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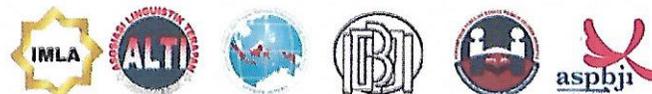


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# JAPANESE NAME IN WEST SUMATRA NAMING CULTURE

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*Abstract—Japanese culture has been positively accepted by West Sumatra people as foreign culture, it is seen from a great number of students who prefer to continue their studies in Japan and promote Japanese culture within the local community. Also, the familiarity of Japanese culture among young adult encourage them using Japanese name for their children. This paper explores the phenomenon of naming children in Japanese as part of the current trend in West Sumatra. The research is conducted as descriptive in which the data are collected through questionnaires from respondents who live in West Sumatra. The result implies that Japanese name is used as a form of their recollection and personal interest toward Japanese culture as well as their memories when living in Japan. The current case in West Sumatra shows that naming children in Japanese mostly correspond with both character and nature that attach to the word that is used to name the children. It is then combined with other names in different languages to represent parents' expectations. Moreover, the family's name is also common, it is usually taken from the father's name.*

*Keywords—Japanese name, naming culture, West Sumatra*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Japanese culture has been easily accepted by the local people of West Sumatra for several reasons; most people associate Japan with positive characters that make the culture easily adapted to within the local community as well as their dependency on Japanese products. Bilateral relationship between Japan and Indonesia has made collaboration between two countries presents in many areas and they are also easily accessible for the civilian. One of the significant collaborations is found in field of education as Japanese government has persuaded many young Indonesian to continue their studies in Japan through various programs. As a result, Japan becomes one of the major choices especially for students from West Sumatra. Currently, both governments have offered appealing scholarships for students to continue their studies in Japan. It is not only limited to the university level but also senior high school programs as a form of short cultural program. It is now also common to find teachers and lecturers who graduated from Japanese universities for their master's and doctoral degrees.

While completing their study, many of them built their family as well as gave birth to their children in Japan. Some of them

even gave Japanese names to their children to reminisce about the place where their children were born. This phenomenon is also common for students who are originally from West Sumatra to name their children in Japanese since there is no specific law that enforce parents to name their children in a certain way within the local community. The previous research about the naming phenomena in West Sumatra was conducted by Pramita, and friends (2017) who focus on naming culture among Pariaman people who are leaving the village which is also known as *merantau*. She found that the naming culture among this specific community is based on 8 criteria including (1) physical condition, (2) behavior, (3) place of origin, (4) parents' name, (5) job, (6) status, (7) resemblance, and (8) mental state. It indicated that the naming culture among Pariaman people possesses a value of sense, some of them might be negative as they tend to name people to humiliate the person while others are neutral because they don't plan to offend people with the name.

Another research for naming culture in West Sumatra was conducted by Reniwati, and friends (2013) who found that naming culture among Minangkabau people is influenced by age factors. Those who are younger than 44 years old tend to have more variety of name while those who are older than 43 years old has limited choices in which their name should be in form of 3 syllables in which the 2 syllables are taken from their name. She also mentioned that the naming culture among women in Minangkabau follows the Sanskrit in the suffixes that are used for the name {(n)(i)ar}, {mar}, {dar}, dan {wati}, that are common among Minangkabau women. The influence of Arabic in both men and women can also be easily found in Minangkabau naming culture such as the use of *nur* in the name which means "light" for women and *-din* suffix for male name. It seems that people in West Sumatra already familiar with the use of foreign language for the name.

Different from the previous research, this paper will focus on Japanese names among West Sumatra people. It should be noted that Japan has a strict rule in naming culture that contradicts the West Sumatra culture that is more liberal in naming their children. Collazo (2017) explains that there are 2 collective names in Japanese culture which include the name of the clan as well as the family. Clan name comes from the noble relationship of the civilian with the emperor, this name can be drawn if the person who is given by the name has

conduct violation. However, in general, this name can be passed down to the generations. While the family name is determined by the social class of the person, this rule has been determined since the Edo period and people should strict to it.

West Sumatra also has naming culture that is associated with clan culture as the name will be determined from their 'suku', this name should be part of the official name and added as the last name. However, this practice has long gone and it is now rare to find a person with a clan name. The eroded of clan naming is influenced by many aspects, but it is the introduction of names from foreign languages that are easily remembered becomes one of the major causes. This paper focuses on the use of Japanese names as part of the current naming culture for children in West Sumatra.

