

SELF REFERENCE AND ITS VARIATION AMONG THE TEENAGERS

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Self references,
Variation,
Teenagers

This research applied a descriptive qualitative method. The study was applied to describe how the teenager use self-reference in different contexts or situations and to find out whether or not gender influences the use of self-reference and also the reasons. The data was taken from the utterances of the teenager in their daily conversation. In this research the source of the data was the teenagers that included six males and six females with an age range of 14-18 years old. Based on the empirical data, there are three kinds of Self-References the reseacher found in this study. They are proper name (such as Zati, Iki, Bella, Agri), kinship term (uni means kakak and uda means abang) and formality term (saya, awak and aku). Then, the data also showed that female more prefer addressed their self in form of proper name eventhough the situation formal or informal. While male more prefer addressed their self in form of awak or aku even it formal or infomal. The following figure showed the number of the form of self-reference used by the teenagers.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a phenomenon of self-reference which occurs among teenagers in Indonesia. Indonesian teenagers speakers have several alternatives for saying „I“, such as *aku*, *saya*, *gua/gue*, proper names, kinship terms (e.g. *uda* “older brother”, *uni*, older sister), *tak* (e.g. Nanti *tak* bawain), the plural pronoun *kita* ‘(inclusive) we’ (e.g. *Besok kita kasih kejutan sama dia* ‘Tomorrow I will give her surprised’). Avoidance of self-referring term (also called ‘zero anaphora’) is also common, e.g. *Pergi dulu* ‘(I’m) going now’ (Berman 1992).

Those self-referring terms are realized by Indonesian speakers in different contexts or situations including formality, intimacy, and kinship relations. In terms of formality, self-reference (first person pronoun) is divided into formal and informal pronouns (Mintz, 1994). Meanwhile, in terms of intimacy, self-reference falls into two classifications including close (intimate) and distant pronoun forms. For example, *saya* is considered a formal form which indicates distant relationships while *aku* is considered an informal form which indicates intimate relationships between speakers and interlocutors (Djenar, 2007; Mintz, 1994). In relation to formality and intimacy, kinship relations appear to influence the use of self-reference among Indonesian speakers (Djenar, 2007; Sneddon, 2006). For instance, when talking with family, the speakers tend to use informal pronoun forms such as *aku*, proper names and kinship terms (e.g. *uda*, *uni*) rather than the formal forms such as pronoun *saya* as self-reference.

Furthermore, within the same speech situation, variation can occur between speakers as well as by the same speaker. Djenar (2007) examined the use of self-reference and its variation such as the pronouns *aku*, *saya*, *gua/gue*, and proper names by using examples from the speech of celebrities. The variation of self-reference is also associated with the issue of power and politeness.

Another factor underlying the phenomenon of self-reference is gender. Gender is one of the social variables which influences the use of language variation and indicates the characterization of gender markings, namely men's language variety and women's language variety (Jendra, 2012). The factors that influence the varieties found between men's and women's language are believed to be more of social than biological nature (Jendra, 2012). In accordance with the statement, Wardhaugh (2006) also stated that gender is socially constructed, involving the whole scope of psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females.

Therefore, the present research aims to examine how young adults use self-reference in different contexts of conversation and also to identify gender influence (i.e. gender preferential) among young adults in using self-referring terms.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Address Form

Address forms are the words speakers use to designate the person they are talking to while they are talking to them. Address forms are really part of complete semantic systems having to do with social relationships (Fasold, 1990:1-3). It means that speakers use address forms to indicate someone's relation to others. Self-reference is the way in which a person refers to him/herself. Self-reference is realized in pronoun „I“ or its equivalence. In Indonesia, there are several pronouns „I“ used as self-reference, such as *saya*, *aku*, *gue*, proper names and so forth (Djenar, 2007). Those self-referring terms are realized by Indonesian speakers in different contexts or situations including *formality, intimacy, and kinship relations*.

