# Investigating Patterns and Aspects of Place Naming in Toba Regency: An Anthropolinguistics Approach

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**Abstract**

This research investigates the naming of *huta* (traditional residences) in Toba Regency from an anthropolinguistic approach, aiming to describe the linguistic performance and to formulate the underlying naming patterns. The research problem emerges from the diminishing awareness among younger generations, which threatens the continuity of historical knowledge and cultural identity embedded in *huta* names. Using a qualitative design with an interactive model, data were collected through in-depth interviews with traditional leaders and supported by document analysis of oral narratives and archival sources. The findings reveal that a total of 92 *huta* names were identified, of which 82 are polymorphemic and only 10 are monomorphemic. Polymorphemic names reflect productive morphological processes such as affixation, reduplication, and compounding, and frequently encode ecological features (e.g., rivers, hills, flora, and fauna) as well as kinship relations and cultural values. Further analysis shows that naming aspects can be categorized into manifestation (39.13%), society (33.70%), and culture (27.17%). The predominance of manifestation aspects illustrates the Batak Toba people's ecological orientation, while the presence of clan names and ancestral references highlights the strong kinship system. Cultural aspects, meanwhile, preserve collective memories of historical events, tools, and symbolic practices. These findings show that *huta* naming constitute a multidimensional system that integrate linguistic, ecological, social, and cultural elements, functioning both as spatial marker and as instrument of cultural preservation. This research contributes to the development of place naming research in Indonesia and underscores the need to safeguard local wisdom through documentation and cultural education.

**Keywords**: *anthropolinguistics; cultural heritage; huta naming; linguistic unit; Toba Regency*

## Introduction

Names play an important role as identities for various entities such as people, places, objects, or even animals (Meiirbekov, 2023; Porter et al., 2024). Names are not only markers or labels, but more than that, they contain deep cultural and ideological values. In a cultural context, names can reflect the traditions, history, and thinking that have developed within a society. Every culture has its own way of naming, which is often influenced by certain values, such as religion, beliefs, or customs (Fedotova & Cherkashina, 2022; Resticka et al., 2021). Names are not only written on a page, but are also associated with other things, such as hopes, memories, beauty, and pride. In addition to being the identity of a person referred to by their name, names are also used as markers of a particular area, such as villages, cities, or hamlets.

Place naming is inherently connected to the socio-historical life of a community (Reyes, 2018). Naming is the process of assigning symbols to ideas. Language and culture are closely related in society, especially when it comes to naming places. Naming a place is not only a way to mark it, but also makes it easier to identify (Baruadi et al., 2024; Jordan, 2022). The same applies to the naming of places, which is done to identify and facilitate the mention of a place in communication. This is in line with research conducted by Silalahi et al. (2024), which reveals an interesting relationship between place names in Tarutung and the surrounding natural environment. In addition, research by Resticka et al. (2023) discusses toponymy in Banyumas as a representation of culture in society. These researches illustrate the multidimensional nature of place naming, which blends physical, historical, and socio-cultural information.

Theoretical frameworks also support this view. Bintarto & Hadisumarno (1979) divides the background of place naming related to geography into two categories, namely physical and non-physical environmental phenomena. Physical phenomena consist of typological aspects (related to location, area, shape, and boundaries), non-biotic aspects (such as soil, water, and climate), and biotic aspects (such as humans, animals, and plants). Non-physical phenomena include social aspects, economic aspects, cultural aspects, and political aspects. More specifically, Sudaryat et al. (2009) divides toponymy into three broad classifications, namely (1) aspects of manifestation; (2) aspects of society; and (3) aspects of culture. These classifications show that naming patterns arise from the interaction between humans and their ecological as well as socio-cultural environment.

The naming of a particular region contains a story or narrative about its formation. Durkin (2009) expressed a similar view, stating that place naming is a study of the sources from which names are derived and the process of their creation. Specifically, place names focus on the language in which the place name was created and whether the name originated from another place name, a personal name, a commemoration of an event, or a description of the geographical or social aspects of the place, or has another origin (Abdikhalikovna, 2020; Lauder & Lauder, 2015;

Narhan & Lubis, 2023). In this research, place naming in Toba Regency will focus on the naming of *huta*.

