The Relationship of Kinship and Rebu in Karonese Culture

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge and behavior which are socially transmitted are called culture. Culture is shared by some group of people. Culture is abstract. It is located in the idea of human who lives in community. In more traditional definitions of the term, culture is said to embody the best that has been thought and said in society. People who live in society of course have tradition in their community. It can be seen from their way of life, how they interact to their relatives, and how they address their relatives.

In this research, the writer discusses about the relationship of kinship in a community which influences the way of communication with certain relatives. The cultural community which becomes the object of this research is Karo culture. Karo has a tradition which is known as rebu. Rebu is a prohibition of direct communication with certain relatives.

The used data are primary data and secondary data. The methods of data collection are metode simak, metode cakap and metode introspeksi. In analyzing the data, the writer uses sociolinguistics as metode padan. While method of data presentation which is used by the writer is descriptive study with informal method.

From the results of the research, it can be concluded that rebu tradition in Karo culture, relation between mami-kela, bengkila-permain and erturangku, are not allowed to communicate directly. In establishing a communication, they have to use the third person as intermediary.

Keywords : Sociolinguistics, Karo culture, rebu, kinship.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of The Research

People as human being cannot live alone, they need one another to complete their need of anything. People who live together in a group is called society. Ramelan states that “the group of people which gather together and form a group of persons is called society” (1991:7). There are many kinds of society that we can find, such as economic, sports, politic, etc. As social being, people need a tool to communicate each other in their society, so the communication can be maintained well. Language is a tool that is used by people to communicate each other. Language plays a great part in our life. Because of its familiarity, we rarely observe it. We take it rather for granted, as we do breathing and walking. Siahaan states that “language is a unique human inheritance that plays the very important role in human’s life, such as in thinking,
communicating ideas, and negotiating with the others” (2008:1).

Language is a kind of signs that is produced by people. Sapir (1921:16) states language is primarily an auditory system of symbols. Signs combine an exponent (a sequence of letters or sounds) with a meaning. According to Robert Lado (1961:2) in *Language Testing*, language is more than the apparently simple stream of sound that flows from the tongue of native speaker; it is more than the native speaker thought about. It is a complex system of communication with various levels of complexity involving intricate selection and ordering of meanings, sounds, and larger units and arrangements.

People have purpose in communicating. They use language to convey their thought, ideas or anything that they want to tell. Wardaugh (2006:1) states that in reaching a certain purpose or purposes, any group or people will gather and form a group of person called society. A community that speak the same language is called speech community (Robert Lado, 1961:2).

People who live in society live under habit that usually is called as culture. Culture is the socially transmitted knowledge and behavior which are shared by some group of people. They agree to apply an idea in their life. Even it might be started by a person or a group, but as the time passes it becomes a habit there.

The appearance of culture enables us to create a different language. According to Mylton Keynes in Periska (2014:3), “culture is one of the most difficult concepts in human and social sciences, and there are many different ways of defining it.” Culture is abstract. It is located on the idea of human who lives in community. In more traditional definitions of the term, culture is said to embody the best that has been thought and said in society. People who live in society of course have tradition in their community. It can be seen from their way of life, how they interact to their relatives, and how they address their relatives.

In this research, the writer would like to discuss about kinship. Wardaugh states that kinship is describing how people in various parts of the world refer to relatives by blood (or descent) and marriage (2006:229). The branch of linguistics that learns about this subject is Sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that takes language as an object of study. It is a field that analyzes language as part of social property (Jendra, 2010:9). Linguistic itself is a study about human’s language. Based on Verhaar’s opinion, linguistics focuses on describing and explaining language and
does not concern with the perspective rules of the language. The word derives from Latin *lingua*, *lague* and *langage* (in French) that means “language” in English and “bahasa” in Indonesia (2006:3). Sociolinguistics has a goal of a better understanding in communication for them who live together in a community. As Jendra (2010:10) states “sociolinguistics concerns with the investigating of relationships between language and society for a goal of a better understanding of language structure and its functions in communication.”

