Self and other reference in mass-mediated models of kinship, friendship and strangerhood

by

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Abstract

This paper explores what a focus on mass mediated models of language and social relations can tell us about self and other reference. In particular, I compare person reference in participant constellations involving family, friends, and strangers. My theoretical impetus is drawn from linguistic anthropological work on imitation, mobility, the market, and nation building. In comparing samples of Indonesian television broadcasts spanning the period 1994 to 2009, I ponder how the models of language and social relations among family and friend relate to what we might call metaphorical person reference in models of contact among strangers. I point out that these models are not only examples of sociolinguistic change but are reflexes of different regimes of language.

Keywords: metaphorical kinship; reference; regimes of language; sociolinguistic change

1. Introduction

Like all disciplines, sociolinguistics has to be constantly reflexive about how its work contributes to regimenting a particular view of how the world works (Goebel, In press-b; Sidnell & Shohet, 2013; Silverstein, 2006), including the extent to which hierarchy is a default for studying and understanding self and other reference. Within cultural studies, for example, Said (1978), alerted us to this phenomena, referring to it as “orientalism”. While acknowledging the absolute essentialness of comparison, not just for academic work, but also for register formation more generally (Agha, 2007; Irvine & Gal, 2000),

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this paper starts by examining person reference within mass mediated representations of family units, but with an eye toward how this relates to person reference in mass mediated representations of contact between strangers. My focus on contact takes into consideration relationships between sociolinguistic scholarship on connection, mobility, migration, and the market (Section 2). I draw out five themes from this work:

1) That all forms of language in social life are connected.
2) The importance of thinking about all forms of language in social life as linked to, produced, valued, and authorized by particular participant constellations within a particular time and place.
3) Focusing on language in social life in contact zones can provide us with insights into sociolinguistic change.
4) In these contact zones what is normative is uncertain and impacted upon by different regimes. Understanding these regimes helps us understand how and why particular sign configurations become normative.
5) Regimes are also impacted upon by markets and vice-a-versa.

I draw upon these five themes to examine person reference in mass-mediated models of language in social life, mainly television broadcasts, between 1994 through until 2009 (Section 4). In doing so, I show how sign configurations that include person reference are imitated across time and space to form new sign configurations that we can refer to as metaphorical kinship and metaphorical friendship (Section 5). Given the multitude of representations of language in social life, the idea that a person spends as much time interacting with family as with other significant others (friends, work colleagues, etc.) and that mobility and contact between strangers is increasingly as much a default as contact among kin and friends, I conclude by aligning with Sidnell and Shohet (2013) to
ponder whether kinship and ideas of hierarchy might be fruitfully complimented with a focus on contact among strangers.

2. Connecting mobility, markets, and regimes of language

My starting point in this paper comes from a now large body of sociolinguistic scholarship on connection and on understanding the connections between language in social life and mobility, the market, and nation building. We can identify five common themes in this work. The first theme draws upon Bakhtin’s (1981) insight and linguistic anthropologists’ development of these ideas (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Lempert, 2014; Silverstein & Urban, 1996; Urban, 2001), namely that all forms of language in social life are connected. That is, they have been used somewhere else, sometime else and by someone else.

The second theme is that all forms of language in social life, including hierarchy, are linked to, produced, valued, and authorized by particular participant constellations within a particular time and place (Agha, 2007; Ball, 2018; Blommaert, 2015; Lempert & Perrino, 2007; Rutherford, 2015; Swinehart & Ribeiro, 2019). Agha (2015) refers to the outcome of these processes as a “chronotopic formulation”. A chronotopic formulation is essentially a semiotic effect or product of a particular participant constellation in a particular time and space or timespace.

To apply this insight to Javanese, for example, we can recall Bax’s (1974) dissertation work that was conducted in the early 1970s. This research tells us that in the village where he worked, the types of asymmetrical patterns of Javanese exchange alluded to in Geertz’s (1960) “The Religion of Java” and empirically demonstrated in the work of Wolff and Poedjosoedarmo (1982), Errington (1986, 1988, 1998b), and Berman (1998) didn’t seem to be present. Nancy Smith-Hefner (1983) found similar symmetrical linguistic exchanges in the Tengger highlands of East Java in the mid-1970s, while some two decades later in my own dissertation research, symmetrical exchanges of Javanese in two urban neighborhoods of
Semarang also appeared to be normative (Goebel, 2000, 2010). Rather than say that some of these scholars must have got it wrong, we can say that these scholars worked with, observed, participated in, and recorded different chronotopic formulations; some, where hierarchy was important and others where parity was important.

To make the above point relevant to the theme of this workshop, person reference, we can take inspiration from Sidnell and Shohet’s (2013: 633) observation about the effects of twentieth century anthropology on defining the object of our enquiries. In short, until the 1990s much of the linguistic anthropological scholarship focused on language in social life within family units and within small-scale societies (Bauman & Sherzer, 1979; Kulick, 1992; Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin, 1990; Tedlock, 1978). The exceptions tended to focus on disadvantage and miscommunication (Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1972; Gumperz, 1982; Philips, 1983; Scollon & Scollon, 1981). While the 1990s and beyond saw a widening of research settings to towns and cities (Inoue, 2006; Rampton, 1995, 2006), as Sidnell and Shohet (2013: 633) observe, where person reference is concerned, the study of kinship has helped retain a focus on hierarchy. As highlighted by Enfield (2007), focusing on such participant constellation is useful and indeed necessary for engaging in the types of comparisons carried out when ascertaining whether an instance of person reference exchange is an instance of parity or hierarchy.

