



Words that Should Not be Said in the Aceh Language to Aceh Coastal Communities (Taboo Study)

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Abstract

This research employed a qualitative descriptive method because the research was field research using listening techniques and speaking methods. The selected data collection techniques were observations and interviews conducted with informants aged between 30-60 years and participant observation. The research data was in the form of oral data obtained from informants. Data analysis steps were inventorying, inspecting data validity, grouping data, describing data, and concluding. The research results indicate that taboo words in the Acehese language by the Acehese coastal communities are forbidden because people believe that it will cause disaster and is also considered rude and impolite; thus, it can offend others, i.e., closely related to the name of the disease, (1) ta'eun 'scabies', (2) nie 'smallpox', (3) budôk 'leprosy'. Furthermore, animal taboos names: (1) Rimueng 'tiger', (2) gajah 'elephant', (3) tikôh 'rat', and (4) limpeun 'centipede' are also taboo to be spoken. Then, seasonal taboos, the intended season is the season of Rimueng. This season cannot be spoken of; it must be replaced with the season of cabuah. Pa'ak 'foolishness', aneuk jén 'son of the genie, pantèk mak kah 'your mother's genitals', and lagèe èk leubô 'like assholes' are taboo when it comes to harsh expressions. These four expressions are taboo to utter because they are considered impolite. Commonly, these expressions are used to scold or curse; thus, they certainly will offend and hurt other people.

Keywords: Acehese coastal communities, Acehese language, taboo words.

INTRODUCTION

The Acehese language is one of the regional languages used by most of the Acehese coastal communities to express thoughts, feelings, wishes, and information; especially, when conveying information; the Acehese coastal communities have distinctive manners, mainly in speaking and acting. Commonly, in speaking, the Acehese coastal

communities have certain words that must be avoided, both to be spoken and to be expressed. Certain words are taboo or forbidden to say (Jamaluddin et al., 2023). For instance, you are not allowed to say or call *unoe* 'bee' in the forest because it can wreak havoc on speakers. Another example, it is forbidden to answer if you hear the sound of something coming from outside the house. It is also considered taboo because it can bring disaster. Indeed, heretofore, this belief has occurred. In ancient times, when villagers entered the forest, community members were also not allowed to mention the word 'snake' for a legless reptile. They believed when it is called directly, the animal will get angry and harm the person. Therefore, the word 'snake' must be replaced with 'akar'.

Taboo is a social expression of disapproval of some behaviors or utterances. Taboo is a phenomenon that occurs in almost all languages (Dewi et al., 2022). Parera (2014) states that taboo is a prohibition or restriction on something dangerous, strange, magical, and considered extraordinary. On the other side, Ristanto et al. (2012) conveys that taboo can be in the form of words or expressions that are considered rude, impolite, mannerless, and inappropriate. Hence, a taboo is something considered sacred (may not be touched or spoken), taboo, or prohibition (Garaga et al., 2022). Taboos are commonly believed to harm members of society because they are considered to violate moral values that have been accepted by society for generations. Moreover, violating taboo things can also result in a person being subject to sanctions or punishments (Affini, 2017). Sometimes, taboos are only used in certain situations by people. However, there are always those who break the rules to get involved in freedom of speech restrictions or the free speech movement.

In general, people assume that taboos can have a certain impact. If there is a taboo violation, it is believed that it will bring a punishment or sanction from the supernatural. This supernatural realm will punish the violators and the people around them, along with the Acehnese coastal communities. Those who break the taboo will be punished. One example of taboos and punishments in society in the coastal province of Aceh is in Tapaktuan Sub-district. There is a Tapaktuan tourist spot there. Everyone is prohibited from belittling the place and should not be too happy or cheerful there. If violated, the person will be dragged away by a large wave that suddenly comes (Yuliasari, 2016). Besides the taboo on actions, there is also a taboo on speech. The Acehnese coastal communities are also prohibited from saying *buya* 'crocodile' around/ near the river because it will have a harmful impact. Thus, we must replace it with '*teungku waki*' (Mutia et al., 2018).

