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ADDRESS TERMS AND INDECENT EXPRESSIONS IN SASAK LANGUAGE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF KARANG BARU (WANASABA) AND SURALAGA

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji istilah sapaan (*address terms*) dan ungkapan tidak senonoh (*indecent expressions*) pada dua komunitas penutur bahasa Sasak di Lombok Timur, yaitu Karang Baru (Kecamatan Wanasaba) dan Suralaga (Kecamatan Suralaga). Dengan desain deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi naturalistik dan wawancara semiterstruktur terhadap 30 partisipan (15 dari setiap desa) dari tiga kelompok usia, lalu dianalisis menggunakan tipologi istilah sapaan Rajabul (2023) dan kategori bahasa tabu Jay (2009). Hasil menunjukkan bahwa kedua komunitas memiliki delapan pola istilah sapaan dan lima kategori ungkapan tidak senonoh yang sama. Pola keakraban, pinjaman, dan ujaran rasial hampir identik, sedangkan perbedaan menonjol terdapat pada strategi sapaan teknonimik di Suralaga, istilah kekerabatan yang peka terhadap urutan kelahiran di Karang Baru, dan tabu keagamaan *kafir* yang hanya ditemukan di Suralaga. Temuan ini menunjukkan adanya variasi intradialek antarkomunitas Sasak yang berdekatan secara geografis, yang berkaitan dengan perbedaan organisasi sosial, elaborasi kekerabatan, dan tingkat urbanisasi.

Kata Kunci: istilah sapaan, ungkapan tidak senonoh, bahasa Sasak, variasi intradialek, sosiolinguistik

Abstract

This study investigates address terms and indecent expressions used in two Sasak-speaking communities in East Lombok, namely Karang Baru (Wanasaba) and Suralaga. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through naturalistic observation and semi-structured interviews with 30 participants (15 from each village) across three age groups, and were analyzed using Rajabul's (2023) typology of address terms and Jay's (2009) categorization of taboo language. Both communities share the same eight address-term patterns and five categories of indecent expressions. The intimacy, borrowing, and racial-slur categories were nearly identical, whereas notable differences appeared in Suralaga's teknonymic address strategy, Karang Baru's birth-order-sensitive kinship terms, and the religious taboo expression *kafir*, found only in Suralaga. These findings

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indicate intra-dialectal variation between geographically close Sasak communities, associated with differences in social organization, kinship elaboration, and degree of urbanization.
Keywords: address terms, indecent expressions, Sasak language, intra-dialectal variation, sociolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

Language does not only function as a tool of communication, but also serves as a mirror of the social and cultural identity of its speakers. Through language, individuals express ideas, emotions, and intentions, while simultaneously establishing and maintaining social relationships. Sociolinguistics examines the relationship between language and society, including how language use varies according to social factors such as age, gender, social class, and geographic region (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Indonesia, with hundreds of local languages spread across thousands of islands, represents a rich domain for such investigation. One prominent regional language is the Sasak language, the primary native language of the Sasak people on Lombok Island, West Nusa Tenggara, which according to Mahyuni (2007) exhibits significant regional variation across Lombok.

Variation in the Sasak language can be observed at the phonological, lexical, and pragmatic levels. A dialect, defined as a distinct language variety characteristic of a specific group or region differentiated by features of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Trudgill, 2000), includes varieties in Sasak such as the Kuto-Kute dialect in the north and the Ngeto-Ngete dialect in central and southern Lombok (Mahyuni, 2007). These dialectal differences influence how speakers address one another, the lexical choices they make, and the manners in which they express themselves in daily interactions.

One aspect of language use that reflects social identity and interpersonal relationships is address terms, which refer to words or expressions used by speakers to call or refer to others, such as personal names, kinship terms, titles, and honorific forms. The choice of address terms is closely linked to age, intimacy, and the social status of speakers (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). In Sasak society, for instance, amaq ('father') and inaq ('mother') are used not only for biological parents but also as respectful terms of address for older individuals. Rajabul (2023) classifies Sasak language address terms into eight patterns: nobility, general, intimacy, borrowing, kinship, religious, cultural, and personal pronoun patterns.

