



Dialect Stigmatization in Aceh Besar: A Sociolinguistic Study of Kuta Cot Glie and Seulimum Sub districts

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Abstrak

Variasi dialek adalah fokus utama dalam sosiolinguistik, terutama dalam konteks multibahasa dan multikultural di mana bahasa tidak hanya menyampaikan nilai komunikatif tetapi juga simbolis. Di Aceh Besar, dialek bahasa Aceh yang dituturkan di kecamatan-kecamatan seperti Kuta Cot Glie dan Seulimum sering kali diberi penanda sosial, mendapat penilaian negatif dari penutur di daerah lain. Studi ini menyelidiki sifat stigmatisasi dialek di dua kecamatan ini, dengan fokus pada persepsi masyarakat, sikap antar generasi, dan implikasinya terhadap identitas linguistik di kedua kecamatan tersebut. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 60 responden (30 dari setiap kecamatan) melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, diskusi kelompok terfokus, dan observasi partisipan. Analisis tematik mengungkapkan tiga temuan utama: (1) penutur yang lebih muda menyampaikan tingkat stigma yang lebih tinggi, sering diejek karena pola bicara "pedesaan" ketika berinteraksi di luar komunitas asal mereka; (2) peserta yang lebih tua mengungkapkan ketahanan dan keterikatan yang kuat pada dialek lokal, menganggapnya sebagai penanda keaslian dan identitas sejarah; dan (3) mobilitas sosial dan migrasi perkotaan memperburuk pergeseran dialek, dengan banyak responden muda beralih ke varietas Aceh atau Indonesia yang lebih "bergengsi" di bidang pendidikan dan profesional. Temuan ini menyoroti interaksi kompleks antara identitas lokal, hierarki linguistik, dan tekanan sosial di Aceh Besar. Studi ini berkontribusi pada perdebatan sosiolinguistik global tentang stigma, prestise, dan identitas dialek, sekaligus menawarkan implikasi praktis untuk kebijakan bahasa dan pelestarian budaya di Aceh. Kata kunci: Hasil Belajar Matematika, Model Pembelajaran Kooperatif Tipe Scramble dengan pendekatan Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL).

Kata Kunci: dialect stigmatization, Acehnese, Aceh Besar, Kuta Cot Glie, Seulimum, sociolinguistics, language attitudes

Abstract

Dialect variation is a main focus in sociolinguistics, especially in multilingual and multicultural contexts where language conveys not only communicative but also symbolic value. In Aceh Besar, the dialects of Acehnese spoken in sub-districts such as Kuta Cot Glie and Seulimum are often socially marked, getting negative appraisals from speakers in other regions. This study investigates the nature of dialect stigmatisation in these two subdistricts, focusing on community perceptions, intergenerational attitudes, and the implications for linguistic identity in the two subdistricts. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected from 60 respondents (30 from every sub district) through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. Thematic analysis revealed three major findings: (1) younger speakers conveyed higher levels of stigma, often being ridiculed for “rural” speech patterns when interacting outside their home communities; (2) older participants revealed resilience and strong attachment to local dialects, framing them as markers of authenticity and historical identity; and (3) social mobility and urban migration exaggerated dialect shift, with many young respondents switching to more “prestigious” Acehnese or Indonesian varieties in educational and professional domains. These findings highlight the complex interaction between local identity, linguistic hierarchies, and social pressure in Aceh Besar. The study contributes to global sociolinguistic debates on dialect stigma, prestige, and identity, while offering practical insinuations for language policy and cultural preservation in Aceh. Kata kunci: Hasil Belajar Matematika, Model Pembelajaran Kooperatif Tipe Scramble dengan pendekatan Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL). Keywords: Mathematics Learning Outcomes, Scramble Type Cooperative Learning Model with Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach.

Key Words: learning outcomes, scramble-type cooperative, CTL

A. Introduction

Language is more than a tool of communication; it is deeply tied to identity, belonging, and social differentiation (Holmes, 2021). In sociolinguistics, dialect variation is particularly revealing because it often uncovers the subtle tensions between local authenticity and wider social hierarchies. In multilingual settings, dialects rarely remain neutral. They are imbued with symbolic meanings that reflect historical trajectories, cultural values, and political dynamics (Labov, 2019).