## II. METHOD

This research is qualitative research with a descriptive approach. The data are taken from the questionnaire that is answered through Google form. The respondents are the local people of West Sumatra who use Japanese names for their children; for this research, the respondents are not categorized into their experience living in Japan because they are only required to collect the questionnaire that is provided for this research. However, the response should complete at least their Bachelor's degree, and if possible Master and Doctorate.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study of naming is part of linguistic research as it is supported by Colman (2014) who believes that language won't be possible without names, because a name is a lexical unit that has different forms than common words. A name usually associates with language structures and procedures in general. Bean (1980) also added that naming system is a cultural entity that portrays the community who comes up with the name. Community creates a name to distinct themselves from other communities as well as to classify them from geographical aspects, mass, and social participation (it may include name of a place, activity, and individual).

The study of naming cannot be separated from cultural and social background of the community in which the names are created. The birth of a name should possess background, purpose, and merits so a name can be thought out. Malinowski (in Stefani:2016) supported that naming studies is not only limited to form, but it is also expanded to the context of the place where the name is created. Naming culture describes the sphere context where the name is presented. Besides, cultural and paradigm change within the community also influence the naming system. In the following section, the form of Japanese naming affects the naming culture of West Sumatra community.

### A. Japanese Name to Describe Personal Characters

Name usually consist of 3 meanings including (1) word to addresses the person (place, thing, animal, etc); (2) designation; (3) fame, virtue (privilege), and dignity (KBBI, 2007:773). under the linguistic term, name is classified

as *proper name/proper noun* which refers to name of person, place, and thing (Kridalaksana, 2008:161). Palmer (1981:129) also added that name which is categorized as *proper noun* for a person, aspect and thing also indicated certain meaning, because name contains fame and dignity of a person. Name is also part of the identity that differentiates one person and another, that makes name consist of certain meaning in it.

Chou (2015:76) explained that Japanese people tend to choose names that correspond to nature such as *ki* for 'tree', *yama* 'mountain', *kawa* 'river'; moreover, they are usually added to the family name. Those names are chosen based on the origin of where the name is created. This phenomenon also shown among respondents who also choose Japanese names that are inspired by nature to name their children, some of them are:

(1) *Hana*

(2) *Haruki*

The first name (1) *Hana* contains the aspect of nature as it originally means as flower, while the second name (2) is originally written as *Haru* which means 'autumn'. The naming process that chooses the word from nature is part of impersonation of Japanese naming culture. While in West Sumatra, no background literature shows that local people choose words from nature to name their children.

Not only adapting Japanese name and culture, but the people also choose the words for names based on its meaning. From the selected data, the Japanese names on children often imply the nature and character that are expected in children. It is shown from the following name

(3) *Hikari* 'bright'

(4) *Hiroshi* 'kind-hearted'

Data (3) *Hikari* name originally means in Japanese as brightness, it implies personal nature and characters, the child is expected to be the source of light for other people around him/her. *Hikari* is not only to bright in nature but also physical appearance. While data (4) *Hiroshi* is a name that means kind-hearted, parents usually choose to give this name to their children in hopes that their children will be generous.

Some names are taken from the Japanese warrior, as follow:

(5) *Rhyoma*

(6) *Sugiyama*

Data (5) *Rhyoma* is taken from Sakamoto Ryōma name, he was previously a Japanese politician as well as an entrepreneur. He is known for his political movement in overturning Keshogunan Tokugawa during Bakumatsu period. He was born in Kōchi, 3 January 1836 and died 10 December 1867 in Kyoto when he was just 31 years old. After running away from his duty as *samurai* Domain Tosa, Sakamoto Ryōma built his export-import company while continuing his political activity in *Ronin* association named Kameyama Shachū/Kaientai. He was also the founder of Aliansi Satchō who proposes the ideas that power should behold by the emperor although his political activities must end during Edo period (Shiba:1998)

Another name which is inspired by Japanese warrior is *Sugiyama* as presented in data (6), *Sugiyama* is taken from the name of Japanese marshal who leads the Japanese force army as well as the ministry of war during world war II (1937 to 1944). during his leadership as the ministry of war in 1937, he was also the main architect of China-Japan war. He was the head of Japanese force during expansion to South East Asia and followed by Japan-America War (Bix:2001). Based on those data (5) and (6) show that warrior names that are taken from Japanese heroes are also the favorite choice for children names among West Sumatra, parents expect the children to be as brave as the Japanese warrior and posses leadership character in them.