*Huta* or traditional residences is a Batak community unit based on law with authority to manage its affairs based on recognized ancestral rights and customs. *Huta* is the smallest social unit in the Batak Toba community structure, based on genealogical descent and exogamous marriage within the clan (Sibarani et al., 2021; Wiradnyana et al., 2019). *Huta* is part of the public domain and part of the public space. In other words, the names of *huta* are a message containing communication between the sender and the recipient.

In addition, the name of the *huta* is part of the public space sign. Sign in public spaces carry messages and are never neutral, as they are connected to the hierarchical social structure and power within society (Aziz et al., 2023; Janggo & Uran, 2023). Every sign that appears in public space, whether in the form of symbols, writing, or visual objects, serves to convey information related to dominant values, rules, or even certain ideologies.

The naming of *huta* can be analyzed as a linguistic text composed of linguistic units that have specific meanings. Linguistic units in this case refer to morphological forms such as monomorphemic and polymorphemic words (Blair & Tent, 2021; Nugraha et al., 2020). Monomorphemic or single morphemes are grammatical forms consisting of one morpheme. Kridalaksana (2008) explains that morphemes are the smallest units of language whose meanings are relatively stable and cannot be divided into smaller meaningful parts. Meanwhile, a polymorphemic word consists of two or more morphemes. Polymorphemic words can change form into new morphemes. This phenomenon can be seen in morphological processes such as affixation, reduplication, and composition and compound words.

Previous research on place naming in other regions, such as Csurgó et al. (2023) in Hungary, Hayward (2022) on myth-influenced, and Setyo et al. (2022) in Central Java, reveal patterns shaped by landscape perception, mythic narratives, and historical events. While informative, these works do not address the interplay of linguistic units, clan-based social structures, cultural symbolism, and ecological references that characterize naming practices in the Toba region. Research on *huta* naming also remains fragmented, often limited to small village scopes and rarely integrating anthropolinguistic perspectives.

Although research on place naming has been conducted in several regions with a focus on physical, social, and historical aspects, there has been no comprehensive research examining the patterns and aspects of place naming in Toba Regency from an anthropological perspective that combines linguistic analysis, dialectal variation, name transformation, community awareness of etymology, and the relationship between naming and tribal identity and local social symbols. In addition, previous studies have generally been local in scale (village/subdistrict) and rarely utilize a mixed approach (qualitative + quantitative/GIS) and have not explored the implications for cultural preservation and local policy. This research

fills this gap by tracing place naming patterns throughout Toba Regency, revealing intra-regional variations, and explaining how place naming in Toba reflects local social, cultural, and linguistic structures.

Based on the issues outlined above, this research addresses the following questions:
1. What linguistic units and morphological patterns characterize the naming of huta in Toba Regency?
2. What aspects underlie the naming of *huta* in Toba Regency?

This research is significant because it can contribute to the preservation of local cultural values contained in place names. In addition, the results of this research are expected to be taken into consideration in the formulation of spatial planning policies, cultural preservation, and the development of tourism based on local wisdom in the Toba region. By understanding the meaning and history behind place names, the community and stakeholders can be more prudent in preserving this cultural heritage.

Academically, this research contributes to the development of place naming studies by expanding its scope through an anthropological approach. This research can also serve as a reference for similar studies in other regions, especially those with a rich local culture and language that is still alive. Furthermore, this research seeks to show that language is a medium for recording and transmitting the identity, values, and worldview of a community.

**Method**

This research uses a qualitative design with an interactive model. Creswell & Creswell (2018) explains that qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups towards a social or human problem. The interactive model in qualitative research design emphasizes the dynamic relationship between various components. In this case, the interactive model was chosen to analyze how the name of the village was formed, developed, and acquired socio-cultural meaning using a repetitive, interrelated, and flexible approach.

