The Toponymy of Plantation Areas in Medan
(Linguistic Anthropology Study)

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between language, culture, and thought is reflected in the naming of a region or place. This study examines the naming of plantations in Medan by finding patterns in naming these areas to illustrate the values and beliefs depicted in them. This research was then carried out to find the sign structure in the formation of the names of plantation areas in Medan and find the acceptance of Sapir-Worf's hypothesis in the toponymy process of plantation names in Medan. This research was conducted through observations and interviews about naming plantation areas in Medan, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. Qualitative descriptive approaches and informal data presentation methods were used to process and present the expected data. The findings showed that the plantation areas in Medan or Tanah Deli have historically been closely related to Deli Maatschappij, a well-known tobacco plantation company in North Sumatra. The relationship between language, culture, and thought can be seen in plantation areas' naming, with several changes occurring. The names of the plantation area include Maryland (Marelan), Helvetica (Helvetia), and Poland (Polonia). This research is expected to contribute to the documentation of the history of naming plantation areas in Medan by describing the values espoused and the beliefs and expectations that are consistent with the people's culture.

Keywords: Toponymy, Plantation in Medan, Sign structure, Sapir-Whorf's Hypothesis

1. INTRODUCTION

A toponym is a tool for tracing the past, exploring a nation's experience and knowledge, and understanding current developments. The knowledge and experience in providing "Geographical names" cannot be separated from its language characteristics. Through language, these names are created as text which is a representation of that particular language. "Geographical element names", "geographic names", or "topographical names" are not just names but can contain knowledge, historical origins of place names (Ayatrohaedi, 1993, p. 10). Furthermore, toponymy is a symptom of human signalling or identity for parts of the earth's surface or "place identity. Toponymy is the result of human culture; Toponymy is attached to the supporting culture; it is a social construction of society and an essential identity (an identity that refers to traditions and the past). Toponymy shows the knowledge and experience of its supportive culture in naming parts of the earth's surface as a place, not just a physical space; Toponymy is a reflection of human internal reality in giving place names.

Language determines the style of culture, determines humans' ways and thoughts, and influences their actions and behaviour (Chaer, 1995: 219). Sapir stated a close relationship between language and culture and emphasized that language and culture cannot be separated. Whorf expanded on this idea by stating that the relationship between language and culture is determinative, meaning that speakers of different languages will see the world differently if the language is structurally different. (Wardhaugh;1986: 229-230). It can be said that the concept of naming a place is a form of linkage

between language, culture, and thoughts. The relationship between these three things is a fundamental concept of linguistic relativity theory whose formulation is based on the Sapir-Worf hypothesis. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (in Kramsch, 2001: 11) states that language affects how a person thinks and behaves.

In recent years, critical toponymic and linguistic landscape studies in Indonesia (Apriadsa, Anggoro, et al., 2019; Apriadsa, Cahyono, et al., 2019; Jindan, 2019; Sekarsih & Arsanti, 2020; Wardoyo Adi, 2020) have become increasingly interested in examining place names within their encompassing. However, as far as the researchers know, the study's discussion of the naming process for plantation areas is a non-starter. The naming of a place is a sociocultural paradigm that exists in a society. As a form of realization of the concept of sign systems in language, its presence cannot be separated from the sociocultural aspects that underlie it. Amir Piliang (2012) states that in cultural studies, signs and texts cannot be separated from the social context in which the signs and texts are located. Signs and text can only function if the community or society uses them. This sign system is a form of convention that produces specific social values and meanings in a particular society. This research examined the process of naming plantation areas in Medan that reflected the people's values and beliefs. This research was conducted to find the acceptance of Sapir-Whorf's hypothesis in the toponymy process of plantation areas in Medan.

There were three problem formulations in this study:
1. How was the concept of naming plantation areas in Medan from a historical perspective?
2. What was the sign structure in the formation of plantation areas in Medan?
3. How was the acceptance of Sapir-Whorf's hypothesis in the concept of naming plantation areas in Medan, which illustrated the values and beliefs contained in the names of these places?

