Place Naming in Aceh: The Genesis and Generic Patterns of Toponyms in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh

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Abstract
Studies conducted on documenting toponymic histories and issues of place name taxonomy and etymology in the Acehnese language are few to begin with. As names of villages in Aceh suggest, it indicates that many indigenous place names in the province seem to be redundant and possibly rooted from landscape formations. This study investigates the role of geographical and environmental as well as migration possibilities on their toponymy by using the descriptive method. The data were obtained from Acehnese village names in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh areas, and observation and in-depth interviews were also used as instruments. The data were analyzed using the model proposed by Miles et al. (2014). The results of this study demonstrate the history and etymology of similar names of villages in Greater Aceh and Banda Aceh areas. However, those names are not related to the migration of people. In general, place naming in Aceh was based on the genesis of the naming and the generic pattern. The former was associated with the specific object or entity, the historical reasons and use of specific-word oriented, whereas the latter was mainly succeeding word-forming elements that followed different patterns of lexicon combinations and loan-words. This study shows that toponyms

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consist of a multi-facetted structure, which entails different features according to situations.

Keywords: Acehnese, linguistic landscape, place-naming, toponymies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Place-names are omnipresence in society which represents the human linguistic-language history and the oldest living heritage of human culture. How people manage geographical spaces through naming places they inhabit in has been of interests to geographers, linguists, toponymists, and historians (Nash, 2017). Some linguistic landscape studies have been in the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial places (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) which relate to the names of companies, products, places, rules or other concepts (Akindele, 2011, p. 2). Place-names in particular is a monoreferential term that applies to places or location that usually comes with specific address functions (Helleland, 2002). However, it is not merely a representation of places or location but also provides a unique insight and underlying perspective tied to its communities (Alasli, 2019). Since places are believed to bear a certain emotional charge and attachment, place-names can usually be linked to self-identity that encompass beyond symbolic dimension of location. Therefore, a place is “a physical location imbued with meaning” (Cosgrove, 1989, p. 104).

On one hand, topography (place-names) can be seen as a way of understanding the cultural artefacts between language and environment (Taylor, 2016). He explains that place-names are the manifestation of human response toward their environment as a place where they dwell and sustain life. This means that in order to understand the origin of place-names such as when, by whom, how, and the motivation behind it, it is important to understand all aspect of information provided by its surroundings and local people. Place-names can act as the basic compass of how people perceive the nature of the places they were at and their relationship with it; they communicate identity, power, location, and culture in a variety of ways that connect geography and language (Humphreys, 1993; Williamson, 2023). On the other hand, the bound that people associated with their place bring forth the other reason why place-names is worth the time understanding it. Most people would agree that the connotation of place-names is related to identities. It is a dual idea of collective identity and memory of the people who live and shared the same way of life and feeling (Helleland, 2012; Tuan, 2001).

The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNEGGN), an organization formed under the auspices of the UN’s United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) has emphasized that toponymy is indispensable for managing social and economic issues. The UNEGGN resolution considers the function of local names which provide various information about the history of settlements, natural conditions, vegetation, and residents’ activities so that local history and culture can be preserved, including information on migration of people in the past (Kerfoot & Närhi, 2006).

The legal framework for Indonesian’s place naming is standardized based on three main directives of either using the national language, the regional indigenous language, and the foreign language. The Indonesian Agency for the Development of
Language derived a comprehensive conclusion mentioning that there is specific pattern used on place-naming vocabulary in Indonesia. Over 1,500 villages in the country that were named in the local languages, three generic terms of identification are commonly used: mountain, river, and bay (Lauder & Lauder, 2015).

By far, while there were some researches about place naming in Aceh, there is no research conducted to document the history of toponyms and the problems of taxonomy and etymology of place-names in the Acehnese language. Hence, this research was conducted to reflect the etymology of place-names in the area studied by reflecting on the history and the geographical location of the place from the perspective of the people who live in the area. Based on this etymology, we tried to delve further into the historic aspects of the names, associate the naming to the linguistic aspects, and narrate the possible meaning of words combination of the toponyms. The results are expected to provide new literature in this field. Thus, this research aims at the process of naming places in Aceh, the genesis of the naming, the generic patterns and their relationship to its history, thus hopefully provide an insight into the possibility of migration route that occurred.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Place Names

Place name is the name of a geographical location, such as town, lake, or a range of hills. The use of language in linguistic landscape has appeared in several languages. The language used in linguistic landscape is surely different from one country to another. It is understandable since the genesis of toponyms itself is on par with the concept of ‘sole ownership’. Place naming lies in the hands of people who inherit their own unique diverse culture, specific way of living, specific skill practices, intellectual concept and belief, and specific set language hence the toponyms is the manifestation of the memory of all those come together (Hausner, 2017). For this reason, the significant relation and representation between linguistics, culture, social relations, and environment are evident in place names. The extant of place names is omnipresence in society; a place name is a self-constructed concept that represents a person’s socio-cultural link to their physical surroundings (Lengen et al., 2019).

