Kinship Systems and Terms among Medan-Based Arabic Community

Nursukma Suri¹
T. Silvana Sinar²
Pujiati³
Fikarwin Zuska⁴

¹, ², ³ Post Graduate Programme of Linguistics
Faculty of Cultural Sciences, University of Sumatera Utara
Jl. dr. Mansoer No. 1 Medan 20155 (Indonesia)

⁴ Department of Social Anthropology
Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, University of Sumatera Utara (Indonesia)

Abstract

The attention towards the Arabic minority living beyond Gulf countries is urgent. The major objectives of this study are to investigate the kinship systems and terms (KST) among the Medan-based Arabic community (MbAC). Antropological perspectives of KST were adopted from Al-Haly (2010), Koentjaraningrat (2005) as well as from Braun (1988). This study employed qualitative approach and was conducted in Medan, Indonesia. Data were obtained from MbAC; the subjects of this study were randomly selected. Interviews were also utilized and they were recorded on audiotape. The results can be summarized as follows: kinship system is patrilineal and applies endogamy and exogamy in marriage system. The kinship terms cover the variations of greetings such as abi, umi, jidd, jidda, ami, ameh, hale, halati, anta, ente, you yourselves, ana, ane, brother, ustaz (cleric), ustazah, navigator, muallimah, and hafid. The following names are also used for greetings: Sarifah, Taufik and others. Greetings in relation to rank are Habib, Said that commensurate with kin terms such as ash Darad, Umm Aisha, or with surnames like Assegaf, Bahadjaj. Habiby and habibaty are also parts of kin terms. The conclusion reached is that kinship system and terms are still used by MbAC.

Key Words: kinship, system, terms, Medan-based Arabic, community

1. Introduction

The influx of Arabs into Indonesia as noted by Zuhri (1981: 176) and Azra (2012: 6) was predicted in the 7th or 8th century AD. Reports from Tang Dynasty in the 7th century told there were settlements of Arab merchants in Barus, a place in western coast of Sumatra; however, Islam was thought of to first come to Perlak and then to Samudra Pasai kingdom. Their arrival created social contact with local people. Soon, some forms of cooperations such as brotherhood, trade, teaching-learning, and mixed marriages happened. This last aspect successfully bore the emergence of Arabic kinship systems and terms. Chony quoted Imron 2005: 27 as saying "kinship system is explained not only because of their marital bond or of their families, but of their blood relations". Chony argued that the key in marriage system was related to lineage or descent marriages. In case of kinship systems two terms are known such as reference and address (Koentjaraningrat, 2005: 129). Kinship terms refers to greetings, for example, parents call their sons with waladi 'oh my son', ya ibnati 'O my daughter', qurrata a'yin 'my dear', bunayya 'my kids'. Husbands call their wives with soft and stimulating words such as habibati 'my dear', zaujati 'my wife', ummi Humaira 'mother with rosy cheeks' and so on.

2. Review of Related Literature

A social system or social organization as Koentjaraningrat (2013: 165) argued is always related to kinship system, for instance, marriage, mutual help and courtesy among relatives and to kinship terms. Salim (1978: 138) wrote relatives are people who have affinities to someone by blood or marriage. Kinship is a matter of relation among relatives. Quran stresses the importance of relatives in An-Nisa': 36. A relative, a close relative or relatives in the Qur'an are termed as zal Qurba or zawil Qurba, and ulul Qurba or ulil Qurba.
Kinship must be maintained and will have to be maintained in the future because it joins the strong nexus of a broader relationship between men and his nation (Fahruddin, 1992: 598). Fox’s (1967: 27) kinship becomes the central concept in anthropology. The concept of kinship can also be based on the classification of kinship typology referring to relatives (kin), rules of descent and rules of relative marriages (Mansur et al, 1988: 21). Ihromi’s (1999: 85) argument revealed that in patrilineal descent the customs of the family is played by the father as the head who serves as an intermediary in the fulfillment of economic resources in his family. In addition, he functions as the highest court to discipline his children and speaks on behalf of his group. This is the main characteristic of Arabic model.

Tsa'alabi quoted al-Sahlani and al-Husseini (2010: 13) who argued there are seven units of Arabic social systems:

(i)  al-ṣya'b ‘the public’ (for example, Qath'an, ‘Adnan, and Khuzaimah).