The data in this research consists of the names of villages in Toba Regency based on the Toba Regency Central Statistics Agency (BPS). The research was conducted in Toba Regency, consisting of 16 districts and 231 villages. From this population, 40 villages were selected using *purposive sampling*. Selection was based on the following criteria: (1) villages with documented traditional residences (*huta*) still recognized by local communities; (2) availability of knowledgeable cultural informants, especially traditional leaders; (3) representation of different geographical zones to ensure ecological variation.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with one traditional leader from each selected village based on Spradley (1979), such as: (a) full enculturation, meaning knowing one's own culture well, (b) direct involvement,

(c) unfamiliar cultural environment, (d) sufficient time, and (e) non-analytical. Then, documentation related to tracing human movements was carried out, both from preserved oral narrative archives told by the indigenous people of the researched area. As noted by Bowen (2009), documents can offer historical context and a wide range of data, which help a person place their research in the context of their subject or field. All of this information was then used to research the process of naming the places studied and the formation of place naming procedures. The data analysis process was carried out as described by Miles et al. (2014), as follows:

1. Data condensation: This step involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming raw interview transcripts, field notes, and documents. Only data related to linguistic units and naming aspects were retained.
2. Data display: Condensed data were organized into tables and charts showing linguistic categories (monomorphemic/polymorphemic) and naming aspects (manifestation, society, culture). Systematic displays facilitated pattern identification and comparison.
3. Drawing and verifying conclusions: Interpretations were developed by connecting linguistic structures, ecological factors, and socio-cultural narratives. Verification was ensured through repeated checks across data sources and consultation with multiple informants.

To ensure data validity, this research used data triangulation (Golafshani, 2015). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing the statements of each informant, while theory triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of analysis using theory for linguistic units and place naming aspects. In addition, method triangulation is combining interview, observation, and document analysis.

Although qualitative research provides broad insights, there are several methodological limitations in this research, namely: the sample of 40 villages does not cover all huta across Toba Regency, limiting generalizability, dependence on oral narratives may lead to recall bias, especially for older naming traditions, and the research did not incorporate GIS mapping, which could strengthen ecological correlations.

**Results**

**1. Linguistic Unit of *Huta* Naming**

Based on the results of the research conducted, 92 *huta* names were found that can be categorized as monomorphemic and polymorphemic. Please refer to the following chart.
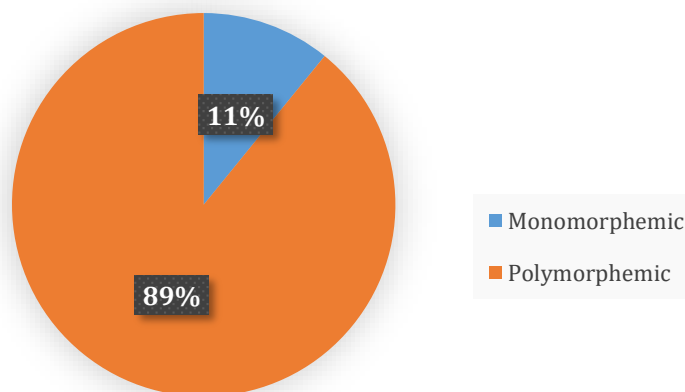
Chart 1. Percentage of Linguistics Units in *Huta* Naming

Based on the data above, it can be seen that there are only 10 *huta* with monomorphemic names. Meanwhile, there are 82 *huta* with polymorphemic names. The monomorphemic naming of *huta* in Toba Regency tends to have a basic form that cannot be further broken down into smaller morpheme units. The existence of monomorphemic words in the data shows that the language being analyzed still retains a relatively simple vocabulary in terms of structure. This provides a strong basis for forming more complex words through morphological processes.