The general approach of toponymy is characterized into the descriptive toponomy and the critical toponomy. The first type deals with the description and historical narrative as well as the linguistic structure behind the name of the place. Descriptive backing denotes the connotative meaning of the place which in turn conveys the emotional overtones of the said name-place’s important history (Alasli, 2019). Badan Informasi Geospasial or the Geospatial Information Agency of Indonesia had established five steps of standardization on geographical names which comprises of preparation and inventory, toponymy survey, data entry, data verification, and recommendation and standardization (Badan Informasi Geospasial, 2017). On the other hand, the second type mostly pays attention on the influence of the socio-cultural aspect behind the place naming practice, such as ideology, politics, intention, society, economy, motive, etc. (Nurhayati, 2018). In short, it is a twofold intersection between culture as a whole and political aspect imposed on name given which in turn shaped place names, new names, or even name changes as a result of
social interaction and linguistics. As a matter of fact, now a greater recognition and acknowledgment were given to the principle that name places should be grounded on the critical theories that take into consideration of space, place, and landscape (Rose-Redwood et al., 2010) as key elements and consideration of cultural heritage.

Stewart (2012) offers classifications of place names where he declares as a practical and nearly all-inclusive sort of category. Any toponymist can use them to build a useful categorization of toponym typology that is appropriate for their region of study (Daniel & Mátyás, 2023). They are (Stewart, 2012, pp. 47-53):

1. Descriptive names: an attribute that can be appreciated by however any senses may serve, e.g., Echo Rock,
2. Possessive names: rest upon the ‘ownership’ and personal sentiment regardless of the right of discovery, e.g., Chinese Town,
3. Incident names: as opposite to descriptive, it records its naming based on the temporary characteristic or occurrence associated with the place from a result of particular occasion, e.g., Wolf Creek and Antelope Spring. They merely note a specific occasion on which the animal was met, not that the animal was extraordinarily abundant there or particularly distinctive of it.
4. Commemorative names: a place-renaming process for an honorific end, e.g., Lancaster to Lincoln in honor to Abraham Lincoln,
5. Euphemistic names: few in number, this type was born out of pure logic that usually refers to future expectation, e.g., Greenland, Eden, or Paradise, because if the county had a good name, men would go there more frequently,
6. Manufactured names: a constructed morphological name that may resulted in new lexicon, new sounds, from backward spelling, and so forth, e.g., Saybrook, Connecticut, from Lord Say and Sele and Lord Brook,
7. Shift names: an alteration adjustment of one generic name to others within a close vicinity, e.g., White Lake, White River, Whiteville,
8. Folk etymologies: a well-recognized process is that of folk etymology, e.g., CayoHueso to Key West; and
9. Mistake names: a naming process out of mere mistake, e.g., Darrington (Washington) from Barrington.

Naming has mainly followed two paths: (1) spontaneous (popular naming) and (2) baptism (planned naming). The former is the result of the lexicalization process in which the starting point is the description of the subject, object, circumstance, and environment bearing the name. Meanwhile, the latter are names given through authorities, formalized status, special resolution, administrative activity, and time consideration that reflect the place and its given name (Helleland, 2002). Humphreys (1993) mentions that people’s perception plays a huge role in constructing a place name. One of the case studies he presented was a detailed study of name places in the northern Cape vicinity where the names of the places were coined from the word that associated with water, such as e.g., lab ‘river’, laus ‘spring’, xora ‘spade water’. He notes that the reason behind this particular word emphasizes were because the water is considered as the high commodity around the geographical area.

2.2 Place-Naming Process

The main reason a place-names exist is to sort out the fundamental cognitive level of understanding over the need of naming a specific location as an address in
order to assert its main function and novelty as a specific place. Furthermore, it reckons
the level of emotive feeling over the place, the ideological level that relate to said
place, and the community-creating level of naming one place all include in the place-
naming process (Helleland, 2002). Lengen et al. (2019) explains that the development
of events in memory and imagination depends heavily on place. The autobiographical
memory is thought to support a sense of self and place identity. They go on to say that
“characteristics of identity associated with the perception and comprehension of the
spatial environment are often summarized in the term ‘place identity’” (Lengen, 2016;
Langen et al., 2019, p. 21; Proshansky et al., 1983).

If we round it up, the significance of place naming is a response to the
relationship and representation between linguistics and the spatial spaces, also known
as linguistic landscape (LL). It is the “visibility and salience of language on public and
commercial signs in a given territory or region” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 23). Shohamy
and Gorter (2009, p. 1) define linguistic landscape as “language in the
environment, words and images displayed and exposed in public spaces”. These
definitions imply that linguistic landscape can give us a glimpse of how inhabitants
(visitors) use linguistic diversity, local linguistic practices, and linguistic ideologies to
create a name of place (Berezkina, 2016).

