Bataknese' Politeness Strategy in Marhata Sinamot (Dowry Bargaining)

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Abstract— **A bargaining usually happened in a market, but in this research it happened in *marhata sinamot*. It was one of the step from Bataknese wedding ceremony that discussed about dowry as one from other topic in *marhata sinamot*. The imposition is higher when the object to bargain was women with different educational and social status background. The politeness strategy in assertives speech act during the discussion in *marhata sinamot* was the object of this research. This research was conducted in a qualitative descriptive research method. The analysis and interpretation are carried out at the time the data was collected related to the utterances in *marhata sinamot* ceremony. A qualitative research is also expected to generate a pattern of language behavior from the cultural domain of this study because a descriptive design of study aimed to describe the social aspects to compile new findings in the context of speech act object of study. Related to cultural domain, this research was categorized as an ethnographic research. Bataknese culture was used since the writer is Bataknese. The subject of the research were the Bataknese people in Sidamanik (a sub-district in North Sumatera, Indonesia). The recorded data were transcribed and classified into its kinds of speech act and politeness strategy. 'Stating' speech act with positive politeness strategy were found as the result of analyzing data. Strategy 2. Exaggerate interest, sympathy, etc with the hearer; Str 4. Use in-group identity markers, 'raja' were the dominant positive politeness found from the utterances. The participants also used the negative politeness strategy which were strategy 5 of showing honor. It was found that participants collaboration between concept of the activity and the concept of *Dalihan na tolu* that had influenced that dominance. Participants mostly gave statement and exchanging information in the process of bargaining the dowry and the process of discussing the preparation to the upcoming wedding ceremony. This also brought to the result that 'stating' speech act dominantly used in *marhata sinamot*.**

Keywords— *assertives; dalihan na tolu; marhata sinamot; positive and negative politeness strategy; speech act*

I. INTRODUCTION

In Batak Toba wedding ceremony, the society should follow and complete long and complex steps or stages. From the beginning of making the plan until finally to the last stages (which is the marriage ceremony); needs two to three months preparation. One of the stages is called *marhata sinamot* (dowry bargaining). There are some other stages to be fulfilled in *marhata sinamot*, which are named as 1) *Partording ni na marhata sinamot* (the opening section of *marhata sinamot*), 2) *Tudu Tudu Sipanganon* (middle section by eating special and sacred food as a sign that the bargaining is about to begin), 3) *Masisisean* (discussing the dowry and all stuffs related to the marriage ceremony). From these three stages of *marhata sinamot*, two of them (stage 1and 2), the utterance are remaining constant and are relatively stable. In the third section, the utterance are dynamic and

variative. *Marhata sinamot*, as one of the most important stage in the process of Bataknese marriage ceremony, is used as a tribute to represent how the groom's family honour the bride's family as a form of cultural values Toba Batak. The dowry (sinamot) is a symbol to show that the woman will be honored (acknowledged and entrusted) by the man who will marry her (Simanjuntak, 2009, p. 102). In delivering and bargaining the *sinamot* price, there are many utterances delivered by the spokesman of each prospective bride. It is needed to be concerned that a Bataknese woman who has higher education background, higer job position, and higher economic background, will definitely influence the level of the dowry that the man will give to the woman (Simanjuntak: 2009, p. 183; Manik, 2011, p. 24). The number of the dowry will definitely be higher than those women who do not have that kind of higher education, job position and economic background.

This kind of bargaining is totally different with the bargaining in a market, definitely there is a big different. In market, it is things to be bought, but in *marhata sinamot*, a woman is to be bought. The woman might be a doctor, a lecturer with postgraduate degree, and many other consideration that makes the level of the imposition is bigger. When the degree of imposition is bigger, then there will be a tendency to threaten someone's face (face threatening act). No one's face wanted to be thereatened, and there is a certain politeness strategy should be applied. In order to carry out successful communication (as in *marhata sinamot*), politeness seems to be an important device that serves to avoid unnecessary conflict between the speaker and a hearer. It means that the effort to be polite determines the choice of words and phases or linguistic variant in expressing the ideas or meaning in a given context (Levinson, 2000). Not only the dowry is discussed in this ceremony, many other things or other stuffs such as the food, *ulos[1]*, *jambar[2]*, the place, the date etc, are needed to be discussed. The discussion is about the preparation for the wedding ceremony.