Further in this research, the writer is going to analyze about how people interact with their relatives in a community according to the relationship by blood and marriage. Since the writer herself is a Karonese and grew in Tanah Karo, Northern Sumatera, the writer will analyze Karonese culture. Indonesia is a country that has thousands of cultures inside it. Indonesia’s culture or *kebudayaan Indonesia* is outstretched from Sabang to Merauke. If we search one by one, it will take so long time because it is countless. Medan, Northern Sumatera, is part of Indonesia. There is a small regency in Medan which is called Karo regency or well known as *Tanah Karo*, one of Indonesian territory that defend culture.

Karonese people have various ways in how they address their relatives. For example, Karonese men call *turang impal* to their father’s sister’s daughter (FZD), and they call *impal* to their mother’s brother’s daughter (MBD), *turang* to their father’s brother’s daughter (FBD), *senina* to their father’s brother’s son (FBS), which are all of them known as cousin in English. The other example, Karonese men or women call *bengkila* to their father’s sister’s husband (FZH), they call *bapa* to their father’s brother (FB), and *mama* to their mother’s brother (MB), *bapa* to their mother’s sister’s husband (MZH) which are all of them known as uncle in English. The way how people in various part of the world refer to relatives by blood (or descent) and marriage (alliance) that will be discussed in this thesis is called kinship.

Karonese also has a unique tradition in their culture. There is a culture which is known as *Rebu*. *Rebu* in Karonese is equal with the taboo concept. In this avoidance, it is forbidden for someone to speak directly, touch the body part, sit face to face, and sit on a mat without someone sit between them. Every member of society who breaks the law of *Rebu* in their culture is considered to be rude in Karonese culture.

This culture may sound so strange for people who are not Karonese. The writer has said before that people in society need to communicate each other.
You may ask, so why Karonese can not speak directly with his relatives? And if they need each other, then how will they hold a communication? We are going to discuss it in this thesis.

Ruth Hermita Marbun, in her Paper A Brief Description of Rebu in Karonese Culture, tries to describe what Rebu means and how Karonese apply it in their culture. On the other hand, Sartika and Wiwik in their journal Gambaran Komunikasi Interpersonal Menantu dan Mertua yang Menggunakan Adat Rebu di Budaya Karo, psychologically concluded that although Menantu (son or daughter in law) can not have a direct communication with their Mertua (mother or father in law), they can maintain an interpersonal communication well.

Culture is a precious heritance, but nowadays it is getting forgotten by the young generation, so the writer has an interest to make a research about Karonese culture. In this thesis the writer will discuss deeper about kinship in Karonese, either by blood (descent) and by marriage (alliance). The writer will also discuss about the relationship between kinship and rebu in Karonese culture. This research will be entitled “The Relationship of Kinship and Rebu in Karonese Culture.”

1.2 Method of Research
1.2.1 Method of Data Collection

a. Metode Simak
To observe the object of research, it is needed to tap the conversation. In other words, metode simak is done by tapping. To get the data, the researcher needs to tap the using of language, tap the conversation between two or more people, or tap the using of written language. Tapping activity is the first way to get the data.

b. Metode Cakap (Interview)
Metode Cakap is one of collecting data method. It is called Interview (Metode cakap) because there are some conversations between the writer and informants to get some valid data.

c. Introspective
Introspective is a method of data collection that is used by writer in this research by using mind and opinion. According to Mahsun (2015:102) introspective is a method of data collection by using the intuitions of a researcher who research languages which are mastered by them (mothertongue) to provide the neccessary data for analysing that accordance with the objective research.

1.2.2 Method of Data Analysis
In analysing this data, the writer uses metode padan. Metode Padan is a method of data analysis by using a determining tool which is out of language. In this
research, the writer uses Sociolinguistics as the kind of *Metode Padan*.

1.2.3 Method of Data Presentation

The last method is data presentation. After analyzing data is done, the data will be presented in the form of report. The writer uses informal method as method of data presentation.

