


Sociolect Variations in the Utterances Of Rural and Urban Communities: A Case Study in Cisata District and Pandeglang City

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Sociolect, Language Variation, Rural And Urban Speech, Sundanese Dialect, Sociolinguistics, Urbanization,</p>	<p>This study investigates sociolect variation in the speech of rural and urban communities, focusing on Cisata District and Pandeglang City, Banten Province. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach with the ethnography of communication method, the research explores how language use is shaped by education, age, occupation, and location. Data were collected through observations and interviews with selected informants in both areas. Analysis based on Labov's and Fishman's theories reveals clear distinctions: rural speakers use Sundanese dialects and informal Indonesian, reflecting traditional lifestyles, while urban speakers prefer standard or semi-formal Indonesian with frequent code-mixing, especially among youth and the educated. The findings show that sociolect variation is influenced not only by geography but also by educational access and social interaction. This research highlights the role of urbanization in shaping language use while underlining the need to preserve local linguistic identities amid social change.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Language is the primary tool of communication in human life, serving not only to convey information but also to reflect the social and cultural identity of its speakers (Kridalaksana, 2008). In the context of sociolinguistics, language variation reflects the social dynamics within a society, one of which is observed through the phenomenon of sociolects, or language variations related to the speaker's social status (Holmes, 2013). This phenomenon can be clearly seen in Indonesia's multicultural society, especially in the language differences between rural and urban communities.

Cisata District and Pandeglang City in Banten Province serve as compelling examples to study these differences. Cisata, as a rural area, retains a strong local Sundanese dialect, whereas Pandeglang, as an urban center, is influenced by standardized Indonesian and modern mixed-language understanding due to urbanization (Suwito, 1985). The linguistic shift and emergence of sociolect variations in these two regions indicate a complex relationship between language, social class, and living environment (Fishman, 1972).

Although numerous studies on language variation have been conducted, such as those by Chaer and Agustina (2010) who examined types of language variation, and Wardhaugh (2006) who explored the relationship between language and society, specific studies comparing rural and urban sociolects in Banten, particularly Cisata and Pandeglang, remain limited. This highlights a significant research gap.

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of understanding social variation to support the preservation of regional languages while also grasping ongoing social changes. Language variation also reflects the negotiation of identity in heterogeneous societies (Eckert, 2000) and serves as a mirror of social structure and mobility (Labov, 1972).

The research questions are: “How does sociolect variation appear in the speech of communities in Cisata District and Pandeglang City?” and “What social factors influence the differences in language use between the two regions?”. This study is expected to contribute to the development of local sociolinguistic studies and support efforts to document language variation in Indonesian society, particularly in Banten, which is rich in cultural and linguistic diversity.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because the research aims to describe in depth the phenomenon of sociolect variation in the speech of rural and urban communities. The main focus lies in the social meaning of language variations that emerge in everyday interactions.

The primary theories used to analyze the data are William Labov’s (1972) theory of language variation and Joshua Fishman’s (1972) concept of sociolect. These two theories help to understand how social factors such as age, education, occupation, and geographic environment influence speech patterns.

The research data consist of direct speech collected through participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The sources of information are residents of Cisata District (representing rural areas) and residents of Pandeglang City (representing urban areas). Informants were purposively selected based on age categories (youth, adults, and elderly), educational background (from low to high), and occupation (farmers, traders, employees, students).

The study was conducted over two months, from March to April 2025. The research locations included three villages in Cisata District and two sub-districts in Pandeglang City. A total of 20 informants participated, with 10 from each area. Research tools included field notebooks and interview guides.

The analysis process involved transcribing the data, categorizing speech variations, identifying determining social factors, and interpreting social meanings based on the language use context. Data validation was conducted through source triangulation and member checking with several informants to ensure data reliability.

This method is expected to allow the research findings to be replicated and used as a reference for further studies on language variation and sociolinguistic phenomena in other regions with similar social conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sociolect Variation in Cisata District

The research findings indicate a significant difference in the use of sociolect variation between rural communities (Cisata) and urban communities (Pandeglang). This variation is evident in the choice of expressions, sentence structure, and levels of formality in speech. The researcher conducted direct observation from March to April 2025 and selected the most representative data based on transcribed sociolect variations in Cisata subdistrict and Pandeglang city.

