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# PROCEEDINGS

## International Seminar

LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT V

September 2–3, 2015



**Revised Edition**

Master Program in Linguistics, Diponegoro University  
in Collaboration with  
Balai Bahasa Provinsi Jawa Tengah



# Proceedings International Seminar Language Maintenance and Shift V

“The Role of Indigenous Languages in Constructing Identity”

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## NOTE

This international seminar on Language Maintenance and Shift V (LAMAS V for short) is a continuation of the previous LAMAS seminars conducted annually by the Master Program in Linguistics, Diponegoro University in cooperation with *Balai Bahasa Provinsi Jawa Tengah*.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the seminar committee for putting together the seminar that gave rise to this compilation of papers. Thanks also go to the Head and the Secretary of the Master Program in Linguistics Diponegoro University, without whom the seminar would not have been possible.

The table of contents lists 92 papers presented at the seminar. Of these papers, 5 papers are presented by invited keynote speakers. They are Prof. Aron Reppmann, Ph.D. (Trinity Christian College, USA), Prof. Yudha Thianto, Ph.D. (Trinity Christian College, USA), Dr. Priyankoo Sarmah, Ph.D. (Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India), Helena I.R. Agustien, Ph.D. (Semarang State University, Indonesia), and Dr. M. Suryadi, M.Hum. (Diponegoro University, Indonesia).

In terms of the topic areas, the papers are in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, theoretical linguistics, antropolinguistics, pragmatics, applied linguistics, and discourse analysis.



**NOTE FOR REVISED EDITION**

There is a little change in this revised edition, which as the shifting of some parts of the article by Tatan Tawami and Retno Purwani Sari entitled “Sundanese Identity Represented by the Talents of *Ini Talkshow* A Study of Pragmatics” on page 166 to 167. This has an impact on the change of table of contents.



**SCHEDULE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT V  
"The Role of Indigenous Languages in Constructing Identity"**

<b>WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2015</b>					
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# LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY IN THE WEDDING CEREMONY OF BATAK TOBA

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## Abstract

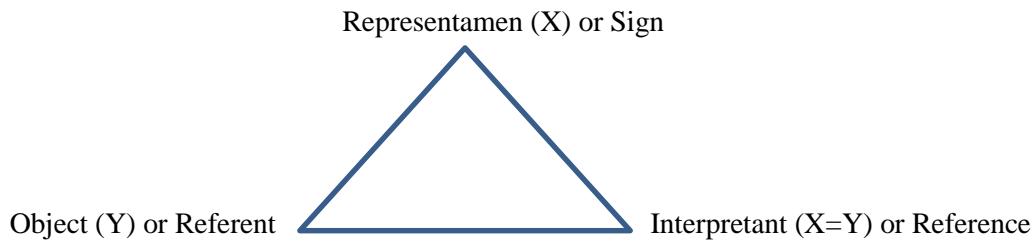
In this article, my attempt is to reveal language and identity in the wedding ceremony of Batak Toba based on the consideration that language is an important part of any society, because it enables people to communicate and express themselves. Language is an important source of continuity and identity in a culture. Batak Toba is one of the ethnic groups of Batak society. Identity is very important in Batak Toba wedding ceremony. The social identity can be directly identified through the family name which is attached to every person from birth. In a wedding ceremony, the specifics of identity can be identified through the roles, action and language used. The identities of those people involved in the ceremony are really very unique and is interesting to investigate. The language expressed, the role and action done will always be related to one's own identity. The uniqueness of identity is always related to family name of the groom and the bride giver sides. This event shows the significance of language in preserving culture and on the other way round this wedding tradition is hoped to maintain the existence of Batak Toba language.