It is thus unsurprising that chronotopic formulations of hierarchy have become a default starting point for interpreting communicative activities in other domains of social life. But in line with the broad thrust of work that has examined the effects of mobility on language in social life in towns and cities (Arnaut, Blommaert, Rampton, & Spotti, 2015; Arnaut, Karrebæk, Spotti, & Blommaert, 2016; Goebel, 2010; Heller, Bell, Daveluy, McLaughlin, & Noel, 2015), we need to extend our study of person reference to cities and towns and other settings, as done by Djenar (2008) and Ewing (2016). Indeed, as I argue below, such a focus can provide us with insights into how new sociolinguistic systems emerge; our third theme. More broadly, sociolinguistic scholarship on mobility has shown us how studying contact
among particular participant constellations over time, i.e. observing their “trajectory of socialization” (Wortham, 2005, 2006), can provide us with insights into how new signs emerge, how they are valued and ultimately how they and become a locally recognizable form of communication (Goebel, 2010); that is, how such signs become “enregistered” among a particular participant constellation (Agha, 2007).

In these type of contact settings, what is normative is uncertain and “under construction”, with participants imitating models of language in social life from another time and place. For example, their prior interactions with strangers, or from interactions among strangers that they have observed, heard on the radio, watched on television, or been taught about in school. This brings me to the fourth theme of work on the connections between language in social life and mobility, the market, and nation building; namely how different authorized participation frameworks construct chronotopic formulations that model language in social life. What I mean by participation framework refers to a range of participation constellations ranging from small face-to-face ones to larger one-to-many frameworks, such as those we find in schools, lecture theatres, scholarly gatherings, and the ones produced via mass mediation (e.g. television and radio broadcasts where the “one” is the program and the “many” the audience).

Of note here too, is that such participation frameworks do not occur in a socioeconomic and political vacuum, but occur during what Kroskrity (2000) refers to as a particular regime of language. Such regimes come and go, and Indonesia is no exception. For example, earlier I tried to highlight the time when studies of Javanese were carried out. For the studies carried out in the early 1970s, the engines and infrastructures of and for nation-building, which we know also contribute to the construction of standards and ideologies about what constitutes a standard, were just beginning to be ramped up in Indonesia (Goebel, 2015; Heryanto, 1995; Sneddon, 2003). In a nutshell, this was done courtesy of a development focused government aided by some newly found wealth from petrochemical world markets. Investments in schooling and media infrastructures enabled large participation frameworks. These frameworks
circulated models of language in social life that were inhabited by groups of participants using a medium, or shibboleths of a medium that were discursively framed as “standard Indonesian” and/or a standard version of a regional language, such as Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese (Bjork, 2005; Goebel, 2015; Kitley, 2000).

The larger, often state-sponsored, participation frameworks helped enregister chronotopic formulations that were recognizable to larger populations; something that Agha (2007) refers to as a “semiotic register”. In the 1980s and 1990s these formulations included the medium of standard Indonesian which were associated with interactions between strangers, interactions in educational settings, the carrying out of governance, public media, public address, and state authority (Errington, 1998a, 2000; Sneddon, 2003). The chronotopic formulations, which included regional languages, unsurprisingly also included co-ethnic interactions, that were often located in the peripheries, whether they be rural areas, the outer islands, or the peripheries of government (Errington, 2001).

Much of the scholarship focusing on the connections between mobility, nation-building and markets highlights that language regimes are not immune to market forces (Heller et al., 2015; Heller & Duchêne, 2012; Pietikäinen, Kelly-Holmes, Jaffe, & Coupland, 2016). This is the fourth theme I wanted to draw out. Since the 1990s market forces have helped usher in a period where regional languages have been revalued and where contact between strangers has been modelled “as being conducted in mediums other than Indonesian” (Goebel, 2008, 2013). Coupled with regime change, and political and fiscal decentralization such models have become ubiquitous on Indonesian television (Goebel, 2015, In press-a).

Recently, a number of colleagues and I have synthesized these five themes proposing that they can usefully be brought to the study of what we refer to as “contact discourse” (Goebel, 2019, In press-a) and “contact registers” (Goebel, Cole, & Manns, In press). In these formulations, “contact” refers to the idea that contact with people and ideas that are not part of our own trajectory of socialization is increasingly the default human condition. In such
settings, norms for language use in general and for reference in particular cannot be
presupposed, but are discursively constructed, either in-situ or in a communicative event
afterwards; think of narratives and gossip about unexpected events or prescriptive discourses
about how someone should have engaged in interaction. Discourse refers to all modes of
human communication and the wide range of signs that we find in any communicative event.
Contact register simply refers to the emergent semiotic configuration that has become the
valued medium of communication among specific participant constellations. It can be valued
through commentaries that note that the use of a particular sign or set of signs is appropriate,
good, or bad, or as in the case of the mass mediated forms these are valued because they are
mass-mediated in the first place.

As a tourist in the area of the study of person reference in general, and person reference
in Indonesia in particular, in the rest of this paper I want to add to the study of reference in
Indonesia (Djenar, 2008; this workshop; Ewing, 2016 this workshop), by focusing on televised
models of person reference or a sub-category of contact discourse that I refer to as “models of
contact” (Goebel, 2019). Models of contact refers to how multimodal representations of contact
found in authorized one-to-many participation frameworks project normativities around contact
in social life. In what follows, I examine person reference as represented in models of contact
that I recorded from the mid-1990s through until 2009. In doing so, I interpret them in terms of
ideas around the study of emergent sociolinguistic systems, regimes of language, and markets,
and how all of this can speak to the theme of parity and hierarchy.

