

The Characteristics of the Sundanese Language "Aing Tangerang": Diversity and Loss of Cultural Identity

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INDEXING	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Keyword 1 ; Sundanese Language Keyword 2 ; Tangerang Keyword 3 ; Diversity Keyword 4 ; Loss of Cultural Identity Keyword 5 ; Language Preservation	In recent decades, a worrying phenomenon has occurred is the declining using of the Sundanese language among the younger generation. This research focussed on various social, cultural, and psychological aspects that affect the use of Sundanese in Tangerang, with the aim of providing insights that can help communities, governments, and educational institutions in formulating more effective conservation strategies. This study used a qualitative approach with in-depth interview methods and participatory observation. The results showed that the use of Sundanese in Tangerang continues to live in certain families and communities, although not as much as in the past. People in Tangerang still maintain this language in their daily conversations, although it is starting to be rarely found in public spaces. One of the characteristics of the Sundanese language that still survives in Tangerang is the expression "aing Tangerang" . "Aing Tangerang" not only reflects pride in personal identity, but also becomes a symbol of a community that is deeply rooted in local history and culture. Some of the factors that caused the decline in the use of Sundanese in Tangerang include Globalization and Modernization, Social Displacement and Urbanization, and also The Influence of Technology and Social Media. The Impact of the Loss of Sundanese Language on Cultural Identity are Erosion of Cultural Identity and The Young Generation Alienated from Cultural Roots. To preserve the Sundanese language in Tangerang, several conservation efforts can be made Sundanese Language Teaching in Schools, Increasing Public Awareness, and Utilization of Social Media and Technology.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a very vital element in human life. Language is more than just a communication tool, language is a window that opens up an understanding of a nation's culture, traditions, and history (Bonvillain, 2019). In Indonesia, a country rich in cultural and linguistic diversity, regional languages have a very strategic role in maintaining this diversity (Zein, 2020). According to the Sarip *et al* (2024), in each regional language, including Sundanese, has its own uniqueness that is an inseparable part of the identity of the people who use it. The Sundanese language, in particular, has long been a part of people's lives in West Java, including the Tangerang region, and plays a very important role in strengthening social ties as well as introducing cultural richness inherited by ancestors, as well as described by Sulaeman (2017), Darhaeni (2018), and Sutedi *et al* (2020).

However, in recent decades, a worrying phenomenon has occurred is the declining using of the Sundanese language among the younger generation (Anshori, 2018). This phenomenon does not only occur in Tangerang, but also in many other areas in West Java, which are supposed to be home to Sundanese speakers (Mulyanah, 2018 ; Sagimin, 2020). As a mother tongue that has been used in daily life for centuries, Sundanese now faces great challenges in maintaining its existence in the midst of the rapid flow of globalization, modernization, and urbanization (Zayadi, 2023).

The main causes of the decline in the use of Sundanese are very diverse, and often interrelated. Globalization that encourages rapid cultural exchange, as well as the strong influence of global languages, especially English and Indonesian, has shifted the role of Sundanese in daily life. Sundanese people, especially those who live in urban areas such as Tangerang, are increasingly accustomed to using Indonesian in almost every aspect of life. Indonesian, as the official language of the country, is the preferred language for communicating in public spaces, education, workplaces, and even in daily social interactions (Khansa *et al*, 2017).

The influence of mass media, especially social media, also accelerates this process. With various platforms that are more dominant in using Indonesian, the younger generation tends to use this language more often to communicate (Damayanti *et al*, 2019). Moreover, foreign languages, especially English, are increasingly dominating global communication spaces that affect the way people think and act. Therefore, Indrayani (2011) stated that the Sundanese, which was originally the main language in families and communities, is now starting to be marginalized, even considered less relevant by most of the younger generation who prioritize convenience and flexibility in speaking Indonesian.

In addition to globalization and modernization factors, the phenomenon of urbanization also plays a role in the process of decreasing the use of Sundanese. The movement of people from villages to big cities, such as Tangerang, has had a significant impact on the language used in everyday life. In these big cities, Indonesian has become a more common and necessary language in social interactions, education, and the world of work (Sain, 2020). People who migrate to cities often feel that using Sundanese is no longer effective, so they prefer to speak Indonesian as a language that is more accepted in many circles. Pepinsky *et al* (2024) explained that urbanization can contribute the declining of local language speakers, shift towards official language of the nation.