Migration also posts its own narratives in place-naming. Gjesdal (2019) believed
that migration represents mobility between worlds of before and after. He explains that
people use language to make sense of the world around them and the circumstances
they are currently in, i.e., the bonds and situation they uphold with home before the
move may influence and construe places of arrival or transition thus interpret and
elaborate the memory of both states. This is usually how the name of a place is
constructed and textualized. Furthermore, the spatial movements between place of
arrival and home, as well as the nature of the journey undertaken, may modify the
semiotic resources in order to understand the spatio dimension of people in it (Schiller
& Salazar, 2013). In addition, the experience of exile and all its related memory
stimulate reminiscence to relate shared characteristics of the new place for naming.
Moreover, the specific aesthetic and linguistic modes in migratory setting may also
reflect and influence the naming process (Phipps & Kay, 2014).

Pertiwi et al. (2020) conducted an anthropolinguistic approach with the
ethnographic descriptive method to look for the pattern of place-naming in Ponorogo
Regency’s villages. The results showed that the villages (83 villages) in this area were
named based on three toponymous aspects, namely the cultural aspects (11 villages),
the manifestation aspects (34 villages), and the social aspects (39 villages). Two years
later, Triana et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative descriptive study based on a corpus
linguistic approach that tried to map out the thematization of place-naming on the West
Coast of Sumatera Island.

3. METHODS

This is descriptive qualitative research to describe the phenomena naturally
without any manipulation (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). In such research fashion, it
involves a collection of techniques used to specify, delineate, or describe naturally
occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation.
3.1 Research Sites

Sources of data for this research are village names in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh districts in Indonesia. According to Badan Pusat Statistik or Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, as of 2019, there are 604 villages in Greater Aceh Regency and 90 villages in Banda Aceh Regency (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022). In this study, the researchers play a crucial role as a primary data collector, in other words the key instrument (Ary et al., 2010).

The main instruments in collecting the data were observation and in-depth interviews. Cohen et al. (2007) have suggested that the particular feature of observation as a research process is that an opportunity is offered to an investigator to gather live data from naturally occurring social situations. During the observation, the names of villages in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh districts were recorded and listed into the list.

![Figure 1. Administrative Map in Aceh Besar District (source: https://uptbgis.bandaacehkota.go.id/katalog/peta/detail/admin-aceh-besar).](image)

3.2 Data Collection Techniques

The data were collected based on the names of villages in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh districts, and looking for names that are relevant or arguably related to determine their relationship so that migration patterns can be drawn. We conducted the data collection process using two main instruments that incorporate documentation and interviews.

The main documentary archives were related to tracing the movement of people, either from the preserved archives or orally narrative story accounted by the natives of
the places studied. Not only that, usually archives also contain information about the history of settlements and place-naming. As Bowen (2009) notes, documents can offer historical context and extensive data coverage, which helps one place their research within the context of their subject or field. All of the information then proceeds to be used in learning the naming processes of places studied and the formation of place-naming procedures.

We also conducted interviews on both experts and the communities to support the claims of the information that gathered from the archives. In this regard, we asked respondents selected from the residents of Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh districts to disclose information on the origin of place names in the intended research area. Cohen et al. (2007) state interview makes participants possible to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and grow and to express how they view situations from their own point of view. In other words, the interview process is expected to provide information on the perspectives of the interviewees about the research topic and also to investigate the reasons for that perspective. For this study, a total of 18 participants were purposively selected and agreed to be interviewed. The selected respondents must be the residents of the village they reside in. We narrowed down the criteria to those that have been living at least 40 years in the village. Our reasoning was to avoid unintended narrative and preserved the original history of a place. People who have taken up permanent residence in a place for a long time tend to know or at least have heard the reason behind the naming, not to mention if they grew up in the said place. Furthermore, the older the participants were interviewed so we could get a glimpse of the original history of the place. However, for villages that was narratively new or was an expansion, we particularly looked for its local government authorities since they could actually provide document and explanation for the name.

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

In this study, the data were analyzed in three stages as proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which include data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. In the first stage of data analysis, we summarized the findings of the study to further analyze the information hence helping us provide a final conclusion of the research. At this stage, all of the data from the interview transcripts, notes, and documents were carefully examined and compared to form a matrix display of data. Subsequently, these data were systematically arranged and organized to permit a coherence corpus to answer the research question using the NVivo software. The results were presented in sub-points of different titles per village. Finally, the last step is concluding the result of the study by making good sense of the overall information.