2. Underlying Theory

2.1 Linguistics

People cannot avoid the purpose of language in their life, because people use language almost in every single activity they do. It is difficult to see adequately the functions of language because it is so deeply rooted in the whole of human behavior. It may be suspected that there is little in the functional side of our conscious behavior in which language does not play its part. Sapir (1921:7) points out “language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by mean of a system of voluntarily produced symbols”. The branch of science that learn about language is called linguistics. It does not only study about the language itself, but also the form of the language, the structure and also the meaning of the language. By learning linguistics we can use language better.

As human, we need to share our idea, thought, and all the expression we have in our life. For that reason we need a tool to convey it all so that people understand what we mean. The tool that we need is called language. It is the best way that can help us to communicate our idea to other in speaking or writing. Sometimes we can communicate our ideas or feelings by using conventional signs, sounds, gestures, or marks which have to be understood.

Language plays a great part of human life. Siahaan (2008:1) states “language is a unique human inheritance that plays the very important role in human’s life, such as in thinking, communicating ideas, and negotiating with the others”. Meanwhile, Ramelan (1989: 37) points out that language is a system of symbol that is used by people to communicate with the others. Therefore, among those participants of communication, it is necessary to make an agreement. The agreement of symbols appears whatever it is derived from symbol and then arises the laws which cover it. Subsequently, it appears a symbol of language which is called written language.

A person who is expert in languages or linguistics is called linguist. Linguistics studies about languages and the part of it. Gray says that:

Linguistics (science of language) deals with the history and scientific investigation of language whether one studies a phenomenon commons to all mankind, or examines the resemblances and differences between languages.
belonging to a given linguistic family, or to sub-groups of such a family, or investigates an individual language or one or more of its dialects (1939: 1).

The other linguist, Verhaar (2006:3) said that linguistics focuses on describing and explaining language, and it does not concern with the perspective rules of the language.

2.2 Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics focuses on how language is used in community. Aslinda (2007:6) describes that sociolinguistics views language as social and communication system as a part of a society and culture, whereas what is meant by the use of language is a form of social interaction that occur in concrete situations. It means that, in sociolinguistics, language is not seen internally but as a mean of interaction or communication in society. On the other hand, Tagliamonte (2006:3) states;

Sociolinguistics argues that language exists in context, dependent on the speaker who is using it, and dependent on where it is being used and why. Speakers mark their personal history and identity in their speech as well as their sociocultural, economic and geographical coordinates in time and space.

Sociolinguistics has a goal of a better understanding in each other communication who live together in a community. As Jendra (2010:10) states “sociolinguistics concerns with the investigating of relationships between language and society for a goal of a better understanding of language structure and its functions in communication.” On the other hands, Spolsky (1998) states that sociolinguistics is a field that studies the relation between language and society between the using of language and the social structures in which the users of language live.

The society where we are grown influences the way we speak and the language we use. Jendra says that “sociolinguistics scholars are convinced that the place where we live and the people whom we live together are shaping and coloring the meanings found in our language” (2010:13). It emphasizes language to be a central product of social intellect and exists only in social groups. Therefore, it is basic to study a language as it is found in the society where it is used. Simply studying systems of speech sounds, structures and semantics out of their contexts will not help people understand better about human existence and their precious inherent language capacity.
2.3 Word and Culture

The exact nature of language and culture relationship has fascinated people from a wide variety of backgrounds. There should be some kind of relation between sounds, words, and syntax of a language and the ways in which speakers of that language experience the world and behave in it seems so obvious as to be a truism.

Words or languages have a strong relation with culture. Sapir in Wardaugh (2006: 222) acknowledged the close relation between language and culture. Maintaining that they were inextricably related so that people could not understand or appreciate the one without acknowledge of the other. The passage which most clearly summarize his views is as follows:

“Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the ‘real world’ is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.”

Different culture gives different language, habits and way of life. It also gives different way for someone to address his relatives. For example the using of terms like father, brother, or older brother is used to address someone in a family system. It carries with its ideas about how such people ought to behave toward others in the society that use that system. Fathers, brothers, and older brothers are assumed to have certain rights and duties. In practice, of course, they may behave otherwise. It is the kinship system which determines who is called what; it is not the behavior of individuals which leads them to be called this or that.