Therefore, it is important to conduct more in-depth research on this phenomenon, not only to understand the factors that led to the decline in the use of the Sundanese language, but also to explore its impact on the cultural identity of the Sundanese people, as well as to find effective solutions to overcome this challenge. This research focussed on various social, cultural, and psychological aspects that affect the use of Sundanese in Tangerang, with the aim of providing insights that can help communities, governments, and educational institutions in formulating more effective conservation strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

These lifestyle changes also affect the way parents educate their children. In many Sundanese families, children are more accustomed to communicating in Indonesian than Sundanese. This causes the younger generation, who no longer know their mother tongue well, to feel increasingly detached from their cultural roots. The loss of the Sundanese language risks eroding various aspects of culture associated with it, such as folklore, folk songs, oral arts, and cultural values that have been preserved for centuries, as well as researched by Sukmawan (2017), also Aljamaliah and Darmadi (2021).

One of the biggest impacts of the decline in the use of Sundanese is the threat to the preservation of the cultural identity of the Sundanese people. The Sundanese language is not only a tool for communication, but also a means of transmitting cultural knowledge, noble values, and traditions that have developed over thousands of years (Fadilah *et al*, 2023). Without this language, folk tales containing the moral values and history of Sundanese society will be increasingly forgotten. Likewise with other arts and cultures that are inseparable from the use of the Sundanese language (Santosa *et al*, 2022). Without adequate preservation efforts, Sundanese culture is at risk of regression, even losing its relevance in the midst of the times (Haerudin, 2018).

The preservation of the Sundanese language is becoming increasingly urgent so that future generations do not lose their connection to their cultural heritage. For this reason, the development of a strategy that is able to integrate the use of Sundanese in daily life is very important. Whether in families, schools, communities, or the media, collaborative efforts need to be made to ensure that the Sundanese language is still used, appreciated, and passed on to the next generation. The use of Sundanese in digital contexts and social media is also a great opportunity to maintain the continuity of this language in the modern era (Aulia *et al*, 2021). Efforts to preserve the Sundanese language not only provide benefits for the Sundanese people, but also to enrich the diversity of Indonesian culture that is the hallmark of this nation. With the right steps, the Sundanese language will continue to live and develop, preserving the cultural heritage that is priceless to the Indonesian nation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with in-depth interview methods and participatory observation, similar with the explanation from Kang and Hwang (2021). Interviews were conducted with Tangerang residents who still use Sundanese in their daily lives as well as with community leaders and linguists who observed changes in language use. In addition, literature analysis was also carried out to strengthen the understanding of the history and development of the Sundanese language in Tangerang as well as comparison with other areas that have similar conditions.

Participatory observation carried out by being directly involved in community activities that still prioritize the use of Sundanese, such as cultural gatherings, festivals, and community events, as well as described by Sanusi and Susanti (2024). This approach aimed to explore a deeper understanding of the role of Sundanese in the daily lives of the people of Tangerang and the challenges faced in maintaining its use.

This research also utilizes secondary sources from books, journals, and articles related to the Sundanese language, Sundanese culture, and social changes that affect the use of regional languages in Indonesia (Sarip *et al* , 2024). The collected data analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which allow researchers to identify patterns related to factors that affect the decline in the use of Sundanese in Tangerang and their impact on the preservation of local culture.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History and Development of Sundanese Language in Tangerang

Tangerang, which was previously part of the West Java region, has a sizable Sundanese population. Sundanese is widely spoken in this area, both within families and in social contexts. In the era before technological advances and globalization, Sundanese was the main language used in daily communication in various circles of society (Pasaribu, 2015). The Sundanese people in Tangerang, at that time, conveyed their oral traditions through folklore, songs, and prose that were passed down from generation to

generation. These stories have deep cultural values, such as folktales about local legends that live in the collective memory of the Sundanese people in Tangerang, as well as described by Fakhriati *et al* (2023).