This research is expected to help document the history of the naming of plantation areas in Medan in describing the values espoused and the beliefs and expectations that follow the people's culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to KBBI (2012: 1482), toponymy is a branch of onomastics that investigates places' names. BRKP (2003: 3) defines toponymy as the naming of geographical elements in the form of islands, mountains, rivers, urban hills, and villages. Toponymy studies are concerned with aspects of linguistics, anthropology, geography, history, and culture. Thus, toponymy is a science related to naming an area strengthened by studies of linguistics, anthropology, geography, history, and culture.

Semiotics, expressed by Piliang (2012: 343), is a branch of science with a broad scope of study covering almost all areas of life. As a discipline related to signs and their use in society, semiotics encompasses all signs and their social uses, thus creating particular semiotic branches. The use of semiotics in analyzing cultural objects is only possible if all these objects are seen as a series of meaningful signs.

According to Saussure, the sign is an inseparable combination between concept and sound image. The combination is shown in the diagram below:
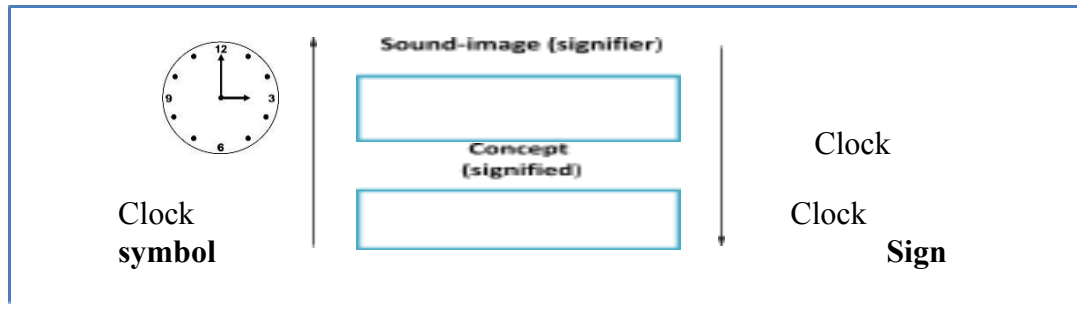

Diagram 1

Concerning this sign model, Saussure emphasizes the importance of social convention, regulating the relationship between the concrete form and its abstract concept or meaning. A sign has a specific meaning due to social agreement among the language-speaking community about that meaning.

The Saussurean's sign structure will be perfect if it is equipped with an analysis of the type or typology of the sign described by Charles Sander Peirce. Peirce (in Pliang, 2012: 350) distinguishes three types of signs, namely icons, indexes, and symbols. Icons are signs that have a similarity or imitation relationship with the object of reference; indexes are signs that have a causal relationship with the object of reference; and symbols are signs that have an arbitrary relationship with their object, that is, an arbitrary or artificial relationship.

Kramsc (2001: 11) explains that the theory of linguistic relativity, which is the basis for formulating the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, states a relationship between language, culture, and human thought. The existence of this theory has a strong influence on sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics. The theory of linguistic relativity was held by Franz Boas (1858-1942), who subsequently influenced Edward Sapir (1884-1939), and Sapir's thought influenced his student Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941). The theory of relativity states that people speak in different ways because they think differently. They think in different ways because their language offers a way of expressing (meaning) the world around them differently. Sapir and Whorf reinforce this theory by stating that the structure of language, which is used continuously, affects the way a person thinks and behaves.

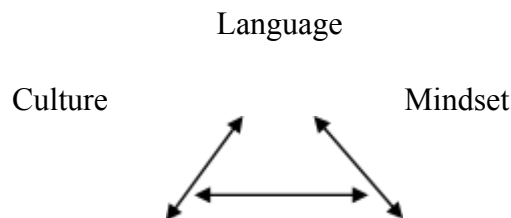The concept of linguistic relativity is explained in the diagram below:

Diagram 2

Diagram 2 above is Sapir's (1921: 207) thought, which states that language is inseparable from culture. It is a social heritage in guidance for actions and beliefs that determine life's texture. This statement confirms that language has two functions: a means of communicating ideas and ideas

objectively and as a verbal means of expressing relative cultural values.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was a qualitative descriptive study. The data analysis in this study was carried out inductively. Existing data were displayed, and conclusions could be drawn from the findings of the analysis process. This procedure characterized that this research was a qualitative research type. The object of this research was the concept of naming the plantation areas in Medan. This research was based on observations and interviews regarding plantation area naming in Medan, North Sumatra Province. This interview was done by interviewing respondents (historians) to dig up information about the toponomy of plantation areas in Medan. Then, the raw data was tested with the Sapir-Worf Hypothesis (in Kramsch, 2004)) which states that the naming process influences the language, culture, and mind of the people concerned. Furthermore, the data that had been processed would be presented with informal presentation methods. This informal presentation method was chosen because the data would be presented with a narrative description (Sudaryanto, 1993).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on interviews with several historians and literature studies about Medan, it is possible to trace the history of naming plantation areas in Medan. The next step was to discuss the toponymy of plantation areas in Medan concerning signs in the semiotic study. Finally, acceptance of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis regarding the toponymy of plantation areas in Medan was examined, which described the values adopted and the belief that naming a place would be contingent on the community's condition. The explanation was presented as follows:

1. **Historical Toponymy**

Based on the interviews, the history of Medan cannot be separated from Dutch colonialism, which controlled the Tanah Deli area through military deployments to open giant tobacco plantations. The beginning of the history of this tobacco plantation began with the arrival of Jacobus Nienhuys, a Dutchman who became a tobacco plantation entrepreneur in the Dutch East Indies. He arrived at Deli land in 1863 and then founded Deli Maatschappij in Labuhan in 1869 after obtaining a concession from the Sultanate of Deli.

From this historical tracing, Jacobus Nienhuys was a pioneer of tobacco cultivation on the East coast of Sumatra and North Sumatra. In 1870, Deli Maatschappij moved its office from Labuhan to Medan, precisely on Jalan Tembakau Deli. Then in 1871, Jacobus Nienhuys left Medan. Four years after Nienhuys' return, there were 40 European shares in Deli plantations such as the plantations of Maryland (Marelan), Arhemia, Helvetica (Helvetia), and Poland (Polonia), Mariendal, and others.

a. Marelan (*Maryland*)
The Marelan area used to be the Deli Sultanate's territory, which was converted into a plantation with concession rights from the Sultan. Dutch investors and many investors from various countries came to Deli to open plantations such as America, England, Germany, Switzerland, France, Poland, Czech, and Belgium. The commodity that was initially planted was tobacco but later developed into other commodities such as rubber, coffee, pepper, nutmeg, palm oil and tea.

These plantations were given local names and some with foreign terms. Many of these plantation names are still used today. One of them is a Maryland plantation. Dirk A. Buiskool, in his article "A plantation city on the east coast of Sumatra 1870 - 1942", states that Maryland is one of the plantations around Medan with an English name. Maryland is the name of one of the states in the United States which was once a British colony.

The name of the Maryland plantation or the Maryland Estate eventually became the name of the Marelan area. Maryland Medan was a Deli plantation area because local people found it difficult to pronounce it; finally, Maryland's name changed to Marelan until now. The mistakes or errors in pronouncing some foreign words are commonly made by non-native speakers strongly influenced by sounds, stress, intonation, or even grammar rules of their native languages (Yusriati & Hasibuan, 2019). Marelan was first used as the name of a Medan subdistrict in 1992 when Mayor H. Bachtiar Jafa was in office.

At that time, the Medan Marelan sub-district was formed as a new sub-district. The legal basis was Government Regulation (PP) No. 35 of 1992, determined on July 13, 1992. The content of this government regulation regulates the establishment of 18 sub-districts in North Sumatra Province. In Medan, the sub-districts that were formed were Medan Marelan sub-district and Medan Perjuangan sub-district. Based on PP-35 of 1992, the Medan Marelan sub-district was formed from parts of the Medan Labuhan sub-district and parts of the Medan Deli sub-district. The Medan Marelan area which originated from Medan Labuhan included the areas of Labuhan Deli Village, Rengas Pulau Village and Terjun Village. Meanwhile, the area of Medan Deli Subdistrict included Tanah Enam Ratus Village.

b. *Helvetia* (**Helvetica**),

The Netherlands was not the only country that had contributed to the history of Medan and Switzerland. One of the Swiss plantation companies that received a concession from Sultan Deli made the plantation Helvetica Estate's name. That name eventually became the toponymy of the area. Helvetia is another name for Switzerland or female personification for Switzerland. Mots and Breker established a tobacco plantation in Deli called Konigsgrätz, which was later named Helvetia.