2.4 Kinship

One interesting way in which people use language in daily living is to refer to various kinds of kin. Wardaugh (2006:229) states that kinship is describing how people in various parts of the world refer to relatives by blood (or descent) and marriage (alliance). Kinship would seem to be a good domain in which to demonstrate the universals, for mating and reproduction, it will be a necessary feature of any variable society. Surprisingly, the kinship systems of the
world’s languages, the way natives classify their kin, while falling into a number of types, are quite variable. The purpose of the work of cognitive anthropologists has been argued that beneath this apparent variation is a system of universal categories to which any kinship system can be reduced.

An approach to the analysis of kinship systems is based on strong universalist assumptions. Malinowski in Foley (1997:131) saw the genesis of kinship within the nuclear family with its primary kinship relation being the basis of all kinship. The wider kinship relations in the society has been derived from these by a process of extension. This view was reiterated by Murdock (1949:92) who sees the nuclear family as a cultural universal:

The point of departure for the analysis of kinship is the nuclear family. Universally, it is in this social group that developing child...learns to respond in particular ways towards his father, his mother, his brothers and sisters, and to expect certain kinds of behavior in return.

Thus, the units of analysis for kinship systems are to be terms based on the universal categories of the nuclear family: parents, spouses, children, and siblings (Picture 2.1), △ indicates a male person and ○ a female; │ │ a marriage bond; │ a descent parent-child relationship; and │ a sibling relationship). More complex kinship relations are based on these units through extension via a linking relative. Figure picture 2.2 indicates two nuclear family units knitted together into a larger...
kinship grouping through a female-linking nuclear family but a mother is in the other.

2.4. Karo People

2.4.1 Karonese Kinship

On understanding the structure of kinship system through an analysis of the categories which is denoted by the native terms, a metalanguage in which to cast the denotata is necessary. Typically, the English nuclear family which is used: father (F), mother (M), brother (B), sister (Z), wife (W), husband (H), son (S), and daughter (D). Ego female is indicated by and ego male is indicated by . A large subset of Karo kinship terminology based on blood relations or consanguines and marriage can be glossed using this system as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nini Bulang</strong></td>
<td>FF (i.e. ego’s father’s father), FFB, FFZH, FMB, MF, MFB, MFZH, MMZH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nini Tudung</strong></td>
<td>FM, FMZ, FFZ, MM, MMZ, MFZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bapa</strong></td>
<td>F, FB, FFBS, MZH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nande</strong></td>
<td>M, FBW, FFBSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mama</strong></td>
<td>MB, MMZS, MMBS, WF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mami</strong></td>
<td>MB, WM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bengkila</strong></td>
<td>FZH, HF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibi</strong></td>
<td>FZ, MZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turang</strong></td>
<td>Z, MZD, FBD, B, MZS, FBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senina</strong></td>
<td>B, FBS, MZS, Z, MZD, FBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turang Impal</strong></td>
<td>FZD, FFBD, MBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impal</strong></td>
<td>MBD, FZS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permen</strong></td>
<td>BD, BS, FBSD, FBSS, WFB, WBS, WFBSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bere-bere</strong></td>
<td>ZD, ZS, HSD, HZS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kela</strong></td>
<td>DH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permain</strong></td>
<td>SW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4.2 Rebu

Rebu means social avoidance of speaking directly with certain relatives. It occurs especially between mami (wife’s mother) and kela (daughter’s husband), between turangku (husband’s sister’s husband) and turangku (wife’s brother’s wife), between bengkila (husband’s father) and permain (son’s wife) (Tarigan, 2008:17).

Bangun in Sartika (2012:83) states that rebu is used as a sign of people freedom limitations. Through this behavior, rebu will remind people about social principles in a related way of life, and people will be able to control his actions. Karo people believe that rebu raises mehangke or reluctant; reluctant raises respect; and respect raises.

