

Toponymy of Gampong Names in Bandar Dua District, Pidie Jaya Regency

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Abstract

Place names function not only as labels but also as representations of identity, history, and cultural values. In toponymic studies, gampong names reflect the relationship between humans, the environment, and socio-cultural systems. However, public understanding of place name origins is declining and largely preserved through oral traditions, posing a risk of losing collective memory. In Bandar Dua, which consists of 45 gampong, place naming is closely related to geographical conditions, social activities, and cultural values. However, previous studies have mainly focused on meanings or classifications and have not comprehensively examined naming aspects. Moreover, toponymic research in this region remains limited. This study aims to describe the toponymy of gampong names based on embodiment, social, and cultural aspects using a descriptive qualitative approach through interviews and observations. The findings show that 37 gampong are categorized under embodiment, 21 under social, and 1 under cultural aspects. The novelty lies in its integrative aspect-based approach combining linguistic, social, and environmental dimensions. This study contributes to the development of toponymy studies and the preservation of local cultural identity.

Keywords: Bandar Dua District, Naming Aspects, Toponymy

Abstrak

Nama tempat tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai penanda, tetapi juga merepresentasikan identitas, sejarah, dan nilai budaya masyarakat. Dalam kajian toponimi, nama gampong mencerminkan hubungan antara manusia, lingkungan, dan sistem sosial budaya. Namun, pemahaman masyarakat terhadap asal-usul nama tempat cenderung menurun dan sebagian besar hanya diwariskan secara lisan, sehingga berpotensi hilangnya memori kolektif. Di Bandar Dua, yang terdiri atas 45 gampong, penamaan wilayah tidak dilakukan secara acak, melainkan berkaitan dengan kondisi geografis, aktivitas sosial, dan nilai budaya. Namun, penelitian sebelumnya masih terbatas pada makna atau klasifikasi, serta belum banyak mengkaji aspek penamaan secara integratif. Selain itu, kajian toponimi di wilayah ini masih minim. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan toponimi nama gampong berdasarkan aspek perwujudan, kemasyarakatan, dan kebudayaan dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif melalui wawancara dan observasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan 37 gampong berbasis aspek perwujudan, 21 kemasyarakatan, dan 1 kebudayaan. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada pendekatan integratif berbasis aspek penamaan yang menggabungkan dimensi linguistik, sosial, dan lingkungan. Penelitian ini diharapkan berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian toponimi serta pelestarian identitas dan warisan budaya lokal.

Kata Kunci: Aspek Penamaan, Kecamatan Bandar Dua, Toponimi

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INTRODUCTION

Place names function not only as identifiers but also as representations of identity, history, and cultural values. In toponymic studies, gampong names reflect the relationship between humans, the environment, and socio-cultural systems. However, public understanding of place name origins remains limited and is largely preserved through oral traditions, creating a risk of losing collective memory and local historical values. In Bandar Dua, which consists of 45 gampong, naming practices are closely related to geographical conditions, social activities, and cultural values. However, previous studies tend to focus on meanings or classifications and lack an integrative analysis of naming aspects, particularly in under-researched regions.

This study aims to describe the toponymy of gampong names based on embodiment, social, and cultural aspects using a descriptive qualitative approach. The findings reveal that embodiment dominates (37 gampong), followed by social aspects (21), and cultural aspects (1). The novelty of this study lies in its integrative aspect-based approach combining linguistic, social, and environmental dimensions. This research contributes to documenting local history, preserving cultural heritage, and strengthening community identity through the understanding of place names. (Anshari et al., 2017; Camalia, 2015; Manalu, 2022).

The use of names is not only limited to humans as a marker of personal identity, but is also used to mention and identify various other objects. The naming can refer to places, animals, buildings, or objects. In the context of regional designation, names are often given to mark a specific location or area, such as cities, sub-districts, or gampongs. The determination of the name for an area is basically not done arbitrarily. According to Ruchiat (in Zaman, 2017:2), the naming of an area is generally motivated by a certain cause or purpose. In other words, the process of naming an area has a basis or historical background behind it. This background can be related to the geographical conditions of the region, the developing cultural values, and the social life of the local community.