4. RESULTS

According to the Local Government and Law No. 5 of 1979 on Village Governance Principles about areas uniformity in Indonesia, the Order makes sure that the place-naming in Aceh is ought to be started with the word Desa ‘village’, not Kampung ‘village’. Meanwhile, the hierarchy for the region in Aceh during the sultanate period consisted of Gampong, Mukim, Ulee Balang Cut, Ulee Balang Rayek, and Sultan. The use of Kecamatan ‘district’ from the Indonesian language is
assimilated to the naming process due to the influence of the language as the national language. The term Gampong is now used in Aceh Province.

4.1 The Genesis of Toponyms in Aceh

It is definite that the genesis of all place names connects with the specific cultures people live in that precise location. Their unique cultures, practices, skills, intellectual, and ways of living all creates a synonymous harmony behind the reason of place naming. Setyo et al. (2022) explain that the normal pattern of toponymy was based on the physical traits (such as geographical, biological, and hydrological aspects) and the social-cultural traits (namely the historical and language aspects). Based on the results of the study, it showed that places in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh Districts were named following these traits that are separated into five dialectical relations between physical geography, specific object or entity (plant names), historical reasons or past events, specific-word oriented, and duplication.

Most of the places in both districts were named based on the physical geography of the domain. The people perceive the nature of some locations and find relationship of these places and its names. At the most basic level of place naming in Aceh, the location markers are related to one generic element of geographical features that provide symbolic information about the place. For example, the name of a place that derives from the word Lhok and Lam. The former means ‘deep’ in general, and the latter means ‘inside’. Although when the word is linked to the area of Lhok and Lham, it points out the general terrain of the place which means that it is located below and lower than other areas. Both names are significant variations of the geographical distributions that distinguish the physiographical characteristics of land and its geological composition that put meaning and represent one location. The distinction in perception of the words refers to the surrounded area of the place hence triggered the people to name the place according to the physical association of the domain. Generally, both Lhok and Lam appear almost exclusively at the start of the name. For example, Lam Ave, Lam Bleut, Lam Cot, etc.

The second most common approach of place naming in Aceh is associated with specific object or entity. In this study, we found that the most universal toponymy undergoes a process of assimilation of constant association with an object. In this case, the entity itself is a tree that is characteristic to the place. However, the native put an attention to detail by only linking the process of place naming to the trees that particularly grow in the meunasah ‘Islamic prayer building’, public places, and graveyards. For example, bak buloh ‘the bamboo tree’, bak setui ‘the santol tree’, and bak sukon ‘the breadfruit tree’. Although the existence of plants associated with the places is difficult to find, the residents believe that these plants once dominated the area.

Another pattern of place naming in Aceh is based on the historical reasons. Based on the data analysis, we found that the residents from some villages named the place according to the past events. The results show that the chronological facts were a prominent blueprint in many names of places. The names chosen were once meaningful and symbolize an important event to the community. In a way, it was constructed around those events to be useful and informative for the future even though it was becoming obscure from the memory overtime. For example, the village of Batee Linteung, Pinto Khop, etc. Morphologically, Batee Linteung was derived from two
different words, *batee* ‘stone’ and *linteung* ‘blocking’. The exact narrative accounted to the history behind the village name was lost to the current generation however we can construct an idea or a story behind the name from the combination of the two words. The same occurrence can be said to the village of *Pinto Khop*. It was developed from two particular words of *pinto* ‘door’ and *khop* ‘close’.

Interestingly, Acehnese people appear to use specific-word oriented in place naming, such as the use of word *meunasah* ‘Islamic prayer building’ at the start of the name. In general, a place that was named with *meunasah* is related to regional expansion where old population settlements immigrated to the new area. In addition, it can also be associated with building construction of a new *meunasah* within the area which is the main cause of expansion. Subsequently, these numerous different *meunasah* buildings are what cause confusion among the settlements thus they add an additional word in front of the word *meunasah*. For example, *Meunasah Manyang, Meunasah Tutong, Meunasah Bak Ue*, etc. *Manyang* means ‘high’, *tutong* means ‘burning’, and *bak ue* means ‘coconut tree’.

The problem with place names is that they are often not unique. Many different places may share the same name and Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh Districts are no difference. There are numerous cases of toponymic homonym problem or identical names can be found. There are two villages whose name is *Meunasah Baro*, and two villages that share a similar name of *Gampong Baro*, and two villages with the name of *Lam Cot*, to name a few.

### 4.2 Generic Pattern of Toponyms in Aceh

#### 4.2.1 Linguistic structure patterns

The name of places in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh Districts are based on word forming elements that followed different pattern of lexicon combinations. To avoid any sort of confusion, it is important to emphasize that the place names consist of head names that are used in almost all/all generic pattern of toponyms discussed. Additionally, there are head names taken from an actual building but does not mean that the villages are the buildings itself. It was merely a name. Below are the data of the language structure pattern in place names.