Another aspect examined is indecent expressions, also referred to in linguistic studies as taboo language, offensive speech, or coarse language—words or phrases considered inappropriate in formal contexts. Jay (2009) emphasizes that taboo language is not always used with negative intentions. In informal situations, such expressions can be utilized to express strong emotions, create humor, build group solidarity, or signal intimacy (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008). Understanding its usage within a community provides valuable insights into the social dynamics, values, and norms of that community.

Previous studies have addressed several of these aspects. Mahyuni (2007) investigated Sasak language use and its relationship to culture, particularly politeness strategies and honorifics, but her focus was primarily on formal and semi-formal speech situations and did not address indecent expressions or compare specific communities in Lombok. Rajabul (2023) analyzed Sasak address terms from a sociolinguistic perspective, demonstrating that the choice of address terms is influenced by age, social status, and speaker intimacy; however, his study focused exclusively on address terms. Meanwhile, most research on the Sasak language has centered on phonological or morphological aspects, or on language maintenance and shift in Lombok. Consequently, comparative studies investigating address terms and indecent expressions across two geographically adjacent yet socially distinct communities remain scarce, and the social factors influencing both linguistic phenomena in daily interaction have not been sufficiently explored (research gap).

The novelty of this study lies in three key aspects. First, it compares two Sasak-speaking communities in East Lombok, namely Karang Baru (Wanasaba District) and Suralaga (Suralaga District), which belong to the same dialectal zone but differ in their degree of urbanization and social characteristics, thereby observing variation at the village level rather than across large dialect regions. Second, address terms and indecent expressions are examined together as two domains that are equally sensitive to social relationships. Third, the analysis integrates Rajabul's (2023) address-term typology with Jay's (2009) taboo language categorization to document the inventory of forms along with their communicative functions. Based on these premises, this study aims to (1) identify and classify the types of address terms, and (2) identify and classify the types of indecent expressions used in daily interactions in Karang Baru and Suralaga, subsequently comparing their similarities and differences.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design with a comparative approach. A qualitative design was selected because it is well-suited for exploring linguistic phenomena within their natural context (Sugiyono, 2019; Creswell, 2014). The study aims to describe and analyze the types, patterns, and functions of address terms as well as indecent expressions as they naturally occur within two speech communities, without testing hypotheses or establishing statistical correlations.

The research was conducted at two locations in East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. The first location is Karang Baru in Wanasaba District, an inland rural area with a predominantly agrarian population. The second location is Suralaga in Suralaga District, which is slightly more urbanized and situated closer to the main thoroughfare connecting East Lombok with Mataram. Both sites were selected because they fall within the same Sasak dialect zone, yet differ in degree of urbanization, exposure to external influences, and local social characteristics, thus providing a meaningful basis for comparison.

The research participants were native Sasak speakers comprising adolescents and adults residing in both communities. To capture variation related to age and social background, participants were selected purposively from three age groups: adolescents (15–25 years old), adults (26–50 years old), and older adults (above 50 years old), involving both male and female participants. Selection criteria required participants to be native Sasak speakers residing in the respective community and willing to participate. The total number of participants was 30

individuals (15 from each location), with diverse backgrounds including farmers, traders, teachers, and students. This sample size aligns with the qualitative nature of the study, which prioritizes depth and richness of data over statistical representativeness.

Data were collected using two techniques: naturalistic observation and semi-structured interviews. In naturalistic observation, the researcher observed daily interactions in social spaces such as markets, family gatherings, and roadside conversations, taking notes on instances of address terms and indecent expressions, the situations in which they occurred, and participant information (age, gender, and social relationship). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' knowledge, experiences, and perceptions regarding the use of both linguistic phenomena and possible inter-community differences. Interview questions were open-ended and adapted dynamically based on responses. All interviews were conducted ethically: participants were informed of the study's purpose and the voluntary nature of their participation.