3. Mass mediated models of self/other-reference among family and friends

This section focuses on examples of the modelling of self and other reference among kin and
friends. Keeping in mind the question of whether and to what extent asymmetrical
relationships and asymmetrical exchanges of self and other reference are the default, here I
begin with these examples only because they represent a point of comparison. Of more
importance, is how this enables comparison with the other examples I present throughout the paper. I examine representations of an interaction between husband and wife (excerpt 3.1), brother-sister (excerpt 3.2), university friends (excerpt 3.3), and children living in the same neighborhood (excerpt 3.4).

Excerpt 3.1 is taken from the soap opera Si Kabayan, which was broadcast nationally by the commercial broadcaster, SCTV, in February 1996. The episode I focus upon is titled *Bukan Impianku Bag: 1* (It wasn’t my dream: Part 1). Si Kabayan is based on a Sundanese folk tale and many mass-mediated imitations of this folktale. It is set in a rural Sundanese village, located not too far from Bandung, the provincial capital of West Java. This series typically revolves around Kabayan’s romantic relationship with Iteung, the daughter of a wealthy villager who is opposed to this relationship. This fragment of interaction occurs at a home where the father (referred to as Abah) has finished exercising to the astonishment of his wife (referred to as Ambu), and their daughter (referred to as Iteung).

**Excerpt 3.1 Modeling other reference within a family in a Sundanese village**

**Iteung**

1 Ah, abah mah suka ada ada aja. Taiso, Ah, Dad [you] like making up stuff. Taiso,

2 taiso. Apa itu abah. Ya, ambu ya? Kayak Taiso. What is it Dad. Yeah Mum yeah?

3 orang kesurupan begitu. [Acting] like someone possessed [by a spirit].

**Abah**

4 Euh, iteung, kamu mah dasar budak bau Heh, Iteung, you were just a newborn

5 jaringao, masih bau kencur! Tidak smelling like the ginger-like herb used to

6 mengalami jaman taiso. Ambu juga bisa wash you. [You] didn’t experience the

7
In this excerpt the daughter, Iteung, refers to her father and mother with abah (line 1-2) and ambu (2) respectively. Both Abah and Ambu refer to Iteung with either first name (lines 4 and 10), or kamu “you” (line 4). In this excerpt and elsewhere, both Abah and Ambu refer to each other using the kin terms Abah and Ambu respectively (e.g. line 12). In other parts of the soap, self-reference between spouses is usually via kin terms, with Abah referring to himself as Abah. In interactions with Iteung, Iteung refers to herself using her first name. In terms of a chronotopic formulation, here we have a representation of family life where asymmetrical social relations between child and parent are, among other things, modelled through the asymmetrical exchange of kin terms, the use of first names and the pronoun, kamu, while reference among spouse is symmetrical exchange of kin terms.

For another models of family-ship, we can turn to the long running popular series Si Doel Anak Sekolahan (Doel an educated lad). This series was originally broadcast by RCTI (Sen &

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1 Ambu is used here to talk about the co-present Ambu, rather than refer directly to her.
2 Note too that like the use of Ambu commented upon in FN 1, here that the use of “si” with a term of other reference turns this form into a third person form of reference.
Hill, 2000:123), but later by SCTV. I recorded this episode in 1998. It is entitled *Meniti Batas Mimpi* “Walking along the edge of a dream” and it is part of series three. This film is set in Jakarta and like many of the soaps of this era, the need to increase market share engendered a use of many signs of ethnic-ness, in this case Betawi-ness. In this particular interaction occurs after Doel, the central character (and the son of Leila) and Mandra (Lela’s younger brother) have a brief interaction outside their home. After moving inside, Manda finishes combining his hair, before then interacting with his older sister, Lela (excerpt 3.2).

*Excerpt 3.2  Modelling self and other reference between brother and sister*

**Lela**

1. Tumben *lu, Dra*, gini ari udah rapi mau ke

2. mané, *lu.*

   [I’ve seen] **you** [do this] for the first time, **Dra**, this time of day [you] are already dressed up, where are **you** going?

**Mandra**

3. **Mpok** lupa kali, ya.

   Maybe [you] have forgotten **Older sister**, yeah?

4. Hey hey hey, **saya** kan mau ngelamar.

   Hey, hey, hey, **I** want to propose marriage right.

**Lela**

5. Hah? Mau ngelamar?

   What. [**You**] want to propose marriage?

**Mandra**

**Lela**

Eh, Dra, lu emang kagak ngarti sopan santun ya, Dra yé.

Heh, Dra, you indeed don’t understand politeness, yeah, Dra right.

In excerpt 3.2 we see examples of a younger brother, Mandra, referring to someone represented as his older sister, Lela, using *Mpok* (lines 3 and 9), while referring to himself as *saya* (lines 4, 6, and 8). In contrast, we see Lela referring to Mandra either with a shortened form of his first name, Dra (lines 1 and 11-12) or *lu* (lines1-2 and 11). Note that these exchanges are asymmetrical, that the older person is referred to using a kin term, while the younger person can be addressed using first name or a pronoun. The following two examples contrast with the above two because they are mass mediated models of friendship. Like the excerpts above, we see that first names or shortened forms of first names are often used for other reference, with symmetrical exchange modelled in the first excerpt (3.3).

Excerpt 3.3 is taken from a re-mediated feature length film entitled *Di Dadaku Ada Cinta* “In my chest there is love”. The film is set in Jakarta and originally hit the big screen in 1986. It was re-mediated on the television station, RCTI in 1994. It is a familiar story, one of romance that is not sanctioned by parents. In this case because Bob, the central character, is from the lower economic stratum, while Marita is from a super-wealthy family who have already chosen a marriage partner for Marita. Marita and Bob initially met via a chance meeting in Bali where they both enjoyed surfing. Excerpt 3.3 is of one of their early encounters
where Bob and his two male friends by chance meet Marita and her two friends while cruising one of Jakarta’s streets. Bob is represented as a university engineering student who works while studying, and who is a little senior to Marita who is a first year university student.

