

THE ROLE OF SURAT UKAT IN KARO SINGALOR LAU KARO DISTRICT

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Abstract—Changing Karo language into a modern written language is certainly not an easy matter. Karo society does not want to be involved to improve, develop, and preserve the Karo language. Therefore, in this research we will examine the role of surat ukat in Karo Singalor Lau Karo District.

Surat ukat can serve as a way of life in every action in Karonese life so that people can live harmonious and peacefully. The method that used in this research is descriptive method and interview. The theory that used is cultural theory.

This study describes about the role of surat ukat in the Karo community Singalor Lau Karo District can be distinguished on: surat ukat in deeds, surat ukat in thoughts, surat ukat in the household and surat ukat for students.

From the results above, can be concluded that the Karo people have surat ukat as a guide to life in sangkep geluh in ancient times, while in the present, the younger generation is rarely know and use the surat ukat. We suggest the Karo community to life their daily life based on surat ukat so that they can live in harmony and good.

Keywords: *Surat Ukat, Culture, Way of Karonese Life*

Abstrak - *Mengubah bahasa Karo menjadi bahasa tulisan modern tentu bukan perkara mudah. Masyarakat Karo tidak mau terlibat untuk meningkatkan, mengembangkan, dan melestarikan bahasa Karo. Oleh karena itu, dalam penelitian ini kita akan meneliti peran surat ukat di Kabupaten Karo Singalor Lau Karo.*

Surat ukat dapat berfungsi sebagai cara hidup dalam setiap tindakan dalam kehidupan orang Karo sehingga orang dapat hidup harmonis dan damai. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif dan wawancara. Teori yang digunakan adalah teori budaya.

Hasil penelitian ini membahas tentang peran surat ukat dalam komunitas Karo Singalor Lau Kabupaten Karo dapat dibedakan atas: surat ukat dalam perbuatan, surat ukat dalam pikiran, surat ukat dalam rumah tangga dan surat ukat untuk siswa.

Dari hasil di atas, dapat disimpulkan bahwa orang Karo memiliki surat ukat sebagai pedoman hidup di sangkep geluh pada zaman kuno, sedangkan di masa sekarang, generasi muda jarang mengenal dan menggunakan surat ukat. Kami menyarankan komunitas Karo untuk menjalani kehidupan sehari-hari berdasarkan surat ukat sehingga mereka dapat hidup harmonis dan baik.

Kata Kunci: *Surat Ukat, Budaya, Cara Hidup*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking of *Surat Ukat* in Karo Language can be divided into two words namely *Surat Ukat* and *Ukat*. Word ‘letter’ according to KUBI is inscriptions or symbols of language consisting of vowel phonemes and consonants pronounced by human. Letter is used to write things that can be forgotten if not written for example there is something we want to convey to friends, relatives whose far apart from us, then we will write it in letter. Therefore, in Karo society there is a personal letter, official letter, etc. *Ukat* in Karo language can be interpreted as ‘sendok’ in the Indonesian language, but ‘*Ukat*’ in the Karo language is a large spoon made of bamboo. *Ukat* in Karo language can be divided into two namely: *Ukat nakan* (spoon of rice) and *Ukat gulen* (spoon of vegetable).

Ukat nakan (spoon of rice) used to scooping up rice from pot to plate and stirring rice when the rice is boiling. The *ukat gulen* is used to taste the salt of food and spooned vegetables from the pot to the plate. So *Surat Ukat* in Karo society is a few words written in the *ukat* (spoon) that uses Karo's Karachi which is now extinct. Many Karo people who do not know anymore the meaning contained in this *surat ukat*. Meaning contained in this *surat ukat* to be delivered to the next generation is to give peace in life such as peace in *sangkep nggeluh* (life order in Karo society), brotherhood and in the household. This *Surat Ukat* also contains advice to give responsibility to every Karonese whose contents are as follows:

Do the best to people first. Each of our step should give joy to others and not harmful to us. So that, anywhere we are able to be friends, loving each other, helping each other that became the motto for the Karonese.

