

The Toponymy Of Place Names In Tarutung, North Tapanuli – North Sumatra: An Ecolinguistic Study

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Abstract

The research on toponymy, particularly village names in Tarutung, North Tapanuli Regency within the domain of ecolinguistic studies, has unveiled an intriguing relationship between these names and the surrounding natural environment. This exploration sheds light on the local community's practice of naming villages based on natural features, flora, fauna, and natural events that transpire in their vicinity. Such revelations yield a profound understanding of the intricate interplay between language, culture, and the natural environment within a social and ecological framework. A novel theory stemming from these findings is the interconnection between village names and the clans of the Toba Batak tribe, highlighting a robust correlation between ethnic identity and geographical location. Consequently, this research contributes to comprehending how cultural and ethnic identity intertwines with toponymy and underscores how toponymy plays a pivotal role in elucidating the relationship¹ between humans and their natural surroundings. These findings bolster the appreciation for preserving and cherishing cultural heritage manifesting in the form of toponymy. The context provided discusses the significance of understanding the origins of meaning in village names, specifically in Tarutung, North Tapanuli. It delves into the classification of village names based on natural elements, circumstances and expectations, and the founding process. The analysis explores how different aspects such as geographical features, occupations, founders' names, cultural or religious significance, and historical events play a role in naming villages. Additionally, it touches on the methodologies and similarities in toponymy research, emphasizing the importance of understanding local context and history in studying place names.

Keywords: *Toponymy, Place Names, Ecolinguistic study.*

Introduction

Toponymy is the study of names, focusing on their origin, meaning, typology, or use. Place names can reflect the physical characteristics of an area, serve as a means of remembering certain figures, embody hope, or act as reminders of historical events related to the region. The naming of geographical features, or toponymy, is closely linked to linguistic considerations. This connection highlights the role of language in categorizing objects in the environment and revealing cultural concepts related to reason and taste. The evolution of reason and taste enables humans to assign identities to the things around them, including geographic features. Toponymy encompasses the study of place names (geography) assigned to physical and

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cultural features such as places, cities, rivers, mountains, bays, islands, headlands, lakes, plains, and more. This study will focus on the use of toponymy in Tarutung, North Tapanuli.

Tarutung is the administrative center of North Tapanuli. Like other urban areas, its development is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include the natural growth of the population and the presence of various urban activities, such as the development of industrial sectors like mining (both oil and gas and non-oil and gas industries), which trigger various other activities and ultimately spur the growth of the city itself. External factors involve population increases due to the city's "attractiveness," which boosts the tourism sector and stimulates further growth in Tarutung. As a developing area, Tarutung shows potential in its geographical naming. The naming of an area is fundamentally part of urban architecture development and the formation of identity, serving as an orientation point that remains relevant over time. This process is rooted in and influenced by public structures, economy, and culture. Naming an area is crucial for a city's identity and affects the ease of mobility.

Tarutung, a tourist destination in North Sumatra, boasts a variety of natural, cultural, and historical attractions. Ecolinguistics can describe the lexicon of regional names in Tarutung, which are closely linked to the physical and social environment of the ethnic community, including physical/geographical conditions, flora and fauna in the community's living environment, and cultural objects related to significant events or individuals. The lexicon of a language is a complex inventory containing various thoughts, interests, and focal points in communication. Additionally, the lexicon can characterize the physical and cultural environment of its speakers. Moreover, the lexicon indicates the existence of symbolic verbal relationships between speech and its environment, such as place names, flora names, fauna names, and names of cultural objects.

Theoretical Framework

The research delves into various aspects of toponymy, encompassing language, semiotics, embodiment, culture, and the significance of place names. It underscores the intrinsic link between language and culture, emphasizing language's role as both a communication tool and a mirror of cultural values and beliefs. The study explores the importance of toponymy in the context of regional naming in North Tapanuli, aiming to elucidate the original meanings of place names, analyze how these meanings are realized, and explain the rationale behind the naming of places in Tarutung, North Tapanuli. The research findings are anticipated to be theoretically valuable, enriching linguistic theories, particularly in ecolinguistics. Additionally, the study aims to serve as a reference for further research on the toponymy of regional names in Tarutung, North Tapanuli.