Excerpt 3.3  *Modelling self and other reference among university friends*

**Johan**

1  Marita.  

**Marita**


**Bob**

3  Hi.  Hi.

**Marita**


**Johan**

5  Hi.  Hi.

**Marita**

6  Halo Trio.  Hello Trio.

**Bob**

7  Apa kabar Marita.  What’s news Marita?

**Marita**

8  Baik Bob. Oh ya kenalkan ini, teman yang  Good Bob. Oh yeah, meet [my] friends that

9  gué ceritain tempo hari.  I talked about the other day.

10  Ini Nina. Ini Dina.  This is Nina. This is Dina.

In excerpt 3.3 Marita refers to Bob and his two friends using first names (lines 2, 4, 6, and 8), while Johan and Bob refer to Marita using her first name (lines 1 and 7). Note too that
Marita refers to herself using *gué* “I” when addressing Bob. This contrasts with excerpt 3.2, where *saya* is used to do this work in an interaction between brother and sister, and represents a slot where either first name could be used or another first person pronoun, *aku*. In addition to the participant constellations in which first names or shortened first names can be used to refer to children, younger brothers, or friends in their late teens and early twenties, we find the use of shortened first names among children who live in close proximity, as in excerpt 3.4.

Excerpt 3.4 is from a recording I made in August 2009. This one is of a children’s show, *Citaku* “my dreams”, which is a quasi-documentary aired on Trans7. This is so because it documents the everyday lives of children throughout the Indonesian archipelago. The stories are typically narrated by a child in Indonesian, but once there is an interaction between the narrator and another, their interaction is frequently carried out in a medium stereotypically associated with a regional language. These conversations are either accompanied by subtitles or translated by the narrator. In the case below, this is an emergent variety of Javanese anchored to Semarang, Central Java (lines 1-5). These documentaries provide insights into language in everyday life, while also providing models of self and other reference.

**Excerpt 3.4  Reference among childhood friends using shortened first names**

**Bambang**

1. aku sedang melukis pemandangan di desaku. Oh ya, namaku bambang.

2. I’m drawing the scenery in my village, oh yes, my name is Bambang, [my] full name

3. Lengkapnya, bambang nuriswanto, saat ini, [is] Bambang Nuriswanto. At the moment

4. aku duduk di kelas enam, sd jati sari, I’m in Grade 6 at the Jati Sari primary

5. semarang jawa tengah. school in Semarang, Central Java.

**Eko**

6. he bang Hi Bang (shortened form of Bambang).
Bambang
7 hou
Hi.

Eko
8 rené ko
Come here Ko (shortened form of name, eko).

Bambang
9 Eh, itu kan eko, teman sekolahku
He, that [person] you know, is Eko my school friend.

Eko
10 lagi opo kowé
What are you doing at the moment?

Bambang
11 nggambar
Drawing.

Eko
12 nggambar opo
what are [you] drawing?

Bambang
14 nggambar opo ki
What am [I] drawing?

Eko
15 kowé wis dienteni eki bai wili, ning
Wili and Eki [are] waiting for you at the lapangan
field.

In the above case, we have a model of the use other reference using shortened first names (lines 6, 8 and 9) between those metapragmatically framed as friends. Note too, the use of kowé “you” (lines 10 and 15). While I will need to go back to this data to see if there are instances of symmetrical exchanges of first name reference and the second person pronoun, kowé, what is represented here is symmetrical exchange of this medium, for example both use opo “what”
(lines 10 and 12) when there are other forms that could potentially be used to indicate asymmetrical social relations, such as *nopo* and *menopo*. Note too, the use of the first person pronoun *aku* “I/my” to address an unknown public (lines1, 3-4, and 9).

Table 3.1 summarizes the data presented so far. I use the following abbreviations: For other reference I use KT = Kin Term; SPP = Second Person Pronoun; FN = First Name; SFN = Shortened First Name; and for self-reference I also use FPP = First Person Pronoun. Note that where a cell has a question mark, this means I currently need to do more research to ascertain reference usage. To sum up, the mass mediated representations discussed thus far not only model reference, but they also produce chronotopic formulations where reference becomes associated with particular exchange patterns, and particular social relationships, and particular sign configurations. Where we have imitations of some of these signs, e.g. kin terms and first person pronouns such as *saya*, and where such imitations are both authorized and found across time and space they begin to form a semiotic register recognizable and thus available for further bouts of imitation.

**Table 3.1 Reference among kin and friends**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Other reference</th>
<th>Self-reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KT</td>
<td>SPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband to wife</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife to husband</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent to Child</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child to Parent</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger Brother to Sister</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In line with the argument made earlier, if such chronotopic formulations are the default, then the instance that we will look at in sections 4 and 5 can be thought of as instances of metaphorical use, which also can be seen as instances of sociolinguistic change in the domain of television. Of import too, is that if we take a temporal view of mass-mediated models, while contextualizing them with information about regimes of language, we see an increased use of terms of self and other reference that are stereotypically associated with regional languages, such as Sundanese and Javanese as in the case of excerpts 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4. In contrast, excerpt 3.3 is a model that was mass mediated before regional languages become a means for increasing market share. This is also an example of sociolinguistic change and register formation where the use of forms stereotypically associated with Indonesian speaking contexts are replaced with those stereotypically associated with the use of forms from regional languages.