Helvetica is the name of a region in Switzerland; Helvetica (another name for Helvetia) is also one of the fonts created by the Swiss national Max Miedinger (source wikipedia.org) in 1957. The Helvetia Estate Plantation opened through Concession Number 3, October 18, 1874, and ended on October 15 1957. It is not known precisely how large the Swiss-owned plantation used to be. However, it is estimated that the plantation was as large as the current Medan Helvetia sub-district, which is 15.44 square kilometres (km), constituting a small part of the tobacco plantation area. Currently, Medan Helvetia is one of 21 sub-districts in Medan.

c. *Poland* (**Polonia**),

In 1872, the Dutch East Indies government, the ruler of Indonesia, gave a concession area for tobacco plantations in East Sumatra to Baron Michalsky, a Polish citizen. Baron named the plantation area Polonia, which resembles the name of his hometown, Poland. In 1879, the concession area used as a plantation was taken over and turned into a plantation owned by Deli Mattchappih (Deli Mij). Deli Mij gave part of his land to be used as an aeroplane runway. This history was what started the Polonia plantation area and later became the Polonia Airport in Medan. Polonia Airport is one of the oldest airports in Indonesia. Medan Polonia is currently one of the districts in Medan.

2. The Sign Structure of Plantation Areas in Medan.

Based on the sign structure proposed by De Saussure, which has been discussed above, the process of naming plantation areas in Medan according to the sign system can be traced in the following chart:

signifier	signified
[Marelan]	The name Marelan comes from one of the names of a state in America, namely "Maryland", while Maryland Medan was a Deli plantation area because local people found it difficult to pronounce it; finally, Maryland's name changed into Marelan. Currently, Marelan is one of the Medan Marelan sub-districts in North Sumatra Province
sign Marelan	

From the chart above, it can be explained that Marelan is a sign system (sign) having a marker (signifier) in the form of a sound [Marelan] and a signified in the form of a Marelan area. Marelan comes from the name of a state in America, namely "Maryland". Maryland Medan was a Deli plantation area because local people found it difficult to pronounce it; the name of Maryland was then changed to Marelan. Currently, Marelan is one of the Medan Marelan sub-districts in North Sumatra Province.

The association between signifier and signified cannot be separated. The two joined together to form a complete sign concept and referred to an area in Medan called Marelan. Based on these reasons, if it was related to Peirce's sign classification aspect, the Marelan naming could be one of the types of index marks. Index, as mentioned above, is a sign that has a causal relationship with the object of reference.

signifier	signified
[Helvetia]	Helvetica is the name of a region in Switzerland; when the plantation entered the land of Deli Medan, the Swiss plantation company named it the estate Helvetica which eventually became the area's name. Helvetia is one of 21 sub-districts in Medan, North Sumatra Province.
sign Helvetia	

In the chart above, it can be said that Helvetia is a sign system (sign) having a marker (signifier) in the form of a sound [Helvetia] and a marker (signified) in the form of a region. Helvetia comes from one of the regions in Switzerland, "Helvetica". When the plantation entered the land of Deli Medan, the Swiss plantation company made the name of the plantation Helvetica Estate; the name eventually became the name of the local area.

The association between signifier and signified cannot be separated. The two joined together to form a complete sign concept and referred to an area in Medan called Helvetia. One of the areas in Medan is called Helvetia, derived from the area's name in Switzerland, namely "Helvetica".

According to the Peirce sign classification, the naming Helvetia is an index sign. The index, as mentioned above, is a sign that has a cause-and-effect relationship with the object of reference.

signifier	signified
[Polonia]	One of the 21 sub-districts in Medan is Medan Polonia. This area used to be a plantation. The name Polonia was given by Baron Michalsky, a Polish citizen who founded the plantation at that time, and Polonia was also the name of his hometown in Poland.
sign Polonia	

In the chart above, it can be said that Polonia is a sign system (sign) having a marker (signifier) in the form of a sound [Polonia] and a marker (signified) in the form of a region. Baron Michalsky, a Polish man who ran a plantation on the land of Deli, gave the name Polonia. The name Polonia was adopted from the Baron's birthplace in Poland, called Polonia. Currently, Polonia is a Medan Polonia sub-district in North Sumatra Province.

