

## KUAN-KUAN IN KARO SOCIETY

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### ABSTRACT

The title of this article is "*kuan-kuan* in Karo society. *Kuan-kuan* is a proverb which usually discusses the habits of the Karo people in everyday life, both in giving advice to the younger, particularly to the bride and groom at a wedding ceremony. In addition, it also describes the work of Karo society in general as well as the nature or character of the Karo people. The method used in this article is descriptive qualitative method which means to provide an overview of behavior and character of Karo society in general through proverb in *kuan-kuan*. Analysis of the data used in the processing of this data is interwoven flow analysis model which consists of three component, they are before, during, and after the collection of data in parallel. Karo people possess an honesty and bold, confident, shy, not greedy and know their rights, irritability and resentment.

**Keywords:** kuan-kuan; wedding ceremony; society; language; proverb

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

One of the wealth of Indonesia which distinguishes it from other nations is the diversity of ethnicities and languages of each ethnic population, rich in culture, language and are united in one national language, Indonesian. The use of the Indonesian language as a unifying tribes in Indonesia, does not close to the increasing use of regional languages in daily social life. But from every tribe, it has their respective local languages such as oral traditions that vary in wisdom both in work and in other cultural fields. Karo people are generally well liked by mutual cooperation in terms of both light and heavy work, in joyful and in sorrow. Work culture for the Karo people can be seen from the expressions and proverbial submitted by the older generation to the younger generation of hereditary good at wedding party as well as in everyday life that essentially teaches young people in order to keep working hard to get the results satisfactorily, for example the phrase which reads *mbuah page nisuan jugular manuk niasuh*.

#### Theoretical Framework

This Study tries to find the whole phenomenon of the use of language in a social context, or known as sociolinguistics. Sociology, language illustrates how language is used in any factors that influence it. The theory used in analyzing the expression of *kuan-kuan* is ethnomethodology theory. Ethnomethodology theory is first introduced by Harold Garfinkel (1967). He combines this approach to see how the nature of human action related to the ability to deliver and understand the actions in daily social activities (Bell & Gorrett, 2001: 162). This approach basically does not directly assess the activities of human language in the context of everyday life but based on the analysis of the conversation. Conversation is essentially two sides of the interaction between the speaker and the hearer. In the process the two exchanged messages, it must be understood in the context that the conversation is successful. Conversation is part of the communication process in general, which is defined as a transmitter of information, sharing of ideas or as a shaper of similarity or unity of thought between the transmitter of information with recipient.

#### Research Methods

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. It is done because the qualitative method is a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of data spoken or written language in the community or in Karo society. A qualitative approach involves the data orally or in writing a language. The approach involving community language is directed at the older generation. The informant can be

quantified according research purposes. (Djadjasudarma, 1993).The data collected is not the numbers but the words which are formed in *kuan-kuan*. It is as a result of the use of qualitative methods. Thus, qualitative research methods in a description of the characteristic of the data accurately.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **Worldview Community in Karo**

Karo community kinship system is based or centered on *daliken Sitelu* (three furnaces). While I was cooking in the kitchen, pots should be placed on a three-legged furnace. If the foot of furnace is less than three, then surely the pot will fall and broke. This cooking furnace has three pillars, symbolizing the Karo people by different names in each group, and perform the functions of one another. To be part of the three relationships, people assume that *sangkep nggeluh Karo* (completeness of life) must be a group of Karo bound by loyalty and obligations in the order of social relations as a whole.

In Karo people, all kinship either by consanguinity or due to marital relationships can be grouped into three types of kinship, namely *senina*, *anak Beru*, *Kalimbubu*. Every member of society has position as *senina* to one of the group. *Anak beru* receives family relation and as *kalimbubu* to other groups. *Daliken sitelu* is as an open system. *Beru position* as a child, or *kalimbubu* or *senina/sembuyak* depends on the circumstances or conditions. The nature of such thing shows Karo customary democratic society. *Daliken sitelu kinship system* contains three main values, the first value is mutual cooperation, the second is order, third is the equality of rights in rotation. It is said rotation because today one can function as *kalimbubu*, the day after tomorrow can also be as a *subsidiary Beru* or function as *senina/sembuyak*. This rotation will happen, just waiting for the time.

The function of the kinship system like this would strengthen the recognition that the Karo people are human beings who can not live alone. So it is necessary to live in unity, mutual giving and receiving. Democratic element in question clearly serves as a tool of social control in preventive, because all personal will be respected, treated fairly. Just a matter of time, when the respected will be given and it is given by the customary treatment.

### **The Character of Karo Society**

There are some characters possessed by Karo society based on the statement given by Teridah Build (1998: 162-171):

#### **a. Honest**

Generally, Karo people live in villages. They fully live on the gifts of nature and they have to use their mind to face the challenge in natural area. In the village, they live in a family and have a sense of togetherness in traditional environment. Because the elements of togetherness is prominent, so both in giving and receiving things, they do it in honest.