Nowadays, technological advances, access to information, and globalization are developing rapidly. Consequently, the previous taboo expressions employed and believed by the community are increasingly being lost. The people's behavior, actions, and words, especially in the coastal areas of Aceh, have started to change. Hospitality and politeness are rarely heard. On the other side, harsh words have started to become a habit, such as *aneuk budôk palèh* 'wretched child', *boh ku* 'father's genitals', and *èk asèe* 'dog dung', are no longer taboo in society. The cultural shifts and the influence of globalization cannot be avoided. The Acehnese coastal communities no longer pay attention to taboos as one of the cultural assets in their area. If this happens continuously, inevitably, one day, the taboo words that exist in the coastal areas of Aceh will gradually disappear and become extinct. Even though, on the one side, the research results of Barus (2018), Sunandar et al. (2018), and Junaidi and Wardani (2019) discover that taboo language functions to maintain good relations, create peace by choosing the correct terminology, and as a means of educating. Therefore, it is the main reason why the authors examine words that

cannot be spoken in the Aceh language by the Acehese coastal communities (Taboo Study); thus, taboo words, one of the local wisdom, are maintained.

METHODS

This research employed a qualitative descriptive method with listening techniques and speaking methods. The research aimed to find and describe words that should not be spoken in the Acehese language among Acehese coastal communities. The research characteristics of qualitative methods included (1) background naturally, (2) researchers as key instruments, (3) various data sources, and (4) meaning with the focus major (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2016). The data collection techniques were observations and interviews with informants aged between 30-60 years and participant observations (Hasanah, 2016). The research data was in the form of oral data obtained from informants who had qualified the criteria as informants. The steps of data analysis were (1) inventorying taboo words in the Acehese language by the Acehese coastal communities, (2) inspecting data validity through data triangulation and triangulation data sources (Akinyode & Khan, 2018), (3) grouping data, (4) describing data, and (5) concluding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research results of the Acehese coastal communities, some words should not be uttered or considered taboo by the community. These words are related to (1) disease names, (2) animal names, (3) seasons, and (4) harsh expressions.

Disease Names

The disease cannot be separated from living things, and every human being will certainly feel pain. Hence, the disease is sometimes something that humans fear. Several names are considered taboo in the Acehese coastal communities. They should not speak about these diseases' names because they are considered scary and can harm the speakers (Siska et al., 2021). The Acehese coastal communities usually replace the name of this disease with other words (Wardani & Nuraiza, 2021). The terms of the taboo diseases in Acehese coastal communities are as follows:

1. *Ta'eun* 'Scabies'

Ta'eun is the name of a disease. This disease is in the form of profuse scabies. This *ta'eun* disease takes quite a long time to be cured, and some even die. The name of this disease is commonly employed by the Acehese coastal communities to swear words. Even though, it is used as an expletive; this word is rarely employed because it is considered taboo. This disease is highly feared by the Acehese coastal communities; thus, it is never spoken, even when someone gets mad. They believe that when someone says this word to another person, this disease will attack them.

2. *Nie* 'Smallpox'

Nie is the name of a disease that can attack the skin. *Nie* in the Acehese coastal communities cannot be spoken because it is considered taboo. This taboo occurs when a person is affected by this disease and is asked by another person '*What happens to her? What is her sickness?*' The Acehese coastal communities should not immediately answer *nie* 'smallpox', but must replace it with *jitimoh mangat* 'well-sickness '. It was done because the community was afraid that if they said it directly, smallpox would never heal and attack them. In another coastal area of Aceh, i.e., Calang, the word '*smallpox*' is also

not allowed to be spoken because they believe that their diseases can get worse when they say it. Therefore, the word 'smallpox' must be replaced with another word that is considered more subtle, i.e., *sakét mangat*, 'well-sickness'.