4. Mass mediated models of neighborship

This section focuses on three examples of the modelling of self and other reference among neighbors. All of these excerpts are examples of the pursuit of metaphorical kinship. Excerpt 4.1 represents an asymmetrical exchange from the same episode of the soap si Kabayan introduced in relation to excerpt 3.1. In this case, Kabayan (Iteung’s romantic interest) goes to
Iteung’s house to seek permission to go to the city from Iteung and her parents. Here, Kabayan is surprised by the cordial and warm welcome offered by Abah to Kabayan, who in the past strongly disagrees with the relationship between Kabayan (who he sees as a poor lazy villager) and his daughter. In fact, on one occasion Abah had shot Kabayan with a BB gun. Having heard that Kabayan has inherited a multimillion dollar textile factory in the city of Bandung, Abah changes his mind about Kabayan’s suitability for his daughter. Excerpt 4.1 is of the talk that occurs after Kabayan is invited inside to eat an evening meal together.

Excerpt 4.1  Modelling self and other reference with a potential son in law

Abah

1 Oh iya. sok Kabayan, makan yang banyak, Oh yes. Try [this] Kabayan, eat a lot,

2 sing dapet

Ambu

3 Sok Kabayan makan dulu Kabayan, Try [this] Kabayan eat first Kabayan,

4 silahkan. please go ahead.

Abah

5 Kamu mah makannya harus banyak. You have to eat a lot.

6 Soalnya kamu mah pekerja keras. Because you work hard.


8 ehm.. Kabayan, Abah denger katanya Eh, ehm, Kabayan, I hear that

9 kamu mau ke kota? you are going to the city.

Kabayan
In excerpt 4.1 we see examples of self and other references. Neither are symmetrical in the sense that they exchange the same types of reference. In the case of Abah, he refers to himself with the kin term Abah “Dad” (line 8), while Kabayan refers to himself with the FPP saya “I” (lines 10 and 12). For other reference, asymmetrical exchange also occurs with both Ambu and Abah refer to Kabayan using his first name (lines 3 and 8) or using kamu “you” (lines 5 and 8). In contrast to the model of kinship presented in excerpt 3.1, here we have a model of metaphorical kinship, where kin-like relationships are modelled through the same type of exchanges found within family relationships.

Mass mediated models of this type of metaphorical kinship can also be found in urban neighborhoods, as in excerpt 4.2. Excerpt 4.2 is taken from the long running comedic soap, Bajai Bajuri “Bajuri’s taxi” aired on TransTV in 2004. It is set in a Jakartan neighborhood, and inhabitants are regularly represented as those who speak a language stereotypically associated with ethnic Betawi social types. This episode is titled Masalah burung dalam sarung “The problem of the penis in the sarong”. It revolves around a young pre-pubescent Moslem boy, Sahili, who has decided it is time to get circumcised. Excerpt 4.2 is an interaction between Sahili’s mother (Minah) and Oneng, the wife of the main character, Bajuri. Minah is represented as nearly ten years older than Oneng.
Excerpt 4.2  Metaphorical sister-ship among neighbors

**Oneng**

1. Jadi rencananya si Sahili mau disunatin So when is Sahili’s circumcision planned
2. kapan, Mpok. sister?

**Minah**

3. Maaf, Mpok Oneng, rencananya sih Apologies sister Oneng, the plan is for
4. besok. tomorrow.

**Oneng**

5. He, iyé iyé. Yes, yes, yes.

**Minah**

6. Maaf Mpok Oneng, Mpok Oneng kan tau Sorry Sister Oneng, Sister Oneng knows
7. sendiri, bapaknya Sahili udah gak ada. that Sahili’s Dad is deceased.

**Oneng**

8. iyé. Yes, yes.

**Minah**


**Oneng**

11. Yang bener aja. Masa Bang Juri mau Get real. How could it be that Brother Juri
12. dijadiin bapaknya Sahili. can become Sahili’s dad?

**Minah**

14. begitu. Maaf, Mpok Oneng saya cuma wasn’t that. Apologies Sister Oneng. I just
15. mau minta tolong, Bang Juri ngurusin want to ask help from Brother Juri to
organize Sahali’s circumcision. Apologies, 

Sister Oneng.

**Oneng**

17 Hehehe, saya kira, Mpok Minah kepengen

18 Bang Juri jadi laki Mpok Minah.

19 Mpok, ngomong-ngomong disunatinnya

20 mau di mane? Mau di dokter atau di

21 bengkong?

Laughter pulses, I though, Older Sister

Minah wanted Older Brother Juri to be

Mpok Minah’s husband.

Older Sister, while we are talking, where

will he be circumcised? At a doctors or

with a traditional circumciser?

In excerpt 4.2 we see the symmetrical exchange of the same kin term, mpok, used to refer to an actual older sister in excerpt 3.2. In this case, however, there are examples of symmetrical kin term exchange (lines 2 and 19), and symmetrical exchange of kin term plus first name (lines 3, 6, 10, 13-14, 16-18). We also see examples of symmetrical exchange of the first person pronoun (lines 9, 13, and 17), which imitates the patterns of exchange from excerpt 3.2. In sum, in this neighborhood setting, the use of this kin terms appears to be modelling a sibling-type relationship, though one of parity, despite age differences. While it thus tropes on models of kinship, this metaphorical use also produces new chronotopic formulations involving a particular type of timespace-bound set of participants and participant social relations. In reconfiguring the indexical potentials of kin terms, for example, the symmetrical exchange of mpok also removes the connotation of “older” sister. This is so because while Minah is much older, she still addresses Oneng as mpok.

Later on in this same soap opera we get an example of a metaphorical model of sibling relations as Sahili prepares to be taken to the doctor to get circumcised. In this excerpt, Bajuri and his employee and neighbor, Ucup, are trying to convince Sahili not to change his mind and try and get him into the Bajuri’s taxi. Sahili’s change of mind has come after one of his friends
have warned him (citing the publicly secret case of a neighbor, Ucup), that he has heard that	
sometimes circumcision ends with one’s penis being accidently shortened.

