The Correlation between the Proper Name and Social Status in Russian and Indonesian Society

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Abstract

This article analyzes the structure of the greetings addressed to a person in Russia and Indonesia, particularly in Minangkabau (West Sumatera) to reveal the correlation between the name and social status of a person. The dependence of the social status on a number of factors including age, marital status, responsibilities, etc. finds its expression in the calls the communicants use while addressing each other, and the analysis of the ways people address each other in different societies helps to state the factors affecting the social status of a person.

1. Introduction

In order to communicate with other people each person fulfills a certain social function in the society. The social status and role are associated functionally by dint of the division of labor in society. The social status is a position occupied by individuals in the community. It is determined by the following key elements: one’s rights, obligations, responsibilities, authority and influence, which in turn determines certain social role of the individual.

Social status is a general overview of one’s position, covering one’s profession, economic status, political opportunities as well as one’s characteristics (Sanzharevsky and Titarenko, 2002). The correlation of one’s position is determined by the status distance that is vertical in nature: high position – equal – low (Formanovskaya, 2007, p. 159). Formanovskaya argued that it is necessary to distinguish the permanent social characteristics of a speaker from

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his or her social position and social roles. The permanent characteristics include biological characteristics, place of birth and upbringing, or traits having enduring changes such as age and knowledge acquisition process (Formanovskaya, 2007, p. 160).

Characteristics of gender in society are divided into male and female, whereas for age they are divided into the age of children, teens, young generation, middle generation, and older generation.

2. The correlation between the proper name and social status

The people born in Russia gain names based on the naming system prevailing in Russia, i.e. proper name, father's name, and family name, as well as differentiated by gender (Dmitrii Aleksandovich Proxorov – for male; Nataya Alexandrovna Proxorova – for female). Of the three-word name, only the self-name is selected by parents, the rest two ones are taken from the father's name and family name from the father's paternal line (Rylov, 2010: 16).

In Indonesia, the name given to newborn babies depends on several factors, such as the place of birth of the baby (in the city, in the village, island, etc.), the ethnic group of the baby’s parents, the culture adopted by parents, the language used, as well as the educational level of the parents of the baby. Indonesia has thirty-four provinces and each province has its own culture, language and traditions. Each ethnic group has its own characteristics associated with the naming system. For example, parents who are highly educated, both receiving education in Indonesia and abroad, recurrently give foreign names to their children. For example, the former Indonesian ambassador in Moscow named his son Abraham Lincoln Washington. This is due to the fact that the father obtained his education and lived for a long period of time in the United States. Each ethnic group in Indonesia has the specifications in naming the newborn babies. The Minangkabau ethnic group occupying the area of West Sumatra, for example, has a culture, language, and traditions different from other ethnic groups in Indonesia. The characteristic of one’s name in this region is that it contains the consonants -r and -z both in many male and female names. The examples of male name are: Azyumardi Azra, Azinar Amin, Rizal, Rizaldo, Rizaldi, Afrizal, Erizal, Syamsurizal, Syahrizal Endrizal, Masrizal, Syafrizal, Hendrizal, Nofrizal; while female names are: Zurhaza, Zakiar, Afriza. What is interesting about these names is that they are easily identified as typical Minangkabau names, because such names are hardly ever found in other ethnic groups. Another feature of Minangkabau names is that they use the tribe or clan names, for example Hendri Chaniago (as derived from the tribe Chaniago), Indra Piliang, Afrizal Koto, Anisa Jambak. Such names, however, are rarely used by the Minangkabau people today. In addition, there is another characteristic of Minangkabau names: the man who is married to a fellow Minangkabau shall receive a customary title at the time of marriage, for example, if the name of a man before his marriage is Azinar Amin, then after the marriage he shall get a new name, like Sutan Rangkayo Basa, which is a customary title.

In addition, customary title can be obtained by a person because he is considered by the local community as a wise, devout and intelligent man, comprehending the complexities of Minangkabau tradition, economically well-established and married. Such a person shall be given a ceremony of bestowing the customary title of Datuk; thus after marriage Sutan Rangkayo Basa, for example, becomes Datuk Sutan Rangkayo Basa.

The use of the names in both Russia and Indonesia (Minangkabau) depends on social status and social roles of each participant of communication. In this case it is important to note one's social status and role in society, as well as interpersonal relationships between the communicants. M. V. Kultunova argued that social status is viewed from the position of a person in employment, economic status, an individual's personal needs and age (Kultunova, 2000: 226).

The age of communication partner is important to note in order to call her/him properly, in accordance with the etiquette in the society. Greeting by using self name + father’s name to an older person in Russia shows that the speakers follow and understand the etiquette prevailing in the community, in this case, shows the courtesy of speakers to the communication partner. Thus the use of calling etiquette to someone is associated with social status of the communication partner.