Perhaps, the question arises for us is why in the advice written on *ukat* to the Karonese. There are some reasons:

- *Ukat* (spoon) is a tool to spoon rice and vegetables to the plate that to be eaten to give strength to humanity (Karonese).
- Always there be the time to read it because when scooping rice and vegetables into the plate we remember the advice in the *Surat Ukat* (spoon)
- Easy for us to see *Surat Ukat* (spoons) because the *Ukat* is a tool that always there in house or rest place.
- *Ukat* is a rain-resistant, hot-resistant, and never-broken home utensil for future generations.
- *Ukat* (spoon) is closely related to everyday life of Karonese.
- This study aims to determine the role of *Surat Ukat* in the Karo Singalorlau community namely the role of *Surat Ukat* in the behavior, household thinking, and student.

METHOD

- The method of literature, the authors trying to find the books as a reference of various references so that more support in conducting research.
- Methods of observation, the researchers directly go to the location of research to observe the objects to be studied. Activities intended to understand more clearly the involvement of observational subjects.
- Interview method, which is a method that is a conversation conducted with a specific purpose, and this conversation is usually done by two parties: the interviewer (interviewer) who asks questions and interviewees (interviewee) who provide answers to the question. In this interview method researchers will conduct interviews to the parties who know all about the *Surat Ukat*.

RESULTS

The role of *Ukat* in Karo society can be divided into:

The Role of the *Surat Ukat* in Behavior or Action

In Karo society there is one guideline to organize actions so that you will not harm yourself and others namely *Surat Ukat*. How should we behave towards friends, family and brothers to fit the "*Surat ukat*"?. Obviously we have to give what others want. No one will hate us if our daily behavior and deeds please others. We will be liked by others wherever we are. Therefore we must avoid unpleasant things like insinuating, abusing and deceiving others.

Good behavior is our sense of reluctance and respect for others. If you want others to shrink and respect us, of course we must respect them first. Therefore if we want to be loved and appreciated by others, we must do it first. For example we are good to others either family or friends, then they also must be good to us. If this kind of goodness is unilaterally, it is impossible to preserve such a aphorism says "claps one hand" and impossible to achieve what the *Surat Ukat* try to say which is the peace of life between fellow human beings. If we remember what the *nini* said (parental counsel), every action must be repaid, such as a borrowed bowl, a bowl returned, in other words there is debt and there is receivable. In the *Surat ukat*, it is emphasized that we must give first before we accept. If we can do this in our daily deeds of course we have to provide all of our needs so that we can give to friends and family. Thus we are required to work hard and sparingly so we can fulfill our needs of our daily lives.

Actually this *Ukat* is a golden bridge into peace, both to friends and to family. According to Karo tribe experts, it is no

mistake that the letter is the philosophy of Karo tribe life. In general, the Karo tribe can adapt to other tribes in Indonesia because wherever the Karo tribe is located they can please others in both behavior and thought. There is parental advice in Karo society that '*dimana langit dijunjung disitu tanah dipijak*'. In other words Karo proverb states "*bagi bindoranlah kita nggeluh, kuga inganna bage rupana*" means we must be able to adjust to other people and leave our habits and adjust to others. For example we enter a place or village, we must follow the customs that exist in the place although it is different with the custom in our place.

The Role of *Surat Ukat* in Thought

Surat Ukat in thought has the intention that everyone should think *rawin jemba* which means that everything we think about and we will convey to others must be drawn first to ourselves whether it is good or not. Otherwise, If it is not good do not convey to others, if it is good then it can be delivered to others. For example, if we are oppressed by others then we will feel miserable or hurt, if we oppress others, of course he will hurt too. So do not oppress. Another example if we are deceived people of course we do not like it, then do not deceive others. If we think that we will not like to be abused by others, then do not scold anyone.