Meanwhile, the polymorphemic in the naming of *huta* in Toba Regency are descriptive of geographical conditions and are used as markers of the social and cultural identity of the Batak people. The basic morpheme patterns (*lumban, huta, sosor, banua, dolok*) show how the Batak people associate places with the surrounding natural environment, while the insertion of clan elements or specific names reflects a very strong kinship social system.

**a. Sosor**

The word *Sosor* belongs to the monomorphemic linguistic unit, which is a word that consists of only one single morpheme and cannot be further broken down into smaller morphemes that have meaning. In the context of naming *huta* in Toba Regency, *Sosor* means 'settlement' or 'place of residence'. Lexically, this word refers to an area used for settlement, usually comprising a group of houses or buildings that form the center of local community life.

**b. Sugapa**

The word *Sugapa* belongs to the monomorphemic linguistic unit, which is a word consisting of a single morpheme without other constituent elements that can be broken down into smaller, meaningful parts. In Indonesian, *Sugapa* means a traditional fishing tool, specifically the lip of a fishing net or trap that juts inward and is designed so that fish that have entered cannot escape.

**c. Tingkatingka**

The word *tingkatingka* underwent a process of total reduplication of the root word tingka. Total reduplication means that the entire root word is repeated without change, so that the word tingka becomes *tingkatingka*. The word tingka itself means

level, and through the process of total reduplication, its meaning develops into multi-level or multi-layered, that is, something that consists of many repeated levels or layers.

**d. Parbagasan**

The morphological naming of *Parbagasan* is the result of word formation through the process of affixation involving the root word bagas and the affixes *par-* and *-an*. The root word bagas means "inside." The affix *par-* in the Batak Toba language is generally used to form nouns that indicate a place, a collection, or something related to the root word. Meanwhile, the suffix *-an* functions as a marker of place or collectivity, thereby reinforcing the meaning as a location or area related to the meaning of the root word.

**e. Hatinggian**

Hatinggian is a polymorphic form that has undergone affixation, namely the confix /ha-an/. *Ha-* + *tinggi* + *-an* ---> *hatinggian* 'Height'. The name of this area comes from the word 'tinggi', which means 'high'. The name of this place is based on its location, which is high up or on a hill, so that if you want to go to the rice fields or farmland, you have to walk downhill for two kilometers.

**2. Aspects of *Huta* Naming**

The aspects of *huta* naming in Toba Regency can be grouped into three types: manifestation, society, and culture. Consider the following data.

Table 1. Aspects of Huta Naming

| Aspects | Number of *Huta* | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Manifestation | 36 | 39.13 |
| Society | 31 | 33.70 |
| Culture | 25 | 27.17 |
| Total | 92 | 100 |

Based on the above data, it can be seen that the aspect of manifestation dominates with 36 *huta,* followed by the cultural aspect with 31 *huta* and 25 *huta* belonging to the society aspect. The aspect of manifestation in the naming of *huta* in Toba Regency covers topography, flora, fauna, and waterways. The cultural aspect covers events, characteristics, and tools. Meanwhile, the social aspect covers clans and the names of ancestors.

**a. Manifestation Aspects**

In this section, the analysis will focus on the classification of *huta* names based on the aspect of manifestation, which shows how the Batak Toba people associate their environment with place names. This analysis reveals the distribution of name categories, providing a deep understanding of the cultural values and perspectives of the community towards their living space. The table below explains the naming of

*huta* based on the aspect of manifestation.