(1)  
*Cot/Lam/Meunasah*, etc.  \(\rightarrow\) adjective

One of the most frequent generic naming patterns in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh Districts was based on the formation of word elements that started with the words *Cot, Lam*, and *Meunasah*, followed by an adjective, e.g., *Cot Cut, Lam Raya, Meunasah Tuha*, etc. In term of the words *Cot and Lam*, both words denote to the topographical features of the place, *Cot* means ‘peak’ and *Lam* means ‘inside, below, lower’. Both words are used to describe the surrounding landscape of the settlement as well as explicitly stating the terrain background of the place. The adjective lexicon that followed the words are those that describe to modify the first word.

In terms of semantic contents, the adjective words that follow the first element record the same sets of descriptive information of the terrain of both *Cot and Lam*. Similarly, the word pair chosen usually recount the narrative of an adjective that describe a proportion of an area, such as big, small, deep, etc. *Cut* is an adjective that
means ‘small’, so Cot Cut literally means ‘small peak’. It is a term that specifically refers to a topographical area that is close to a peak, be it a hill, a mountain or simply a higher area.

In term of adjective word that comes after Meunasah, the lexicon usually explains the current condition of the building. Meunasah is a noun that means ‘Islamic prayer house’. One of the villages whose name started with this word is Meunasah Tuha. Tuha is an adjective means ‘old’ so the combination of these two words literally means an old Islamic prayer house.

(2) Cot/Lam/, etc. $\rightarrow$ adjective + noun

Comparable to the first pattern, toponyms for this second structure starts with the same words as the first pattern; Cot, Lam, but not Meunasah. However, unlike the first one, this pattern comprises three-word elements that is followed by an adjective and a noun, for example Lambaro Kueh, and Lambaro Sukon. Several examples mentioned show that even though that these base variations are unrelated in location proximity to be called an expansion area of the first place of its namesake (Lam), semantically it is a part of an extended meaning of such. However, while the use of adjective in the first pattern was to describe Lam, the function of adjective in this pattern was to describe the noun after it.

Lambaro is formed from two words, lam and baro. Lam means ‘inside, below, lower’, while baro is an adjective lexicon that means ‘new’. However, there is no relationship between these two words in which its composition can create a new lexicon with new meaning. Its combination is no more than for word combination that creates rhyme to simplify and ease the pronunciation. On the other hand, baro describes the noun Kueh and Sukon in Lambaro Kueh, and Lambaro Sukon. Kueh means ‘cake’ and sukun mean ‘breadfruit’, so Baro Kueh and Baro Sukon literally mean ‘new cake’ and ‘new breadfruit. However, bear in mind that these definitions do not reflect the history of the naming process.

(3) Cot/Lam/Meunasah, etc. $\rightarrow$ noun

The elements analysis identified proper noun as the most frequently occurring naming structure after the head name. There are a total of 160 place names based on various head names in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh. The head names are ranged from the most common of Cot, Lam, and Meunasah to the newest entry such as Aneuk ‘child’, Lampoh ‘land’, etc. All these head names are particularly acute in names containing noun elements afterwards, such as Lam Bate ‘stone’. The specific singular forms of all type of entity are used in this section and are not assigned to any particular topographical features (i.e., lake, mountain, hill, etc.) or affiliated with any notable attributes (i.e., water, stone, tree, etc.).

Names range from Lam Kawee ‘fishing rod’, Cot Kareung ‘coral’, Cot Karieng ‘salted fish’, Meunasah Kulam ‘pool’, Meunasah Keudee ‘shop’, Lampoh Raja ‘king’ to Aneuk Glee ‘forest’. Some names belong to places that are close to each other but share no similar noticeable characteristics that imply their similarity traits or connections, such as Lam Panah ‘arrow’ and Lam Teuba (it can be derived from Bahasa Indonesia tiba ‘arrive’ or Acehnese tuba ‘poison’). Both places are close to each other and are settlements that are close to the hillside area but none of the noun
markers are affiliated to the hillside. It is most likely that the nouns are chosen based on past events or merely native to the place.

(4)  \textit{Cot/Lam/Ateuk}, etc. \(ightarrow\) noun + noun

The fourth type of place naming structure in Aceh adjusts to the solid compound formation of language structure. However, unlike the constant of meaning changing after words combination in which we are usually familiar with in regard of compound, Acehnese place naming took an opposite turn in this aspect. First, it is a compound of two nouns but without nouns combination hence disregards the law of morphology. For example, ‘airport’ in English is derived from two different words, ‘air’ and ‘port’, that opens a new meaning for a new lexicon. However, village toponyms in Aceh adjusts this rule by separating two nouns that stand for and refer to one meaning. Here, we arrive to the second rule of place naming based on nouns formation in Aceh toponyms that is two different and separate nouns referring to one meaning. In addition, the meaning of these ‘compound’ words does not necessarily point out to one specific article but allude to the intact intended definition it represents. Meaning, the fourth rule is related to what the nouns combination corresponds to as a whole picture in terms of what it represents and the interpretation of the representation. For example, \textit{Krueng Kala}, where \textit{krueng} means ‘river’ and \textit{kala} means ‘bamboo sprout’ but it does not produce a new meaning should it be combined. However, in this context, \textit{Krueng Kala} refers to a river where many bamboo sprouts are found.