In Aceh, this issue becomes even more salient. The Acehnese language (bahasa Aceh) is not uniform but consists of multiple dialects distributed across different districts (Durie, 2020). Some dialects, particularly those spoken in urban centres, are perceived as prestigious, while others carry stigma. This variation is particularly visible in Aceh Besar, a region that—despite its geographical proximity to Banda Aceh, the provincial capital—displays rich internal diversity. Two subdistricts, Kuta Cot Glie and Seulimum, are frequently described by outsiders as *kampungan* (“village-like”) or *kasar* (“rough”). Such labels place their speakers at risk of ridicule or marginalisation when interacting with broader Acehnese society.

Dialect stigmatization is more than linguistics issue, as it is linked to sociocultural as well. A substantial part of the research proven that individual identity could be shaped by stigma, mobility restriction and limitation access to opportunity. (Trudgill, 2021; Coupland, 2020). In Aceh, the issue intersects with broader concerns such as post-conflict identity reconstruction, language-in-education policy, and the role of Indonesian as both a unifying and homogenising national language (Rahman, 2022).

Despite its significance, little empirical exploration has directly examined shoptalk smirch in Aceh Besar. While several studies have delved language conservation and shift among Acehnese speakers (Yusuf & Maulina, 2021; Hasan, 2023), many have concentrated on the lived gests of speakers whose cants are marginalised. This study, thus, seeks to fill that gap by examining how communities in Kuta Cot Glie and Seulimum perceive, negotiate, and respond to the stigmatisation of their original cants.

The article has three primary objectives:

1. To document perceptions of dialect stigmatisation among residents of Kuta Cot Glie and Seulimum.
2. To explore intergenerational differences in attitudes toward local dialects.
3. To analyse the broader sociolinguistic implications of dialect stigmatisation for identity,

4. mobility, and policy in Aceh.

By situating local realities within broader sociolinguistic debates, this study contributes not only to theoretical understandings of stigma and identity but also to practical discussions about cultural preservation in Aceh.

The sociolinguistic study of shoptalk variation is predicated in the understanding that verbal forms are noway socially neutral. Labov's(1972/2019) seminal work on social position in New York City illustrated how language variation is totally tied to class, prestige, and smirch. Trudgill(2021) also demonstrated that so- called "non-standard " cants, though linguistically valid, are frequently socially marginalised.

Accommodation Proposition(Giles & Coupland, 2019) offers a useful lens for this miracle, suggesting that speakers acclimate their speech patterns to align with or distance themselves from interlocutors, depending on social dynamics. When a shoptalk is stigmatised, confluence toward a more prestigious form frequently becomes a survival strategy. Relatedly, Labov's(2019) notion of covert prestige reminds us that while stigmatised kinds may be disparaged by outlanders, they frequently carry in- group value as labels of solidarity and authenticity. Together, these frameworks highlight that dialect stigmatisation is less about linguistic form and more about the social meanings assigned to those forms.

Dialect stigmatisation is far from unique to Aceh. In the United Kingdom, speakers of working- class cants similar as Scouse or Brummie frequently encounter negative conceptions(Coupland, 2020). In the United States, both Appalachian English and African American Vernacular English(AAVE) have historically been stigmatised, despite their internal thickness and uproariousness(Rickford, 2019). In Southeast Asia, pastoral kinds of Malay, Javanese, and Tagalog are constantly framed as lower sophisticated or backwards(Low & Pakir, 2021). Across these contexts, three mechanisms recur:

Acehnese itself is a different language, flaunting a wide range of dialectal variation shaped by terrain, history, and inter-community contact(Durie, 2020). Major shoptalk regions include Pidie, Aceh Utara, Aceh Selatan, and Aceh Besar. Within this ecology, civic cants especially those spoken near Banda Aceh — frequently function as prestige kinds, while pastoral cants are devaluated.

Arising exploration documents these dynamics. Yusuf and Maulina(2021) observed that youthful Acehnese speakers decreasingly borrow civic cants in educational and professional surrounds. Hasan(2023) linked shoptalk smirch as a driving force behind language shift, while Rahman(2022) stressed how Indonesian reinforces being prestige scales.