(ii) al-qabīlah ‘the tribe’

(iii) al-fasīlah ‘the group’

(iv) al-‘asyīrah ‘the clan’

(v) al-ẓurriyyah ‘the offspring’

(vi) al-‘atrah ‘the household’

(vii) al-‘ā`ilah ‘the family’

Ma'luf (1986: 607) proposed qabilatun meaning ‘children from the same father’. Ali and Muhdlor (1996: 1433) translated qabilah orasīrah as ‘tribes’, ‘tribal’ or ‘ethnic’. Ali (1981: 713) wrote qabilah means the father’s side. Some examples of al-qabilah are Rabi'a, Iyad, Mudar, and Kinanah. Meanwhile, according to Koentjaraningrat (1989: 23), ethnicity is a social group or entity who has a life of human interaction system, system of norms that regulate the interaction, continuity and a sense of identity to unite all its members as well as having its own leadership system.

Hitti (2003: 39), Wafi (no year: 96), and Faruqi (2003: 45-47) divided al-qabilah into three: Ba'idah, Aribah, and Musta'ribah Arabs. The first group, for example ‘Ad and Thamud, was punished by God and they were extinct. The second were descended from Yasyjub bin Ya'rib bin Qahtan ibn' Abir ibn Salikh Arfakhsyad ibn Sum ibn Nuh ibn Qahtan, or also called Qahtaniyah. The descendants of Qahtaniyah were Ya'rub (living in Yemen), Hadramaut (settling in Hadramaut), 'Amman (dwelling in Amman city), and Jurhum us-Saniyah (residing in Hijaz). The third was descended from Ishmael who was also called Adnaniah. Their nation came from 'Adnan, Nizar, and Ma'add. It was called by al-Musta'ribah because they were affiliated with Saudi al-'Aribah through marriage. The Qahtaniah and 'Adnaniah became the pioneers for the birth of the Arab nation.

The al-fasilah according to Asyqar (1985: 765) refers to kinship families while Ali and Muhdlor (1996: 1906) suggested “origin”. About the al-asyirah Asyqar (1985: 243) interpreted it as ‘relatives in one religion’. Ali and Muhdor (1996: 932) argued that az-zurriyyatu means children, grandchildren, and descendants. Asyqar (1985: 279) proposed another meaning that this term had the connection to Pharaoh and his families. Al-Sahlani and al-Husaini (2010: 17) thought the al-itrah means the nuclear family while Ma'luf (1986: 486) indicated this term as the bloodline of a man and his descendants or relatives and so on. Sunarto (2002: 166) proposed another meaning as al-Baitu wa al-ā`ilatu 'housekeeping'. Ali and Muhdor (1996: 1255) pleaded that al-a`ilah consists of a mother, a father and children who are not married.

Al-Ahly cited al-Sahlany and al-Husseini (2010: 9-33) who suggested three categories of Arabic kinship as shown in the followings:
1) al-'abwānuwawa al-waladu an nazlu ‘father’s and mother’s parents and their children’

This category includes a) al-'abu ‘father’, b) al-'umu ‘mother’, c) al-'ibnu ‘son’, d) al-'ibnu ‘daughter’, e) son’s grandson, f) son’s granddaughter, g) daughter’s grandson, and h) daughter’s granddaughter.

2) al-'akhawatuwa `aulā duhumnazluwa, wawa al-'ajdādu an 'Alu ‘ego’s brother and sister’

Under this category there are some relatives comprising the followings: a) al-'akhu ‘ego’s brother’, b) al-'ukhtu ‘ego’s sister’, c) ibn al-'akhu ‘ego’s brother’s nephew’, d) bintu al-'akhu ‘ego’s brother’s niece’, e) ibn al-'ukhtu ‘ego’s sister’s nephew’, f) bintu al-'ukhtu ‘ego’s sister’s niece’, g) al-jiddu ‘grandfather’, and h) al-jiddatu ‘grandmother’.

3) al-'akhwālu, wa al-'a'mamu ‘ego’s uncle and aunt’

This last category consists of a) al-'ammu ‘uncle or father’s younger or older brother’, b) al-'ammatu ‘aunt or mother’s younger or older sister’, c) al-khālu ‘uncle or mother’s younger or older brother’, d) al-khaālatu ‘aunt or mother’s younger or older sister’, e) ibn al-'ammu ‘cousin or son of father’s brother’, f) bintu al-'ammu ‘nephew or daughter of father’s younger or older brother’, g) ibn al-'ammatu ‘cousin or son of father’s younger or older sister’, h) bintu al-'ammatu ‘nephew or daughter of father’s younger or older sister’, i) ibn al-khali ‘cousin or son of mother’s younger or older brother’, j) bintu al-khali ‘nephew or daughter of mother’s younger or older brother’, k) ibn al-khalati ‘cousin or son of mother’s younger or older sister’, and l) bintu al-khalati ‘nephew or daughter of mother’s younger or older sister’.