There are several previous studies on *marhata sinamot*, but most of the previous study have not discussed related to Speech acts and Politeness Strategies. As conduceted by Helga Manik (2010), Delima, in 2014, conducted a research about the function of *Sinamot* (price of dowry) in Batak Toba wedding ceremony. Sastrya Naibaho & Idola P. Putri (2016) which discussed about the meaning, function and pattern of *Sinamot* in Bataknese Traditional Wedding. Not yet discussed about pragmatics. The same thing also found in the research by Sinurat (2018) that the object about pragmatics especially speech act and politeness strategy were not the focus of the study but the Toba Batak-English Semantic features analysis of modality in *marhata sinamot* Traslational Text. Related to the absence of pragmatic analysis in *marhata sinamot*, this paper was finally conducted to find out what politeness strategy was dominantly emerged in the speech of the spokesmen on *marhata sinamot* ceremony in Batak Toba's wedding. The factors of the domminance used of the speech acts and the politeness strategy were collaborated and discussed on this paper.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Pragmatics

Levinson (1983, p. 9), Leech (1993, p. 8); (Cummings, 1995) and Yule (1996, p. 3) defines pragmatics as the fields of linguistics concerns to what is intended by speakers abourt something from what is said based on the context that affects the utterances when the utterances are spoken. Contexts defined as the aspects related to physical and social environment of an utterance with parameter of situation, the speaker itself, the time and location when the utterances are spoken, that help hearer to interpret the intention of speaker (Brogaard in Alan, 2012, p. 114). Context also defined as, physical and social world and the assumption of knowledge that are possessed by the speakers and hearers (Cutting, 2002).

A speech act, in Austin's point of view is an act through utterance. It means that Austin (1962) determines when a speaker is uttering something, that speaker is actually not only informing something, but also acting/doing something (to say something is to do something). Searle and Vanderveken (1985) proposed five kinds of speech act, such as: (1) Asertives: kinds of speech act that state what the speaker believes to be the case or not; this might also the statements of fact, assertions, conclusions and descriptions. (state, assert, claim, report, inform, predict, rebut, remind, etc), (2) Commissives: kinds of speect acts that speakers use to commit themselves to future action (offers, pledges, promises, refusals, threats, vow, bet, guarantee, bid, warrant) (3) Directives: kinds of speech acts that speakers use to get someone else toto something (advice, commands, orders, questions, requests, forbid, pray, suggest, permit), (4) Declaratives: kinds of speech acts that change the world via their utterance, and (5) Expressives: kinds of speech acts that state what the speaker feels.

B. Politeness Strategies

Many theories about politeness and politeness strategy discussed and presented by some experts (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Blum-Kulka, 1989; Lakoff, 1990; Fraser, 1990; and Leech, 2014) in order to clarify their perspectives and positions in the discussion about the phenomenon of politeness in communication. They stated that politeness will always be related between 'onself'and 'others'. (Goffman, 1967) wrote that face is a social attribute but Brown & Levinson stated that face is actually a personal attribute of each individual and is universal. Brown & Levinson viewed politeness in relation to a conflict avoidance. Brown&Levinson (1987, pp. 101-227) classified some politeness strategy that can be used to save other's face: (a) Bald-on record politeness strategy, (b) Positive politeness strategy to save the positive face: strategy 1. Notice, attend to hearer's interest, wants, needs, etc.strategy 2. Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy) with hearer, strategy 3. Intensify interest to hearer, strategy 4. Use in-group identity markers, strategy 5. Seek agreement and, strategy 6. Avoid disagreement, strategy 7. Presuppose/raise/assert

[1]Ulos: the traditional cloth of Batak people. Different kinds of ulos have different ceremonial significance. The ulos is normally worn draped over the right shoulders, or in weddings to ceremonially bind the bride and groom together (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulos).