Definitions of Toponymy

The study of toponymy, a branch of onomastics, involves tracing the origin, history, and culture of a particular place through its name, which reflects the intellectual genius and cultural tendencies of the local people. Toponymy is a scientific, nuanced examination of place names, revealing how they can provide historical information about a specific area or region. Reconstructing the social past of any community is not possible without understanding the origin of its place names. Toponymy, as the identity of a place, is synonymous with a location in space influenced by human activities, imparting it with unique characteristics. Maryani (2010:11) states that a place has a physical character and humans living in it contribute to its branding as a landmark, geographic region, or geographical indication, which is immovable and unique.

The element of naming places cannot be separated from human activity, whether it reflects a geographical phenomenon or a past event. The procedure for naming geographical elements is more complex than it may appear. The standardization and regulation of naming geographical elements are studied in a branch of science known as toponymy, which involves the assignment of place names. This field is closely related to linguistics, anthropology, and historical and cultural geography (Agustan, 2008). Yulius (2004:2) defines toponymy as the science or study of geographical names, focusing on the naming of locations with physical and cultural characteristics. Geographic objects on the Earth's surface are identified by human senses, leading people to instinctively name places. The reasons behind these names are explored in toponymic studies.

Toponymy examines place names, or toponyms, which are the names of place objects created by humans. Hanks (2011:344) describes a toponym as "the name used to identify a specific location on the landscape. An examination of place names in a region can provide a great deal of information about the cultural landscape, both past and present, and may provide clues regarding sequent occupance." Thus, toponyms specifically identify places related to physical phenomena or morphology.

Khvesko (2014:402) adds that "the serious academic study of place-names began among medievalists because the geographical and historical record of names can supplement other historical evidence, sometimes in unexpected ways." Studying toponymy requires careful academic procedures because it often reveals significant geographical and historical events. In Indonesia, place naming involves a long process, influenced not only by geographical phenomena but also by social phenomena, which significantly impact the naming of places.

Ecolinguistic Studies

Ecolinguistic studies delve into the linguistic aspects of toponymy, examining how language is used to name places and exploring the relationship between language and the environment. By applying ecolinguistic principles to toponymy, researchers seek to uncover the cultural significance embedded in place names, revealing how they reflect the cultural heritage, beliefs, and values of the communities that use them. These studies focus on understanding the interaction between language, culture, and the natural environment, shedding light on how human societies perceive and interact with their surroundings through naming practices.

The objective of ecolinguistic analyses of toponymy is to preserve and explore the local knowledge embedded in place names, thereby contributing to the documentation and conservation of cultural heritage and linguistic diversity. This approach aims to reveal sociocultural insights by examining the meanings and associations of place names within the broader context of human-environment relationships. In essence, studying toponymy through an ecolinguistic lens provides a holistic approach to understanding the intricate connections between language, culture, and the environment as manifested in the naming of places.

Place Names

Place names often have historical roots, preserving memories of past events, people, or activities that took place in the region. By analyzing the etymology and origins of place names, researchers can uncover historical narratives and understand the evolution of the area over time. Place names can embody cultural values and beliefs held by the communities that named them. They may reflect religious practices, folklore, traditions, or societal norms that were significant to the local population. Place names frequently describe or reference geographic features such as rivers, mountains, or forests. These names provide insights into how people interacted with

and perceived their natural surroundings, showcasing their environmental knowledge and resource management strategies.

In regions with a history of colonization or migration, place names may bear traces of the colonizers' languages, traditions, or religious beliefs. Analyzing these names can reveal the cultural amalgamation and power dynamics that shaped the region's identity. Indigenous place names often demonstrate a deep connection between Indigenous communities and the land. These names may incorporate references to natural elements, spiritual beliefs, or historical events, offering a glimpse into Indigenous cultural practices and their relationship with the environment. The semantics of place names can reflect cultural traditions and beliefs associated with specific locations. By studying these names, researchers can gain insights into how communities interpret and value these places, contributing to a sense of identity and belonging. In summary, place names serve as linguistic artifacts that encode historical, cultural, and geographical information, providing valuable clues to understanding the rich tapestry of a region's past and the cultural significance attached to its landscapes.

Linguistics Realizations

The naming of places in an area can be seen from various aspects, among others, from folklore (legend), historical aspects, and linguistic aspects. If the naming of an area is seen from a historical point of view, the naming of an area can be reviewed or seen from the story of the origin of the formation of the name in a particular area.

Naming places based on natural elements is a common aspect of toponymy, the study of place names. This practice involves associating geographical locations with the surrounding environment, landscape, or prominent natural features. The names given to places based on natural elements often provide insights into the local geography, ecology, and cultural connections to the environment.