3. *Budôk* 'Leprosy'

Similar to smallpox, the *budôk* disease in Indonesia is called leprosy; a disease caused by bacteria. This disease is highly feared by coastal communities, especially in Tapaktuan. There is no medicine to cure this disease. This word is taboo because it will attack someone who says it. This word is commonly used in an agreement to convince someone; e.g., *bak budôk lôn* means 'hopefully, I get leprosy' (Yuliasari, 2016). This word was never employed because it was considered taboo and inappropriate. The people believe that if you say this word, you will be attacked by leprosy and exiled. Therefore, they never said those words because of fear.

Animal Names

Several types of animal names are considered taboo in society, including *Rimueng* 'tiger', *gajah* 'elephant', *tikôh* 'rat', and *limpeun* 'centipede'. The four animals are taboos to be spoken of because the people believe that if the names of these animals are mentioned, they will bring danger to the local community, either directly or indirectly (Almos, 2013; Jamaluddin et al., 2023). Further descriptions are as follows:

1. *Rimueng* 'Tiger'

Rimueng is a taboo expression for the Acehnese coastal community. In Southwest Aceh, especially in Kuta Tinggi, i.e., a village at the foothills of Mount Killa, Southwest Aceh, according to folklore, once in Kuta Tinggi, there was a charismatic scholar named Teungku Nyak Dikilla; who once said that it was tigers on Mount Killa that were not happy when people climbed Mount Killa and then saw tigers and called them '*Rimueng*'. In ancient times, the tigers on Mount Killa often guarded the garden and nature on the mountain. One day, the tiger on Mount Killa had a dialogue with a charismatic Aceh scholar, Teungku Nyak Dikilla. In the conversation, the tiger said 'he did not like being called *Rimueng*'. However, the tiger asked to be called *yah nèk*. Therefore, the people of Southwest Aceh call the tiger on Mount Killa '*yah nèk*'. Similar cases occurred in another coastal area of Aceh, i.e., in South Aceh. Mentioning or calling *Rimueng* was also taboo because it could cause disaster. *Rimueng* is considered a sacred animal. It is evidenced by the prohibition to kill, eat, and mention his name in vain. The terms of *Rimueng* must be replaced with '*grandmother*'. The name was changed because the people considered '*Rimueng*' as the first animal to exist and the oldest among others. If there is a violation, it is believed that it will bring disaster and anger to the animal. Consequently, these animals will attack people if they meet. Hence, one way to prevent it is not to use the word '*Rimueng*', but replace it with '*grandmother*'. In Aceh Jaya, the word '*Rimueng*' is also taboo, especially at night, because it is considered calling the beast to come. Therefore, the people replace it with '*rumpoe tempat/ nèk*' (a place owner/ grandmother).

2. *Gajah* 'Elephant'

The elephant is the largest land animal classified as a mammal. Almost all parts of the body of this animal have a large size. Generally, elephants tend not to be disturbed. Hence, the word *elephant* in the Acehnese coastal communities is forbidden to say carelessly because most of them consider that when they mention '*elephant*', the animal

will get angry and go berserk. Thus, it must be replaced with a more subtle word, i.e., *teungku rayek* 'big *teungku*'.

3. *Tikôh* 'Rat'

Tikôh is another taboo name for animals. Similar to the previous word *imau/tiger*, the *tikôh* should not be uttered because it is believed that it will trigger the animal angry and bite the items in the house concerned. *Tikôh* in the Acehese coastal communities is usually replaced by the word '*putri*'. This word is replaced to make the animal obedient and not damage the items in the house.

4. *Limpéun* 'Centipede'

Another animal whose name is taboo is *limpeun*. *Limpeun* in Indonesian is called the centipede. The Acehese coastal communities, especially in Southwest Aceh, consider '*the limpeun*' a dangerous animal. Hence, when these animals enter the house, almost everyone there wants to expel or kill these flat-bodied animals. If *limpeun* is mentioned, the animal will run fast, or it is believed that it will also bite the people around it. It is different when it is called *brôh* 'trash'. These poisonous animals will slow down or even stop, helping us to dissipate or kill them.