Table 2. Manifestation Aspects

| Naming of *Huta* | Lexical Meaning | Naming Aspects |
|---|---|---|
| Sampuran | *Sampuran:* waterfall | Waters |
| Galagala | *Galagala*: a type of fruit | Flora |
| Tarutung | *Tarutung*: durian | Flora |
| Lanting | *Lanting*: a type of tree | Flora |
| Lumban Bulbul | *Lumban*: settlement<br>*Bulbul*: circular | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Simpang III | *Simpang III*: junction | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Bonan Dolok II | *Bonan Dolok*: foothills | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Hatinggian | *Hatinggian*: height | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Sosor Dolok | *Sosor*: village<br>*Dolok*: hill | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Huta Tinggi | *Huta*: village<br>*Tinggi*: high | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Lumban Bagasan Dolok | *Lumban*: settlement<br>*Bagasan*: inside<br>*Dolok*: hill | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Lumban Bagasan Toruan | *Lumban*: settlement<br>*Bagasan*: inside<br>*Toruan*: lower part | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Patujulu | *Tu julu*: upstream | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Tingkatingka | *Tingkatingka*: multi-levels | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Lumban Tongatonga | *Lumban*: settlement<br>*Tongatonga*: middle | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Lumban Julu | *Lumban*: settlement<br>*Julu*: upstream | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Lumban Tanjungan | *Lumban*: settlement<br>*Tanjungan*: cape | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Lumban Gadu | *Lumban*: settlement<br>*Gadu*: rice field embankment | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Lumban Natihar | *Lumban*: settlement<br>*Natihar*: flat | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Bustak Nabirong | *Bustak*: mud<br>*Nabirong*: the black one | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Dolok Nabolong | *Dolok*: hill<br>*Nabolong*: the discarded | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Banjar Ganjang | *Banjar*: row<br>*Ganjang*: long | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Baribatali | *Bariba*: across<br>*Tali*: rope | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Huta Nagodang | *Huta*: village<br>*Nagodang*: a lot | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Tanotur | *Tano*: land<br>*Tur*: ground | Topography/Geomorphology |
| Lumban Binanga | *Lumban*: settlement<br>*Binanga*: river | Waters |
| Sosor Ambar | *Sosor*: village | Waters |

| | *Ambar*: pond | |
|---|---|---|
| Lumban Lintong | *Lumban*: settlement | Waters |
| | *Lintong*: pond | |
| Lumban Galagala | *Lumban*: settlement | Flora |
| | *Galagala*: a type of fruit | |
| Hutabulu | *Huta*: village | Flora |
| | *Bulu*: bamboo | |
| Lumban Hariara | *Lumban*: settlement | Flora |
| | *Hariara*: banyan tree | |
| Pea Gaol | *Pea*: plains | Flora |
| | *Gaol*: banana | |
| Lumban Latong | *Lumban*: settlement | Flora |
| | *Latong*: a type of tree | |
| Silimbat | *Silimbat*: snakehead fish | Fauna |
| Sitambirik | *Sitambirik*: livestock hoof | Fauna |
| Sihorbo | *Horbo*: buffalo | Fauna |

Based on the list of *huta* names included in the manifestation aspect, it can be seen that most names refer to elements of the physical environment such as topography, soil type, vegetation, fauna, and the presence of water sources. This pattern shows that the Batak Toba people have built a strong cognitive relationship between their living space and the characteristics of the surrounding nature. Each natural element used in naming, such as *dolok*, *binanga*, *hariara*, or *silimbat*, is a social representation of how the community understands and classifies space.

The tendency to use topographical elements in large numbers indicates that geomorphological conditions are an important factor in the formation of traditional settlements. Meanwhile, names that refer to flora and fauna show the community's closeness to the local ecology and careful observation of the surrounding nature. Refer to the table below to see the dominance in the manifestation aspect.

Table 3. Percentage of Manifestation Aspect Subcategory

| Subcategory | Number | Percentage within Manifestation (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Topography/ Geomorphology | 21 | 58.34 |
| Flora | 8 | 22.22 |
| Fauna | 3 | 8.33 |
| Waters | 4 | 11.11 |
| Total | 36 | 100% |

Topography/geomorphology dominates the manifestation aspect (58.34%). This indicates that the Batak Toba people pay close attention to physical landforms such as hills (dolok), slopes, and highlands when constructing spatial identity. Flora-based names (22.22%) and fauna-based names (8.33%) also appear, suggesting ecological familiarity, while water-related names (11.11%) reflect the importance of rivers and streams in settlement formation.