The research instruments consisted of two types. First, field notes were used to record the interaction context, participant characteristics, examples of address terms and indecent expressions, and researcher reflections. Second, a semi-structured interview guide containing open-ended questions was utilized, addressing topics such as address terms used toward older, peer, younger, and higher-status individuals, as well as the use of indecent expressions in daily communication.

Data analysis was qualitative and proceeded through four stages. Data reduction involved reviewing all data (transcripts, field notes, and audio recordings) and selecting content relevant to the research questions. In the classification stage, each address term was categorized into one of Rajabul's (2023) eight patterns, whereas indecent expressions were grouped according to Jay's (2009) categories and functions, taking into account age, gender, social relationships, and speech situations. In the interpretation stage, data from Karang Baru were compared with data from Suralaga to identify similarities and differences, and were linked to social factors (age, gender, social status, and intimacy). In the conclusion-drawing stage, findings were synthesized and evaluated with reference to the literature review. This study did not employ statistical tests or specialized analysis software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings according to the two research questions—address terms and indecent expressions—followed by a comparison between the two communities and a discussion of these findings grounded in sociolinguistic theory. Both locations are inhabited predominantly by Sasak people who use the Sasak language as their primary means of daily communication across family, neighborhood, and social settings.

Address Terms in Karang Baru and Suralaga

Both communities utilize all eight address-term patterns in Rajabul's (2023) typology. The distribution of address terms across each pattern is summarized in Table 1.

Pattern	Karang Baru (Wanasaba)	Suralaga
Nobility	4: Baiq, Mamiq, Lalu, Niniq	5: Baiq, Mamiq, Lalu, Niniq, Papuq
General	5: bajang, dedare, penganten, batur, semeton	5: raden, denda, Pe + child's name, Nk + child's name, semeton

Pattern	Karang Baru (Wanasaba)	Suralaga
Intimacy	7: gendut, kenjok, melong, pekik, jaen, imok, icok	7: gendut, kenjok, melong, pekik, jaen, imok, icok
Borrowing	8: bro, cees, geng, bestie, sayang, ayang, love, ay	8: bro, cees, geng, bestie, sayang, ayang, love, ay
Kinship	11: amaq, inaq, wayah, anakku, papuk, naken, mak kaka, nak kaka, mak adi, nak adi, pisak	8: amaq, inaq, papuk, ruan, bija, amak saik, inak saik, pisak jari
Religious	4: pe guru, ustadz, ustadzah, bapak	4: abah, ustadz, ustadzah, pk tuan
Cultural	5: pekaseh, aman jangan, inan nasik, mangku, kadus	5: pekaseh, aman jangan, inan nasik, tetoak, kadus
Personal Pronoun	4: aku, epe, ita, epe pada	4: aku, epe/ida, ita, ida pada
Total Items	**48**	**46**

Nobility and General patterns. In Karang Baru, Baiq is used for noble Sasak women, both married and unmarried; Mamiq for married noble men; Lalu for unmarried noble men; and Niniq for elderly grandparents or noble family members. Suralaga exhibits similar forms, but Niniq is specifically reserved for noble grandfathers, whereas noble grandmothers are addressed as Papuq. In the general pattern, Karang Baru uses bajang for unmarried young men, dedare for unmarried young women, penganten for newly married individuals, and batur and semeton to address people generally or friends; some speakers also address others directly by personal name in informal situations. In Suralaga, unmarried young men and women are addressed as raden and denda, whereas fathers and mothers are addressed using a teknonymic strategy, namely Pe- + first child's name for fathers and Nk- + first child's name for mothers; semeton is also used as a polite and friendly term of address.

Intimacy and Borrowing patterns. Both villages share seven identical intimacy terms. Four are based on physical traits: gendut (chubby/heavy-built), kenjok (limping), melong (large-eyed), and pekik (slant-eyed/narrow-eyed), while three are shortened personal names: jaen (from Zaenuddin), imok (from Halimah), and icok (from Aisyah). These forms mark intimacy and solidarity rather than disrespect. In the borrowing pattern, bro, cees, and geng are used for close male friends; bestie for close female friends; and sayang, ayang, love, and ay for romantic partners. These terms originate from Indonesian and English and are predominantly used by younger speakers in informal communication.