Function of Address Forms

The use of address form has its own function which depends on the culture and context in every conversation. In some countries, especially in Europe or America, there is a difference on the use of address forms, but it is not as complicated as in Indonesia which has many regional languages. Brown and Ford in Fasold (1990:8) state that when the speakers do not have an intimate term with the addressee then some forms of Title and Last Name (TLN) will be used.

On the other hand, people use First Name (FN) to address people whom the speaker has close relationship. In addition to the function and difference of address forms in many countries with different culture, there are also examples of address form in many places. According to Cf. Geiger in Fasold (1990), there is a case when people will address one person with different address forms. For example, a man can be expected to address his wife by her first name, but may refer to her as, 'Mom', 'my wife', 'Mary', Mrs. Harris', or Tommy's mother. It depends on whom he is talking to (1990:3). While, according to Ervin Tripp

in J.B. Pride, if the speaker simply does not know the other person's name, he uses some address usually used in American English address. Ervin-Tripp's chart leads us to 'title', 'Mr.', 'Mrs.', or 'Miss' plus an empty last name, as for another example, it will be perfect to address a priest, for example, as "Father" (1972:228-9).

Aku, saya and proper names as self categorizations

In what follows I describe an alternative approach which treats terms such as *aku*, *saya*, *gua/gue*, and proper names as linguistic realizations of different selfcategorizations. Self Categorization Theory (Turner, Hogg, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987; Haslam, 2001; Onorato & Turner, 2001, 2002, 2004) is a cognitive/social psychology approach that builds on the insights of George Herbert Mead (see e.g. Mead 1967) concerning the relations between the self and society. Like Mead, self categorization theory views the self not as an autonomous entity but rather as part of a social group. It supports Mead's contention that the self arises out of "a social process which implies interaction in the group, implies the preexistence of the group" (1967, p. 164).

The theory promotes a conception of the self as fluid and necessarily context dependent. The self is understood not as a stable set of mental structures or schema that represents an individual's unchanging self identity. Rather, it is a conception in which there reside both personal and social identities which exist interdependently. Identities are understood as cognitive representations of the self that take the form of selfcategorizations. Selfcategorizations are defined as cognitive groupings of oneself and other members of a psychological group perceived to be similar to oneself in comparison to other groups (Onorato and Turner, 2001, p. 156). Groupings are defined in relation to the relevant context. For example, in one context, I may categorize myself in relation to a group defined in terms of nationality, such as "Indonesians", while in another context, I may position myself in relation to an ethnic group, such as "Sundanese", "Balinese", and so on.

Personal identity, or the personal self, is a definition of the self that gives salience to the perceived difference between oneself and other people in a group. For example, in a group defined by ethnicity (e.g. "Sundanese"), a member might perceive her/ himself differently from other members for various reasons. It suggests a perception of the self as "me" and of the others in the group as "not me", and represents a categorization in which intra group (interpersonal) differences are perceived to be greater than intergroup differences (e.g. "Sundanese" vs. "Balinese"). In other words, a personal selfcategorization reflects a conception in which a person perceives her/himself as being different from other people in a group, however that group is defined.

Language and Context

There is a close relationship between language and context. They can not be separated. According to Malinowski in Ramlan (1993:8-11), communication does not only consist of speaker, hearer, and topic that they are talking about, but also more than that. There are cultural background and circumstances around the speaker and hearer. From there, an idea about context of situation and context of culture were appeared. Firth in Ramlan (1993:12) completes the idea about the context of situation. He stated that there are four main concepts of context of situation.