## INTRODUCTION

Batak Toba is one of the ethnic groups of Batak society who speaks Batak Toba language. In a cultural wedding ceremony, the use of Batak Toba language does not exist apart from culture. Spradley (1979: 5) defines culture as, "the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate social behavior". This can be seen in the wedding tradition of Batak Toba where we can see the link between the orality and identity. As Batak Toba society adopts the patrilineal or father line system which is to say that the son and the daughter use their father's family name which means to say that the family name is an ethnic and cultural identity of Batak society. The family names of the clans are regulated by kinship relationship called *Dalihan Natolu* (Siahaan, 1982: 126) which means a fire place consisting of three stones of the same height and size for supporting the cooking tools or containers. Each of the three stones is of the same importance and function, the absence of one stone will stop the function of the other stones. The analogy of the elements of this fireplace in Batak society is identified as: *Boru, Dongan Sabutuha, and Hula-hula*. *Boru* means the daughter descendants of a clan which include the husbands and the children, the parents of her husband and the whole clan of her husband (of the same family name with her husband). *Dongan Sabutuha* literally means born from the same womb which means all son descendants of the same clan who have the same family name. *Hula-hula* means the bride giver of each descendant. The clan of the bride's parents is the *Hula-hula* of the groom side. This triadic kinship relationship is used as a norm to all cultural activities such as wedding ceremony.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The design of the present study is descriptive qualitative which seeks to find out how identities are represented in Batak Toba wedding ceremony. Data were collected from some wedding ceremonies in Surabaya by participating, observing and being involved in the whole process of the wedding ceremony. Semiotics is applied in this study based on the idea that all cultures are sign systems (Levi Strauss, 1963) and the concept of culture is a semiotic one (Geertz, 1973: 5). Data were analyzed by applying semiotic triangle of Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914) which is proposed in Danesi (1946/2004: 26). He stated that the task of semiotic analysis is to figure out what the range is and the aspect of semiotic methodology is known as interpretation (Danesi, 2002: 4). The cultural process in the wedding ceremony is seen as signs and the signs to be studied are the signs which denote identities.



## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The term identity may be defined as “the active negotiation of an individual’s relationship with larger social constructs” (Mendoza-Denton, 2002: 475) where the speakers “at-tempt to establish the social identities of others through verbally performing certain social acts and verbally displaying certain stances Ochs (1993: 288). In Batak wedding ceremony, orality as the vehicle for the transmission of tradition is the bearer of the totality of significations specific to an oral culture. Through the spoken word, tradition based on knowledge, values and cultural models of a social group are transmitted from one generation to another. In this cultural event we can see how identity is revealed through verbal and language acts; language acts as acts of identity where speakers “reveal both their personal identity and their search for social roles” (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985: 14). The verbal used in this cultural event must be specific as the situation is concerning with the tradition which has been passed from generation to generation. The use of ‘Umpasa’ (a quatrain) is always dome in various cultural events such as marriage and death rituals.

This study shows that identity is represented through acts and verbal language. The discussion on the sequence of the acts is based on the process of wedding ceremony tradition. The act of welcoming the bride giver’s side called ‘Hula-hula’ by the groom side is begun by making a verbal call through the loud speaker and by sending a messenger to tell the bride giver’s side that they are ready to welcome them. The welcome procession is signified by presenting traditional Batak music ‘*gondang*’. The groom side comes to meet the bride giver’s side to the door gate by dancing ‘*manortor*’ (traditional Batak dancing is called ‘*tortor*’); they fold their hands on the chest and move the body freely following the rhythm of the music. The groom side moves backward and the bride giver’s side moves forward and they stop until they come to the front part, the seating place where the ceremony is held.

While dancing and moving forward following the rhythm of the traditional Batak ‘music’ (*gondang*), the bride giver’s group open both hands by putting the palms down as a symbol of bless of God. The women of the bride giver’s side bring rice in a container called ‘*tandok*’ on their heads. The rice in the container is poured down to another container and the *tandok* is returned to the owner by putting very little money into the *tandok* to show respect to ‘*Hula-hula*’.

The next act is presenting the representation of food ‘*tudu-tudu ni si panganon*’ (consisting of five parts: the head, neck, thigh and leg, back and ribs, the tail part) which is given by the groom’s side. They move from their seating place toward the seating place of the bride giver’s side and then say a few words about the food they prepare for the ceremony to show their respect by slaughtering a pig not just buying the meat at the market because they want to show their high respect to the parents of the bride who are ready to marry their beloved daughter to their son.



This act is replied by the bride giver's side by presenting cooked gold fish on a big plate which consists of five pieces; they move from their seating place and present the goldfish to the groom's side. The master ceremony of the groom's side says a few words to say that the bride parents want to show their love through the fish with a hope that the bride and groom live like a fish which never goes alone, but live together in harmony.



These two acts cannot be done on the other way round, the act and the role denote the identity of the doer. The role cannot be exchanged' in this way the cultural group identity can be directly seen through what each side does.