The study of the origin of place names is discussed in a branch of science known as toponymy. Muhidin, (2021) explained that toponymy is part of onomastics that specifically studies place names. Meanwhile, onomastics itself is understood as a branch of linguistics that examines the origins, forms, and meanings of personal names, especially those related to the names of people and place names. Bandar Dua District, which is located in Pidie Jaya Regency, is known to have 45 gampongs with a variety of different names. Ulee Gle functions as the capital of the sub-district. The Bandar Dua District area is further divided into five administrative areas, namely East Ulee Gle, West Ulee Gle, Ulee Gle Tunong, Ulee Gle Dalam, and East Buya Term. The diversity of gampong names in this sub-district shows the historical and cultural background behind it. The variation in the naming of the gampong then became the basis of the researcher's interest in studying the phenomenon in more depth in the Bandar Dua area.

Through the study of toponyms of gampong names in Bandar Dua, various social phenomena that have occurred in people's lives can be revealed. In addition, the geographical aspects, culture, cognitive patterns, and views of the previous community can also be reflected through the names of the existing gampongs. One example obtained from public information is Gampong Beurasan. The name of the gampong comes from the word "balasan". The term reply refers to a form of expression of gratitude in the form of a piece of land given by the community to a scholar. The land was given as a reward for the help of the ulama when helping people who had difficulty lifting wood during mutual cooperation activities in the construction of houses in the past. Because the land was a gift as a form of reward for the services rendered, the area became known as Gampong Balasan. Over time, the pronunciation of the name has changed until it is finally known as Gampong Beurasan (Pertiwi et al., 2020; Zaman, 2017).

The story of the naming of Gampong Beurasan shows that the process of naming the area is closely related to the community aspect, especially social interaction which is reflected through mutual cooperation activities and mutual assistance in community life. This is in line with the toponymic classification put forward by Sudaryat (Anum, 2022), which divides the aspect of naming places into three categories, namely the embodiment aspect, the community aspect, and the cultural aspect. Life values such as harmony, cooperation, and high gratitude are the characteristics of the people of Gampong Beurasan, which is reflected in the origin of the name Beurasan which comes from the word *repy* as a form of appreciation for the help of a scholar.

Studies on toponymy are considered interesting and important to do. The results of research on toponymy are expected to contribute to documenting and preserving the history of the origin of the naming of a region. This is important considering that there are still many people who do not know the background or meaning of their own place of residence. If this condition is left unchecked, the public's understanding of the history of the area where they live has the potential to become weaker, as expressed by Humaidi et al. (2021:31).

A number of previous studies have been conducted related to the study of toponymy or the origin of the naming of a place. One of them is a research conducted by Hasna, (2021) entitled *Village Toponymy in Muara Bungo Regency*. The study discusses the lexical meaning and cultural significance of village naming and classifies aspects of village naming in four sub-districts and 34 villages in Bungo Regency. The four sub-districts that were the object of the study included Pelepat Ilir District, Tanah Sepenggal District, Tanah Tumbuh District, and Limbur Lubuk Mengkuang District. The results of the study show that the most dominant aspect in the naming of villages in the region is the aspect of embodiment, especially related to the elements of water and flora, as well as cultural aspects related to folklore.

Another study was conducted by Anum (2022) entitled *Toponymy of Village Names in Bangun Purba District, Deli Serdang Regency: An Anthropolinguistic Study*. The study found that the naming of villages in the area is influenced by three main aspects: the embodiment aspect, the social aspect, and the cultural aspect. In addition, the research also revealed the meanings contained in the village names in Bangun Purba District. One of the findings shows that *Mabar* Village derives from the embodiment aspect related to flora, where the word *Mabar* refers to the name of a poisonous tree. Another example is *Sibaganding* Village, which originates from the cultural aspect and is associated with local folklore, meaning "large short snake." Meanwhile, *Bah Balua* Village comes from the embodiment aspect related to water elements, where the word *bah* means water and *balua* refers to animals such as deer. Overall, the study identified 18 village names that were classified based on these naming aspects. (Rosa, 2016).

