has the meaning (sign) that there is 'respect' from E to F who is the spouse of his wife's brother (younger/elder brother). E is called a 'anak boru' who marries someone's sister who is called a 'mora' who must be respected like a king. Therefore, it is inappropriate for E to talk to F who is likened to his queen. The meaning of the kinship taboo 'ompung bayo' is as a form of respect for speech and language ethics.

The next conversation that emerged from the observation results was data 2 and 3 between D and C who are sibling;

2) C: Ro   do   kakak? Husangka   na   ro   ari rayo on.
     Come-V Part sister? 1Sg-guess   Neg   come holiday-N
     'Do you come sister? I guess you don't come in this holiday'

   D: Polama   na   ro   au   i,

Impossible	Neg	come	1Sg	that,
giot	mangan	alame	au.	
want-V	to eat	sweet cake-N	1Sg	

'Impossible I don't, I want to eat sweet cake'

3) D: | Abangmu | pe | dohot | do | indin | bo. |
| Brother-in-law-2Pl | Part | follow-V | Part | there | Part |

'Your bother-in-law also comes to follow over there'

Generally, there is no prohibition on talking between sibling (brothers and sisters) in any culture around the world. In this case, however, according to the informant, the limitation of sibling conversation is in the sense of 'maintaining self-respect'. Limited conversations such as joking and teasing are a form of maintaining the self-esteem of both younger and elder siblings (called 'mariboto') particularly if they are already adults or married, even they have own family. The ignorance of Angkola community for this tradition in kinship was influenced by the modern era. Globalization, mass conflict, and large-scale population movements pose unprecedented challenges to maintaining a sense of cultural identity in the modern world (Nickerson et al., 2009). The current information society thinks that communication should be carried out freely and without restrictions like old or ancient cultures.

The next conversation pattern is between I and J in which I is the mother-in-law and J is the son-in-law of I. The data on their conversation from the observations obtained:

4) I: Pajuguk!
Sit-Imp
'Sit down!'
J: Olo   nantulang.
Yes   auntie
'Yes auntie'

The dialogue in data 4 is very short and straight to the point in which I invites J to sit down and J responds by answering 'Yes auntie'. The performance between I and J was having an appropriate conversation according to Angkola culture which also makes it taboo to talk between a mother-in-law and her son-in-law.

The meaning of this language taboo is 'politeness' or good manners as a form of respect for the mother-in-law. However, the language pattern between daughters-in-law and their sons-in-law looks is displayed on data 5;

5) H: Tambai   jo   parumaen   aek milas   nai!
      Imp-(V)   Part   daughter-in-law   hot water-N   Poss
      'Please add the hot water my daughter-in-law!'

   K: Diama amangboru   galasmi,
      Inter   father-in-law   glass-2Pl
      'Give me your glass my father-in-law!'
      Anso   hubuat   namilas.
      Conj   1Sg-take   hot
      'So that I take the hot (water)'

Data 5 shows that H's performance as a male father-in-law does not hesitate to ask or to order K. Then the sentence of K is also longer and show a performance of being respectful, happy to serve, and ready to be ordered. However, according to the informant in the interview, this kinship relationship should not be in the context of joking or teasing.

The meaning of this kinship is K's attitude of 'service' towards H who is the father of husband of H. A servant language attitude will be seen emerging from the daughter-in-law's conversations with her father-in-law and giving respect to her husband's attitude. The services provided by daughters-in-law are due to the social culture of the Angkola community. Husbands (men) generally work outside of home and wives (women) are at home serving family members, one of whom is the man-in-law. Many of Angkola newly married family stay at groom's house gathering with husband's family. *Parumaen's* relationship with *amangboru* was limited only when they are young. When they become older, the daughter-in-law will be considered as his own daughter and is frequently called *inang*, which means 'daughter'.

Data 6 below is a conversation between in-law relative (A and I) when A and his family visited I's house;

6) A: Biado   saba   i,   ma manyabi?
      How-Inter   field   the   already harvest-Inter
      'How is the field, already harvested?'

   I: Madung.
      Already
      'Already'

This relationship is immensely limited and must be pleasant, and be ethical. Explanation of the data above can be seen in the following table;

Table 1:
Performance and Meaning of Inter-kinship Taboo Communication

No	Participant	Performance	Indexicality
1	Wife/husband of the in-laws	- Silence, not answer - Indirect speech, using word 'ninna' - Coding (small cough) - Using simple and short words - Intermediary of objects in the place where they converse - Leaving the conversation location	Respect
2	Siblings (different gender)	- Should be more polite - Not joking - Tending to be serious - Giving good and polite answers	Maintaining self-esteem and respect for brothers
3	Daughter-in-law to her father-in-law	- Short, straightforward, and straight to the point - Avoiding jokes, teasing, long conversation - Using third person intermediaries	Politeness
4	Son-in-law to his mother-in-law	- Serving language attitude - Being respectful attitude	Service
5	In-law relatives (husband's father to wife's mother)	- Being respectful attitude - Small talk language patterns	Respect and reluctance
6	The wife of our younger brother	- Not talking at all - Using the word 'namora' referring to our younger brother's wife	Respect for brother
7	Our aunt's daughter	- Not kidding - Speak in quit voice	Politeness

The performance of language speakers in AL activities can be seen as explained in the table above. According to the informant, the ways participants used to avoid taboo communication included:
1. Being silent, not answering
2. Using indirect sentences
3. Coding (clearing throat, small cough)
4. Using simple, short words
5. Mediating of surround objects
6. Leaving the conversation location
7. Not joking

8. Tending to be serious
9. Giving good, polite answers
10. Avoiding jokes, teases, and long conversations
11. Using a third person intermediary
12. Making small talk

CONCLUSION

Many Angkola people actually in cognizant that in a family there is a pattern of taboos in communicating between relatives. The results of the respondents' answers by Google Form shows that the average of understanding is 63.13% and the majority who unknow are respondents under 20 years of age.

According to the results of interviews with informant and answers from respondents, it can be concluded that the waning of language taboo culture is caused by globalization era. The widespread use of social medias and the openness of information in addition to communication in the current modern era have included as well. It is expected that there are revitalization efforts by obligating communication culture in local content teaching materials at schools and also articles in mass media. The roles of parents are also expected to provide direction and advice to the younger generation regarding the ethical values of this language so that they are maintained and maintained. Because the values of language taboo are needed to improve the language character and attitudes of society, especially in AL users. Researchers also expect that there will be similar researches in other regional languages/cultures in order that language potentially play a role in character building.

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