According to Krysin, social behavior is a form of one’s behavior in a social group and in situations of communication (Krysin, 1989, 136 -137). In terms of social roles and the communicative situations there are two types of communication: unequal communication (one communicant has a social status and role higher than the other communicant, for example supervisor - subordinate, faculty - student, parent - child), and equal communication (both communicants have equal social status and role).
From the communicative-pragmatic perspective the name of a person is used in accordance with the prevailing etiquette. Groups of people who already know each other communicate considering the age, activity, role and status, intimacy, relationships, level of closeness, and the style of the language used.

The distinguishing feature of self-name, particularly in Russia, is a unique way to transform self-name that is associated with different emotions and expressions (ones that indicate a formal or business situations; ones that express affection, respect, intimacy, humiliation) that reflect a wide range of human interpersonal relationships.

From the sociological perspective, the call of names of a person is differentiated by the following categories: a) communicating in a formal or non-formal situation; b) communicating with a communicant whose status and social position is higher or lower than those of the speaker; c) communicating with a communicant of different ages and different groups (groups of strangers, family, close friends, acquaintances) (Superanskaya., 2008, 311). In other words, the realization of name use in a society is closely associated with etiquette, politeness, and social status in the society.

3. Discussion of results

The following are the examples of the use of names in Russia and Indonesia (Minangkabau):

(1) Frol Fedotych namorshhil lob i hotel eshhjo chto-to dobavit', no tut v kabinet voshla Anja, nesja v rukah ogromnyj podnos s chashkmi, saharnicej i vazochkami, napolennym vareniem i vafljami. Ona lovko postavila podnos na stol i sprosila:
- Eshhjo chto-nibud', Frol Fedotych?
- Spasibo, Anechka, nichego bol'she ne nado. (Dasha Orlova: Shiroka Reka, 2008:10).

Frol Fedotych frowned and wanted to add something, but Anya walked into the room carrying a large tray with cups, sugar jar and jars filled with jams and waffles. Carefully she placed the tray on the table and asked:
- Anything else, Frol Fedotych?
- No, dear Anna, nothing else is needed ’ (Dasha Orlova: Shiroka Reka, 2008: 10).

The dialogue takes place in the office of the chief doctor Frol Fedotych. Frol Fedotych is receiving a new surgeon who will work at the hospital. The communication is formal; Frol Fedotych and the surgeon meet each other for the first time. Anna is a nurse who always helps Frol Fedotych in all of his surgeries. Anna is a young nurse working with such a serious and good manner that Frol Fedotych regards her as his own daughter. This relationship is not an asymmetrical relationship, even so their relationship is close and well, unlike the rigid superior and subordinate relationships. Anna greets his superior with Frol Fedotych. The call of Frol Fedotych has a structure of self-name + father’s name. Such call expresses politeness and respect to the person called. The call with the structure of self-name + father’s name in Russian society is used to address a respected, adult person. Such call is similar to the call of Bapak/Pak and Ibu/Bu + self-name in Indonesian society. Russian society does not have the words like Bapak/Pak and Ibu/Bu to address a respected person.

Frol Fedotych greets Anna with the call Anechka. This shows their close and long-established relationship; Frol Fedotych considers Anna as his own daughter so that the communication between them is very well established and comfortable. Anna also feels comfortable and happy to be called Anechka by Frol Fedotych, although in formal situations, in the presence of a new doctor, Frol Fedotych still call her as usual. This shows how the relationship is so close established within their profession. This new doctor can perceive it. Anechka derives from the self-name of Anna. The addition of diminutive suffix -echka in this case shows a very positive emotion since it expresses the feeling of love, admiration, and respect to person called.

(2) His name at birth was Azinar Amin, once appointed as a Datuk, he is now renamed Datuk Mangkudun Sati. People recognize someone who has been confirmed by the Minangkabau society as Datuk by calling him with his customary title. When a person, understanding Minangkabau tradition and knowing that he has been a Datuk, still calls him by his birth-name, for example, Pak Azinar, then that person is considered not to respect the person he addresses to and this in turn would ruin the friendship. This call is also applicable at the place of work. When co-workers coming from different areas and not knowing that he has the title of Datuk, do not call him by his Datuk
title, there would be no problem. It is the duty of other Minangkabau friends to tell them that the person has become a Datuk. When there are two Datuk as the communicants then he is also called as Datuk Mangkudun.

The customary title of Datuk has a high social status in Minangkabau society since there are a lot of criteria including mature personality, economically established, intelligent, understanding the customs that are used for a person to be elected a Datuk by the community. Other than that, it requires a long process to obtain the title of Datuk.

Similarly, married men are to be called by the title obtained at the time of their marriage by the side of woman family. For example, the proper name given by the parents is Rizal Azumar, while the title received when married is Sutan Pamuncak; then, his parents-in-law will call him by the call Sutan. When the parents-in-law call him Rizal, they would be considered impolite and do not understand the customs, and this shall make the relationship not good. Such custom is still valid in West Sumatera.

4. Conclusion

From the brief description of the proper name and social status, it turns out that the correlation between both is notably close, because the social status will determine how we call our communication partner. The right call on the communication partner both in Russian and the Minangkabau society (Indonesia) determines the degree of friendship and the relationship with the partner. The wrong call will affect the degree of proximity between friends, relatives, and communicants.

References