Another relevant research was also conducted by Salehudin et al., (2022) A previous study titled *Cultural Aspects in the Toponymy of the Bujangga Manik Manuscript: An Anthropological Linguistic Study* examined cultural elements reflected in place names found in the *Bujangga Manik* manuscript. The study identified eleven toponymic data, including Ci Pamali, Ci Ronabaya, Mount Larang, Mount Mahameru, Mount Marapi, Mount Rajuna, Medang Kahiang, and Bobodo. The findings show that the naming of places in the manuscript is closely related to cultural elements such as folklore, legends, art, and belief systems. For instance, legends are reflected in Bobodo, Ci Ronabaya, and Mount Brahma, while belief systems appear in Mount Mahameru, Mount Marapi, Mount Hiang, and Medang Kahiang. Norms are reflected in Ci Pamali, folklore in Mount Rajuna, knowledge systems in Mount Larang, and arts in Mount Wayang.

In contrast to previous studies that mainly focus on the meaning and cultural aspects of place naming, this study aims to reveal the background of gampong naming based on its naming aspects. Research on the history of place naming is still relatively limited, particularly in Pidie Jaya

Regency. Therefore, conducting toponymy research in this area, especially in Bandar Dua District, is considered important.

THEORITICAL REVIEW

Onomastics

Onomastics is a branch of linguistics that studies names and the process of naming. In linguistic studies, onomastics is understood as a discipline that examines the origin, form, and meaning of names, particularly those related to personal names and place names. According to Harimurti Kridalaksana (2008), onomastics refers to the study of the origin, form, and use of proper names in language. This field of study does not only focus on the linguistic structure of a name but also considers the social, cultural, and historical contexts underlying its use. Therefore, the study of names can provide insights into how language reflects the values, beliefs, and identity of a particular community.

In its development, the study of onomastics is not limited to purely linguistic analysis but also involves a multidisciplinary approach. Willy Van Langendonck (2007) explains that the study of names can be analyzed from various linguistic perspectives, including semantics, pragmatics, and syntax. From a semantic perspective, names carry meanings related to natural conditions, social activities, or cultural beliefs. From a pragmatic perspective, names function as markers that allow speakers to refer to particular entities in communication. Meanwhile, from a syntactic perspective, names can be analyzed in terms of their structure and position within a sentence.

In addition, contemporary studies in onomastics emphasize the role of naming in constructing identity and ideology. Names are not neutral labels but can reflect power relations, political interests, and cultural dominance within a society. Thus, onomastics also intersects with sociolinguistics and discourse studies in understanding how naming practices shape social reality.

In general, the study of onomastics covers two main areas, namely anthroponymy and toponymy. Anthroponymy is the branch of onomastics that studies personal names, including given names, family names, and other forms of naming used to identify individuals. Meanwhile, toponymy focuses on the study of place names, such as the names of villages, rivers, mountains, and other geographical features. Both fields play an important role in understanding how language reflects the interaction between humans, culture, and the environment.

Although onomastics has been widely studied from linguistic and sociocultural perspectives, previous studies tend to focus more on structural and etymological analysis of names rather than exploring the integrated relationship between linguistic form, socio-cultural meaning, and environmental context, especially in local Indonesian settings. Furthermore, limited research has examined how naming practices simultaneously reflect identity construction, local wisdom, and ecological awareness in specific communities.

Toponyms

Toponymy is one of the branches of onomastics that specifically studies place names. Etymologically, the term toponymy comes from the Greek *topos* (place) and *onoma* (name). Thus, toponymy can be understood as the study of naming places on the earth's surface (Mahsun, 2005; Sarmah, 2017). Toponymy not only studies the linguistic form of a place name, but also traces the origins, meanings, and socio-cultural backgrounds that influence its naming process. Sarmah (2017) states that toponymy is a scientific study of place naming which includes the origin, meaning, use, and typology of the place name.

