

Kupang Malay Kinship Terms and Their Function in Linguistic Politeness

Kupang is located on the western tip of the island of Timor. It is the capital city of the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT). Kupang is a multilingual city with a number of regional languages and with a local Malay variety known as *Kupang Malay*. Vernacular languages are heard regularly, particularly in the neighborhood areas associated with specific ethnic groups (Jacob, 2006:2). As each community has its own linguistic micro-universe within the city, the norms of conduct within family, clan and ethnic group are transferred to the interactions with non-group members.

This paper establishes basic rules for the use of Kupang Malay kinship terms (KT) in discourse, through written data found in colloquial column in *Pos Kupang* Newspaper named *Tapaleuk*. *Pos Kupang* is a local newspaper in Kupang City. This column is written in the local Malay variety of *Kupang Malay*, and it tells about the daily reality of the local people.

The scenes from this column is about how couples interact with their neighbors and how they discuss about hot issues happen in the city, so, the use of KT are vary based on the situations and the topic of discussion. For example when a wife addressing her husband.

1. Situation 1: giving a warning.

Lu makan tarus bapa.
2SG eat keep father

“Keep on eating **dad**”

(*Tapaleuk*, 25/02/2015)

2. Situation 2: a drunken wife refusing a favor.

Beta sonde tau itu lagu. Nyadu pi cari sandiri
1SG NEG know that song. Brother-in-law go look alone

“I don’t know that song. Find it **yourself**”

(*Tapaleuk*, 7/01/2015)

The examples above show that when addressing a husband, some KT may be applied by a wife. As in (1), when the wife gives a warning to her husband, she used KT *bapa* ‘father’ in her utterance. The KT *bapa* ‘father’ is the most general term when addressing a husband. In (2), when the situation is about how a drunken wife addressing her husband, the wife used KT *nyadu* ‘brother in law’. In normal situation, this term is used to address husband’s or wife’s brothers or sisters.

This paper discusses the pragmatic uses of kinship terms in Kupang Malay family. The discussion will be implemented with Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) ‘giving deference’ strategy and Scollon and Scollon’s (2004) politeness theories of *deference*, *solidarity* and *hierarchical* politeness system.

References

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