The representation of the slaughtered pig is distributed to both sides of the bride and the groom. The representation food is divided into two parts and then the two halves are each distributed to the bride and groom sides. The head part is for the 'bride giver parents'; the neck part is for the 'boru'; the thigh and leg are for the members of the same clan; the back and the ribs are for bride givers; the tail part is for the host of the party. The receivers of the cuts of the meat are called one by one by each of the master ceremony of the bride and groom side.

Submitting the bride price is done after eating. The groom side gives the money on a plate; they will come in group (usually the brothers of the father's groom and the others of the same clan). The bride price to be submitted is only the rest; a part of the price has been given at the time of deciding the amount agreed which was negotiated in front of the clans of the bride and groom sides. The bride price doesn't mean that the groom buys the bride; this is a custom which has been generated from generation to generation to show high respect to the bride parents because their daughter will attend the big family of the clan of the groom.

The next step is the act of giving 'ulos' to the parents of the groom by the parents of the bride. This *ulos* is called '*ulos pansamot*' which means that the father as the head of the family may be blessed by God to have better income and luck and good health. The literal meaning of '*pansamot*' (pronounced '*passamot*') is the one who earns money. This *ulos* is given to show the respect of the bride parents because he has provided the bride price. After '*ulos pansamot*' is submitted to the groom's parents. The father of the bride expresses a few words of hope and prayer in order that they have long life, more luck and more descendants from the newly married son. After saying a few words, he continues to state three quatrains '*umpasa*' which expresses a hope and prayer to ask for the bless of God.

The next is called '*ulos hela*' which is given to the bride and groom by the parents of the bride. The meaning of giving this *ulos* is to show their love to the daughter and son-in-law who is now married to their daughter. This is a medium for asking the bless of God for the new family. Before laying '*ulos*' to their shoulders, the father of the bride says three quatrains '*umpasa*' to pray to God in order that the new family has long life, good luck and soon ha the bless of God to have son and daughter. The summary of the acts and languages related to identities can be seen below:

The Bride's giver side	The Groom side
receive bride price;	give bride price;
enter the ceremony place by moving slowly following the rhythm of the traditional dance and give bless by putting down the palms of hands;	welcome the bride's giver clan with traditional dance at the door gate by folding hands putting them on the chest to show their respect to the bride's giver;

bring rice on the women's head in a specific container called ' <i>tandok</i> ' which is made from plaited plastic or certain plant called <i>pandan</i> ;	receive the rice and then pour all the rice into a sack and return the container ( <i>tandok</i> );
receive the representation of food prepared for the ceremony.	present the representation of the cultural food prepared by the groom side
present gold fish as a cultural food on a big plate consisting of five fish	receive the fish and accept them as a sign love;
give <i>ulos</i> to the groom's parents by laying it on their shoulders;	Sit down and receive the <i>ulos</i> on their shoulders;
give <i>ulos</i> to the bride and groom;	The bride and groom receive <i>ulos</i> on their <i>sholders</i> ;
give <i>ulos</i> to the father's brother of the groom and his wife;	The father's brother and his wife of the groom receive <i>ulos</i> ;
give <i>ulos</i> to the sister of the groom's father;	The sister of groom's father and her husband receive the ' <i>ulos</i> ' on their shoulders.
give <i>ulos</i> to the bride and groom	
give <i>ulos</i> to the groom and bride and instead they are given a little money in an envelope;	-

The clan of the bride giver gives *ulos* to the bride and groom including the bride givers of the groom side but not the clan of the groom; the groom side is the receiver of *ulos*.

The Bride giver's side	The Groom side
--	Say 'welcome words' to invite the bride giver's side to enter the reception room;
State words of bless at the time of giving <i>ulos</i> to the groom's side in the form of ' <i>umpasa</i> ' (quatrain);	--
Addressing by using the word 'Raja ni Pamoruon' something like 'Distinguished'	Addressing by saying 'Raja ni Hula-hula' something like your Highness

## CONCLUSION

The identity that develops as a function of Batak ethnic group membership can be clearly seen in their roles in the wedding ceremony. It cannot be denied that ethnicity is linked to cultural identity. The specificities of the roles and languages which categorize people participating in Batak wedding ceremony lead to identify the identities of the bride giver side and the groom side.

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