Yet, utmost studies have tended to concentrate on broader regions or Acehnese as a whole. There's a lack of fine- granulated analysis at the position of specific subdistricts similar as Kuta Cot Glie and Seulimum.

Although research on Acehnese has demonstrated language survival and shift, and theoretical frameworks on smirch are well established, little is known about how smirch is maintained in tiny groups. The comprehensions of speakers in Kuta Cot Glie and Seulimum, whose chants are often considered to be "less prestigious," have not yet been fully compared in any study. This study fills that gap by providing theoretical benefits to international discussions on shoptalk smirk and identity as well as empirical insight into unique dynamics.

B. Methodology

1) Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design, suitable for exploring nuanced perceptions and lived experiences of language users. A qualitative approach allows researchers to capture subjective meanings attached to dialects, particularly in contexts where stigma is subtle and deeply embedded in everyday interaction (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

2) Research Sites

The research was conducted in Kuta Cot Glie and Seulimum, the subdistricts were located in Aceh Besar. Both are predominantly rural, with agriculture as the main livelihood. Despite their proximity to Banda Aceh, residents are often alleged as speaking a "less refined" Acehnese dialect. These areas provide fertile ground for investigating the relationship between dialect, identity, and stigma.

3) Participants

Sixty participants were selected through purposive sampling: 30 from Kuta Cot Glie and 30 from Seulimum. The sample included equal representation from three age groups:

Youth (18–25 years old) Middle-aged adults (26–45 years old) Older adults (46 years and above)

This age stratification enabled intergenerational comparison of perceptions. Participants included farmers, students, teachers, traders, and local officials.

4) Data Collection

Three methods were employed:

Semi-structured interviews – the interview lasting 45–60 minutes, which focus on experiences of the participants being judged for their dialect, strategies of adaptation, and attitudes toward their linguistic identity.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) – two FGDs were conducted (two in each subdistrict), enabling participants to collectively reflect on stigma and share narratives.

Participant Observation – researchers attended community events, local markets, and gatherings, noting interactions that revealed language attitudes.

5) Data Analysis

The analysis of the data using Braun and Clarke's model (2019) which consist of six – phase frame familiarization, rendering, theme generation, reviewing, defining, and reporting. For rendering reiteration NVivo was used. Triangulation was applied to ensure credibility on interview, FGDs, and Compliances.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Hasil

Thematic analysis yielded **three overarching themes**, each supported by rich narratives and illustrative quotations.

A. Experiences of Dialect Stigmatisation

Many respondents, mostly youth, reported being mocked when uttering their dialect outside the village. A university student from UIN ar-Raniry described:

"ketika pertama kali jumpa kawan di kampus di Banda Aceh, teman-teman sering menirukan gaya bicara saya. Mereka mengatakan bahwa logat saya kedengaran 'keras atau kasar' atau 'kampungan'. Saya merasa malu dan sering mencoba gaya bicara mereka."
 ("When I first attended university in Banda Aceh, my colleague often mimicked the way I spoke. They told me that my accent sounded 'rough' or 'village-like.' I felt ashamed and often tried to imitate their speaking style.")

Similar accounts emerged in Kuta Cot Glie. A young seller stated:

"waktu pergi ke pasar di kota, kebanyakan orang langsung tahu saya berasal kampung karena gaya bicara. Mereka tertawa kecil, seolah logat saya aneh."
 ("When I go to the city market, mostn people could tell I'm from the village because of my speech. They sometimes laugh quietly, as if my accent is quite strange.")

These experiences demonstrate how stigma is passed through mockery and stereotyping, leading speakers to feel unconfident.

B. Intergenerational Differences in Attitudes

Older participants, however, confirmed stronger flexibility. A 65-year-old farmer in Kuta Cot Glie remarked:

"gaya bicara saya ini sudah turun temurun dari nenek moyang. Bagi kami, inilah Aceh yang sebenarnya. Kalau orang kota bilang agak kasar, itu pandangan mereka dan kami merasa itu biasa saja. Kami tetap bangga."
 ("This style of speaking has been passed down from my ancestors. For us, this is the true Acehnese. If city people say it's a bit rude, that's their view, and we feel it's normal. We're still proud..")

