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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.

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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).

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