#### **b. Assertive**

Karo people has his firm stance, quick thinking and acting. Not so soft in dealing with something of a problem, especially if it relates with principle.

#### **c. Brave**

Karo People generally are brave. Since childhood, he has been taught by his parents or his grandmother that humans are equals, no human being privileges over other human beings. What is different is the twist of a person's hand or fortune. Karo people teach their children to be the meat in the blood leads a life that is as "*kudin taneh, ija pecah, ije iambekken.*" means clay pot, where it is broken out, we should through it there.

**d. Confident**

Karo community believes in their own strength. Karo people rarely makes the fate or whining to others. Shyness is owned by the Karo people and shame on the mercy of others to survive.

**e. Not Greedy**

Generally, Karo people are not greedy. They really want to be rich but not using greedy way. They also strenuously defend their rights.

**f. Easily Offended**

Because Karo people rarely hurts others in speaking, so he will soon be offended if his or her family is hurt by someone in speaking, either openly or covertly. If he offended then immediately flushed face, clanking his ears, and then heat heart. He would quickly try to find that people and try to find solution. If not, he will take revenge for it.

**g. Rational and Critical**

Rational and critical thinking is also a characteristic of Karo. Karo people are not so quick to be emotion, but always rationally and critically. Therefore, they do not easily swayed by something seduction. This critical attitude often makes the other party disappointed.

**h. Adaptable**

Karo people are easy to adapt in any places and always respect among members of the community. They have their own words: *I ja taneh idedeh I je langit ijujung* 'meaning 'where land is stepped in where the sky is lifted'. Karo people are easily to adapt in new place they are domiciled. It can be done because they have a good attitude of tolerance in the society.

**i. Persistent in Getting Knowledge**

To gain knowledge, Karo people is prepared to suffer from many things. To seek knowledge, Karo people generally live in a simple life. They are ready to work everything, even the job is something very difficult, such as a driver, newsboy, salesmen, etc. They do it just only to fulfill all of the need for education.

**DISCUSSION**

**Kuan Kuan and Its Use**

In Karo's dictionary (2002: 320), the proverb of "*kuan-kuan* is typically arranged to deliver a purpose. Observing human behavior using language for various purposes are very interesting. Some use the language in a straightforward and outspoken. Some are choosing other forms of language that are not straightforward and not blatant use of proverbs. Proverb is regarded as a language that has its own distinctive characteristics because of four of surplus assets.

First in terms of structure, it has a structure that is almost frozen. So from the perspective of the theory of transformation, sentence structure is largely irreversible. If it remains changed it is no longer a proverb.

Second, in terms of the meaning of the proverb, it generally implies figurative meaning. Its meaning is determined by factors which is out of words. In other words, the meaning of a proverb is determined by its contextual and cultural context. Therefore, it requires knowledge, intelligence and sharpness of thought to understand it. Proverbs can even be regarded as a language that is full of wisdom. Proverb also be referred to as the language of wisdom that can not be understood solely through ratio. As the language of wisdom, proverbs can pass his time because phenomena and events that constantly appear all time.

Third, proverbs contain values that can be used as a guidance in setting a good life among human beings, humans with the natural surroundings, as well as human with his creator. Fourth, proverbs have a high aesthetic value both in its form as well as on how to convey meaning.

### ***Kuan-kuan and Its Meaning in Proverbs***

There are some examples of *kuan-kuan* and its meaning in proverbs which describe the attitude of Koronese/ Karo people which can be seen to the following examples:

a. *Siageng-agengen radu mbiring, sikuning-kuningen radu megersing 'siarang-arangan sama hitam, sikunyit-kunitan sama-sama kuning'*

The proverb above illustrates the man vilify to each other and the result of course both of them are equally ugly. But if both do well, of course the results are pleasing or satisfying.

b. *Bagi si mandang roka dung peranin 'seperti mengeritik lereng padi usai panen'*

From the proverb above, we can see that in Karo people sometimes arise regret about their couple after they are married. Meaning, it is not useful job to be regret because it has happened. Everything should be managed first before making decision.

c. *Nggeluh bagi bindoran 'hidup seperti bunglon'*

From proverbs above, as well as other tribes, culture in Karo teaches that adjust to where we are, so that we can be loved and accepted by the society where we are.

d. *Bagi kerbau gunduk natap lau meciho, terinem lau megembur 'seperti kerbau yang tanduknya melengkung ke bawah memandang air jernih, terminum air yang tidak jernih atau air bercampur butiran tanah.'*

The proverb above refers to Karo people who always lose in his business. Whatever is given to him, he never have any luck, always lose money.