Rebu was formed because in the past people lived together in an ancient house of Karonese. This house is known as Rumah Si Waluh Jabu, where eight families lived. To avoid any unwanted things happen among them then Karo people made rebu custom. This custom aims to respect the relatives who were supposed to be respected.

Rebu does not only forbid some certain relatives to speak directly, but it also forbids them to touch part of the body, sit face to face or sit on a mat without someone sit between them. Non-Karonese may think that rebu is such a weird tradition, but Karonese believe that when they do rebu with their relatives, they do honor them.

3. Discussion

Data 1

A conversation between Mr. Dison and Mrs. Lina as follow:

Mr. Dison: Sentabi ningen man mami ena, o meja.
(O, Table, please tell to mami, excuse me.)

Mrs. Lina: Kai kin nda, ningen ku kela ena.
(Please tell to kela, what’s going on?)

Mr. Dison: Ku rumah ah min mami entisik.
(I ask mami for coming home, please.)

Mrs. Lina: Kai kin nda perluna, ningen ku kela.
(Please tell to kela, what for?)

Mr. Dison: La kap seh at anak mami, gelah taruh ken mami ku rumah sakit, ningen man mami ena meja.
(Please tell to mami, mami’s daughter is getting sick, I wish mami will accompany her to go to hospital.)

Mrs. Lina: O, uwe yah. Misakureh, ersikapakulebe.
(Oh, yes. I am coming soon.)

Mr. Dison: Adi bage ku rumah aku lebe, ningen man mami ena meja.
(O table, please tell to kela, I am leaving first.)

Mrs. Lina: Ue, ningen man kela ena, manjar-anjar.
(Please tell to kela, yes, be careful)

Analysis
A. Contexts
1. Speaker and listener: Mr. Dison and Mrs. Lina
2. Setting: Mrs. Lina’s house
3. Context: Mr. Dison came to Mrs. Lina’s house. He told her that her daughter (Mr. Dison’s wife) was sick and asked Mrs. Lina to get her to the hospital. Mr. Dison is rebu with his mami. Rebu forbids someone to speak directly with his certain relatives. For he is not allowed to speak directly with his mami, he must use third person as intermediary. There was no one at home, so he used “meja” or table (line one) as the intermediary for their conversation.

B. Kinship System

Based on conversation and diagram above, we know that the relation between speaker and listener is kela and mami. Kela in Karonese means son in law or daughter’s husband. Meanwhile, mami means mother in law or wife’s mother. Mr. Dison is Mrs. Lina’s daughter’s husband. It is shown by his utterance in line 5 when he said “anak mami” which means mami’s daughter. He said anak mami as the kin term of his wife. The kin relative between Mr. Dison and Mrs. Lina is Mrs. Lina’s daughter. According to the custom prevailing in Karo society, communication between mami (mother in law) and kela (son in law) is rebu; avoidance of speaking directly. A mami does not talk directly with her kela or in the other direction. In other words both mami and kela must avoid talking directly. Because they can not communicate directly, there must be a third person as an intermediary.

In this data, the conversation was started by Mr. Dison. He started the conversation by saying sentabi (line one). Sentabi means sorry or excuse me. Sentabi is usually said to someone whom we respect or honor. Mrs. Lina is his mother in law, and he supposes to respect on her, that is why he said sentabito start
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the conversation. Karo people believe that rebu raises mehangke or reluctant, reluctant raises respect, and respect raises manners (Bangun, 1986).

Since there was no one at home who could be the third person as intermediary, he used meja (table) as the intermediary (line one). When he used table in the end of his sentence, he felt that their communication is not conducted in direct communication because he had table as an intermediary which can be identified as the third person.

He did not only use table as intermediary, but he also avoided direct communication by saying “ningen man mami, o meja” in his first utterance. It means like, “please tell the message to mami, o table”. In this case, ningen man mami has function as intermediary. When he said “ningen man mami”, he felt that there was no direct communication between him and his mother in law.