- **Naming places based on natural elements** is a way for communities to express their connection to the land and to highlight features that are significant to their identity and history. As a result, studying the toponymy of a region can reveal a rich tapestry of human-nature interactions and cultural significance.
- **Naming places based on circumstances and expectations** refers to the practice of assigning names to geographical locations that reflect specific events, situations, or anticipated developments. This aspect of toponymy involves considering the historical context, events, or future prospects of a place when choosing its name. The city of Gold Coast in Australia, for instance, reflects the initial expectations of finding gold in the region. Silicon Valley in California, for instance, reflects the expectation of the region becoming a hub for the semiconductor and technology industry. This may include names that express cultural identity, values, or societal expectations.
- **Understanding the circumstances and expectations** behind the naming of places provides insights into the mindset, aspirations, and historical context of the communities involved. One aspect of toponymy involves understanding how places are named based on the founding process. The names of places often carry historical, cultural, or geographical significance, and studying the toponymy of a region can provide insights into its history and the people who have inhabited it. This could be a founder, explorer, leader, or any influential person associated with the area. This could involve references to mythology, religious figures, or cultural symbols. The name may reflect the nature of the landscape or the resources available. Understanding the toponymy of a place provides valuable insights into its cultural and historical context.

Method

In the study, research methods are employed to facilitate the implementation of activities and achieve the researcher's objectives. The descriptive method, a qualitative research approach, is used to produce descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words. The purpose of this language research is to collect and analyze data and linguistic phenomena. The data required for this study include the names of places in Tarutung, information about the origin of these place names, and the meanings embedded in them. The data sources for this study are the Tarutung community members who provide information about the meaning and origin of place names in Tarutung. The research is conducted in Tarutung, North Tapanuli – North Sumatra, and the study spans several locations within the Tarutung area. The informants for this study are culturalists or local community members knowledgeable about the origin or history of place names in Tarutung. The research is carried out in three strategic stages: first, Data Provisioning Methods: These include observation, survey, and interview techniques; second, Data Analysis Methods: These involve using matching methods and advanced techniques such as sorting and selecting data; third, Presentation of Results: The results of data analysis are presented using an informal presentation method. To ensure the validity of the data, a triangulation technique is employed to compare data from different sources. This technique helps verify the data and produce valid results. The data analysis technique follows Miles and Huberman's approach, which involves data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

Result And Discussion

The context provided highlights the importance of understanding the origins and meanings of village names in Tarutung, North Tapanuli. It delves into the classification of these names based on natural elements, circumstances and expectations, and the founding process. The analysis explores how various factors such as geographical features, occupations, founders' names, cultural or religious significance, and historical events influence the naming of villages. Additionally, it touches on the methodologies and similarities in toponymy research, underscoring the necessity of understanding the local context and history when studying place names.

The origins of village names in Tarutung significantly impact the region's cultural identity and historical significance. The use of the Batak language in naming villages reflects the preservation of cultural identity and continuity between the Batak people and their natural environment. This signifies the close relationship between the local community and their surroundings, emphasizing their connection to their cultural and historical roots. Historical factors also play a role in village naming in Tarutung, with some villages named after historical figures or events. This practice reflects the glorification of significant historical figures or events, serving as a way to honor and remember their contributions to Tarutung's cultural identity. Furthermore, the naming of villages based on natural elements such as water bodies, landforms, climate, and forests demonstrates the community's appreciation and positive relationship with nature. This practice underscores a concern for environmental sustainability and preservation. In summary, the origins and meanings of village names in Tarutung profoundly impact the region's cultural identity and historical significance by preserving cultural heritage, commemorating historical figures or events, and reflecting the community's connection to their environment and traditions.

The provided context discusses a study on the meaning and classification of village names in Tarutung, North Tapanuli, focusing on three aspects: Natural Elements, Circumstances and Expectations, and the Founding Process. The study identifies and classifies 20 place names based on these aspects. It emphasizes the relationship between clauses and the logical-semantic meanings conveyed by the village names, providing insights into the

historical, cultural, and geographical significance of the village names in Tarutung. Moreover, the study highlights potential similarities with other toponymy research, such as the focus on etymology and historical significance, the importance of the local context, and the connection to local history. It also outlines differences between toponymy research on village names in Tarutung and other scientific research, emphasizing the specific geographical, historical, and cultural characteristics that distinguish the region.