[2]*Jambar*: Special food (pork) which each part of the pork is symbolized as to honor family of the bride and the groom. This special and sacred food is always included in almost all formal ceremony of Batak people.

common ground, strategy 8. Joke, stragey 9. Assert or presuppose speaker's knowledge of and concerns for hearer's want, strategy 10. Offer, promises, strategy 11. Be optimistic, strategy 12. Include both speakers and hearers in the activity, strategy 13. Give reasons, strategy 14. Assert reciprocity, strategy 15. Give gifts to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation. (c) Negative politeness strategy to save the negative face: strategy 1. Be direct, strategy 2. Don't assume about hearer's wants (use hedge), strategy 3. Be pessimistic, strategy 4. Minimize the imposition, strategy 5. Show honor/give deference, strategy 6. Apologize, strategy 7. Use impersonal and strategy 8. State the FTA as a general rule, strategy 9. Nominalize, strategy 10. Redress other wants of hearer's (d) Off-record indirect strategy: strategy 1. Give hints, strategy 2. Give association clues, strategy 3. Presuppose, strategy 4. Understate, strategy 5. Overstate, strategy 6. Use tautologies, strategy 7. Use contradictions, strategy 8. Be ironi, strategy 9. Use metaphors, strategy 10. Use rethoric questions, strategy 11. Be ambiguous, strategy 12. Be vague, strategy 13. Over-generalized, strategy 14. Displace hearer, strategy 15. Be incomplete, use ellipsis.

It should be noted that the bald-on-record strategy is used straightforward or can also be used in an emergency or dangerous situation that the use of polite expressions are considered not necessary such as directly say 'beware of the crocodile', as this statement contain no imposition and are not threatening the face because it is intended for the safety of the hearer.

C. Interacting with Dalihan Na Tolu

Dalihan Na Tolu (Three Furnaces) is a system covering all the clanship relationship and interclanship relationship binded by marriage, from men and his kin, first, men who marries his daughter with a man from another clan (Ego), and second side, are man and his kin which took wife from the ego group (Vergouwen, 2007, Simanjuntak, 2002). The relationships in *Dalihan Na Tolu* are *hula-hula* (bride giver), Dongan Tubu (brother) and boru, for every Batak Toba, the dalihan na tolu statues are dynamic, which is every Batak Toba are able to continue to change statues, from *hula-hula*, to *dongan tubu*, and to *boru*. These principles are becoming the basic consideration of how Bataknese people communicate in every traditional ceremonies, including the ceremony of *marhata sinamot*. (Tampubolon, 1960, p. 46) and Situmorang (2009) explained the concepts of dalihan na tolu as these following: *Hula-hula* is the group from which give away his daughter to the ego group. (1) *Hula-hula* has a higher status than ego, which is higher than *boru*. In other word, as the wife giver, *hula-hula* are the most respected group on social life and custom, so message are given to respect *hula hula*. (2) Boru, is the group of family who took wife from ego clans. It customary, for the boru to take a role as a '*parhobas'* or servant, especially on ceremonies. For the Batak Toba, these statues have a very important role on traditional ceremonies. On that case, every Batak Toba have to '*elek marboru'* (persuade the *boru*). (3) *Dongan Tubu* also known as *Dongan Sabutuha* is the entire male relative on the ego. This group is responsible on helping with custom matter, consulting and support. That is why people of Batak Toba are given message to be wise to all his clan brother or *manat mardongan tubu*.