## b. Culture Aspects

The naming of *huta* in Batak society represents cultural meaning. In this context, the cultural aspects referred to include important events and traditional tools that are an integral part of everyday life. The table below explains the naming of *huta* based on cultural aspects.

Table 3. Culture Aspects

| Naming of *Huta* | Lexical Meaning | Naming Aspect |
|---|---|---|
| Sosor | *Sosor:* settlement | Historical moment |
| Sugapa | *Sugapa*: fish sauce | Traditional tool |
| Sirpang Opat | *Sirpang*: junction | Historical moment |
| | *Opat*: four | |
| Lumban Onan | *Lumban*: settlement | Historical moment |
| | *Onan*: market | |
| Pulo Godang | *Pulo*: island | Historical moment |
| | *Godang*: many | |
| Lumban Habinsaran | *Lumban*: settlement | Historical moment |
| | *Habinasaran*: east | |
| Lumban Saro | *Lumban*: settlement | Historical moment |
| | *Saro*: small hut | |
| Lumban Soburan | *Lumban*: settlement | Character/Symbolic |
| | *Soburan*: guzzling | |
| Porlak Pargondangan | *Porlak*: park | Historical moment |
| | *Pargondangan*: place of drums | |
| Parbagasan | *Parbagasan:* a deep place | Historical moment |
| Pangaloan Ail | *Pangaloan*: place of resistance | Historical moment |
| | *Ail*: ail | |
| Dolok Nauli | *Dolok*: hill | Character/Symbolic |
| | *Nauli*: the beautiful one | |
| Banua Luhu | *Banua*: territory | Historical moment |
| | *Luhu*: all/overall | |
| Parratusan | *Parratusan*: place of a hundred | Historical moment |
| Lumban Balian | *Lumban*: settlement | Historical moment |
| | *Balian*: rice field | |
| Nasonak | *Nasonak*: high tide | Historical moment |
| Hutagurgur | *Huta*: village | Historical moment |
| | *Gurgur*: boiling | |
| Lumban Sihole | *Lumban*: settlement | Historical moment |
| | *Sihole*: paddle | |
| Sosor Mangadar | *Sosor*: village | Historical moment |
| | *Mangadar*: fighting in the courtyard | |
| Sosor Ugan | *Sosor*: village | Historical moment |
| | *Ugan*: fertilizer | |
| Parparean | *Parparean*: stingray habitat | Historical moment |
| Batugana | *Batu*: stone | Historical moment |
| | *Gana*: oath | |
| Raut Bosi | *Raut*: knife | Traditional tool |
| | *Bosi*: iron | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Lumban Parhuta | *Lumban*: settlement<br>*Parhuta*: villagers | Historical moment |
| Huta Namora | *Huta*: village<br>*Namora*: the rich | Character/Symbolic |
| Soposurung | *Sopo*: pond<br>*Surung*: main | Historical moment |
| Panasala | *Nasala*: the incorrect one | Character/Symbolic |
| Nalela | *Nalela*: feeling of seeing something | Character/Symbolic |
| Janji Maria | *Janji*: promise<br>*Maria*: have fun | Historical moment |
| Pasar Raja | *Pasar*: market<br>*Raja*: king | Historical moment |
| Lumban Mamukka | *Lumban*: settlement<br>*Mamukka*: which begins | Historical moment |

The list of *huta* names in terms of culture shows that the Batak Toba people interpret space through cultural heritage and historical events. Many names refer to important events, traditional objects, traditional tools, or symbolic values that shaped social life in the past. These names serve as historical traces passed down from generation to generation, as well as reminders of certain events or activities that are considered important. The cultural aspect consists of 25 *huta* names, which were categorized into the following subcategory:

Table 4. Percentage of Culture Aspect Subcategory

| Subcategory | Number | Percentage within Culture (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Historical moments | 24 | 77.42% |
| Traditional tool | 2 | 6.46% |
| Characters/Symbolic | 5 | 16.12% |
| Total | 31 | 100% |

A majority of cultural-based names are tied to historical moments (77.42%), suggesting that naming practices function as a memory-keeping system. Traditional tool items (6.46%) indicate the role of livelihood practices and material culture. Names that reference human character, symbolic traits, or communal values (16.12%) reflect the importance of social identity and moral representation in Batak tradition.