*Excerpt 4.3  Metaphorical sibling-ship among neighbors*

**Bajuri**

1  Eh, mau ke mana loh?  Heh, where are [you] going?

**Sahili**

2  Ili bukannya mau kabur  Ili isn’t running away.

**Bajuri**

5  Eh, Ili. Dulu juga **Bang Juri** waktu kecil  Hey, Ili. In the past, when **Older brother Juri**
6  pengen banget disunat.  **Juri** was young [I] really wanted to be
circumcised. But when it was time,
7  Tapi pas waktunye, hehe,  laughter pulse, **Older brother Juri**
8  **Bang Juri** jadi takut.  became afraid. Come on, get in, laughter
9  Ayo, masuk, hehehe, ayo.  pulses, come on!

**Sahili**

10  Ili gak mau disunat  Ili doesn’t want to be circumcised.

**Bajuri**

11  Jangan takut. Disunat gak sakit, kok.  Don’t be afraid. Being circumcised really
isn’t painful.

**Sahili**

12  Ili gak mau burung **Ili** jadi pendek kayak  Ili doesn’t want Ili’s penis to become short
13  burung Bang Ucup.  like Bang Ucup’s penis.

Setting and participation constellation change five times before the following scene where
Bajuri, Ucup and Sahili are waiting for the doctor at the hospital.
Bajuri
14 Jangan berontak lagi. Guwa serahin dokter, entar guwa tinggal. Don’t revolt again. I’ll put it all in the hands of the Doctor and I’ll leave you [here].

Sahili
16 Jangan, Bang. Don’t Older brother.

Bajuri
17 Iyé. Yeah [are you sure]?

Sahili
18 Iyé, Bang. Yes Older brother.

In excerpt 4.3 we have an adult (Bajuri) addressing a child (Sahili) using a shortened form of his first name, Ili, (line 5), and the child referring to himself with the same shortened form of his first name (lines 2, 10, 12). We also see Sahili referring to Bajuri with the term Bang “Older brother” (lines 16 and 18), while Bajuri refers to himself initially using Bang Juri (lines 5 and 8) when trying to coax Sahili to go ahead with the circumcision, but then after being upset that Sahili made such a fuss earlier changes stance through both a threat and through his use of terms of self-reference, in this case guwa (lines 14-15). Across both interactions we see that Bang, the male equivalent kin term for mpok, retains the meaning of older, but is metaphorical because Bajuri is not Sahili’s blood brother. In short, this is a mass-mediated model of metaphorical kinship, which also models the situational nature of self and other reference as a way of stance-taking.

Table 4.1 summarizes the data presented so far on the exchange of self and other reference in a number of examples of mass-mediated neighborship. I use the following abbreviations: For other reference I use KT = Kin Term; SPP = Second Person Pronoun; FN =
Table 4.1  Reference among neighbors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Other reference</th>
<th>Self-reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KT</td>
<td>SPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult to potential son-in-law.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential son-in-law to Adult</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult to Child</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child to Adult</td>
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<td>Adult to Adult</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To sum up, the chronotopic formulations that emerge from the mass mediated models examined here are typologically metaphorical (but only if we use the family unit as the default for comparison). As with many of the excerpts from section 3, those presented here also used terms of self and other reference stereotypically associated with regional languages, such as Sundanese and Betawi. However, in the case of the Betawi example, this representation was also produced in a period where ethnic-ness had been revalued and politicized through the political and fiscal decentralization that occurred from 2001 onwards. Indeed, jumping forward a couple of years from 2005 to 2009 evidences the existence of shibboleths of regional languages across almost all television genres. Taken together with the idea that the representations of language in social life here are metaphorical we can say that these examples are both examples of sociolinguistic change, and where there are some common linguistic
forms, examples of register formations. In my last data section, I want to continue with the theme of metaphorical social relations, but in situations of contact among strangers.

5. Mass mediated models of contact among strangers

This section focuses on the use of self and other reference in mass-mediated models of contact among strangers. As with the previous sections, I draw upon a range of television genres broadcast over a period of twenty-five years. Excerpt 5.1 is taken from a mid-morning bulletin that I recorded in 1994. It was broadcast on RCTI and this segment is part of a talk-back show called Wajah “face”. In this excerpt, the compare to the bulletin, Dana, introduces the guest (Tantowi) and the person who conducts the interview (Zsa Zsa).

Excerpt 5.1 Symmetrical exchanges of first name among relative strangers

Dana

1 Pemirsa kita jumpai Tantowi Yahya kali Viewers we meet Tantowi Yahya this time
2 ini sebagai tamu kita dalam Buletin Siang as our guest during the mid-morning
3 bersama Zsa Zsa Yusharyahya. Selamat Buletin together with Zsa Zsa
4 Siang. Yusharyahya. Good morning.

Zsa

5 Selamat siang Dana. Tantowi selamat Good morning Dana. Tantowi, good
6 siang. morning.

Tantowi

7 Selamat siang Zsa Zsa. Good morning Zsa Zsa.

Of note here is that Zsa Zsa refers to both Dana and Tantowi (line 5) using first names only (in bold), while Tantowi also refers to Zsa Zsa using her first name (line 7). While all appear to be of similar ages, they are strangers and this is in public. This symmetrical exchange
contrasts with the exchange pattern observed in excerpts 3.3 and 3.4, insofar as the guest, Tantowi, is a stranger and the exchange is “in public”. In this case, it seems that there is a recontextualization of a shibboleth of the chronotopic formulation of “interaction among friends who are age mates”, namely first name is okay for referring to another stranger of similar age and in this case occupational status (all work in the television industry). In short, it seems to model the pursuit of metaphorical friendship.