III. METHOD

This research was conducted in a qualitative descriptive research method. Sutopo (2002) stated that a qualitative research emphasizes process and meaning. The analysis and interpretation are carried out at the time the data is collected related to the utterances in *marhata sinamot* ceremony. This study was a qualitative research that the findings will be described in the form of words and not mathematically or statistically (Lindolf, 2002). A qualitative research is also expected to generate a pattern of language behavior from the cultural domain of this study because a descriptive design of study aimed todescribe the social aspects to compile new findings in the context of speech act object of study. Related to cultural domain, Saville-Troike (2008, p. 165), categorized this research as an ethnographic research. Bataknes culture was used since the writer is Bataknese. An ethnographers are able to use themselves as the source of information and interpretation (reserachers can be informant at the same time), the access is easier, and the interpretation could be more accurate. Spradley (1980) stated that the location should fulfil three basic elements, such as: place, participant and event. In this research, Kecamatan Sidamanik was the place of where this research was conducted. It was a sub-district of a district called Simalungun in South Sumatera province. In this place, there were many Bataknese people live even some are Javanese, but Bataknese are dominant. Most of Bataknese people in Sidamanik are farmer, sellers and some of them are civil servant. The participants or subjects of this research are the spokesman of each side; the groom side and the bride side. The utterance (the speech act and politeness strategy) of the spokesmans were used as the data of this research.

The techniques of collecting and analyzing the data can be seen as the following:

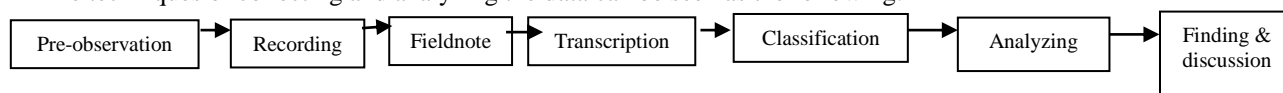Pre-observation → Recording → Fieldnote → Transcription → Classification → Analyzing → Finding & discussion

Fig. 1 Steps from Collecting to Anazying Data

Pre-observation was done to know the setting, the participant, how the ceremony was started and finished. It was continued with the recording the utterances of the spokesman on the discussion in *marhata sinamot*. Taking fieldnote was important to give clear information of when and where the data was recorded (this might be the interviewed conducted by the researchers to the spokesman). The recorded utterances were transcribed and classified to identify its category based on the politeness strategy found during the discussion (classification of Brown & Levinson to politeness strategy). After classifying and identifying, then

analyzing was furtherly done in order to find out the objectives of this study about finding out the Bataknese politeness strategy in *marhata sinamot*.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data were analyzed and resulted as displayed in this explanation below: The spokesman of the bride's side dominantly used the positive and negative politeness strategy rather than bald-on record or off-record.

TABLE I. FINDING

No	Assertives Sub-Speech Act (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985)	Politeness Strategies Brown & Levinson (1987)	
		Positive	Negative
1	Stating	Str 4. Use in-group identity markers; Str 6. Avoid disagreement; Str 8. Joke, Str 9. Assert or presuppose speaker's knowledge of and concerns for hearer's want. Str 11. Be optimistic.	Str 5. Show honor/give deference Str 4. Minimize the imposition
2	Informing	Str 2. Exaggerate interest, sympathy, etc with the hearer; Str 4. Use in-group identity markers.	Str 5. Show honor/give deference; Str 3. Be pessimistic.
3	Reporting	Str 4. Use in-group identity markers;	Str 5. Show honor/give deference,
4	Assuring	Str 4. Use in-group identity markers.	Str 5. Show honor/give deference

Str= Strategy

From the table, it can be explained dominant sub-speech acts and the politeness strategies that are exposed during the discussion in the ceremony of *marhata sinamot*, they were as these followings:

1. The assertive speech act with some sub-speech acts were identified as 'stating, reporting, informing, assuring; but the most dominant sub-speech act was 'stating' during the discussion, the reason of why 'stating' was dominant would be explained further.
2. The politeness strategy that the spokesmen used during the discussion of *marhata sinamot* were as these followings:
   a. When the spokesmen uttered 'stating' speech act, the positive politeness strategy were applied, and it was identified as Str 4. Use in-group identity markers; Str 6. Avoid disagreement; Str 8. Joke, Str 9. Assert or presuppose speaker's knowledge of and concerns for hearer's want, Str 11. Be optimistic. The negative politeness strategy also found in communication used by the spokesmen, they were Str 5. Show honor/give deference and Str 4. Minimize the imposition.
   b. 'Informing' speech act were uttered by using the positive politeness strategy which were identified as Str 2. Exaggerate interest, sympathy, etc with the hearer; Str 4. Use in-group identity markers. The participants also used the negative politeness strategy which were str 5. Show honor.
   c. 'Reporting' speech act were uttered by using the positive politeness strategy which were Str 4. Use in-group identity markers. The participant also used negative politeness strategy number 5 Showing honor to the hearer.
   d. Assuring' speech act were uttered by using the positive politeness strategy which were strategy 4. Use in-group identity markers. The participants also used the negative politeness strategy which was str 5. Show honor/deference.
3. The dominants politeness strategy used by the spokesmen in *marhata sinamot* was strategy 4. Use in-group identity markers because whatever the speech act was, this spoliteness strategy always attached to the utterance and the second most dominant was to exaggerate interest, sympathy, etc with the hearer.

A. 'Stating' Speech Act was Dominantly Occurred during the Discussion in Marhata Sinamot

The utterances used by the participants during the communication and the discussion of *marhata sinamot* were influenced by the contents of the concept and the purpose of *marhata sinamot* itself, this pattern of communication were called as concept-oriented communication pattern (Soenarto, 2006). The concept and the purpose of *marhata sinamot* finnaly influenced the utterance of the participant to dominantly used giving statement. Sihombing (1989) stated that the concept-oriented communication can be seen or obtained by adjusting to the function and meaning of *sinamot* and also the processes of *marhata sinamot* itself. This ceremony was an activity of discussing about bargaining the dowry and all the preparation of wedding ceremony. Discussing the dowry price and the preparations are the basic point in Batak Toba wedding's ceremony because they are the determinant to carry out the wedding and this has been the very basic important thing whether the wedding can be held (Tambunan, 1982, p. 136).

Kurniawan (2015) explained that discussion is the vision of two or more individuals verbally and face-to-face with the objective is to find out a solution by exchanging information. Discussion is a regular process that involves a group of people to interact with the purpose to find out solution to problems by sharing information or idea or objection to a related themes. The discussion in *marhata sinamot*, the communication were around giving information, giving idea and opinion, telling a situation, stating idea, giving opinion about the dowry price, the date, jambar, ulos which are related to a themes about wedding ceremony.

As can be seen from the following example when the bride's spokesman aims toconfirm the price that the groom's family could offer to the bride's family. It has been agreed by the bride's family that there was an agreement to how much price that will be negotiated later:

B: *Ndang pola be ra dohononku, angka aha na solot di ate-ate, dohot na gompang di pusu-pusu, asa mangkilala ma hamu, manghatahon manang na sadia pasahatonmua sinamot ni boru nami, nunga diboto hamu aha na di bagasan roha nami."*
(I think I don't need to tell you about what hidden in our heart, because I believe that you can feel it, you know how much you should give the dowry price, because you do know what's in our mind).

The untterances implicitely was intended to inform the groom's side know and can predict what the bride's family wanted or needed. No one wanted to be paid with low price, everyone needed to be paid higher and so does the bride's family. The spokesman of the groom's side imply B by showing expression that they understand what bride's side wanted.

A: *"Tung tangkas do huantusi hami na dibagasan rohamu na i, alai raja nami songon hata ni natua-tua nang 'dohonon nami: Sai naeng do nian didok roha hatop mamora, alai hapogoson dope didok sibaran. Dipangidoan muna i, tangkas do huantusi hami, Alai Raja nami, Molo tung songon diape Raja nami na tolap hami godang ni sinamot sipasahaton nami, uli ma roha muna raja ni hula-hula nami. Jadi pasahaton nami ma sinamot ni boru ni Raja i Rp. 30 juta, Botima Raja nami."*
(actually we do know what you want, but raja, as what old people told us: if only we were rich, in fact we were not that rich. Related to your request, we actually do know it. But, raja, eventhough we cannot give you as much as you want, we hope that you will be happy to agree to the dowry price that we are going to give you. We can only give you thirty million rupiahs. That's what we can give, raja).