However, in the era of modernization, Sundanese began to be displaced by Indonesian, which became the national language and was widely used in education, media, and government. Globalization that brings outside influences also accelerates this shift in language (Kohler, 2019). Nonetheless, the use of Sundanese in Tangerang continues to live in certain families and communities, although not as much as in the past. People in Tangerang still maintain this language in their daily conversations, although it is starting to be rarely found in public spaces.

Characteristics of "Aing Tangerang" in Sundanese in Tangerang

One of the characteristics of the Sundanese language that still survives in Tangerang is the expression "aing Tangerang". This phrase is often used by the people of Tangerang to show a sense of pride in their local identity. "Aing" in Sundanese means "I" or "I", but in the context of Tangerang, this expression has a deeper meaning, namely as a symbol of pride in their city or region of origin. "Aing Tangerang" not only reflects pride in personal identity, but also becomes a symbol of a community that is deeply rooted in local history and culture, as well as researched by Kulsum *et al* (2023).

The use of expressions such as "aing Tangerang" is a characteristic that distinguishes the Sundanese people in Tangerang from other regions. Despite being influenced by the Indonesian language, the Sundanese people in Tangerang still maintain and use local elements in their conversations, which makes the Sundanese language in Tangerang still have unique characteristics.

Factors Causing the Reduction in the Use of Sundanese Language

Some of the factors that caused the decline in the use of Sundanese in Tangerang include (Pepinsky *et al*, 2024):

1. Globalization and Modernization: In the era of globalization, Indonesian has become a more dominant language, especially in the world of education, work, and media. Indonesian is considered a more universal language and makes it easier for people to communicate in a wider context. This causes Sundanese to be used less often by young people who are increasingly exposed to Indonesian.
2. Social Displacement and Urbanization: Rapid urbanization in Tangerang causes many people from various regions to come to look for work. As Sundanese mingle with other ethnicities and cultures, the Sundanese language used to be used in daily life begins to be replaced by Indonesian, which is considered more practical and easy to understand by all parties.
3. The Influence of Technology and Social Media: The presence of social media and modern technology also affects the language used

The Impact of the Loss of Sundanese Language on Cultural Identity

Language is not only a means of communication, but also a medium to transmit the cultural, historical, and identity values of a community group. The loss of the use of the Sundanese language has a considerable impact on the preservation of local culture. Here are the impacts (Aulia *et al*, 2021 ; Firdausy *et al*, 2024) :

1. Erosion of Cultural Identity: Along with the loss of the Sundanese language, many cultural values related to this language have also been eroded. Folklore, oral traditions, and customs passed down by previous generations are beginning to be forgotten. This causes the Sundanese people in Tangerang to lose their connection

with their cultural roots.

2. The Young Generation Alienated from Cultural Roots: The younger generation who do not master the Sundanese language will be increasingly alienated from their ancestral culture. They may only know Sundanese culture through a more modern form, but without a deep understanding of the meanings and values contained in oral traditions passed down from generation to generation.

Efforts to Preserve the Sundanese Language in Tangerang

Silitonga and Astuti (2018) and Sutedi *et al* (2020) to preserve the Sundanese language in Tangerang, several conservation efforts can be made:

1. Sundanese Language Teaching in Schools: Sundanese language education should be included in the school curriculum as a compulsory subject, not just an elective. Effective teaching of Sundanese in schools can help children understand and appreciate their language and culture from an early age.
2. Increasing Public Awareness: Communities need to be given a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving their regional languages. Through seminars, workshops, and cultural festivals, people can be more aware of the value of preserving the Sundanese language and get to know their culture more closely.
3. Utilization of Social Media and Technology: Using social media and technology as a means to promote the Sundanese language can be an effective strategy. For example, developing a Sundanese language learning app or holding a podcast that conveys Sundanese folklore in Sundanese, so that the younger generation can be more involved in preserving their language.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of declining use of Sundanese in Tangerang shows a great challenge for the preservation of regional cultural identity. Although various factors have led to a reduction in the use of the Sundanese language, conservation efforts can still be undertaken with a planned approach and based on public awareness of the importance of preserving their cultural heritage. The Sundanese language is not only a communication tool, but also a window that opens a deeper understanding of Sundanese history and culture that needs to be preserved.

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