

THE USE OF ACEHNESE PERSONA PRONOUNS AMONG THE YOUNGER GENERATION

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the use of persona pronouns in Acehnese among the younger generation with a focus on forms, patterns, and social factors that affect its use. The phenomenon of a shift in the use of traditional Acehnese pronouns, such as *lon*, *droeneuh*, *gata*, and *kah*, began to be replaced by terms in Indonesian, foreign languages, as well as slang terms such as *sayang*, *beb*, *anti*, and *bro*. This study uses a qualitative approach with a sociolinguistic descriptive method. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation of young people aged 15–25 years in Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar. The results of the study show that the use of pronouns has undergone a significant shift influenced by social media, education, social environment, and religious identity. This shift not only has an impact on linguistic aspects, but also reflects changes in cultural values and local identities. This research is expected to contribute to efforts to preserve the Acehnese language in the midst of social dynamics and modernization.

Keywords: persona pronouns, Acehnese language, younger generation, language shift, sociolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the main elements in shaping the cultural identity of a society. In the realm of linguistics, **persona pronouns** or pronouns are one of the important aspects that reflect social relationships between speakers. This pronoun functions not only as a substitute for the noun, but also as a marker of social relations, status, and emotional closeness between individuals (Dam, 2015; Abbas & Hasyim, 2022).

Almost all languages in the world have a persona pronoun system that is classified into three main categories, namely the first, second person, and third person, both in the singular and plural forms (Moravcsik, 2012; Velupillai, 2012). Examples of variations in persona pronouns can be found in Japanese, Russian, English, to Indonesian and other regional languages such as Sundanese, Javanese, and Madurese (Etsuko, 2017; Mustika, 2012; Alwi et al., 2003; Mardiana, 2020).

The Acehnese language also has a rich and complex system of persona pronouns, such as *lon* (I), *droeneuh* (you), *gata* (you), *kah* (you), and *gop* (we). The use of these forms is not only determined by the grammatical role in sentences, but is also influenced by social factors such as age, hierarchy, and familiarity (Armia et al., 2023). For example, *droeneuh* is used to show respect, *gata* is commonly used in married couples, and *kah* is more neutral or used to peers.

However, with the times, especially with the influence of globalization, social media, and the dominance of the Indonesian language in education and media, there has been a shift in the use of Acehnese language persona pronouns. The younger generation now tends to replace traditional pronouns with popular forms of Indonesian and modern terms such as *sayang*, *beb*, or *adek*. This shift is a clear indication of a change in language attitudes and a weakening of the use of regional languages among young people.

This phenomenon is worth paying attention to because the shift in pronouns not only impacts the structure of language, but also leads to a shift in local culture and identity. As revealed by Ulfa et al. (2018), language shifts can lead to the loss of local knowledge as well as threaten the sustainability of the cultural values inherent in the language.

Various previous studies have examined language shifts at the macro level, such as the migration of Russian speakers to Germany (Michel et al., 2012) and changes in pronoun functions in Japanese and English (Twenge et al., 2012). However, studies that specifically discuss the **shift in the use of persona pronouns in Acehnese by the younger generation** are still very limited.

Therefore, this research is important to describe the form, usage patterns, and social factors that affect the pronoun persona in the Acehnese language among the younger generation. Through a sociolinguistic approach, this research is expected to contribute to understanding the linguistic dynamics of the young generation of Aceh and become the basis for efforts to preserve local language and identity.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a sociolinguistic descriptive method. This approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the purpose of research that wants to describe in depth the linguistic phenomenon that occurs in society, especially related to the use of Acehnese pronoun persona among the younger generation. The qualitative approach allows researchers to understand the social and cultural meanings inherent in language practices in daily life (Moleong, 2017). The research was carried out in the Aceh Besar and Banda Aceh regions, which are areas with a relatively high number of Acehnese speakers, but are beginning to show symptoms of a shift in language practices due to the influence of modernization, media, and Indonesian language dominance.

The informants in this study are the young generation aged 15 to 25 years who still use the Acehnese language, both as a first and second language. The determination of informants was carried out purposively (purposive sampling) by considering the representation of age, educational background, social environment, and the level of use of the Acehnese language in daily life (Sugiyono, 2016). Data were collected through three main techniques, namely semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Interviews were used to explore the experiences, perceptions, and views of informants regarding the use of persona pronouns in social interactions. Observation is carried out participatory in various communication situations, such as in the home, school, or community environment, to record directly the use of pronoun forms. Documentation in the form of conversation transcripts, audio recordings, and field notes is used to reinforce the data obtained.

The data collected was analyzed using the interactive analysis technique of the Miles and Huberman (2014) model which consisted of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data reduction is carried out by sorting out data that is relevant and directly related to the focus of the research. The presentation of data is carried out in the form of narrative descriptions that describe the pattern of use of persona pronouns, social context, and shifting tendencies. Conclusions are drawn inductively based on patterns and trends arising from field data. To maintain the validity of the data, triangulation techniques, both source triangulation and triangulation techniques, are used to compare information from interviews, observations, and documentation (Patton, 1990). In addition, data validation is carried out through member checking, namely by confirming the results of interpretation to informants so that the results of the research still reflect the true meaning.