A kela can not also say “kam” or “you” and “ndu” or “your” to his mami. When he says “kam” or “ndu”, it feels like he speaks directly to his mami. It can be seen in line 3, unless saying “Ku rumah ah min kamenti, which means “I ask you for coming home, please”, he said “Ku rumah ah min mami entisik”, which means “I ask mami for coming home, please”. In avoiding direct communication, he used “mami” to address his mother in law. In sentence line 5, “La kap sehat anak mami, gelah taruh ken mami ku rumah sakit,ningen man mami ena” means “Please tell to mami, mami’s daughter is getting sick, I wish mami will accompany her to go to hospital.” In this sentence, Mr. Dison used word mami to change possesive pronoun “your” in “mami’s daughter” and pronoun “you” in “I wish mami will accompany her”. By doing this, Mr. Dison tried to have a communication with his mother in law indirectly.

To respon the utterance from his kela, a mami also use the same utterance structure. A mami can not speak directly to his kela. She added “ningen man kela” or “ningen kukela” (line 2, 4, 8) which means “please tell the message to kela” in the end of her utterance. In this case, “ningen man kela” has function as intermediary. By saying “ningen man kela”, she felt that there was no direct communication between her and her son in law.

**Data 2**

The conversation among Mr. Sitepu, Marshel and Mrs. Sembiring, as follow:

Mr. Sitepu : O, Marsel!
(O, Marsel!)

Marsel : Kai pa?
(Yes, dad?)
Mr. Sitepu: *Orati ge cuba permain ena, entah lit susun na bibit cina?* (Please you ask permain, whether she has some chili seed or no.)

Marsel: *Begindu ka nge kai nina Bapa ah?* (Did you hear what father said?) (asked his wife)

Mrs. Sembiring: *Bibit cina siuga kin e, ningen ku bengkila ena?* (Please ask bengkila, what kind of chili seed does he mean?)

Mr. Sitepu: *Bibit cina kotak, ningen kupermain.* (Please tell to permain, I mean the import chili seed.)

Mrs. Sembiring: *Nggo kap keri bibit cina kotak ndai, bibit cina lokal nari nca lit, ningen ku bengkila.* (Please tell to bengkila, there is no more import chili seed. There is only local chili seed.)

Mr. Sitepu: *E pe labo dalih, ningen ku permain yah.* (Please tell to permain, the local one is okay, it does not matter.)

Mrs. Sembiring: *Enda dage, ningen ku bengkila.* (Please tell to bengkila, here it is.)

Mr. Sitepu: *Bujur, ningen kupermain.* (Please tell to permain, thank you.)

Analysis

A. Context

1. Speaker and listener: Mr. Sitepu (F), Marshel (S), and Mrs. Sembiring (SW).
2. Setting: Marshel’s house.

3. Context: Mr. Sitepu went to his son’s house. He wanted to ask some chili seeds to Mrs. Sembiring. Since they can not speak directly, Marshel is become the third person in their conversation.

B. Kinship System

Conversation above is conversation between Mr. Sitepu, Marshel, and Mrs. Sembiring. Marshel is Mr. Sitepu’s son (S), and Mrs. Sembiring is Marshel’s wife (W). Mr. Sitepu is Mrs. Sembiring’s bengkila (HF), and Mrs. Sembiring is his permain (SW). The conversation between them is conversation between bengkila and permain.

According to Karonese custom, bengkila (father in law) and permain (son in law) are rebu. Bengkila is not allowed to speak directly with his permain or in the other direction. In other words, both bengkila and permain must avoid talking directly. Since they can not have a direct communication, there must be a third person as intermediary.

In this data, the conversation was started by Mr. Sitepu. He came to his son’s house and wanted to ask his permain (SW) whether she had some chili seeds or not. Because he must use third person as intermediary, he used Marshel as the third person. It can be seen in line one “O, Marshel!” He started the conversation by
calling his son, and then he told what exactly he meant by coming there. In line three he said, “Orati ge cuba permain ena, entah lit susunna bibit cina.” (Please you ask permain, whether she saves some chilli seeds or not). From this utterance, Mr. Sitepu tried to avoid direct communication by using Marshel as the intermediary. When Mr. Sitepu said “Orati ge cuba permain ena” (please you ask permain) in line 3, he did not use “your wife” as the term of Marshel’s wife although he spoke to his son. It is rude for Karonese if a bengkila says “ndeharandu” or “your wife” as the term of his permain, even he says it to his son.