Kinship, Religious, Cultural, and Personal Pronoun patterns. In Karang Baru, amaq and inaq are used for father and mother, wayah as an affectionate address for father, anakku by parents to children, papuk for grandparents, naken for niece/nephew, and pisak for cousin. Karang Baru also distinguishes uncles and aunts based on birth order: mak kaka and nak kaka for older siblings of parents, and mak adi and nak adi for younger siblings of parents. In Suralaga, amaq, inaq, and papuk are used with similar meanings, bija is used by parents to children, ruan for niece/nephew, pisak jari for cousin, and amak saik and inak saik for uncles and aunts without distinguishing birth order. In the religious pattern, ustadz and ustadzah are used for male and

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female religious teachers in both villages, while religious leaders (Tuan Guru) and men who have completed the Hajj pilgrimage are addressed as pe guru and bapak in Karang Baru, and abah and pk tuan in Suralaga. In the cultural pattern, pekaseh (village irrigation manager), aman jangan (male server for side dishes in traditional ceremonies), inan nasik (female server for rice), and kadus (sub-village head) are found in both villages, whereas culturally knowledgeable customary leaders are addressed as mangku in Karang Baru and tetoak in Suralaga. In the personal pronoun pattern, both villages use aku, epe, and ita; the third plural form is epe pada in Karang Baru and ida pada in Suralaga, with Suralaga having an additional second-person singular variant, ida.

Indecent Expressions in Karang Baru and Suralaga

Both communities exhibit all five categories of indecent expressions according to Jay (2009), except religious taboos, which were recorded exclusively in Suralaga. Their distribution is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of indecent expressions according to Jay's (2009) categories in Karang Baru and Suralaga

Category	Karang Baru (Wanasaba)	Suralaga
Sexual Language	3: tlen inam bi, ngancot, tle	2: jlet, ngarong
Skatological Language	4: tai, tain tle, tain ptuk, ntut	3: tai, tain jlet bi, ntut
Derogatory Terms	9: acong, godek, babi, dangkong, sundel, binjat, gender, polo, bodo	7: acong, godek, bawi, sundel, gendut, pkek, dotak
Racial/Ethnic Slurs	2: Papua, Cina	2: Papua, Cina
Religious/Spiritual Taboo	kafir	1: kafir
Total Items	**18**	**15**

Sexual and Skatological language. In sexual language, tlen inam bi in Karang Baru and jlet in Suralaga are commonly used by parents when scolding children. Ngancot (Karang Baru) and ngarong (Suralaga) are used for emphasis or humor, while tle in Karang Baru is used to generate humor, mark intimacy/solidarity, or express frustration depending on the context. In skatological language, tai expresses anger in both villages; intensified forms (tain tle and tain ptuk in Karang Baru, tain jlet bi in Suralaga) express strong anger, frustration, disappointment, or mockery; and ntut is used to create humor.

Derogatory terms and Racial/Ethnic slurs. Derogatory terms are used to insult, criticize, or mock, though among younger speakers, some are also used playfully among close friends. Acong, godek, babi/bawi, and sundel are used to express anger or produce humor. Other forms have specific meanings: mocking overweight individuals (gender in Karang Baru, gendut in Suralaga), blind or unobservant individuals (polo, pkek), and individuals perceived as stupid (bodo, dotak). In racial/ethnic slurs, Papua is used to mock dark-skinned individuals and Cina to mock narrow-eyed individuals, identically in both villages.

Religious/Spiritual taboos. This category was found exclusively in Suralaga, specifically kafir. In daily usage, this term is not interpreted in a strict theological sense, but rather serves

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as a social sanction directed at community members (generally Muslims) who neglect religious obligations, particularly the five daily prayers. This labeling functions to embarrass recipients so they return to complying with communal religious norms. In Karang Baru, no equivalent expression was observed.

