

## The Power of Euphemism to Avoid Taboo Words in Aceh Culture

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### Abstract

this paper aims to investigate the euphemism of taboo words in Aceh culture. the qualitative research design was used in this study. this study seeks to determine the categories of euphemism taboos used by Acehnese speakers. there are two methods of data collection used: first, observation, and second interviews. the respondents in this study are twenty Acehnese speakers; ten of them are first-generation, and ten of them are third-generation or young-generation. this study used data analysis using interactive models of Miles and Huberman, and Saldana (2004). there are two ways to collect data, first by observation and second by interview. the result found that there are five euphemisms used in Aceh culture, such as 1) euphemism of taboo animals, 2) euphemism of taboo of praise, 3) euphemism taboo of things, and the last 4) euphemism taboo of illness, 5) euphemism taboo of swearing,

**KEYWORDS:** *Euphemism, Taboo Words, Aceh Culture*

### 1. Introduction

in a cultured society, taboo is a linguistic phenomenon. the phenomenon of taboo language in such languages varies by ethnicity. damanik and Sinaga (2022) define this expression as local wisdom because it is used as a life rule (mores or ethics. the word taboo, also known as taboo language or linguistic taboo, is a type of taboo that involves restricting the use of words or other parts of language due to social constraints. this could be due to a taboo on specific parts of the language (such as certain words or sounds) or the need to avoid a taboo topic. taboo words are a powerful part of natural language. it has been proposed that "taboos" reflect properties resulting from negative valence and high physiological arousal from word references (Reilly et al. 2020).

one of the cultural heritages that must be known and preserved is taboo, which can be a form of ethical education taught by our forefathers . taboos are made up of past life experiences that can be used as role models in everyday life. it reflects society's noble values and encompasses various aspects of life that are taboo. in addition, al-abed and al-samadi believe that language users employ their linguistic knowledge to achieve different communicative purposes. the communicative setting helps speakers and hearers understand each other through cues provided by the context. for example, speakers avoid using direct expressions that denote forbidden topics as "taboos" and tend to use acceptable expressions that convey similar meanings. the use of alternative expressions to reduce the acuteness of the expression is often called euphemism (neaman and Silver 1990).

the term euphemism (greek eu 'good, well' and phe me speaking) is well known; however, its antonym dysphemism (greek dys- 'bad, unfavorable') is rarely encountered in everyday language. in this paper, we will discuss the form of euphemism used by Aceh speakers in langsa, aceh, and indonesia. taboo is one of the cultural heritages that must be known and preserved because taboos can be a form of ethical education taught by our forefathers. research on taboos that are still alive among Acehnese people in general and in the Langsa area in particular

until now is important to be carried out. therefore, the existence of taboo language research in Acehnese society is intended so that the academic community can understand the meaning, values, and cultural norms of taboo language in Acehnese society both theoretically and practically to avoid mistakes in communication.

**2. Method**

This study uses a qualitative research design. the informants of this research consist of 6 old informants and 4 young informants, so the total number of informants amounts to 10 people. while secondary data or supporting data obtained by linguist language researchers is not sourced directly from speakers but from work reports and performance results of their peer language analyzers. The data collection and data analysis used the theory of miles, Huberman and Saldana's (2014) concept. the figure can be seen below;