In a televised soap opera that I recorded in 1995, we get a very similar model of contact, although in this excerpt we have to follow the interaction for a few turns before we get to see this same phenomena. This comedic soap opera was broadcast by the commercial semi-educational television station, TPI. The soap is entitled Noné (Missy) and the data that I will analyze is drawn from an episode titled Cipoa “Con artist”. In the lead up to this scene, Dewi has inherited a house in Bandung, the provincial capital of West Java, and to help with the upkeep she has advertised a room for rent. Excerpt 5.2 represents the interaction between three strangers, Dewi, Ayu, and Susi.

The scene starts with Ayu presenting herself at the front door as a person from Jakarta who wishes to rent the whole house, and initially referring to Dewi as Ibu Dewi. The interaction continues, first through dialogue between Dewi and the ghost of Dewi’s grandmother, and then through an argument between Ayu and Susi about who is entitled to the room. Susi arrived before Ayu and is also represented as hailing from Jakarta in contrast to Dewi who is represented as a Sundanese (by way of her, her grandmother’s, and a tax driver’s use of linguistic fragments stereotypically associated with Sundanese in interactions among themselves). It is in this piece of interaction, and that which follows, that both Ayu and Susi project a wish to recalibrate the social relationship from strangers to friends through the use a shortened form of Dewi’s first name, Wi.
Excerpt 5.2  *Strangers, metaphorical friendship and self and other reference*

Ayu

1 Selamat pagi. Bisa bertemu dengan ibu  
   Good morning. Can [I] meet with Mrs.

2 Dewi?  
   Dewi?

Dewi

3 Eh, iyah. saya Dewi.  
   Eh, yes, I’m Dewi.

Ayu

4 Oya? Yang pasang iklan ini?  
   Oh yes? The person who posted this
   advertisement?

Dewi

5 Euh, Iya.  
   Ah, yes.

Ayu

6 Oh, saya pikir sudah nenek nenek.  
   Oh, I thought [you] were already a
   grandmother/old person.

Dewi

7 Ini dulu memang rumahnya nenek. Tapi  
   In the past the house was indeed my
   grandmothers, but now I inherited it.

8 sekarang diwariskan sama saya.  

Ayu

9 Oke. Kenalkan, saya Ayu. saya  
   Okay. [I’ll] introduce [myself], I’m Ayu.

10 peragawati, pemain sinetron, cover girl,  
   I’m a model, an actor, cover girl, a queen

11 ratu sepeda indah, foto model, dan kadang-  
   of beautiful bikes, a photo model, and

12 kadang saya juga suka nyanyi.  
   sometimes I also like to sing.

Nine turns deleted where clarification about what is being rented, that another has already asked to rent a room, a warning from the ghost of Dewi’s grandmother about people like Ayu, and Ayu giving Dewi a deposit and then telling her to bring her bags inside.
Susi
13 Guwa dateng duluan. Pantes dong rumah kontrak ini jadi hak guwé. Nih, uang persekotnya. I got here first. The house is perfect, so it is my right. Here [Dewi], the deposit.

Ayu
16 Kamu boleh aja dateng duluan. Tapi yang duluan bayar persekot kan guwé. Ya kan, Wi? You can get here early, but the person who paid the deposit first was me right? Isn’t that right Wi?

Nine turns deleted. Essentially an argument ensues between Susi and Ayu and also involved the taxi driver who brought Susi to the house.

Susi
19 Kamarnya di mana, Wi? Where is my room Wi?

One turn deleted as Ayu makes here case to Susi.

Susi
20 Adil buat kamu belum tentu adil buat Susi. What is fair for you is not fair for me.

Excerpt 5.2 represents a number of instances of person reference, all of which are related to Susi and Ayu wishing to inhabit a friendly type of social relationship in order to secure a room in Dewi’s home. First of all, we see that Ayu moves from initially inhabiting a respectful social relationship projected through her reference to Dewi as Mrs. Dewi on line 1, to Dewi as servant of Ayu. The latter is projected not through person reference, but by telling Dewi to do something. As competition for the room heats up between Susi and Ayu, we see Ayu attempting to recalibrate the relationship between her and Dewi by referring to Dewi with the shortened form Wi (line 18). Susi imitates this change in stance on line 19.

Note too that while Ayu and Dewi symmetrically refer to themselves with saya “I” (lines 3 and 6-12), self-reference between Ayu and Susi is either guwa/guwé (lines 13-14 and 17) or
their own first name (line 20). This sits in contrast to the national narrative of the day that idealized forms associated with Indonesian in interactions among strangers of differing ethnic backgrounds. Of note too is their symmetrical exchange of *kamu* “you” (line 16 and 20), which in this case contrasts with their use of abbreviated first names to Dewi. Ultimately, this contrast, and the co-occurrence of the use of *guwé* for self-reference during an argument provides two models: “symmetrical person reference during an argument between strangers”, and one of “how to pursue metaphorical friendship”. In the end, the latter was unsuccessful because neither were offered the room.

Excerpt 5.3 presents another model of metaphorical friendship. This one is taken from the same episode of *Si Doel Anak Sekolahan* (Doel an educated lad), that was discussed in relations to excerpt 3.2. In this particular interaction Zaenab, who has just found out that her mother is not her biological mother, is found by Sarah wandering aimlessly on a road. Sarah invites Zaenab to spend the night at Sarah’s house and in the morning she offers Zaenab some clean clothes to wear before they engage in some more intimate talk about personal lifeworlds and their conversation the night before.