Gender Preferential

Another factor underlying the phenomenon of self-reference is gender. Gender is one of the social variables which influences the use of language variation and indicates the characterization of gender markings, namely men's language variety and women's language variety (Jendra, 2012). Gender preferential is defined as the features of language which can be used by both sexes but are preferred by one of them (Holmes, 2001; Meyerhoff, 2006). These features consist of lexical varieties, the pitch of speech, and the standard use of language features of male and female speech (Yelkenac, 2001).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research applied a descriptive qualitative method. The study was applied to describe how the teenager use self-reference in different contexts or situations and to find out whether or not gender influences the use of self-reference and also the reasons. The data for this study was self-reference itself that taken from the utterances of the teenager in their daily conversation. In this research the source of the data was the teenagers that included six males and six females with an age range of 14-18 years old. In the process of collecting data and analyzing the data done by the researcher herself. So, it can be said that the researcher is the key instrument of this study. Here the researcher selected the only self-reference in the teenager's utterances. Besides, the researcher did observation and tape recordings. In doing observation, the researcher observed the teenager related to the use of self-reference in different context and the researcher also record the utterances itself.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the empirical data, there are three kinds of Self-References the researcher found in this study. They are proper name (such as Zati, Iki, Bella, Agri), kinship term (uni means kakak and uda means abang) and formality term (saya, awak and aku). Then, the data also showed that female more prefer addressed their self in form of proper name eventhough the situation formal or informal. While male more prefer addressed their self in form of awak or aku even it formal or infomal. The following figure showed the number of the form of self-reference used by the teenagers.

Table 1. Form of self-reference

<i>Form of self-reference</i>	<i>Number</i>
Aku	3
Saya	1
Awak	4
Kinship term (uni or uda)	3
Proper name	4

Proper name term of Self- Reference

In this term, the dominantly used proper name to address his/her self was the girls. They usually used it in the formal or informal situation. It can be seen from the data as follow:

“Miss, buku *Bella* tinggal Miss. Salah bawak *Bella* Miss. Bahasa Indonesia yang *Bella* bawak Miss. Salah liat roster *Bella* Miss. *Bella* kira ini hari rabu.”

The utterance happened in the formal situation in the teaching learning proccess or in the classromm between the teacher and the student. From the data it can b seen that the student was forgot to bring her book. She didn't bring an English book because she thought that it was Wednesday. From the data above she addressed her - self in proper name as “*Bella*”.

In addition, the other data showed also showed the use of proper name self reference in formal situation.

“yang warna apa buk? *Agri* gak tau.”

The utterance also happened in the classroom. In that case, the teacher asked her student *Agri* to take her book. This data showed that the student addressed her -self in proper name term.

Besides in formal situation, proper name term also occurred in informal situation like in the data below:

“Sebenarnya *Zati* pun sebenarnya juga gak bisa. Ya udalah nanti *Zati* bilang aja sama *Tri* makan martabaknya nanti-nanti aja.”

This utterance happened on Friday afternoon. The speaker here talked to her friend that she cannot joined to eat Martabak. As we can seen that the situation in was informal. Then, from the data it can be seen that the speaker addressed her- self in proper name term.

And the last data of proper-name term was from the boy. From the all source of the data, only he addressed him-self in proper name term. The data as follow:

“Bu, orang-orang sekarang ini bu, pacaran cuma sekedar suka. Oh dia cantik, dekatilah! *Iki* orang nya gak kayak gitu. *Iki* gak mau pacaran itu bukan hubungan yang gampang berakhir.”

The utterance was informal situation on Sunday afternoon. The speaker discussed about love with his mother. From the data, it can be seen that the speaker addressed his-self in proper name term.

From all the data of proper name term, the researcher found that proper name term mostly used by the girls wheter it happened in formal or informal situation.

Kinship term

In this research the data of kinship term was three data. All of the data was occurred from the girl and the kinship term was from Padang culture. It was “*Uni*” meant kakak in Bahasa Indonesia. It can be seen from the data as follow:

“Menurut *Uni*, yang penting di keluarga itu saling terbuka, saling menghormati, jujur satu sama lain. Saling menghormati itu gak Cuma dari anak ke orang tua aja, tapi dari orang tua ke anak pun.”

This utterance happened in the night at the source data’s house. The situation was informal. From the data above, the speaker addressed her-self in kinship term “*uni*” that meant kakak because she was the oldest daughter in her family and her family came from Padangnese.

“Sangkin gak pedulinya lho, dia sampek kek mana gitu bilangny. Menurut *Uni*, itu nunjukkan kalau dia betul-betul gak peduli.”