The spokesmen give statement and tell ideas to each other to express their opinion as the form of the interaction that appeared in the activity of *marhata sinamot*. This concept or the topic being discussed had made the spokesmen expressed their utterance in which categorized as an assertive speech act, which was act that inform the hearer about the speaker believes to be the case or not; by giving the statements of fact, assertions, or conclusions and descriptions. That was the reason of why 'to inform' and 'to state' occurred dominantly in *marhata sinamot* because the concept or the topic and the the purpose of this activity made the spokesmen uttered this assertive speech act rather than directives or declarative.

B. Dominant Politeness Strategy during The Discussion in Marhata Sinamot

The essential meaning of *sinamot* (the dowry) is used as the symbol that the groom's family respects the bride's family, because the bride's family was going to give their daughter become the groom's family and she was going to be the future mother. Simanjuntak (2010) also actualized the same opinion that *sinamot* is a tribute to bride's family and contain the values of Batak Toba culture which is called as *hasangapon* (being recognized or entrusted) by the man who will marry the woman. In communicating, Batak people must give big attention about to whom does someone speaks or talks because Bataknese people are bound with the principle of '*Dalihan na tolu*'. So does the communication in *marhata sinamot* spokesmen should correctly placed themselves whether as *hula-hula* (wife giver), boru, or as *dongan tubu*. In *marhata sinamot*, the bride's side were the *hula-hula* in which other spokesman needed to use language that show respect and courtesy. When talking to *dongan tubu* (the entire male relative on the ego who is responsible on helping with custom matter, consulting and support) the spokesmen need to speak that showing a respectful relationship and keep each other's face from being threatened. While if someone talks to *boru*, s/he must use language that shows persuasiveness, gentleness and affectiveness.

In case of Batak Toba marriage system, *hula-hula* was briefly defined as the family of bride's side (include the parents of the bride). *Hula-hula* functioned as a protector (*pasu-pasu*) who has the highest position in *dalihan na tolu*-system and to be most respected by others. This made the spokesman used very respectful utterances towards the bride's family as they had the highest position in *dalihan na tolu*. But, *hula-hula* as as a protector needed to use language that signify respect. This was the reason of why the assertive speech act spoken by the spokesmen in *marhata sinamot* always uttered with the strategy 4. Use in-group identity markers because whatever the speech act was, this spoliteness strategy always attached to the utterance and the second most dominant was to exaggerate interest, sympathy, etc with the hearer, even by the groom's spokes man or by the bride's spokesman. It was concluded that the politeness strategy effectively helped spokesmen to find a deal related to the discussion of dowry and everything that they talked in *marhata sinamot* ceremony.

V. CONCLUSION

The discussion brought to conclusions that there were politeness strategy used by the spokeman of Batak Toba in 'reporting', 'assuring', 'informing', 'stating' speech act when discussing the dowry and other things related to prepare the wedding ceremony on the upcoming days. There was lexical of 'raja' in the utterannces of of the spokesman in *Marhata Sinamot*.After the data were collected and analyzed, it was found that there was a lexical which was always used by the spokesmen during the discussion of *marhata sinamot*. When talked to every spokesmen, they never immediately mentions the name of every participants but they use a group identity marker to maintain the politeness in the interaction. The marker was ´raja' which literally meant as 'king'. *Raja* is the representation of god that their position are considered sacred and holy (Silalahi, 2012). The philosophy of Bataknese people, they were all believed as the descendants of a king. So, Bataknese people were proud to be called as '*raja*' or 'king' because someone will feel honored when called as 'raja' (king). 'Raja' was used to determine the honor to other participant in the activity of *marhata sinamot*.

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