In line 4, it is the turn for Marshel to talk. To respond what his father asked in line 3, he spoke to his wife. He said “begindu kange kai nina bapa ah?” (Do you hear what father said?) In that utterance, he did not repeat Mr. Sitepu’s question about the chili seed. It means that he was aware that his wife already got the point. He was there with his wife when Mr. Sitepu came; for only Mr. Sitepu can not speak directly with his permain, the message was told to Marshel.

In line 5 Mrs. Sembiring said, “bibil cina siuga kin e,ningen ku bengkila ena.” (Please tell to bengkila, what kind of chilli seed does he mean?) In this utterance, Mrs. Sembiring said “ningen ku bengkila ena” in her last sentence. This utterance means like “please tell the message to bengkila”. By saying that words, she did indirect communication with his father in law. She did not need to tell the message to his husband (the third person) again, because when she said “ningen ku bengkila ena”, she felt that there was no direct communication between her and his father in law.

To answer his permain indirect question, Mr. Sitepu said “bibil cina kotak,ningen ku permain” (please tell to permain, the import chilli seed) in line 6. The words “ningen ku permain” in his last sentence means like “please tell the message to permain.” In this utterance, “ningen ku permain” has function as intermediary, so Mr. Sitepu tried to avoid direct communication with his daughter in law.

Till the end of the conversation, the third person has no more role again. The conversation was held by Mr. Sitepu and Mrs. Sembiring only, but they kept avoiding direct communication. Mr. Sitepu said “ningen ku permain” in his last sentences, and Mrs. Sembiring said “ningen ku bengkila” in her last sentence. They used that words as intermediary and kept speaking indirectly.
A conversation between Mr. Sitepu and Mrs. Ginting, as follow:

Mr. Sitepu: *Ja kin nda Andel nda? ningen man turangkuena, o sapu-sapu.*
(Broom, please tell to turangku, where is Andel?)

Mrs. Ginting: *La kap iya rumah, ningen man turangku, man kai kin ndai?*
(Please tell to turangku, he is not at home, what’s going on?)

Mr. Sitepu: *Perlu aku minjam pompa, tah banci pake sada wari enda ateku ndai, ningen man turangkuena.*
(Please tell to turangku, I need to borrow pump, I wish I can use it for today)

Mrs. Ginting: *Nta kunin yah, adi kuidah kari banci kari baba, ningen man turangku... La kap je ningen man turangkuena.*
(Please tell to turangku, I look for it first. If I find, turangku may take it... I couldn’t find it, I don’t know where he placed it.)

Mr. Sitepu: *Adi la rumah ntah jange susunna e. Ruh kari ia, ngata turangku ena. Gelah ia kari ndaramisa.*
(Maybe he placed it in other place. Please tell to turangku, if he is home, please ask him to find the pump later)

Mrs. Ginting: *Adi bage ue ningen man turangku ena, kari me banci kuataken.*
(Please tell to turangku, I’ll tell him later.)

Mr. Sitepu: *O, lawes aku lebe, ningen man turangku.*
(Please tell to turangku, I am leaving)

Mrs. Ginting: *Ue, ningen man turangku.*
(Please tell to turangku, yes, please)

**Analysis**

**A. Context**
1. Speaker and listener: Mr. Sitepu and Mrs. Ginting.
2. Setting: Mrs. Ginting’s house.
3. Context: Mr. Sitepu came to Mrs. Ginting’s house, for seeing Andel (Mrs. Ginting’s husband) and borrowing pump, but he was not at home. Mr. Sitepu and Mrs. Ginting are *rebu* relatives. They can not speak directly and must use third person as mediator. Since there was no one at home as the third person, Mr. Sitepu used *sapu-sapu* (broom) as intermediary.