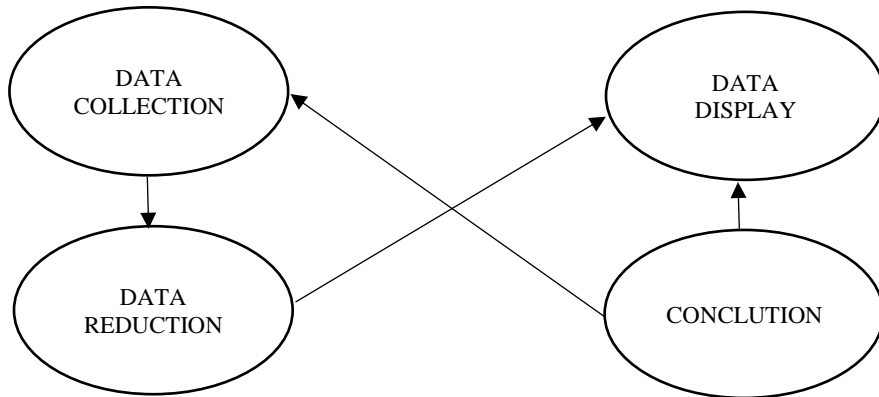
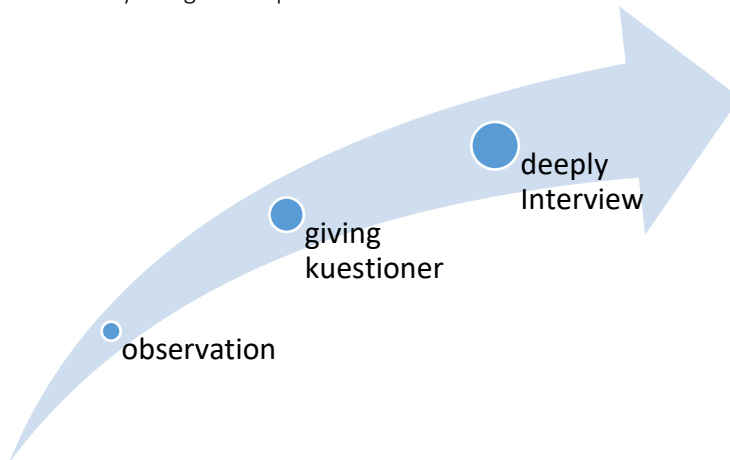


figure 3.1: component of data analysis: interactive model.

in data collection, the researcher collected data related to the phenomenon of taboo language in Aceh culture by using the steps below :



**3. finding and discussion**

The Acehnese in Langsa City use euphemisms in their daily conversations to avoid taboo words. Euphemisms are expressions that do not offend people, are subtle, and are used to replace references that may be felt to be insulting, offend people, or suggest something unpleasant. "a euphemism is used as an alternative to a preferred expression to avoid possible loss of face: either one's face or, through giving offense, that of the audience or some third party" (Allan &

Burridge, 1991: 11). euphemisms are used as an alternative to unwanted expressions to avoid losing face, either for yourself or for listeners or third parties, by hurting. below are taboos that have euphemism forms in Aceh culture, such as:

Table 3.1 Euphemism in Aceh Culture

EUPHEMISM TABOO OF ANIMALS NAME	EUPHEMISM TABOO OF PRAISE	EUPHEMISM TABOO OF THINGS	EUPHEMISM TABOO OF ILLNESS	EUPHEMISM TABOO OF SWEARING
<i>Rimueng</i> 'tiger' ❖ <i>Nek kaum/ rimueng meutuwah</i>	<i>Sihat</i> 'healthy' ❖ <i>Brok</i> 'bad'	<i>Sira</i> 'salt' ❖ <i>le laot/ saka masen</i>	<i>Timoh-timoh</i> 'kind of skin illness' ❖ <i>mangat</i>	<i>Aneuk jen</i> ❖ <i>Aneuk Meutuwah</i>
<i>Gajah</i> 'elephant' ❖ <i>Po meurah, tengku raveuk/gajah meutuwah</i>	<i>Tumbon</i> 'fat' ❖ <i>Brok</i> 'bad'		<i>Ta'eun</i> " kinds of pandemic illness" ❖ <i>Ateuh</i>	<i>Aneuk paleh</i> ❖ <i>Aneuk Meutuwah</i>
<i>Buva</i> 'crocodile' ❖ <i>Nek lubuk/ buva meutuwah</i>			<i>Budok</i> " a kinds of skin illness ❖ <i>Baroeh</i>	<i>Aneuk Ase</i> ❖ <i>Aneuk Meutuwah</i>
<i>Badeuk</i> 'rhinocerose' ❖ <i>Po mentjula/ badeuk meutuwah</i>				<i>Aneuk haramjadah</i> ❖ <i>Aneuk Meutuwah</i>
<i>Uleue</i> 'snake' ❖ <i>Ukhe kayee/ uleue meutuwah</i>				
<i>Tikoh</i> 'mouse' ❖ <i>Nyak ti, po ti/ tikoh meutuwah</i>				