Place names are generally formed from various factors related to the geographical, historical, and cultural conditions of the people who inhabit the area. Therefore, toponymy cannot be separated

from interdisciplinary approaches such as anthropology, geography, and history. In this context, place names serve not only as location markers but also as representations of regional identity (Erikha et al., 2021; Moleong, 2010).

Moreover, recent perspectives highlight that toponyms function as a form of cultural memory and spatial narrative, preserving collective experiences of a community. Through place names, communities encode information about past events, environmental characteristics, and cultural beliefs, making toponymy an important source for understanding local knowledge systems (Sugiri, 2003; Sulistyawati, 2020).

Toponymy has several important functions in people's lives:

1. As a location marker
2. As an identity of a place
3. As a repository of historical, cultural, and social values

Most previous studies on toponymy focus on classification and meaning of place names, but relatively few explore how toponyms function as living cultural narratives that connect environmental conditions, historical experiences, and social practices simultaneously. In addition, there is still a lack of in-depth studies that analyze toponyms using a holistic framework (linguistic + ecological + cultural), particularly in specific local contexts.

Naming

Naming is the process of assigning names to objects, places, events, or concepts. In linguistic studies, naming is understood as the process of assigning language symbols that represent references outside language. Rosa states that naming is a symbolic process that refers to particular objects or phenomena in human life. Linguistically, the relationship between a name and its referent is arbitrary. However, in practice, naming is often motivated by certain factors such as physical characteristics, historical events, environmental conditions, and cultural values.

According to Abdul Chaer, naming can occur through various processes, including imitation of sounds, reference to distinctive characteristics, naming after inventors, place of origin, materials, or through abbreviation. This shows that naming is not random but reflects how humans conceptualize and categorize their world. In addition, naming can also be seen as a cognitive and cultural process, where language users interpret their environment and assign meaning based on shared knowledge and experiences. Thus, naming contributes to the formation of collective knowledge systems within a community.

While naming has been widely discussed in linguistic theory, there is still limited research that examines naming as a dynamic process involving cognitive, cultural, and environmental dimensions simultaneously, especially in the context of place naming. Previous studies often treat naming as a static outcome rather than a process shaped by ongoing social interaction and cultural transmission.

Naming Aspects in Toponymy

In toponymy studies, place naming can be analyzed through several underlying aspects. According to Sudaryat (2009), place names are generally influenced by three main aspects: embodiment, social, and cultural aspects.

a. Embodiment Aspect

The embodiment aspect relates to the physical condition of the natural environment. Place names are often derived from observable natural elements such as landforms, vegetation, animals, and

water sources. Sudaryat classifies this into geomorphological, biological–ecological, and hydrological backgrounds.

This aspect shows how communities interpret and interact with their natural surroundings, making environmental features key references in naming practices.

b. Social Aspects

The social aspect is related to community life, including social activities, occupations, historical events, and influential figures. Place names in this category reflect social dynamics, economic activities, and patterns of interaction within a community.

c. Cultural Aspects

The cultural aspect involves beliefs, folklore, myths, and traditions. Many place names originate from legends or culturally significant events, reflecting collective memory and identity.

Additional Theoretical Perspective:

These three aspects align with a broader socio-cultural linguistic framework, where language (including naming) is shaped by the interaction between environment (nature), society (human activity), and culture (belief systems). This triadic relationship highlights that place names are multidimensional linguistic phenomena.

Although Sudaryat's framework provides a clear classification, previous studies often analyze these aspects separately rather than integratively. There is still limited research that examines how embodiment, social, and cultural aspects interact simultaneously in shaping place names, particularly in localized case studies. Additionally, the application of this framework in specific regional contexts remains underexplored, creating opportunities for more contextual and empirical investigations.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. The qualitative approach was chosen because the data studied was in the form of speech, stories, and information submitted by informants about the origin of the naming of gampong in Bandar Dua District, Pidie Jaya Regency. Descriptive research is used to describe and explain the phenomenon of gampong naming based on the aspects behind it systematically and factually (Sugiyono, 2013).