Thinking *rawin jemba* is must be reciprocated between *awin* that replied by *jemba* can be similar with '*ndi*' replied by '*enta*'. Speaking of reciprocal or not reciprocal, it is clear for us that everybody feels the services of parents to their children and it cannot be repaid. It is impossible for a child to provide the same service with the services the parent had given to them. If we reflect on how the parents treated and raised us from the womb until we married, the affection of the parents is infinite or we can say that it is the most sincere affection on this world. Their eating and sleeping time

are disturbed to take care of us. When we are sick or in distress, our parents are sad and hurt, their heart is beating so fast when their child is sick, the child is treated as well as possible. Parents never feel disgusted to clean up their child's feces even though she or he was eating. After child has grown become a mature one, the child even denied their parents.

Conversely, when parents are elderly, it is definitely a burden for children to take care of their parents because the parents who are elderly are not able to work especially if he is sick until they cannot go to toilet by themselves anymore. Although we have taken care of parents as much as possible, we still cannot repay even half of the sacrifice that they has been given to us, it will be more bad if we neglect it. There are children who are ungodly against their parents so that their parents are sick and stressed because they cannot overcome their children.

Surat Ukat in Karo language is not similar with people who buying and selling, we give money to the seller, we accept the goods without any element of love inside it. In buying and selling, there is no difference who gives first with who receives first. Although in this case there are elements reciprocal. The giving and receiving are the same, so it is not the same as the *Surat Ukat's* law which contains 'ndi' 'enta' as a guideline for the life of the Karonese.

According to *Surat Ukat*, it is a honor if we can give to someone else but it cannot be resurrected to make the person hate to us. Is this case happens, their honor to us will be lost and the resentment of the receiving person will arises. When we often talk about our gifts to others, there is an element of high-mindedness inside it. Therefore, although we give much to others or help others, we have to stay humble in order that the higher self-personality remains in us. If the person we are helped does not reply our kindness, do not be hurt. Just think that it is

our part to help them. To the person who often berates us, we should do our best to him and suppose the person is inexperienced until someday someone else will reply his actions. Try not to hurt others because if we hurt someone else, someday someone will be hurt us. In this world, not everyone will repay the good to us even if we have done something good to them, of course it will be more bad if we do some evil, it is definitely, the result is more evil. The reply that we will receive certainly not as fast as biting chili, the time it bitten, immediately felt spicy. Bad behavior, will be rewarded with the bad, though not only the person we hurt will hurt us. Someone else will do.

It is possible if we do something bad such as hurt people, make them sad and etc on young age, the reward to us may come when we are old.

The Role of *Surat Ukat* in Students

This *Surat Ukat* may be filled with many things that hated by the students today. This *surat ukat* contains many counsels to students. The purpose of making this *surat ukat* is that the life of future generations today much better than the life of the forerunners because the person who made this *surat ukat* lived in an era of colonization who yearns for peace in his life. They never feel hopeless and will support the students as the next generation on the basis of love and love for the next generation with existing abilities to guide. *Surat ukat* was created when situation of Indonesia was not good because Indonesia was being colonized in that time. In those days there was a quarrel among the family and even brothers and got to the court. That is why the writer of this *surat ukat* want if the young people will not get the same thing.

This independence has been entrusted to the next generation who sit in elementary, junior high school, or who already sit in college. They are the next generation who

can build this country become the better country. The young generation must prepare themselves as knowledgeable and experienced human beings to create a prosperous society. In addition, mental and disciplined behavior should also be prepared because knowledge is not enough. Eventhough their knowledge is as high as the sky is nonsense without disciplined mental and behavior. Like Hitler who made the German state destroyed by his poor mentality, he always considered his country is the best country in the world as the slogan says "*Deutschland ist uber alles*" which means Germany is the best so that Germany must lead the world. The Germans are arrogant and consider all the countries of this world not as good as Germany. Later, in the first and second world wars, Germany was lost and the country was divided into two and now reunited. Therefore, the writer of *Surat Ukat* really wants the next generation can use the *surat ukat* as his life guide. In *Surat Ukat*, there are good mental and behavioral teachings for the east people generally and in particular the mind of the Karonese. According to *Surat Ukat*, Karo people's personality is humble, *rawin jemba* thought, and deeds *ndi enta*. If the personality contained in this *surat ukat* has been a behavior for the people of Karo surely they will get peace and tranquility of the heart is also favored by others. Generations of successors must apply the *surat ukat* in their lives so that people in the family can behave well or have good ethics.