Season Names

There is one season that is taboo in the Acehese coastal communities, i.e., *Rimueng season*. In coastal communities, especially in Tapaktuan, *the Rimueng season* cannot be spoken because it is considered taboo (Yuliasari, 2016). The sanctions by mentioning the season of *Rimueng* will bring disaster and anger to the animal. Therefore, the word must be replaced with the *cabuah* season.

Harsh Expression

A rude/ harsh expression is an expression in lexemes, phrases, or sentences. This expression is employed when someone gets mad or emotional (Samosir et al., 2021). Consequently, words appear that compare the appearance, character, and behavior of humans to animals or something that has a negative connotation (Gunas, 2021; Taib, 2014). These words are as follows:

1. *Pa'ak* 'Foolishness'

Pa'ak is the name of someone who is stupid and lazy and can no longer be taught. This word is usually used for swearing. Commonly, this word is frequently heard in learning in schools, which is pinned on children who are lazy, stupid, and unmanageable. Even though, this word is rarely uttered because it is thought to attack the person. This word is extremely harsh when spoken to others, and the effects are hurt and offense.

2. *Aneuk jén* 'son of the genie'

Aneuk jén 'son of the genie' is cursing at a creature dreaded subtly by humans. Sometimes, these creatures were not recognized by humans. Then, this cursing is spoken by someone who is scolding her daughter. It is rude and this cursing becomes taboo.

3. *Panték mak kah* 'Your mother's genitals'

The words of the *panték mak kah* 'your mother's genitals' in Aceh society are taboo because they are considered impolite. This speech is frequently employed to ridicule or curse. Thus, in the Acehese coastal communities, this expression is forbidden; it can hurt other people's hearts.

4. *Lagè èk leubô* 'Like assholes'

This expression contains a harsh meaning; thus, it is also taboo in the Acehnese coastal communities. They often use this expression when they are angry or mocking others. When considering its essence, this expression is disgusting; thus, it can hurt or offend others.

CONCLUSION

The taboo/ forbidden words due to the belief that they will get disaster or bad luck, are also considered rude and impolite, thus potentially offending other people's hearts in the Acehnese language by the Acehnese coastal communities, i.e., a name of the disease (1) *ta'eun* 'scabies', this disease is taboo to be spoken, even if it has to be done, it must be replaced with *gadang disease*, (2) *nie* 'smallpox' must be replaced with '*jitimoh mangat*' or '*sakét mangat*' (well- sickness). It is similar to *ta'eun* and *nie's disease*, (3) *budôk's disease* 'leprosy' is also taboo. Apart from being challenging to cure, this disease is also believed to attack the person who calls it. Furthermore, the taboo on animal names, (1) *Rimueng* 'tiger', the tiger is sacred and considered the oldest animal. Therefore, it is not permissible to mention the name directly, it must be replaced with '*yah nèk*' or *grandma*, or with *rumpoe tempat/nèk* 'a place owner /grandmother'; (2) *Gajah* 'elephant' also cannot be called in vain, but *teungku rayek* 'big *teungku*' is an alternative to the word *elephant*; (3) *tikôh* 'rat' cannot be called either because it will make the animal angry. Hence, it must be replaced with '*putri*'; (4) *Liempeun* 'centipede' is also taboo to be spoken. To avoid angering the animal, people call it '*brôh*'. The next taboo relates to the season. The season is the *Rimueng season* or the tiger season. This *Rimueng season* cannot be spoken of and must be replaced with *the cabuah season*. *Pa'ak* 'foolishness', *aneuk jén* 'son of the genie', *pantèk mak kah* 'your mother's genitals', and *lagè èk leubô* 'like assholes' are taboo when it comes to harsh expressions. These four expressions are taboo to utter because they are considered impolite and harsh. Commonly, these expressions are to scold or curse; thus, it is inevitable that they will offend others.

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