Kartomihardjo (1988: 238) argued address is a component of a language which is important because the greeting can be determined by a specific interaction. Although most speakers do not realize how important it is but instinctively each speaker will strive to communicate clearly. It becomes the designation that indicates an appreciation in any degree as well as a person’s dignity in public life. Al-Khulli (1982: 5) mentioned that nouns of address) is al-Mukhatab. Braun’s (1988: 9) eight proposals on nouns of address can be translated into Arabic as indicated below: 1) Asma for “proper names” which includes al-ism mu`annas and muzakkar. The first is addressed to female names such as Fatima, Zainab, etc and muzakkar to male names for example Ahmad, Tariq Afdol, etc. 2) Mustalahatu al-nasab for ‘kinship terms’ which refers to father, mother, brother, uncle, sister, mosque, ami, ameh, etc. In Arabic, mustalahatu al-nasab is merely used to indicate relatives.

Pedigree kinship in the family is only addressed to father and mother. The following is the category of kinship terms.

1) Address to parents.

Address to parents are indicated by the use of ummior ummu ‘mother’ and abi, abah or abun ‘father’. These two classifications are termed as kunniyyah ‘nickname’ meaning speaker does not want to use the middle name of the person to whom he/she is talking to, for example, umm ad-Darda ‘Darda’s mother’ or Abu Abdillah ‘Abdillah’s father’ (al-Khuli, 1982: 283).

2) Address to father’s side.

Some addresses to father’s side are jidd ‘grandfather’ and jiddah ‘grandmother’; the two addresses are derived from the words jaddun ‘grandpa’ and jaddatun ‘grandma’. Other addresses include ami ‘uncle’ and ameh ‘aunt’.

3) Address to maternal.

Addresses to maternal are marked by the use of jaddun, jaddatun, hale ‘uncle’ and khalati ‘aunt’. The address is termed akhwal in Arabic meaning ‘all members of mother’s relatives’. 
4) Address to honour.
Address to honour in Arabic is named al-ihtram sighatu ar laqab which is indicated by the words Sayyid, Habib, Al-Amin, etc.

5) Address to degree and rank. This address is almost the same as address to honour.
6) Address to addressee.

7) Address to particular relationship.

8) Address to compassion, for example, ya bunayya ‘oh my son’, humaira ‘oh rosy cheeks’.

9) Address to kinship which is united in the name, such as, Abu Ali 'Ali’s father'.

3. Research Methods
This qualitative research was carried out through verbal utterances (Moleong, 1990: 29); therefore, it was also called descriptive in which the data was taken in the form of field notes, interviews, observations, questionnaires, personal documents and other important documents. The research location was Medan, a capital of North Sumatera Province. MbAC was spread in 17 districts and this research focused only on members of some Arabic communities, for instance, An-Nady Al-Arabi, Al-Ichwan Al-Araby con centred in Sutrisno and Al-Falah streets. There were 3,318 people of MbAC (BPS Medan, 2013: 43). The sampling technique was random.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1 Kinship system of MbAC
The MbAC adopted two kinds of marriage systems. The first was endogamous marriage which happened among members of a group. This was carried out to keep the group's lineage, class or family status. The second, exogamy marriage, could occur beyond members of a group. In case of kinship systems the MbAC tend to receive patrilineal kinship which paid much attention to the male’s lineage so the father's relatives were included within the limits of this kinship; in contrast, female relatives were put outside these limits. What is important is that MbAC remained to keep their kinship system and this condition was the same as what was suggested by Al-Haly (see al-Sahlanly and al-Husseini, 2010: 9-33).

4.2 Kinship terms of MbAC
In case of kinship terms or mustalahatu al-nasab (see Table 1) in Arabic the MbAC gave Arabic names properly to their children either by using al-ism muzakkar for males (Taufiq, Yasin, etc.) or al-ism mu’annas for females (Rukayah, Nabila, etc.). Moreover, the MbAC remained to use widely the address to parents (like ummi, abi), to grandparents (jaddun, jaddatun), to maternal (hale, khalati), and to heir (akhun, ukhtun), Kunniyah which was related to names taken from nature was also found, for example, Galib bin Saad bin Abdullah, or Berek Rhozi bin Mubarak bin Saad. Family names from Saada group which showed higher class was existing; consider for example Said Abd al-Mahdaly, Ja’far al-top, Amik Muhammad Alatas, or Rizaldi Mavi al-Ethiopia. Family names from Caim group like Salim Sungkar, Yaser Abdul Aziz and from Mashaayikh group like Mubarak Abdullah Zein Zubaidi were available.