The association between signifier and signified cannot be separated. The two combine to form a complete sign concept and refer to an area in Medan called Polonia. One of the areas in Medan is called Polonia, which originates from Poland's regions. It is related to Peirce's sign classification aspect; naming is one type of index sign. An index is a sign that has a cause-and-effect relationship with the object of reference.

Sapir-Whorf's Hypothesis on Naming of Plantation Areas in Medan

The local people of Medan are part of the Malay culture. Kluckhohn in (Koentjaraningrat, 2009) reveals five fundamental cultural values, namely the essence of human life, the essence of human work, the essence of human position in time and space, the essence of human relations with the surrounding nature, and the essence of human relationships with others.

The Malay people take the essence of human life as their point of view on life, which is one of the five aspects mentioned above. The Malay people's way of life, according to Hamidy (2004), is shaped by three value systems. First and foremost, Islam provides a value system. Malay society holds this value set in high regard (Kamaruddin, 2019), and it is referred to as the "Malay Value System". Second, culture provides a value system. This value system establishes a standard for how humans should act and behave, as well as a set of reasonably strict sanctions. Third, tradition provides a value system. If the traditional value system is a value system with a set of rules and strict sanctions, then the customary value system lacks such sanctions in applying the given norms.

The Malay language also has a variety of tolerance values expressed in various vocabularies, such as openness, plurality and friendship. These values are reflected in Malay language and literature writing, as stated by Raja Ali Haji (2021) in the fifth chapter of his famous work, Gurindam XII: "if you want to know a great nation, look at their character and language". In the Malays, tolerance is "the nature of tolerance" or "the feeling of the same.". This characteristic is fundamental in Malay culture; as a result, tolerant people are regarded as wise, kind, and self-aware individuals who understand how to adhere to traditional and religious practices.

In terms of naming plantation areas in Medan, naming plantation areas in Medan was inextricably linked to the figure of the ruler "Sultan" who could rule and guide his people well. As the Deli land leader and plantation manager, the Sultan named the plantation area. The names Marelan, Helvetia, and Polonia reflect Malay cultural values such as tolerance and respect for others. This explanation can then describe the relationship between language, culture, and people's ideas about naming areas. As previously stated, the people of Medan are part of a Malay culture in which they strive to maintain positive relationships with their fellow humans, including their leaders. This establishes a cultural value of always respecting others. Thus, the name Medan is a manifestation of language symptoms whose emergence was influenced by the minds of the community to appreciate the person who has granted concession land for plantations, namely the Sultan.

According to the explanation above, the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis about language relativity "naming process influences the language, culture, and mind of the people concerned" was reflected in the toponymy of plantation areas in Medan. The names of the plantation areas in Medan were inspired by the thoughts and culture of the local community. As a result, the toponymy of plantation area names in Medan strengthens the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which holds that language, culture, and thoughts are all interconnected.

4. CONCLUSION

Plantation areas in Medan, including Marelan, Helvetia, and Polonia, were once the Deli Sultanate areas, converted into plantations with concession rights from the Sultan. At that time, Dutch investors and many investors from various countries came to Deli to open plantations. Some of these plantations were given local names, while others were given foreign names, which are still used today. Some of them are the Maryland plantations known today as Marelan, Helvetica as Helvetia, and Poland as Polonia.

Based on the analysis from a semiotic perspective, the plantation areas' names are a type of index sign composed of interrelated signifiers and signified systems. The relationship between community values to maintain good relations with fellow humans, always with respect realized by Malay's use in the toponymy of plantation areas in Medan, strengthens the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

Due to space constraints, this study only focuses on toponymy naming plantation areas in Medan. The study did not address the toponymy of the names of other historic areas. This study investigated toponymy from a historical standpoint by relating it to semiotics and the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. It is expected that researchers will look into the toponymy of other historical areas in Medan and associate it with aspects of linguistic science.

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