The collected data indicate that Japanese name that implies certain nature and character show parents expectation in their children. It is equal with Lieberson (1992) and Ogohara, and friends (2015) finding that the orientation of value and expectancy of the parents toward their children.

### *B. Combining Japanese Name with other Foreign Language Name*

The phenomena of combining name from foreign language indicate that cultural interfusion can easily take place within the community. Sato (2007) had explained that the Japanese naming phenomena in which the name is taken from Kanji are often adapted to English writing system. Although it might be strange among Japanese, it often occurs abroad; as people adapt the Japanese naming into their language.

Not only do people in West Sumatra adapt the Japanese name into children's name, but also combine them with other names from different language as seen as the following data:

(7) *Fathir Hikari Putra*

(8) *Alia Shifa Ayumi*

Data (7) shows the use of Japanese name *Hikari* which has been juxtaposed with Arabic name *Fathir*. It is also present in data (8) where the Japanese name *Ayumi* is combined with Arabic name *Shifa*. However, adding the Arabic name into the children's name is not the only variable that can be found, other variation of japanned name with other foreign language twists also occur on the following data

(9) *Kimiko Eveline Aiko*

(10) *Annemarie Kaori Zahramurasaki*

Data (9) present with some part of the name come from Japanese language *Kimiki* and *Aiko* that are combined with English name *Eveline*. The same case also occurs on data (10) as the Japanese name *Kaori* and *Murasaki* meet with another naming from English that is *Annemarie* as well as Arabic language *Zahra*.

Previous research from Reniwati, and friends (2013) indicated than people from West Sumatra mostly take the name from Sanskrit and Arabic, but only Arabic that still becomes the prominent source for name. Although other languages can be

used as alternatives for naming such as Japanese, these people still preserve the Arabic name for their children.

The historical background that makes both Sanskrit and Arabic become the major source language for naming can be traced back before the second AD century when Hindu had spread among Southeast Asian country including Indonesia (2005:192). As a result, the Sanskrit become one of the important languages in the country. Later, Islam was introduced and embraced by the Indonesian, which makes Arabic become one of the prominent languages within the community. The influence of Arabic toward Indonesian cannot be avoided, and it can be easily found in naming culture. Today, people in West Sumatra still use both Sanskrit and Arabic for name.

### *C. Adding the Parent's Name*

As one of the major clan in Indonesia, People in West Sumatra who are also known as Minangkabau has a unique tradition. Unlike other clans in Indonesia that are patrilineal society, Minangkabau has adapt matrilineal system to guide the community. At least there are two main groups in which are then divided into four major sub-clan (*suku*) including *Koto Piliang* (consist of *Suku Koto* and *Piliang*), and *Bodhi Chaniago* (both *Suku Bodhi* and *Chaniago*); they are then divided into 96 subdivision or smaller scale of *Suku* (Fatimah, 2011:78). historically, people in West Sumatra used to add the name of their *suku* for their official name that is often added as the last name. It is influenced by the practice of matrilineal in the community, as adding the name of the clan will help them to identify their lineage from the female relatives. However, this practice has been neglected that makes the clan naming is no longer popular among younger generation.

In Japan, family name is known as *myouji* which is often written as the first name to determine the family tree. The kinship in japan is patrilineal that makes family names taken from the male parents, and it should be passed down to the first son in the family. Historically, the use of family names in Japan has been practiced for a long time and went through process. As stated by Hamamura (2019) that the choice of family name in japan correlated to the mobilization of the people.

The data for this research indicate that the Japanese names that are given to the children are partially followed by family name, while the rest of them choose to abandon the family name on their children. Some of the name that indicates no family names are

(11) *Arazka Seiji Hanan*

(12) *Vicky Akihiro*

While Japanese name that contains family name from the paternal side can be seen on the following data :

(13) *Eijiro Sugiyama Edison*

(14) *Marqueino Oyama Chandra*

(15) *Hikari Amirah Firdaus*

Data (13) Edison as the last name indicating the family name of the children that are taken from her father's name Edison Munaf. It is also similar to data (14) in which Chandra implies the family name taken from the father's name Gunawan Chandra, as well as in data (15) where Firdaus also is taken from father's name that is also Firdaus. It can be implied that father's name can be taken in various ways, it can be taken father's first name as shown in data (9) or even father's last name as seen in data (10). while taking the entire name of the parents can also be possible if the father only has one syllable name as seen in data (11).