RESEARCH RESULTS

1) Singular First Person Persona Pronouns

The singular first-person persona pronouns commonly used by younger people are as follows.

a. Use of Own Name

The use of one's own name in place of traditional persona pronouns suggests an interesting sociolinguistic phenomenon. In society, the use of one's own name in everyday communication can reflect a desire to individualize personal identity. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this phenomenon shows how language norms can change along with changes in social and cultural structures.

The name itself is considered more informal and familiar compared to traditional pronouns which may feel more rigid or formal. In everyday communication, especially on social media or in casual interactions, the use of one's own name makes the conversation feel more personal and close. This facilitates the formation of warmer and more direct relationships between individuals. Social media plays a huge role in changing communication patterns. On platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, individuals often interact using usernames or nicknames, which provide a sense of closeness and uniqueness. This phenomenon reinforces the tendency to use one's own name in

everyday communication outside of cyberspace, making it part of broader social norms. The name itself can be adapted to different contexts and relationships, providing space for more flexible and adaptive communication according to the situation and audience.

2) Pronouns of Single Second Person Persona

a. Use of Foreign Languages

The use of the singular second-person persona pronoun from a foreign language is found among students, students, and also other young generations on social media.

a) Use of the word *anti*

Among the students, the *Anti* is a form of substitute for the second person pronoun that is often used by students, especially when talking to their friends in the pesantren environment. Use *Anti* reflects the influence of Arabic, which is the main language used in Islamic boarding schools. This shows that Arabic is not only used in formal contexts but is also adapted in daily communication among students.

b) Use of Slang Language

Among the younger generation, the use of *bro* and *Squirt*. *Bro* and *Squirt* is an example of an informal pronoun that reflects a change in the way young people interact. *Bro* is a term often used among young men to indicate closeness or friendship. The term reflects the influence of pop culture and English slang that has entered the local language through social media and digital communication. It also shows a trend towards more relaxed and intimate communication, where formalities are reduced to create closer relationships and are not tied to strict social norms.

On the other hand, *beb* is an informal term used by young women to refer to close friends or best friends. This term reflects the emotional connectedness and informality of social interaction. *Bro* and *beb* show the influence of global culture in everyday language and the use of more casual terms in communication on social media and social interactions.

c) Use of Familiarity Calls

The use of this familiarity call is found in the husband's call to a wife or young couple. In Acehese language, for the mention of the second person pronoun or for the wife often use the word *Gata*. However, this word has undergone a shift. Use of the word *Gata* replaced by some familiarity calls such as the word *dear* or *brother*. So is the pronunciation of the word *droeneuh* by the wife to the husband is also replaced by the use of the word *brother*.

3) Plural Second Person Persona Pronouns

a) Use of the word *antum*

Word *Antum* is a plural second-person pronoun in Arabic used to refer to a group of people. In the context of Islamic boarding schools *Antum* It is often used as a form of respect and formality when talking to a group of people. Use *Antum* among the students reflects the influence of the Arabic language that dominates religious education and daily communication in the pesantren environment. *Antum* It not only serves as a form of pronoun but also as a symbol of religious identity. The use of this word shows an emphasis on the norms of politeness and formality that apply in social interaction in the pesantren environment. This reflects the connection between the use of Arabic and the religious values taught in Islamic boarding schools.

b) Use of *Klean* in Indonesian

The word *Klean* is an adaptation of the word *Klean* in Indonesian. The use of *Klean* among the younger generation or in everyday conversation indicates a process of **simplification** and **modernization** of the language. This adaptation reflects how Indonesian, as a more common language, affects the local language, including in the use of persona pronouns. *Klean* is a more casual and informal form compared to *Klean* and often appears in digital and informal communication. The use of *Klean* shows the widespread **influence of the Indonesian language** and how terms from

Indonesian were adopted and modified in the context of the local language. It also reflects **its trend towards a more casual and affordable** language in everyday interactions.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that there has been a significant shift in the use of Acehese persona pronouns among the younger generation. Traditional pronoun forms such as *lon*, *droeneuh*, *gata*, and *kah* began to be replaced by new forms derived from Indonesian, Arabic, to modern slang terms such as *sayang*, *beb*, *anti*, and *bro*. This shift is influenced by various social factors, including the dominance of the Indonesian language in education and media, the influence of social media, lifestyle changes, and religious identity in certain environments such as Islamic boarding schools. These findings indicate a weakening of the function of the Acehese language as a marker of the cultural and social identity of the younger generation. Therefore, efforts are needed to preserve and revitalize the Acehese language so that local cultural values are maintained and inherited to future generations.

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