Just like the other three generic patterns above, this structure and frequency of place names in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh also start with \textit{Lam} and \textit{Meunasah} with additional occurrence of \textit{Ateuk}. For example, \textit{Lam Blang Trieng}, \textit{Meunasah Krueng Kala}, \textit{Ateuk Lung Ie}, \textit{Ateuk Mon Panah}, etc. Interestingly, there is a common pattern that can be found in this naming structure in which almost all of the names have an affiliation with water or a place that is associated with water. For example, \textit{Krueng}, \textit{Lung}, and \textit{Mon}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place name</th>
<th>Literal meaning</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lam Blang Trieng</td>
<td>Lam ‘inside’, Blang ‘paddy field’, Trieng ‘bamboo tree’</td>
<td>(A place) that was built near a paddy field where many bamboo trees are found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meunasah Krueng Kala</td>
<td>Meunasah ‘Islamic prayer house’, Krueng ‘river’, Kala ‘bamboo sprout’</td>
<td>An Islamic prayer house that was built near a river where many bamboo sprouts can be found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ateuk Mon Panah</td>
<td>Ateuk ‘dike’, Mon ‘well’, Panah ‘jackfruit’</td>
<td>A well that was dug beside a ditch where many jackfruits grow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5)  \textit{Cot/Lam/Meunasah}, etc. \(ightarrow\) noun + noun + noun

We have learned in point four that a non-combination compound noun place names in Acehnese language do not create a new word but rather correspond to the intended definition it represents. Akin to the previous point, all three different non-combined nouns that form a place name stand for a complete representation of the
place. For example, Lambarih Meunasah Blang Mee. There are three nouns after the head name of Lambarih, they are Meunasah ‘Islamic prayer house’, Blang ‘paddy field’, Mee ‘tamarind’. When the words are put together, it means ‘an Islamic prayer house that was built where the tamarind grow’. However, Lambarih itself consists of two words, lam ‘inside, in’ and barih ‘row’, derived from the word bareh ‘row’. As a whole, semantically, the meaning of the village name is ‘an Islamic prayer house that is built around a row of tamarind trees’.

(6) Cot/Lam/Meunasah, etc. → noun + adjective

There are also place names which pattern comprise of a head name, noun, and adjective. The adjective is used to describe both the noun and the head name. Examples are such as:
- Cot Lampoh Soh, in which cot is ‘peak’, lampoh is ‘land’, and soh is ‘empty’
- Lam Alue Cut, in which lam is ‘inside’, alue is ‘ditch’, and cut is ‘small’
- Lam Asan Klieng, in which lam is ‘inside’, asan is ‘narra tree’, and klieng is ‘dark (color)

The last words are always an adjective and it is used to modify the previous two words before it. Subsequently, the combination of the three words produces a meaning that describes the referent. Cot Lampoh Soh means ‘an empty land that is located at a high place’, Lam Alue Cut means ‘(a place) that is built inside a ditch’, and Lam Asan Klieng means ‘(a place) that is built where the dark narra trees grow’.

4.2.2 Other structure patterns

Another not so common structure pattern of place names in Aceh starts with a noun and followed by plant names, geographical elements, and cardinal direction. Most toponyms named after these three markers describe locality of the place. Plant names are usually associated with a property of a specific plant that is well-known to the area, such as Gampong Pineung from gampong ‘village’ and pineung ‘betel palm’. There is high possibility that this plant is the main agricultural feature of the area hence the name.

The second one is the geographical elements. When it comes to landscape features as the reason behind the naming, there is such a common pattern of generic specific in the process that is glaringly similar to all names. Lam Cot (‘inside’ and ‘peak’), Gampong Blang (‘village’ and ‘paddy field’), Cot Paya (‘peak’ and ‘swamp’), Aneuk Paya (‘child’ and ‘swamp’), Aneuk Glee (‘child’ and ‘forest’) are some of the examples. Yet all the names start with nouns but the point is the identifiers after the noun. If we look closely, all the words after the nouns are those that describe the geographical terrain of the particular village, not of the entire settlement. For example, places in the region of a hillside as its surrounding areas starts with the word ‘hill’ then is followed by another word. However, both Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh villages only take the geographical features that belong solely to the said villages that describe them.