**B. Kinship System**

Conversation above is conversation between *turangku*. The word *turangku* has two meanings, depending on the sex of Ego that uses it. 1. If Ego is a man, then *turangku* means “wife’s brother’s wife (WBW). 2. If the Ego is a woman, then *turangku* means “husband’s sister’s husband (HZH)”. In brief explanation, the people who call each other *turangku* (or shorter: erturangku) must be in different gender. The speaker and listener in this conversation are Mr. Sitepu and Mrs. Ginting. In conversation above, Mr. Sitepu was looking for Andel. Andel is Mrs. Ginting’s husband (H); Andel is Mr. Sitepu’s Wife’s Brother (WB). As the
writer has said before that if the ego is a man, then his turangku is his wife’s brother’s wife. Since Andel is his wife’s brother, then Mrs. Ginting is his turangku.

Rebu in Karo tradition avoids direct communication between turangku relative. If they want to maintain a communication, there should be a third person as intermediary. In this data, Mr. Sitepu came to Mrs. Ginting’s house. There was no one at house, so he used sapu-sapu (broom) as intermediary. It can be seen in line 1 when he said, “Ja kin nda Andel nda? Ningen man turangku ena, o sapu-sapu.” (Broom, please ask turangku, where Andel is). When he used sapu-sapu (broom) at the end of his sentence, he felt that their communication was not conducted in direct communication because he used broom as an intermediary which could be identified as the third person.

In line two, Mrs. Ginting answered his turangku’s question. She said “La kap iya rumah, ningen man turangku ena, man kai kin ndai?” (Please tell to turangku, he is not at home, what’s going on?) Mr. Sitepu did not use sapu-sapu (broom) as intermediary, but she said “ningen man turangku ena” to avoid direct communication. “Ningen man turangku” means like please tell the message to turangku. So by saying these words, she felt there had been no direct communication between her and his turangku.

In indirect communication, Karo people avoid the usage of “kam” (you) and “ndu” (your, sometimes has function as “you” too). It can be seen in line 5, unless saying “ngatakam”, Mr. Sitepu said “Ruh kariya, ngata turangku ena, gelah ia kari ndaramisa.” (If he is home, Please turangku ask him to look for it). This is one of ways to avoid direct communication in rebu because if they say “kam” or “ndu”, it feels like they speak directly.

Both Mr. Sitepu and Mrs. Ginting avoid direct communication till the end of conversation by saying “ningen man turangku” in their sentence.

4. Conclusion and Suggestion
4.1 Conclusions

From all the analysis, it can be concluded that Karo people have a unique tradition: rebu. Rebu in Karo tradition avoids people to talk directly to some certain relatives. Rebu relationship will be maintained if someone had already married. There are three kinds of rebu, such as; rebu between mami (WM) and kela (DH), rebu between bengkila (HF) and permain (SW), and rebu between turangku (♀ HZH, ♂ WBW).
To maintain a communication between rebu relatives, the speaker and listener should talk to the third person as intermediary. If there is no one who can be roled as third person, it can be replaced by using things. The other way to speak indirectly in rebu tradition is by saying “ningen man mami” or “ningen man kela” in mami-kela relatives, “ningen man bengkila” or “ningen man permain” in bengkila-permain relatives and “ningen man turangku” in erturangku relatives.

The value of rebu tradition is about giving respect or honour on relatives. Karo people believe that rebu raises mehangke or reluctant, reluctant raises respect, and respect raises manners.

4.2 Suggestion

Every ethnic has its own traditions. Rebu as one of Karonese traditions is one of Indonesian culture heritance. The writer suggests that it is important for young generations, especially for Karo people to learn about their tradition since nowadays, there are so many Karo young generations have less understanding about their own custom and tradition. Rebu tradition may sound weird in this modern era, but Karo people need to keep the value of rebu tradition to keep giving respect and honour on their relatives. It is rude for Karo people if someone does not do rebu with his/her relatives who are supposed to be his/her rebu.

5. References