Similarities and Differences Between Both Communities

The clearest similarities are evident in the intimacy and borrowing patterns, whose items are identical in both villages, as well as in the nobility and religious patterns (Baiq, Mamiq, Lalu, ustadz, ustadzah), which are used in the same manner. Among indecent expressions, tai, ntut, acong, godek, and sundel appear in both villages, and the racial/ethnic slur category is entirely identical. The sharpest differences exist in the general pattern (use of raden and denda, and the teknonymic strategy in Suralaga) and the kinship pattern (birth-order differentiation present only in Karang Baru). A summary of differences is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of differences in address terms and indecent expressions between Karang Baru and Suralaga

Aspect	Karang Baru (Wanasaba)	Suralaga	Nature of Difference
Nobility Pattern	Niniq for noble grandfathers and grandmothers	Niniq (grandfather) and papuq (grandmother)	Gender differentiation
General Pattern	bajang, dedare, penganten	raden, denda; teknonymic Pe-/Nk- + child's name	Lexical and address strategy
Kinship Pattern	Differentiated by birth order (mak/nak kaka, mak/nak adi); naken, wayah	Not differentiated (amak saik, inak saik); ruan, bija, pisak jari	Degree of elaboration
Religious Pattern	pe guru, bapak	abah, pk tuan	Lexical variation
Cultural Pattern	mangku	tetoak	Lexical variation
Personal Pronouns	epe, epe pada	epe, ida, ida pada	Additional variants
Sexual Language	tlen inam bi, ngancot, tle	jlet, ngarong	Lexical; identical function
Skatological Language	tain tle, tain ptuk	tain jlet bi	Lexical; identical function
Derogatory Terms	9 forms, including dangkong, binjat, gender, polo, bodo	7 forms, including gendut, pkek, dotak	Inventory size
Religious Taboo	Not found	kafir	Category present only in Suralaga

DISCUSSION

Shared address system structure, distinct local elaborations. The finding that both communities utilize all eight of Rajabul's (2023) patterns demonstrates that the typological framework is sufficiently robust to map address terms across distinct Sasak villages. However, differences in Suralaga's teknonymic strategy and Karang Baru's birth-order-sensitive kinship terms indicate that this basic structure accommodates substantial local elaboration. In line with Wardhaugh and Fuller's (2015) view that language use reflects social context, identity, and interpersonal relationships, these differences can be interpreted as evidence that each community has developed address strategies aligned with its social organization. Teknonymy in Suralaga places parental status and family identity as primary sources of social recognition, whereas the more detailed kinship terminology in Karang Baru emphasizes generational rank within the extended family.

Role of urbanization and social exposure. Differences in the degree of urbanization provide a plausible explanation for some of these patterns. Suralaga, being located closer to the main thoroughfare leading to Mataram, is likely more exposed to external linguistic influences, which may correlate with additional pronominal variants (ida) and distinct general address terms (raden, denda). Karang Baru, being more inland and agricultural, appears more conducive to preserving conservative and detailed kinship terminology, consistent with Chambers's (2003) observation that traditional linguistic norms tend to persist in communities less exposed to external contact. It should be emphasized that this explanation is interpretative and has not been empirically tested in this study. Conversely, similarities in intimacy and borrowing patterns suggest that address domains related to peer solidarity and youth culture are less sensitive to local variation, as they are shaped more by shared exposure to Indonesian popular culture and social media than by village traditions.

Stable functions, variable forms. Comparison of indecent expressions supports Jay and Janschewitz's (2008) argument that taboo language serves recurring social functions—such as expressing emotion, creating humor, marking solidarity, and providing emphasis—regardless of lexical forms. In both villages, sexual and skatological expressions center on the same two functional poles: used by parents when scolding children, and used among peers for humor or emphasis, despite differing lexical items (tlen inam bi vs. jlet; tain tle/ptuk vs. tain jlet bi). This indicates that indecent expressions in Sasak can be understood as a functionally stable yet lexically flexible register. This aligns with Jay's (2009) view that communicative motivations for taboo language tend to be more consistent than their surface forms.