The last one is place names based on cardinal direction, such as Gampong Baroh (‘village’ and ‘north’), Meunasah Tunong (‘Islamic prayer house’ and ‘south’), Iboh Tunong (‘a type of palm tree’ and ‘south’), etc. Usually, there are two reasons why a place is named based on the four main points of a compass. One, strategically and
geographically, the place is located in one of the four points. Second, it is to specifically state the location of a place that share a similar head name within one settlement. For example, Lamteumen Timur (timur is ‘east’) and Lamteumen Barat (barat is ‘west’).

4.2.3 Loan words

There are some villages which names are loaned from other languages. In Aceh, place naming based on loan words is indisputably traced from the Bahasa Indonesia influences. The most common pattern of word borrowing that can be traced over Acehnese toponyms mapped out two frequent patterns of language structures that form a village name. One, when one of the elements from the two separated lexicons that form a place name is directly loaned from Bahasa Indonesia. The frequent pattern of this type of place name starts with an Acehnese word that is followed by Bahasa Indonesia, such as Jantho Baru, Lam Raya, and Cot Raya. The second one is those in which both word elements are derived from Bahasa Indonesia, such as Data Makmur (‘data’ and ‘prosperous’), Tanjung Selamat (‘peak’ and ‘safe’), Suka Damai (‘like’ and ‘peace’), Suka Tani (‘like’ and ‘farmer’), Bandar Baru (‘city’ and ‘new’), and Kota Baru (‘city’ and ‘new’).

When it comes to inverted elements of loan words process of place naming in Aceh, there is a big possibility that transmigration was the big factor. The main reasoning for this conclusion relies on the fact that many settlements of new villages that adopt the Bahasa Indonesia word for a place are not native people of Acehnese. In term of direct language contact, this is not an impressive feat considering that the borrowing of an element does not require intense contact and a prolong time of changes. In fact, the word comes from those whose native language is Bahasa Indonesia.

5. DISCUSSION

Attempts to trace the chronological motives of special inevitable reasons on place naming in Aceh involve much speculation. However, there are patterns that lead to three specific methods that people used to name a place. Although the results are an oversimplification of a complex historical reality, the general patterns show a much logical conformity on the reasoning behind the decided name of a place long forgotten in the past.

First, people associated a place with the history behind it. It reflects a tie to the past about the important history of the places where people settled. It mirrors the historical richness of the place and contribute to the roots of motives behind the naming (Helleland, 2012). These past events are told in both written and handed down orally from generation to generation. Therefore, name place is a part of cultural heritage in that they tell us about the place.

Second, the name of a place responds to the geographical reflection of a landscape. This process of place naming is the result of human and the nature relationship in the most conscious way. People usually correlate the physical aspect of an environment to put a name to a place. While they might deliberately name it because of the said surrounding attribution, sometimes geographical name can also happen
unconsciously. This conscious act refers to the concept of nature. It is a process of visualizing the geographical aspects of the surrounding that influence the decided linguistic modifier (Nurhayati, 2018). Furthermore, their apparent attribution as a referential role in place naming sometimes is also correlated with a symbolic meaning of an event.

Third, the direct reference of geographical surrounding and the history can also represent the direct link between language and the thing it represents. It means that the surrounding landscape, history, people, etc. affect the choice of words in name giving. Kövecses (2005, 2006) believes that language reflect world outlook of people and express the cultural reality of our surrounding. Some scholars argue that toponyms create new coinage (Bright, 2003) that was used by people even after the one who coined it passed away. In this regard, coinage symbolizes the link and interaction between language and culture (Onchoke, 2021).

While we did mention that migration might be a big factor in loan words process of place naming in Aceh, we also want to make it clear that there was no migration factor that comes to play in toponyms regarding specific ethnic group distribution that come to Aceh to build their own settlements. What happened was the effect of language contact (Bahasa Indonesia) and modernization. That being said, loan words from Indonesia, such as baru ‘new’, are the result of modernization of language contact and language shift within the community (Leodora, 2013).

In addition, there were no correlation between the origin of the population and the similarity in place names of some villages. In fact, when two settlements that are far in distance share similar names, it is merely a pure coincidence. In some cases, when two places close to each other share the same name, there is an additional attribute to differentiate them. For example, Lamteumen Barat and Lamteumen Timur are both located in Jaya Baru sector. However, timur ‘east’ and barat ‘west’ were assigned to establish a set marker that marked the eastern part and the western part of the place.

The results of this study show that Lam and Cot were two of the most common head names of places in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh. Both refers to the geographical surrounding of the places and reflects the landscape condition of the location before the naming. Thus, the element of naming a place in both districts cannot be far off from how the physical proof of the place in the past (Duizenberg, 2020). We are talking about the terrain and the record of the natural topography of the place. There must be a reason why people named a place with words that usually connotes to high (cot) and low (lam) implication. In one testimony, a respondent said that lam in his village name (Lamcot) is associated with the location of where it was built. In the past, the terrain was located far from the crowded area and slightly indented, hence the word lam (inside, below, and lower) was used, but at the same time, there was a higher area around the middle part of the space, hence the word cot (peak) was used. However, landscape and geographical factors do not always act as the decisive aspect of toponomy in Aceh.