## c. Society Aspects

The naming of *huta* in Batak culture has social and genealogical dimensions, one of which is through the use of clans or ancestral names as the basis for naming. This naming pattern reflects kinship structures, clan systems, and respect for founding figures or ancestors who are considered to have played an important role in the history of a *huta's* establishment. The following presents data on *huta* that fall under the aspect of society.

Table 5. Society Aspects

| No | *Huta* Naming | Naming Aspect |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Pandia | Clan |
| 2 | Tambunan | Clan |
| 3 | Baringbing | Clan |
| 4 | Hinalang | Ancestor name |
| 5 | Pea Sidari | Ancestor name |
| 6 | Sibangebange | Ancestor name |
| 7 | Lumban Gaol | Clan |
| 8 | Batubara | Clan |
| 9 | Hutagalung | Clan |
| 10 | Marpaung | Clan |
| 11 | Simangunsong | Clan |
| 12 | Sibarani Namungkup | Ancestor name |
| 13 | Sibarani Nasampulu | Ancestor name |
| 14 | Siringoringo | Clan |
| 15 | Lumban Butarbutar Pea | Clan |
| 16 | Purba Lubis | Clan |
| 17 | Silalahi | Clan |
| 18 | Lumban Gurning | Clan |
| 19 | Lumban Ambarita | Clan |
| 20 | Sirait Uruk | Clan |
| 21 | Lumban Manurung | Clan |
| 22 | Lumban Nainggolan | Clan |
| 23 | Siahaan | Clan |
| 24 | Hutagaol | Clan |
| 25 | Siraja Deang Dolok | Ancestor name |

The names of *huta* in the aspect of society show the dominance of naming based on clans or ancestors who founded the settlements. This naming illustrates how the kinship structure of the Batak Toba is an important basis for social organization and spatial marking. The existence of names that refer to certain figures or ancestors indicates that huta serve as spaces that perpetuate the social legitimacy of their founders. The society aspect includes 31 *huta*, mostly derived from clan names or ancestors.

Table 6. Percentage of Society Aspect Subcategory

| Subcategory | Number | Percentage within Society (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Clan | 19 | 76% |
| Ancestor | 6 | 24% |
| Total | 25 | 100% |

Clan naming (74.19%) overwhelmingly dominates the society category. This reinforces that kinship structures *'marga'*, remain central to Batak Toba social organization. Naming a *huta* after a clan or ancestor signals territorial identity, genealogical continuity, and social cohesion.

**Discussion**

The findings of this research reveal that the naming of *huta* in Toba Regency is rather a structured cultural practice embedded in the social and environmental context of the Batak Toba community. From a linguistic perspective, the predominance of polymorphemic forms (82 out of 92 *huta*) indicates that the Batak Toba language utilizes productive morphological processes such as affixation, reduplication, and compounding to construct place names that are both descriptive and meaningful. This result supports the argument of Blair & Tent (2021), who emphasized that polymorphemic naming tends to reflect a community's creativity in encoding layered meanings within linguistic forms.

The use of morphemes such as *lumban*, *huta*, *sosor*, *dolok*, and *banua* reflects a strong connection between the community and its surrounding natural environment. These lexical units are not only markers of settlement but also serve as geographical signposts, identifying rivers, hills, trees, and other natural features that are significant to everyday life. This finding is consistent with Silalahi et al. (2024), who noted that in Tarutung, toponyms function as ecolinguistic expressions of people environment interaction. Thus, the dominance of manifestation aspects (39.13%) in the data demonstrates that the Batak Toba people construct spatial identity primarily through ecological and geographical references.