Some examples of logical-semantic relationships between clauses and the meanings conveyed by the village names are:

- Elaboration ($\alpha = \beta$): Signifying that one element is equal to another, indicating a relationship of equality between the elements.
- Expansion ($\alpha + \beta$): Signifying that one element is added to another, contributing to the understanding and explanation of the village name, making it easier to understand and remember the location.

These relationships help in understanding the logical connections between different parts of village names and how they contribute to the overall message being conveyed. The logical functions and taxonomic relationships between clauses aid in analyzing how these clauses relate to each other and the meanings they convey. This analysis enhances our understanding of the logical relationships between different parts of a sentence or discourse and how these relationships contribute to the overall message being communicated. Understanding these relationships can aid in the effective interpretation and expression of ideas in both written and spoken language.

In the context of village names in Tarutung, understanding the logical functions and taxonomic relationships helps determine the relationship between the linguistic structure of the village names and their meanings. For example, expansion (which includes elaboration and adding elements) helps in explaining and understanding the meaning of the village name, making it easier for people to recognize and remember the location. Additionally, it can signify relationships of equality or addition, providing geographical clues that can be used to identify natural features around the village.

The three aspects of naming discussed in the text are:

1. Natural Elements: This aspect refers to the use of names based on geographical features, water bodies, descriptive landforms, climate, and forest and woodlands.
2. Circumstances and Expectations: This aspect involves naming based on the founding circumstances and social or cultural expectations associated with a place. It includes names that reflect occupation or economic features, cultural or social expectations, and historical or event-based names.
3. Founding Process: This aspect focuses on names that are formed based on the process of establishing and developing a place. It includes names based on founder's names and the overall process of founding a village.

Based on the results, place names in Tarutung are classified based on their origins of meaning into three aspects:

1. **Natural Elements**
 - Aek Siansimun: Water Bodies
 - Hutapea: Geographical Features
 - Hutatoruan: Geographical Features
 - Hutaauruk: Descriptive Landforms
 - Hapoltahan: Climate

- Siandor-andor: Forest and Woodlands
- 2. Circumstances and Expectations**
 - Parbubu: Occupation or Economic Features
 - Simamora: Cultural or Social Expectations
 - Partali Toruan: Occupation or Economic Features
 - Sitompul: Cultural or Social Expectations
 - Si Raja Oloan: Cultural or Social Expectations
- 3. Founding Process**
 - Simanungkalit: Founder's Names
 - Sangkaran: Founding Circumstances
 - Lumban Siagian: Cultural or Religious Significance
 - Sitampurung: Founder's Names
 - Sosunggulon: Historical or Event-Based Names
 - Parbaju Julu: Cultural or Religious Significances
 - Parbaju Tonga: Cultural or Religious Significances

Additionally, the data classification shows that the dominant or important aspect in the process of the establishment and development of Tarutung is based on the Founding Process. Specifically, village names were formed based on Geographical Features, Occupation or Economic Features, Founder's Names, Founding Circumstances, Cultural or Religious Significance, and Historical or Event-Based Names.

Based on the provided results, we can determine the number of place names in Tarutung that are formed based on natural elements, circumstances and expectations, and the founding process. Here is the breakdown:

Natural Elements:

- Water Bodies: 1 name
- Descriptive Landforms: 1 name
- Climate: 1 name
- Forest and Woodlands: 1 name

Circumstances and Expectations:

- Cultural or Social Expectations: 3 names

Founding Process:

- Geographical Features: 2 names
- Occupation or Economic Features: 2 names
- Founder's Names: 3 names
- Founding Circumstances: 1 name

Therefore, in Tarutung, there are 4 place names formed based on natural elements, 3 place names formed based on circumstances and expectations, and 8 place names formed based on the founding process.

Conclusion

This research discusses the classification and analysis of 20 place names in Tarutung, focusing on the aspects of founding process, circumstances, expectations, and natural elements. It provides an overview of the dominant aspects in the establishment and development of Tarutung, highlighting the significance of geographical features, occupations, founder's names, cultural or religious significance, and historical or event-based names. This research also

explores the cultural and historical connections of the village names, emphasizing the importance of land, fishing, and clan contributions in shaping the community's identity and livelihood.

The research emphasizes the inseparable relationship between toponymy and linguistic problems in several ways. First, it underscores the need to understand the linguistic and phonological processes that have shaped place names over time. This includes comprehending sound changes, grammatical developments, and other linguistic processes that have affected the forms of place names. Second, it emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary collaboration between linguists, historians, archaeologists, and other scholars in order to fully understand the significance of place names. By working together, these scholars shed light on the complex relationships between language, culture, history, and place.

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