In the previous explanations, we have generalized ‘inside, below, and lower’ as the definite three meanings of lam. We arrive at the conclusion that (1) the most common genesis of place naming was based on the physical geographic of an area and the object/entity that is unique to that area. This reasoning contributes to the fact that (2) the word matched the structural meaning of the linguistics pattern when the generic pattern of naming process was laid out. However, the reality is a little bit different.
Some of the places named after the word lam indeed have different meanings albeit the geographical characteristic it alludes to. From interviews, we found out that some of that naming processes related to lam was based on past events. The respondent emphasized that in some cases, lam was a “rhyme word” that gradually experience change overtime. What he really meant was that there are some words in Acehnese that almost sound the same as lam when it is pronounced quickly but has different meaning. Over the years, this pronunciation eclipsed the real sound of the word and the history of the naming (Kearns & Berg, 2002). Because of that, many people have now forgotten the real name of the place itself.

A closer look is at the name of Lampisang, a village in the Suka Makmur Sub-district. The original name of the place was Lham Bak Pisang. However, since it was a bit difficult to pronounce, over time it changed to Lampisang. The initial word was lham which means ‘drowned’, not lam ‘inside’. Then there is a place name Lamteuba Mukim. In this name, Lamteuba itself comes from the word lham which refers to the ‘hoe that is used to dig a well’. There is also Lamteungoh (in the Ingin Jaya Sub-district), which, according to the respondent, the place was named after a snake’s name; ueleu lan ‘a large python’. The word lan changed overtime to lam. There are also Lampaseh Lhok and Lampasah Krueng. According to the informants, lampaseh is one word, and not from lam and paseh. It is an Acehnese word that means ‘land clearing’, usually carried out in areas that were originally forests and not owned by anyone, then the land was cleared and made into settlements or fields.

6. CONCLUSION

This study shows that toponyms consist of a multi-facetted structure, which entails different features according to situations. Analyzing the genesis of toponyms in Banda Aceh and Greater Aceh has brought us to a five-point conclusion of how a place is originally named in Aceh. Two of these five features were nature origin in which physical geography and specific object or entity is involved. In physical geography, this is mainly when a name of a place is taken from the depiction and representation of its surrounding area, landscape, or terrain that describes and characterizes the geographical condition of the area. Meanwhile, in specific object or entity, this is related to distinctive object information that is unique to that area and usually the entities are those related to plant names. The last three features are human made based names, namely historical reasons or past events, specific-word oriented, and duplication. Acehnese people tend to create the names of their settlements based from past events. These events symbolize important occurrences to the community and have a historical affiliation and sentiments to the place. Additionally, toponyms in Aceh followed a specific-word oriented pattern where some words are used countless of times in the naming process, such as Lam, Cot, and Meunasah. However, these recurrent choices on words are only for the head name part. Some words are common to the point of causing confusion of whether duplication was involved. Certainly, in this case, not a direct repetition but some places do practice loan words to name their places albeit unintentionally. This word borrowing is mainly the results of area expansion, modernization, and direct language contact. Lastly, it is found that Acehnese toponyms are not caused by migration.
Concerning the generic pattern of toponyms in Aceh, this study shows that the naming process followed four specific patterns. The first one is the linguistics structure pattern. In Aceh, name elements are constructed from noun and adjective. It usually consists of two words or more that is preceded by a head name, i.e., *Lam*, *Cot*, and *Meunasah*. The number of word elements and type of patterns may vary but a head name is definite. There are six common patterns, namely (1) head name + adjective, the adjective contains the descriptive information of the head name, (2) head name + adjective + noun, the adjective is to describe the noun after, (3) head name + noun, the noun becomes a proper noun (not morphologically, of course) in meaning when paired with the head name, (4) head name + noun + noun, the noun combination corresponds to the representation of the name as a unit and the whole meaning, (5) head name + noun + noun + noun, the noun combination corresponds to the intended definition it represents, and (6) head name + adjective + noun, the adjective modifies the noun and the head name.

While physical geography and specific object or entity play a significant role in place naming, an immediate challenge that seems vital for comparison is the scale of a place that is referred to the naming entity. We are talking about the measurement of territory of a place it is named of, in this case, a village. If a place is named following the physical proof around it, how big of a scale of the said place is devoted to the name? For example, the village of *Gampong Pineung* ‘village of areca palm tree’ whose name is derived from the main agricultural feature of the area. If the village is named after the said feature, i.e., the Areca Palm tree area, of a small scale of terrain within the land that latter on included as one village, how did the range calculation of one village measured? There is limitation in this that we failed to understand the partition scales considered best suited to the mapping scale of one village name. It will be interesting if future research can serve this type of study on the table.

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