Table 1 Transcript of Sociolect Variation Data

No	Aspect	Cisata Community	Pandeglang City Community	Sociolect Variation
1	Regional Language	“Kumaha cager, Ema?” / “How are you, Mom?”	“Tadi sih saya udah ke kantor lurah, tapi teu aya orangna.” / “I already went to the sub-district.”	Local language variation, informal, close social relationship, rural context.
2	Regional Language	“Abdi badé ka sawah heula.” / “I’m going to the rice field first.”	“Udah biasa, orang Pandeglang mah gitu. Hade di awal, bingung di akhir.” / “It’s normal.”	Polite Sundanese, agricultural context, rural community. Code-switching.
3	Regional Language	“Pak RW tos sumping, ayeuna urang ngamimitian rapatna.” / “Mr. RW has arrived, now we start the meeting.”	“Saya mah nurut aja, asal ulah dipersulit wae urusannya.” / “I just obey, as long as it’s not complicated.”	Polite Sundanese, formal local language, institutional context, rural.
4	Regional Language	“Tadi mah ka pasar, bade meser béas saréat.” / “Earlier I went to the market to buy rice.”	“Iya, acaranya jadi. Tapi pas hujan gede, loba nu teu datang.” / “Yes, the event happened.”	Polite Sundanese, rural culture, traditional economic context. Code-switching.
5	Regional Language	“Teu acan, Ema di kebon kénéh, can mulang.” / “Not yet, Mom is still in the garden, hasn’t returned.”	“Eh, maneh kamana wae? Kuring nelepon teu diangkat-angkat.” / “Hey, where have you been? I called but you didn’t pick up.”	Casual Sundanese, agrarian culture, family relationship, rural community. Code-switching.

Sociolect Variation in Cisata Subdistrict

In the rural area of Cisata, it was found that the community tends to use the local Sundanese dialect in daily conversations, especially in interactions within the family and community environment. For example, in greetings, they use specific forms. In addition, code-switching between Sundanese and Indonesian was found in formal contexts.

This variation demonstrates a strong sense of solidarity and kinship, as emphasized by Holmes (2013), who states that forms of speech can reflect social relationships between speakers. The regional language is used as a collective identity and a means of preserving local culture, in line with Sudaryat's (2009) view that Sundanese serves as a symbol of regional and familial status in the Banten area.

Sociolect Variation in Pandeglang City

Conversely, the urban community in Pandeglang predominantly uses Indonesian in semi-formal and formal varieties, especially in work contexts and social interactions. For example, in housing contexts, the forms used are: "Maaf, bisa dibantu proses pengajuan ini?" or "Silakan registrasi ulang di loket sebelah."

However, in informal environments such as among friends or on social media, utterances mixing Indonesian with slang or colloquial language appear, such as: "Gue udah bilang dari awal, lo aja yang ngotot." This variation reflects the social dynamics of an urban community that is more heterogeneous, influenced by media, education, and high social mobility. This supports Labov's (1972) theory that language variation reflects the social structure of society, including status, age, and social networks.

Social Factors Influencing Variation

The main factors influencing the difference in sociolect variation between the two regions include:

1. Educational background – Communities with higher education tend to be more flexible in using formal language varieties.
2. Occupation – Office employees or professionals in the city are more likely to use standard Indonesian, while farmers and traders in rural areas maintain the local language.
3. Geographical environment and access to information – Urban environments that are more open to global information flows encourage the emergence of dynamic and cosmopolitan language styles.

Implications

This study shows that sociolect variation is an important indicator in understanding the social and cultural dynamics of society. These findings also emphasize the need for preserving regional languages amid modernization and urbanization. This research can serve as a starting point for further studies highlighting language shift and linguistic identity of local communities in the context of computerization or multilingual education. Future researchers are encouraged to examine sociolect variation in other contexts such as sexual orientation, generation, or advanced domains, to broaden the understanding of language diversity in contemporary Indonesian society.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that sociolect variation between rural communities in Cisata Subdistrict and urban communities in Pandeglang City reflects the speakers' social conditions, educational levels, and communication environments. Rural communities tend to maintain the use of the local Sundanese dialect as a symbol of identity and social solidarity, while urban communities show a tendency toward the use of formal Indonesian and more dynamic mixed language varieties. These findings affirm that language is not merely a tool of communication, but also a social marker influenced by the structure and social mobility of the community. Additionally, the study indicates that geographical differences and access to information also shape the variation of speech across regions. However, this research has not yet thoroughly examined sociolect variation based on factors such as age, gender, and advanced communication media, which also have significant potential in shaping contemporary linguistic styles. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore these aspects to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of language variation in Indonesia's ever-evolving society.

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