Moreover, we can also find the family names that are taken from the combination of both parents as seen on the following data:

(16) *Kenzo Fidira*

(17) *Arzeka Aiji Nawarman*

Data (16), as *Fidira* is the family name that comes from both parents' names that are *Rona Fitri* and *Hari Handira*, *Fidira* is the abbreviation of both parents' names *Fitri* and *Handira*. The same pattern is also found in data (17) as *Nawarman* is taken from mother's name *Nana Efrina* and father's name *Welli Minang Warman*, so *Nawarman* is also an abbreviation of *Nana* and *Warman*. It is an interesting phenomenon to be analyzed because it does not correspond to the common traditional family name which is often taken from one parent; but instead of using the already given name, these people choose to combine both parents' names into an abbreviation.

#### *D. The Reason for Choosing Japanese Name*

Trough the concessionaires that have been given to the respondents who are West Sumatra local people, it is found that at least there are two main reasons why they choose to name their children with Japanese names. (1) first, as their reminiscence when living in Japan and (2) second, because they have interest in Japan. The respondents who choose the first answer as they choose to name their children in Japanese as part of their reminiscence when living in Japan indicate that they had been previously lived in Japan for months and sometimes years. These respondents mostly stay in Japan for work or continue their studies in Japanese universities. Some of the children were born in Japan, while the rest born after the parents leave Japan and coming back to West Sumatra.

Those people who have experienced living in Japan choose to name their children by adding Japanese words or Japanese culture. The name that is given to the children not only chosen based on the form but also meaning. This consideration is taken into account by their parents because they understood that name is part of both children as well as parent's identity. Respondents answer that giving Japanese name to their children also become part of their historical memories that correspond to the time when they live in Japan.

Watanabe (2013) added that giving names to children is also associated with sociocultural aspects. By adding Japanese names on children who are part of West Sumatra community,

they also create an identity as well as build communication networks with others: it also implies that the time they spend in Japan has influenced them greatly. This phenomenon is correlated with the 'cosmology' term (*world view*) which is orientated to how people in West Sumatra build a dialogue with the cosmos as 'universe' and the socio-cultural background. West Sumatra People with their philosophical thought *dima bumi dipijak, di sinan langik dijunjuang* (the ground you stand is where you hold the universe high) which means that Minangkabau/ West Sumatra people need to follow the rule of place where he lives.

Respondents who have no experience in living in Japan choose to name their children in Japanese because they have interest in Japanese culture. They may have previously learned Japanese, or have an interest in specific Japanese works. Disdier (2009) also added that media can also influence the naming culture as shown in French. His finding shows that at least 5% of the people choose to name their children in a foreign language because of the influence of foreign media. This phenomenon shows that foreign influence can be easily absorbed by the community as a result of media intervention. The evolution of social media has caused unlimited participation and communication that can influence many social aspects including the naming culture. anime, comic, film, online game, and other popular culture products that are introduced by Japan has gained massive interest in Indonesia. The communities that are dedicated to Japanese culture can also be easily found in Indonesia as well as in West Sumatra. The indulgence toward cultural product from Japan has encouraged people to learn Japanese, it then triggers people to name their children into Japanese as well.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Choosing Japanese name among West Sumatra people show several variations (1) first they choose the name based on words that correspond to nature, it is close to the naming culture in Japan that prefer the object of nature to create a name for person. (2) second, people also choose the name based on the character that attaches to the words, it contains parents' expectations toward the child; hoping that the child will bear the nature that belongs to the Japanese name. (3) choosing the name from Japanese warriors is also common, as parents wish their children to have the feature of the heroic subject.

While inserting Japanese names, parents also combining the name with other foreign languages especially English and Arabic; although Arabic is more common as it corresponds to the historical and social background of West Sumatra people who are Muslim majority. Moreover, family name can also be found in the name of children which is taken from the paternal parents; while some of them choose to recreate new family name by combining the name of both parents.

A partial respondent from this research is recorded to experience living in Japan, while those who have not visited

japan show interest in Japanese culture. Japanese names are chosen because it part of their reminiscence when living in japan or it shows their interest in Japanese cultural products which is expressed trough the Japanese naming choice.

#### V. SUGGESTION

This research is limited to West Sumatra people, other researchers are encouraged to explore the wider scope of research to identify the phenomena of Japanese name in Indonesia. Other researchers can also focus on the naming culture in West Sumatra as their future research project. Throughout this research, no naming regulation can be found among west Sumatra people. However, the patter form of naming choice within the West Sumatra community indicate a homogeneous scheme that should be analyzed further.

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