In Acehnese society there are several taboos in conveying intentions and objectives in speech including: the taboo of giving praise to children is one that is prohibited in communicating, for example, someone praising small children or or babies with tall bodies. Some objects are taboo in the culture of the Acehnese people, so they needs to be smoothed so that the word is accepted to be spoken in the community. euphemism is taboo in pronouncing certain diseases in the culture of the people of Aceh, and it is believed to make the disease worse if there is no refinement in pronunciation. so that the people of Acehnese are prohibited from mentioning diseases experienced by infants or small children, namely conditions such as itching of the skin accompanied by an increase in the child's body temperature. the people of Acehnese call it 'mangat, or "delicious." *Mangat* ' in english mean delicious, but the people of Acehnese call the word *Mangat* specifically for children who are affected by the disease, so it is believed that if you say the word *mangat*," the disease will quickly heal, but it is taboo to mention the name of the disease directly because it is believed to result in misfortune for a sick child. another disease is the *budok* disease, 'leprosy'. the direct mention of *budok* disease requires abstinence from saying it because it is believed to cause a reversal of the disease in the person who utters it. *ta'eun* disease is considered a contagious disease that becomes a plague in society.

The Acehnese believe that if they mention the disease, they are afraid that it will attack them or their families. the people of Aceh hope that such diseases will be kept away from their lives. to avoid mentioning the name of the dreaded disease, the people of Acehnese use euphemisms such as *peunyaket barôh* for *budôk*, *peunyaket ateuh* for *ta'eun*, and *mangat* for *timoh-timoh*. In avoiding the taboo of swearing, Acehnese speakers use the words '*meutuwah*, 'lucky, which is a prayer in the Aceh language that means the use of the word *meutuwah* is another way of avoiding taboos; not all taboo categories can use the word "*meutuwah*" because the word *meutuwah* can replace the use of taboo words that are in the form of human adjectives; for example, the characteristics of very annoying children are equated with animal characteristics and with spirits. for example, the word '*meutuwah*' is used with the insult taboo. The word "*meutuwah*" is a form of euphemism for a taboo word that shows bad characteristics so that

by using the word "*meutuwah*" bad traits can be avoided, the mention of the word "*meutuwah*" is usually done by parents to children when parents angry and annoyed with their child, to avoid using taboo words that take the form of swearing, parents replace them with the word "*metutuwah*" which is a prayer of kindness for the child so that his morals become better. Likewise, the word "*meutuwah*," which is used for wild animals, can be paired with the mention of these animals to avoid the anger of wild animals, so that the name of an animal that is considered dangerous when mentioned will give coolness to the prayer given. The mention of the word *meutuwah* is also a form of refinement that is common for all sacred animals. For example, when someone wants to mention the word "*rimueng*" when added to the word *metuwah*, the mention of the word "*rimueng*" can be done; for example, it becomes "*rimueng meutuwah*" or a good tiger and blessings. However, not all taboo expressions can be compared with the word *meutuwah*." the following is a list of taboo and *meutuwah* words that are acceptable in Acehese society.

## 5. conclusion

The conclusion of this research found that five euphemisms are used in Aceh culture, such as: 1) euphemisms of taboo animals; 2) euphemisms of taboo praise; 3) euphemisms of taboo things; and 4) euphemisms of taboo illness. 5) euphemism taboo of swearing: in avoiding the taboo of swearing, Acehese speakers use the words '*meutuwah*, which is a prayer in the Aceh language and means lucky. the use of the word *meutuwah* is another way of avoiding taboos of swearing. not all taboo categories can use the word "*meutuwah*" because the word *meutuwah* can replace the use of taboo words that are in the form of human bad behavior.

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