The uses of pronouns like ente, ana were still easily found in the Arabic community. Names combination namely Abu Ali (Saudi) ‘the father of Abu', Abu Bakr Zubaidi, Abu Bakr al-Amry were also in trends. Names from Kunniyah were also combined by some people, for example, the names Abu Bakr, Umm Salamah, Abu Dardak, Nurul Umi and so forth. Consider Table 2 in Appendix to see the MbAC’s varieties of names. The address of Sayyid and Sheikh to old respected man and Lady to old honourable woman was not forgotten. Those who had the same ages were accustomed to using banat and walad while teachers could call their students tulab.

5. Conclusion

Patrilineal lineage is adopted in daily life and matrimony is dominantly used as the kinship system (mustalahatu al-nasab) by MbAC. Marriages are based on endogamy (inter-tribe) and exogamy (inter-ethnic). Kinship terms are mainly used for relatives. In case of reference (ma’na dalaly) the kinship terms include some varieties, such as, abi, umi, ukhti, jidda, ami, ameh, hale halati, ana, antum, and ente, and in case of addressee (al-mukhatab) as buy to mention buya, bi to call abi, ukh to call ukhti, and so on. With reference to addresses some names like name, surname, rank are operational. Other terms are oriented to the name of Sudan and this name refers to cousins, nephews, siblings, etc.

Aknowledgement

The authors wish to say thanks to Muhammad Ali Pawiro who helped editing and gave some comments to the earlier draft of this article. Nevertheless, we are entirely responsible for any mistakes that might be found in this article.

References


Appendices

Table 1: Structure of Arabic Kinship (modified from Al-Haly in Al-Sahlany and Al-Husseini, 2010: 9-33)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Anthropological terms</th>
<th>Kinship terms</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>ب</td>
<td>أب</td>
<td>/abun/</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>م</td>
<td>أم</td>
<td>/a`mun/</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>ابنة</td>
<td>ابنتي</td>
<td>/<code>iba</code>nun/</td>
<td>Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>بنت</td>
<td>بناتي</td>
<td>/`ibnutun/</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>جد</td>
<td>جدتي</td>
<td>/jaddun/</td>
<td>Grandfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>ابنة حدة</td>
<td>ابنتي حدة</td>
<td>/<code>ibnutu</code>akhun/</td>
<td>Son of ego’s brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>بناتي حدة</td>
<td>/bintu`akhun/</td>
<td>Daughter of ego’s brother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Varieties of MbAC’s Terms of Address (Modified from Koentjaraningrat, 2005: 129)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anthropological Terms</th>
<th>Meaning in Indonesian</th>
<th>Terms of Reference</th>
<th>Terms of Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Ayah, Bapak</td>
<td>Abun, Walidy</td>
<td>Abuya, buya, baba, dadi, papa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Ibu, mama</td>
<td>Umu, walidaty</td>
<td>Yuma, mama, abuma, bibiti, tita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOB, MYB</td>
<td>Kakak/adik laki-laki dari ibu</td>
<td>Khaly</td>
<td>khal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOZ, MYZ</td>
<td>Kakak / adik perempuan dari ibu</td>
<td>Khalaty</td>
<td>Khal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOB, FYB</td>
<td>Kakak / adik laki-laki dari ayah</td>
<td>Ammy,</td>
<td>Am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOZ, FYZ</td>
<td>Kakak / adik perempuan dari ayah</td>
<td>Ammaty</td>
<td>Am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Saya, aku</td>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>Ani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Suami</td>
<td>Jasry</td>
<td>Khuya, akhuya, bang, habiby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Istri</td>
<td>Jauzaty</td>
<td>Dek, habiby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OB</td>
<td>Abang</td>
<td>Akhky</td>
<td>Khuya, akhky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OZ</td>
<td>Kakak</td>
<td>Ukhky</td>
<td>Ukh,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GM</td>
<td>Nenek</td>
<td>Jaddaty</td>
<td>Umnu syekh, Yuma syekh, yahika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GF</td>
<td>Kakek</td>
<td>Jadd</td>
<td>Abu Syekh, buya syekh, yahik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Anak laki-laki</td>
<td>Ibu,</td>
<td>Yaba, yahuy, ibmy or using father’s nickname</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Anak perempuan</td>
<td>Ibaty, binti</td>
<td>Ibaty, bany, yuba, Yuma, or using daughter’s nickname</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:

F = Father; E = Ego; M = Mother; H = Husband; MOB = Mother Old Brother; W = Wife; MYB = Mother Youth Brother; OB = Old Brother; MOZ = Mother Old Zister; GF = Grand Father; MYZ = Mother Youth Zister; GM = Grand Mother; FOB = Father Old Brother; OZ = Old Zister; FYB = Father Youth Brother; OB = Old Brother; FOZ = Father Old Zister; FYZ = Father Youth Zister