This pride contrasted with younger respondents, many of whom reported adapting their speech to avoid stigma. One FGD participant in Seulimum explained:

"Anak-anak muda jaman sekarang lebih suka campur bahasa Indonesia dengan Aceh versi kota. Mereka merasa kurang nyaman jika diejek kalau bicara logat kampong mereka di Seulimum."

("Today's youth prefer to mix Indonesian with the urban Acehnese dialect. They feel uncomfortable being teased for speaking their village dialect in Seulimum..")

Thus, generational divides are evident: while elders maintain dialect as heritage, youth perceive it as a social obligation.

C. Dialect Shift and Social Mobility

Another major theme concerned language adaption in pursuit of mobility. Several scholars and professionals described purposely shifting to civic Acehnese or Indonesian in academic and workplace surrounds. A youthful schoolteacher noted

“ Kalau di sekolah, saya biasanya pakai bahasa Indonesia atau menyesuaikan dengan logat Banda Aceh. Kalau menggunakan gaya atau logat kampung, murid kadangjuga ikut menertawakan.”

“ "At school, I usually speak Indonesian or adapt my Banda Aceh accent. If I use a village style or accent, the students sometimes laugh too." ”)

This miracle replicates broader pressures toward verbal integration in formal and civic disciplines. still, it also contributes to the gradational corrosion of original dialect applied among youth generations.

D. Counter-narratives of Resistance

Despite widespread stigma, some youth expressed pride and resistance. A university student from Kuta Cot Glie shared:

“*Saya tidak mau malu dengan logat saya. Kalau orang mengejek, saya anggap itu tanda mereka iri karena kami punya ciri khas.*”
 (“I refuse to be ashamed of my accent. If people mock me, I take it as a sign they are jealous because we have something unique.”)

Such counter-narratives suggest that dialect stigmatisation is not uniformly internalised but contested within communities.

Discussion

The findings reveal a complex interplay between smirch, identity, and adaption in Aceh Besar. Three crucial perceptivity crop .

First, smirch is most acutely felt by youth, reflecting both their mobility outside the vill and heightened perceptivity to peer judgment. This aligns with Coupland’s(2020) observation that youngish speakers are frequently the first to borrow prestige forms under social pressure.

Alternate, generational divides illustrate the pressure between heritage and fustiness. While elders valorise shoptalk as authentic identity, youth navigate contending pressures pride in heritage versus the need for social acceptance in civic settings. This glasses global findings on shoptalk smirch in surrounds ranging from AAVE in the U.S.(Rickford, 2019) to pastoral Malay in Malaysia(Low & Pakir, 2021).

Third, stigma accelerates dialect shift, with speakers adopting prestigious Acehnese or Indonesian in formal contexts. However, the presence of counter-narratives of resistance highlights the dialect’s enduring symbolic power. This resonates with Labov’s (2019) concept of covert prestige, where stigmatised forms retain strong in-group value.

The case of Kuta Cot Glie and Seulum demonstrates that dialect stigma is not only about linguistic inequality but also about broader questions of who gets to define cultural authenticity. Urban centres, by labelling rural speech as inferior, exert symbolic dominance. Yet rural communities push back by framing their dialects as “*the real Aceh*”.

D. Conclusion

This study has portrayed how dialect stigma existed in Kuta Cot Glie and Seulum, revealing both its damaging effects and its contested nature. Stigma is enacted through mockery, stereotyping, and exclusion, leading many teen speakers to adapt their speech. Yet pride, especially among elders, and resistance among some youth, highlight the enduring strength of local linguistic identity.

The present study enriches sociolinguistic theory by revealing how dynamics of stigma, prestige, and identity intersect within the multilingual and post-conflict environment of Aceh. Beyond its theoretical contribution, the research emphasizes the urgency of inclusive language planning and cultural initiatives that recognize every dialect as a legitimate representation of Acehnese heritage.

Looking ahead, further investigations could adopt a comparative approach by examining dialectal perceptions across other districts, assessing the mediating role of mass media in either sustaining or challenging linguistic stigmatization, and exploring the sociolinguistic implications of inter-dialectal marriages for the negotiation of identity and language attitudes.

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