From a socio-cultural perspective, the results also show that huta names often encode kinship relations, clan identity, and ancestral heritage. The inclusion of clan names such as *Tambunan, Silalahi,* or *Hutagalung* aligns with Sudaryat et al. (2009), who argue that toponyms frequently embody social structures and genealogical memory. This reinforces the idea that *huta* naming functions as an archive of collective identity, where language preserves both history and social organization. Moreover, the presence of cultural aspects (27.17%), such as names derived from tools, historical events, and communal practices, highlights how naming extends beyond environmental description to incorporate symbolic values and local wisdom.

The dominance of manifestation aspects (39.13%) in the dataset therefore reveals more than a preference for environmental descriptors and reveals a cosmological orientation. In Batak Toba epistemology, the landscape is understood as a living entity with moral, ancestral, and spiritual significance. Settlements are named by acknowledging the environment as a defining partner in human livelihood. This ecological grounding implies that naming is a way of legitimizing settlement, as a huta must be linguistically situated in relation to natural landmarks that guarantee safety, prosperity, and identity. Thus, the prevalence of manifestation-based names suggests that the Batak Toba worldview is fundamentally place-based, where

environment, ancestry, and identity form an integrated triad.

Comparing these results with previous researches in other regions (e.g., Setyo et al., 2022; Csurgó et al., 2023), it becomes clear that the Toba context presents a more complex interplay between ecological, social, and cultural factors. While studies in Klego and Hungary emphasize either the physical or perceptual dimension of naming, the Batak Toba case illustrates a balanced integration of natural environment, social kinship, and cultural symbolism. This makes Toba an exemplary case of anthropolinguistic toponymy, where linguistic analysis must be combined with cultural interpretation.

Another important implication of this research is the role of *huta* naming in maintaining cultural continuity amidst modernization and tourism-driven changes in the Lake Toba region. As noted by Reyes (2018), naming practices are inseparable from cultural identity. The gradual erosion of indigenous knowledge about the meaning of *huta* names suggests a risk of cultural detachment among younger generations. Therefore, documenting and analyzing these names is not only academically valuable but also essential for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

Overall, the discussion highlights that the naming of *huta* in Toba Regency reflects a multidimensional system: (1) linguistically, it demonstrates productive morphological processes; (2) socially, it encodes kinship and genealogical structures; (3) culturally, it preserves memories of events, values, and tools; and (4) environmentally, it maintains a strong ecological awareness. The interplay of these dimensions confirms that language in this context functions not merely as a communication tool but also as a symbolic system that records, preserves, and transmits the worldview of the Batak Toba community.

## Conclusion

This research has demonstrated that the naming of *huta* in Toba Regency is shaped by complex linguistic, social, cultural, and ecological dimensions. The findings indicate that polymorphemic naming patterns dominate, showing the productive use of morphological processes such as affixation, reduplication, and compounding. These linguistic forms embody the Batak Toba community's kinship structures and cultural memory.

The research also reveals that manifestation aspects (39.13%) are the most prominent, followed by society (33.70%) and cultural aspects (27.17%). This distribution shows that ecological awareness plays a central role in place naming, yet it remains intertwined with clan identity and symbolic cultural values. Compared with other regional and international studies, the Toba context highlights a distinctive balance between environmental, social, and cultural elements, making it an important case for anthropolinguistic toponymy.

Nevertheless, this research is not without limitations. The data were limited to 92 *huta* names, primarily collected through interviews with selected informants and documentation sources. As such, the findings may not represent the full diversity

of naming practices across all villages in Toba Regency. In addition, the research focused mainly on linguistic and cultural analysis without incorporating more extensive geographic information system (GIS) mapping or younger generations' perceptions of place names. These limitations provide opportunities for future research to expand and deepen the analysis.

Further research should expand the dataset to include a broader range of *huta* names across multiple districts in Toba Regency. Mixed methods involving GIS mapping, oral histories, and ethnographic observation would provide a more comprehensive picture of naming practices. Future research may also explore intergenerational perspectives to understand how younger Batak Toba people interpret and maintain these names.

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