Data collection in this study was conducted systematically through several stages, including preliminary observation, purposive informant selection, field observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and data verification. Preliminary observation was carried out in Bandar Dua to identify the research setting and the 45 gampong as research objects. Informants were selected based on specific criteria, such as being native residents, over 40 years old, knowledgeable about local history, and willing to provide information. Field observations were conducted to examine geographical and social conditions related to gampong naming. In-depth interviews were carried out openly to explore the origins, meanings, and background of place names. The collected data were documented through field notes and recordings, and verified through triangulation to ensure data validity. Finally, the data were organized based on naming aspects for further analysis. (Erikha et al., 2022; Istiana, 2012; Sugono, 2005).

Data collection was carried out through observation and interview techniques. Observations were carried out by observing the environmental conditions and social situation of the community related to the background of the naming of the gampong. In addition, in-depth interviews were also conducted with informants to obtain information about the history and meaning of the names

of the gampongs in Bandar Dua District. Interviews are conducted openly so that informants can convey information more freely and in-depth (Makincoiri, 2021; Mardhoniawati, 2016).

The data that has been obtained is then analyzed using the referential matching method, which is a language analysis method whose determining tool is outside the language. In this study, the analysis was carried out by interpreting the references or meanings contained in the names of the gampong based on their naming aspects. The data analysis process is carried out through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data reduction is carried out by selecting and focusing data that is relevant to the research objectives. Furthermore, the selected data is presented in the form of descriptions and groupings based on naming aspects. The last stage is the drawing of conclusions which is carried out after all data is thoroughly analyzed so that an overview of the toponymy of gampong names in Bandar Dua District, Pidie Jaya Regency is obtained (Prasetyo, 2019; Widodo, 2018).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the toponymy of gampong names in Bandar Dua is shaped by three main naming aspects, namely embodiment, social, and cultural aspects, as proposed in Sudaryat's framework. From a total of 45 gampongs analyzed, 37 are categorized under the embodiment aspect, 21 under the social aspect, and only 1 under the cultural aspect. These findings demonstrate that place naming in this region is not arbitrary but systematically reflects the interaction between humans, environment, and socio-cultural systems.

The embodiment aspect emerges as the most dominant factor influencing gampong naming. This aspect reflects the physical and ecological characteristics of the environment, including landforms, water sources, and vegetation. Many gampong names in Bandar Dua District are directly derived from observable natural features. For instance, Ulee Gle originates from the words ulee ('head') and gle ('mountain'), indicating the geographical position of the village at the end of a mountain range. Similarly, Alue Keutapang reflects the presence of a river (alue) and ketapang trees in the surrounding area. Other examples such as Paya Pisang Klat, Drien Tujoh, and Uteun Bayu also demonstrate how swamps, fruit trees, and forests serve as references in naming (Sibarani, 2004; Sudaryat, 2009).

This finding supports Sudaryat's theory that the embodiment aspect is closely related to geomorphological, biological-ecological, and hydrological elements in the environment. It also aligns with broader toponymic theories which state that place names function as linguistic representations of environmental perception. In this context, language becomes a medium through which communities interpret and encode their surrounding landscape. The dominance of this aspect indicates that the people of Bandar Dua maintain a strong ecological orientation, where nature is not only a physical setting but also a primary reference in constructing spatial identity (Nash, 1999; Tent & Blair, 2011).

In addition to environmental factors, the social aspect also plays a significant role in shaping gampong names. The study found that 21 gampong names are influenced by social conditions, including economic activities, social interactions, and community structures. For example, Blang Dalam reflects agricultural activities, as the word blang refers to rice fields, indicating that farming is a dominant livelihood in the area. Meanwhile, Keude Ulee Gle contains the word keude ('market'), which highlights the role of trade and economic interaction within the community.

Furthermore, several gampong names reflect the existence of social and religious institutions. Names such as Meunasah Paku and Meugit Sagoe indicate the presence of religious buildings (meunasah or mosques), which function not only as places of worship but also as centers of social interaction, discussion, and communal activities. These findings reinforce sociolinguistic perspectives which emphasize that language reflects social structures and collective experiences.

They are also consistent with previous studies, such as Hasna (2021) and Anum (2022), which highlight the role of social and economic factors in the formation of place names (Chaer, 2014; Kridalaksana, 2008; Lauder, 2005).