**Excerpt 5.3 Emergent friendship and self and other reference**

**Sarah**


**Zaenab**

2 Ah

**Sarah**

3 Heem

**Zaenab**
Ngak usah, *Sar*. Pake baju ini aja It’s not necessary *Sar*. [I’ll] wear this one [that I’m wearing].

*Sarah*

Aduh ganti dong. Ini kan kotor bekas Oh come on, change. This one is dirty
tadi malam. Yah, pakai baju *aku*. Nanti from last night. Yeah, wear *my* clothes.
biar bibi yang cuci baju *kamu*, ya. Later Aunty can wash *your* clothes, yeah.
Kenapa, sih risih ya, takut panuan. Why, you uncomfortable, afraid of germs.
Nggak kok bersih, ya.. ya udah, *kamu* No way, it’s clean yeah. Yeah, okay *you*
pilih ya sendiri. *Aku* mau ke bawah choose. I am going down stairs first to get
baru ngasih tau bibi bikin sarapan. aunty to make breakfast.

Interaction with maid deleted. Asymmetrical exchanges of Bi and Non.

*Sarah*

Kok belum ganti baju *Nab*, heuh. Gee [you] haven’t yet changed your blouse

*Zaenab*

Ah. iya, nanti deh *Sar* Ah, yes, [I’ll do] it later *Sar*.

*Zaenab*

*Sarah*

Heeh. Yes.

*Zaenab*

Maaf ya. *aku*, selalu aja ngerepotin Sorry yeah. I am just always imposing on
kamu you.

*Sarah*

Ngerepotin apa sih [You] haven’t put me out at all.
Zaenab

19 Iya ngerepotin kamu. Ngelibatin kamu Yeah imposing on you, involving you in ke masalah pribadi aku. my own personal problems.

Sarah

21 Ngak apa kok. It’s no problem at all, really.

Zaenab

22 Dan, makasih juga yah, semalem kamu And, thanks also for last night when you mau dengerin cerita aku. listened to my story.

In examining this interaction and the lifeworlds of these two people, we can note that while both are age mates, Sarah is from an extremely wealthy family, while Zaenab is from a family of modest means. Despite these clear asymmetries in economic status we find the symmetrical use of terms for other reference, which include: truncated names without any kin term (lines 1, 4, 12, and 14); kamu “you” (lines 1, 7, 9, 17, 19, 22), and self-reference, aku “I” (lines 1, 6, 10, 16, 20, 23). Of importance here is that while these two young women are acquainted, they are not initially represented as friends in this soap, but rather as two people in competition for the affections of Doel, the main character of this soap. Thus, what we have with this example is a model of metaphorical friendship or more precisely, a model of how to pursue friendship using terms of self and other reference.

Excerpts 5.4 is taken from the soap opera Si Kabayan (see excerpt 3.1). Excerpt 5.4 represents an interaction between one of Kabayan’s friends, Diran, and a stranger who is visibly about ten years older than he. The stranger is driven by a chauffeur to Kabayan’s home where the interaction takes place. The stranger is visibly wealthy (indexed by his dress, his briefcase, and his car, and chauffeur) and he is later metapragmatically labelled as someone of educated status (a lawyer).
Excerpt 5.4  Strangers in the village: using Pak and Saya

Diran

1  Mau cari siapa pak. Barangkali bisa saya  Who are you looking for Sir? Maybe I can
2  bantu.  help.

Lawyer

3  begini pak, saya datang ke mari,  It is like this Sir, I came here with the
4  maksudnya mau menemui dan membawa  purpose of meeting and accompanying Mr.
5  saudara kabayan. Tadi, kata tukang  Kabayan [to …]. Earlier the stall owner said
6  warung, rumahnya di sini,katanya .  his [Kabayan’s] house is here.

In this excerpt both symmetrically address each other with the use of Pak “Mr.” (lines 1 and 3), while also each referring to themselves with saya “I” (lines 2 and 3). This symmetrical address continues throughout this episode despite the large difference in age, education, and income of these two. As a term of address for father or for one’s unrelated seniors, which some note was borrowed from Javanese into Indonesian (Poedjosoedarmo, 1982), Pak has a range of possible meanings and uses, as we have seen with the kin term Abah. In this case, the model of contact between strangers has produced a chronotopic formulation where neither father or older male is indexed.

In summing up this section, we can say that as with the previous two sections these chronotopic formulations can be viewed as both evidence of sociolinguistic change and or register formation. In the case of the latter, it is a specific type of register, which we can refer to as a contact register because it models the use of sign constellations within contact among strangers.
6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have examined a wide range of mass mediated models of language in social life, focusing on person reference. While person reference used among family and metaphorical family relations demonstrated a tendency toward asymmetrical exchange of self and other reference, person reference among friends, neighbors, and strangers evidenced a tendency toward symmetrical exchange of self and other reference. Contact among strangers imitated person reference among friends. In line with what we already know about person reference in Indonesia among strangers (Ewing, 2016), we saw that person reference among strangers could be recalibrated according to what participants wanted to achieve (e.g. excerpt 5.2). In addition, and again in line with broader sociolinguistic scholarship that urges us to look at the totality of sign exchanges and at stance-taking (Agha, 2007; Ewing, 2016), we saw that interpretations of representations of person reference required us to look at what was being achieved (e.g. cajoling versus threats in excerpt 4.3).

Where sociolinguistic change is concerned, we pointed out that if the default setting was family and friends, then representations of other participant constellations were not only examples of metaphorical kinship and friendship, but also examples of sociolinguistic change and register formation with the social domain of television. In addition, by taking a twenty-five year view of these representations along with the regimes in which they emerged we got to see why there was an increased use of shibboleths of forms stereotypically associated with regional languages. In ending, I can point out that the ongoing revaluation of ethnic languages raises a number of interesting points, including what forms of person reference are modelled on Indonesian television now, some ten years after my last recording and how might this relate to contemporary regimes of language in Indonesia?
References