Religion and social control. The presence of kafir exclusively in Suralaga represents a notable asymmetry, whereas sexual, skatological, and derogatory categories serve parallel functions in both villages. Because this term functions as an informal social sanction mechanism to compel individuals to conform to communal religious expectations, its presence in daily repertoire indicates that the two communities may differ not only in vocabulary, but also in the degree to which religious practices are treated as public behavior subject to linguistic surveillance and enforcement. This interpretation aligns with the role of social norms and religious identity in Wardhaugh and Fuller's (2015) framework, though because this category is represented by a single item, it should be regarded as an initial indication rather than a definitive conclusion.

Interplay of social factors and study limitations. Overall, the observed patterns appear to be explained by the interaction of social factors: age, social status, intimacy, and urbanization. Age and intimacy influence appropriate forms similarly across both communities: younger speakers use more informal, borrowed, and peer-oriented forms, whereas intimate relationships permit the use of generally taboo expressions as solidarity markers. Inter-village differences primarily lie in local elaborations of kinship and general terms and the presence of religious taboos, which relate more to social organization and external exposure than to age or intimacy alone. These findings reinforce the study's conceptual framework integrating Wardhaugh and Fuller's (2015) sociolinguistic variation model, Rajabul's (2023) address typology, and Jay's (2009) functional account of taboo language, while expanding Mahyuni's (2007) claim by demonstrating that dialectal variation occurs not only across major dialect regions but also between neighboring villages within a single dialect zone. Study limitations should be noted: the purposive sample of 30 individuals lacked even age and gender distribution to systematically isolate individual social factors, and the study did not encompass written language or communities beyond these two villages.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

First, regarding the types of address terms, both Karang Baru (Wanasaba) and Suralaga utilize all eight patterns identified by Rajabul (2023): nobility, general, intimacy, borrowing, kinship, religious, cultural, and personal pronouns. The intimacy and borrowing patterns are identical in both villages, whereas distinct differences emerge in the general pattern (Suralaga's unique teknonymic strategy), the kinship pattern (Karang Baru's more detailed birth-order system), and specific lexical items in nobility, religious, cultural, and pronominal patterns.

Second, regarding indecent expressions, five categories were identified: sexual language, skatological language, derogatory terms, racial/ethnic slurs, and religious/spiritual taboos. Both communities employ them for similar communicative functions—expressing anger or frustration, generating humor, and providing emphasis—and share an identical racial/ethnic slur category. Primary differences reside in the lexical items for sexual and skatological language, the inventory size of derogatory terms, and the presence of the religious taboo kafir exclusively in Suralaga. Overall, Karang Baru and Suralaga demonstrate meaningful intra-dialectal variation attributable to differences in social organization, kinship elaboration, urbanization, and external contact, rather than random variation.

Theoretically, this study demonstrates that sociolinguistic variation can occur within a narrow dialect zone, extending Sasak variation research from regional dialect levels to adjacent village levels, while validating that Rajabul's (2023) typology and Jay's (2009) functional framework apply effectively across Sasak speech communities when accounting for local social organization and urbanization. Practically, these findings benefit language educators in Lombok for developing culturally responsive learning materials, assist language documentation efforts as village-specific forms risk obsolescence amid youth adoption of borrowed and standard forms, and aid local government and community organizations in cultural preservation endeavors in East Lombok.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are offered: (1) Future researchers should extend this study to other communities, including Kuto-Kute or Meno-Mene dialect areas, to examine whether these variation patterns apply more broadly across Lombok. (2) Subsequent research should employ larger, stratified samples with more balanced age and gender distributions to systematically analyze the independent effects of each social factor. (3)

Language educators in Lombok are advised to incorporate local kinship and general address term variations into local-content curricula to foster appreciation for dialectal diversity. (4) Language documentation agencies should urgently record vulnerable forms at risk of loss or homogenization, such as birth-order kinship terms in Karang Baru and teknonymic terms in Suralaga. (5) For Sasak speech communities, the continued use of local address terms and context-appropriate expressions within families and peer groups should be maintained as a badge of identity, alongside standard or formal varieties in public and cross-community contexts.

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