e. *Bagi penarune buntu 'seperti pemain serunai buntu'*

Proverb above explains that there are people who can not be set out because he feels he is always needed by many people so he wants everything in accordance with his will. He does not want to listen to the opinions of others, or in other words he wants to monopolize many things.

f. *Bagi lembu penampen lupa nggagat tarum natap 'seperti sapi daerah penampen, lupa makan gara-gara memandang'*

Proverb above describes someone who forgets to eat or forgotten works because more often looking at something or may also be said to people who do not persistent work because they just want happy alone. Karo is famous for his hard work. The culture of saving in Karo teaches the young to save the money so that in the old days, he is not difficult anymore to fulfil his life. That is why, Karo people are extremely difficult to sell they land because the land as his investments. The land is used as a treasure to be given to his grandson.

g. *Angkar beltek pangan labo ate keleng 'jaga perut bukan sayang makanan'*

In Karo people, if there is a party, they always try to serve meal for entertaining guests, because it is the closeness of the family and will add to the windfall for the host. But if there are children who can not withstand the taste, there will be some problem in their life. That is why parents often convey this proverb to their children in order to think about the negative impact of his actions.

h. *Mbuah page nisuan, merih manuk niasuh* ‘berlimpah hasil padi yang ditanam, berkembang biak ayam yang dipelihara’

In the culture of Karo, the couple that will get married provided with advices given by the family. Moral message is conveyed to remind them to keep the dignity and the dignity of the family and be independent. So they have to work hard to obtain satisfactory results.

i. *Adi ngalo la rido, maka nggalar ka la rutang* ‘kalau menerima tidak ada piutang, maka membayar pula tidak ada utang’

Proverb above teaches people to be honest because if we get something in a way that is unauthorized or accept improperly it will come evil or disaster.

J. *Mangkuk lawes, mangkuk reh* ‘mangkok pergi, mangkok datang’

Proverb above explains that Karo people are taught a principle of life that gives it first receives, or it is often also used by the proverb *endi-enta dalam surat ukat* ‘memberi – meminta dalam tulisan sendok bambu’ ‘meaning, give first and take. It is different with the English proverb *take and give*.

We can see that there are 10 (ten) proverbs of *kuan-kuan* which have been described above. It can be concluded that the speaker in delivering advice to the young generation is in the form of orders or prescriptions, and some restrictions, so that the younger generation is expected to be able to perform the command from older generation and also able to avoid the restrictions that have been submitted to the younger generation.

### **Traditional Wisdom in Karo Society**

Wisdom means, tactful, thoughtful and clever. So knowledge means wisdom or intelligence. Therefore traditional wisdom means tactful or skill that is the tradition, the customs is handed down from generation to generation. Traditional wisdom is important because it is a legal or cultural life in the Karo people (living law/living culture). Wisdom can also mean taking the right decision, or in accordance with applicable law. While traditional means customs, habits. Therefore, the traditional wisdom means making the right decision, or in accordance with the law:

In Karo society, we know *surat ukat* which is read *endi-enta*. This word is written on *ukat* that is spoon made of bamboo' which means I am a member so you are also a member. On the principle of community in Karo, first you give and you will receive. The principle becomes the philosophy in all areas of life in Karo. The validity of this philosophy can also be seen from another expression: *mangkuk lawes, mangkuk reh* ‘*mangkok pergi, mangkok datang*’ which means that we give and we will receive in return. Karo society is a society of farmers, therefore the community is very honest with nature. Honesty that we know in expression: *mbuah page nisuan, merih manuk niasuh* ‘berlimpah hasil pertanian dan berkembang biak ayam yang ditanam’ meaning, should attempt or effort first and last is results. If we look at the expression; *mbuah page nisuan, merih manuk niasuh* explains that the Karo people encourage the next generation to planting rice first and reap, because there can be no crop that can not be harvested if not planted. There are no proverb in Karo: *mbuah page la nisuan, merih manuk la nisuan* ‘berlimpah hasil padi yang tidak ditanam dan berlimpah hasil ternak yang tidak dipelihara’. This differ from the fishermen who have a habit, without planting can get harvest *rani la nisuan, merih ikan la niasuh*. For the people in Karo, every action will bring consequences as expressed in traditional proverb, *adi ngalo la rido, nggalar kang larutang* meanings if we gain something illegally or improperly, it will come reinforcements or disaster.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the explanation above, we can conclude that Karo people have a habit in delivering advice that is hard work to fulfil their need of life which can be seen from the expressions submitted by the older

generation to the younger generation. Besides, we must ask for the Lord to all the hard work endowed by God in order to obtain satisfactory results. Besides having to work hard, Karo people must work first and after that may receive remuneration or wages of the job which has been done. This can be seen in the culture of wedding ceremony. Giving material first and ready to eat, after that the ceremony is over. It may differ from the culture of other regions such as eating first and after finish eating, you should donate some material.

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