In the second data, it came from the same source data. The situation was also informal situation. The speaker was talked about someone who looked like didn’t care about his surrounded. From the data, she addressed her self in form of kinship “*uni*” because her parents taught to use it in home.

“Gak tau. Dulu *Uni* sempat bilang pokoknya jangan sampai yang kayak gitu.”

From this data, the utterance occurred informal and relaxed situation. The speaker discussed about her future husband. This utterance happened in the night. As the habitual, at the every night her mother always asked her children to make a conversation.

From the data about, the kinship term used by the girl and the culture also influenced the kinship term.

Formality term

This language variety falls into two classifications, namely formal and informal language varieties. Formal language variety is referred to the language used in official occasions such as in college lecturers, academic seminars, and so on, while informal language variety is used in everyday situations and or casual conversations (Jendra, 2012). For example, *saya* is considered a formal form which indicates distant relationships while *aku* is considered an informal form.

From the research, the researcher found the formality term as eight data whether it was formal or informal situation. They are *saya* (1), *aku* (3) and *awak* (4). The all data as follow:

“Kak, *aku* udah siap. Ajari lah kak soal yang lain.”

This utterance happened on Sunday evening in formal situation. In this data, the speaker was studied about sport with her private teacher. In this data, it can be seen that the speaker addressed her-self as “*aku*” in formal situation.

The other data also showed that in the formal situation the teenager prefer to use *aku* or *awak* rather than *saya* to addressed her/his self. It can be seen in the follow data:

“Malas kali *aku* baca kak. Fitri aja nyontek sama *aku* kak.”

The utterance happened in formal situation at the course. The speaker asked to her teacher about she was lazy to read a book and her friend, Fitri was copied her work. From the data, the speaker here addressed her-self as *aku*.

“Miss ini kayak mana? *Awak* gak ngerti!. *Awak* yang ngerti Cuma nomor dua Miss sama nomor empat. Yang nomor satu gak ngerti *awak* Miss. Nanti *awak* tanyak sama Zaki gak apa- apa kan Miss?”

The utterance happened on Saturday morning in the classroom between teacher and T as the student. T asked to his teacher about the question that He didn’t understand. Then, the teacher explained it to his but he still didn’t understand and confused. Here, T address his name as *Awak* in formal situation.

“Itu lihatlah di mejamu tadi *aku* taruh disitu”

This utterance happened on Saturday in the school while the students have a break time. The situation was informal. The source data was between B and Z. B asked to Z where Z put his book. Z answered that he put it on his table. But B didn’t find it so Z checked it on his table and found it. In this data it can be seen that Z addressed his-self as *Aku*.

“Miss, *awak* gak ada kertas selembat. Udah habis Miss.”

This utterance happened in the class on Wednesday morning between the teacher and the student. The situation was formal. In this situation, teacher said that the class will have an examination and asked them to take a paper. But T didn’t have it. From the data above, T addressed his-self as *Awak*.

“*Saya* Miss. *Saya* ya?”

The utterance happened on Tuesday morning while class activity occurred between the teacher and the students. The situation was formal. In situation, the teacher asked her student who can answered question for number six. And one of her students F, offered herself to answer it. From the data, it can see that F address her-self as *Saya*.

From the data above, it can be seen almost all of the data mostly used awak to addressed themselves whether it happened in formal situation. This data shown that boys prefer used Awak or Aku to Saya in addressed themselves in the formal situation to their teacher.

CONCLUSION

The most self –reference used by the teenagers was awak, proper name (such as Zati, Iki, Bella, Agri), kinship term (uni means kakak and uda means abang) and saya just one data. Then, female more prefer addressed their self in form of proper name eventhough the situation formal or informal. While male more prefer addressed their self in form of awak or aku even it formal or infomal. And the reason why some teenagers used awak or aku because the situation or the people in surronding them used awak or aku. The teenagers were usually used it even with their parents. Then, the reseacher found than the parental role was imporant to teach the children in refer their self in good way.

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