Surat ukat appealed that students should be diligent in learning in the school. To achieve a good performance is definitely difficult, but in that trouble, there will be a privilege for him, for example a student who champion and quickly got a bachelor degree with good results would be easy to find a job because the company needs the best people. In general, people who are diligent to learn will be more earnest and full of

responsibility so that in his work will quickly get promotion. If he is a businessman then his business will forward and develop fast. Such a person will always be remembered until the end of his life as the proverb says elephants died leaving ivory, humans die leaving names.

From the above description, students want to suffer temporarily to get further pleasure. At school, it suffers from having to do good things and stay away from fun things like watching movies, picnics, and dating. Once the problems in school finished or finished school and work, of course they can do what they want to do not disturb the peace and decency of others. If they want to watch a movie every night, picnics every week no one will worry and ban him. School is the place for they to learn for the future.

The Role of *Surat Ukat* in Household

Households in Karo society have been included in the *sangkep nggeluh*, both in party customs, meetings, and also had responsibility both in action and mind. Household is a golden bridge to achieve the ideals. Meeting men and women in the household make a human being responsible in the household. Forming a household is not only if you have much money, because if everything has been fulfilled so the new household feels like vegetables without salt, it is tasteless. There is no pride for us if everything has been fulfilled but you will get pride of heart if you live with suffering first then happy. Similarly with student who struggle to find knowledge then after the graduation, he can be proud. There is no man who graduated in marriage even though age is advanced, only death can separate the household. To avoid the destruction of households, the people of Karo are guided by the *Surat Ukat* to keep the house peaceful. We often meet a household that only one person who fought for the household and they are blame each other in the household. According to *Surat Ukat*, do

not blame each other and you must support each other. The reason why *surat ukat* is written on the *Ukat* is because women will often hold the *Ukat*. This is in line with the nature of women who tend to be one-sided in the family, for example if the wife who came, the wife smiled, while if the husband's family who came, the wife will sullen. There are also quarrels within the household for this reason. The *surat ukat* appeals in the household, husband and wife, to be fair in their life against any party because husband and wife have become one.

DISCUSSION

The *Surat Ukat* on Karo society plays an important role both in action, mind, household, and students. According to cultural theory, all human activities or behaviors make man more prosperous. In accordance with the theory, *the surat ukat* in the Karo society used in ancient times it was seen that the Karo people were menology-like people, able to adapt to the place where he was, the social beings who live in mutual assistance, mutually cheers and respects. Karo people generally always think first before they act in order to avoid misunderstanding between them. When he wants to act, it will be done to himself, whether he is happy or not. If that is not good for him, he will not do it. But if it is good for him then he will do it. This is called in the *surat ukat* with *rawin jemba*.

Generally, the Karonese had always tried to give first before they want the reply of it, both in action and words so there is a theory in the *surat ukat*, *rendi enta*. Therefore, the life of Karo people in the past seemed to be working hard and always save money for their future. In this modern era, the *surat ukat* as a guide in Karo society has begun to erode due to selfishness that controls the minds of Karo society. Karo society in general has begun to forget the role of the *surat ukat*. Many Karo people

who have lived like a *unduk-unduk* or a type of caterpillar which means do not see the left and right, just selfish. The next generation in the Karo society has recently begun to be happy for a moment and hard forever, no longer as it is written in the *surat ukat*.

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