The presence of the social aspect demonstrates that toponymy also serves as a record of community life. Through place names, information about livelihoods, social organization, and historical events can be preserved and transmitted across generations. This confirms that language functions not only as a communication tool but also as a repository of social knowledge.

In contrast, the cultural aspect appears to be the least dominant in the naming of gampongs in Bandar Dua District. The findings show that only one gampong name is associated with cultural elements, namely Alue Sane. This name is linked to local beliefs about a supernatural being (*sane*) that is believed to inhabit the river in the area. This indicates that cultural-based naming, such as those derived from folklore, myths, or belief systems, exists but is less frequently used compared to environmental and social references.

However, despite its limited occurrence, the cultural aspect remains important because it reflects the symbolic and ideological dimensions of naming. It shows how traditional beliefs and cultural narratives are embedded in language and contribute to shaping local identity. This finding is in line with previous studies (e.g., Salehudin et al., 2022), which emphasize that cultural elements such as myths, legends, and belief systems play a role in place naming, although not always dominant.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce the theoretical framework of onomastics and toponymy, which states that place names are shaped by multiple interacting factors, including environmental, social, and cultural contexts. The dominance of the embodiment aspect highlights the strong relationship between the community and the natural environment, while the social aspect reflects the importance of daily activities and social interactions in shaping linguistic expressions. The cultural aspect, although limited, confirms the presence of local belief systems within naming practices (Berg & Vuolteenaho, 2009; Coates, 2012; Kadmon, 2004).

In a broader perspective, this study also supports the view that toponymy is a multidisciplinary field that intersects with linguistics, anthropology, geography, and cultural studies. Place names in Bandar Dua District not only function as geographical markers but also as representations of collective memory, local knowledge, and identity. Through toponymy, it is possible to understand how communities perceive their environment, organize their social life, and preserve their cultural values (Alderman, 2008; Hough, 2016; Rose-Redwood et al., 2010).

Thus, this study confirms that the toponymy of gampong names in Bandar Dua District reflects a complex interaction between language, environment, and society. The findings highlight that naming practices serve as an important medium for recording history, expressing identity, and maintaining the continuity of local wisdom across generations.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the toponymy of gampong names in Bandar Dua is systematically shaped by three main naming aspects: embodiment, social, and cultural aspects. The findings reveal that the embodiment aspect is the most dominant, followed by the social aspect, while the cultural aspect appears least frequently. This indicates that natural environmental conditions serve as the primary reference in naming gampongs, reflecting a strong ecological orientation of the local community. At the same time, social activities such as agriculture, trade, and religious interaction also play a significant role in shaping place names, while cultural beliefs contribute symbolically to local identity. Overall, gampong names function not merely as geographical

markers but as representations of the relationship between language, environment, and society, as well as repositories of historical experiences and local knowledge.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have several important implications:

1. Theoretical Implications

This study strengthens the theoretical framework of onomastics and toponymy by providing empirical evidence that place naming is influenced by the interaction of environmental, social, and cultural factors. The dominance of the embodiment aspect confirms Sudaryat's classification and highlights the importance of ecological perspectives in linguistic studies. Furthermore, this research supports the view that toponymy is inherently interdisciplinary, bridging linguistics, anthropology, and geography.

2. Practical Implications

The results of this study can serve as documentary data for local governments and communities in preserving the historical background of gampong names. Given that much of the data is based on oral narratives, this research contributes to preventing the loss of local knowledge. It can also be utilized in regional planning, cultural mapping, and educational materials related to local history.

3. Social and Cultural Implications

This study helps increase community awareness of the importance of place names as part of cultural heritage. Understanding the meaning and origin of gampong names can strengthen local identity and encourage the preservation of traditions, values, and collective memory within the community.

4. Academic Implications

This research provides a reference for future studies in toponymy, particularly in under-researched regions. It opens opportunities for further research using broader approaches, such as comparative toponymy, digital mapping, or interdisciplinary studies combining linguistics with environmental and cultural analysis.

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