# Exploring dominant naming patterns in West Aceh and Nagan Raya: A linguistic and geographical analysis

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**Abstract**
*Naming patterns in Indonesia have shown the influence of geographical, social, and cultural factors on toponymy. Place naming in Aceh, a province in the country, has been based on the genesis and generic patterns that indicate specific objects, historical reasons, and word-forming elements. This study explores the dominant naming patterns found in the West Aceh and Nagan Raya regions by analyzing data sourced from regional databases, government archives, and the SIGAP (Sistem Informasi Gampong-Village Information System). A total of 131 place names from 29 villages were examined through literature review and document analysis as primary and secondary data sources. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, was employed to systematically identify recurring linguistic patterns. The results revealed nine dominant naming patterns in these regions, demonstrating a combination of different elements such as alue [aluə] 'ditch', blang [blaŋ] 'rice field', pasi [pasi] 'beach', suak [suaʔ] 'estuary', cöt [cɔt] 'highland', often combined with nouns or adjectives. This study illustrates how place names convey linguistic structures and geographical narratives that present Aceh's interconnection between language, landscape, and cultural identity. The findings contribute to broader discussions on the role of toponyms in preserving local knowledge and shaping regional identity.*

***Keywords:*** *Nagan Raya; naming patterns; toponymy; West Aceh*

## INTRODUCTION

Language, whether spoken, signed, or written, is inherently created by integrating multiple modes of expression and is shaped by the surrounding context (Kusters et al. 2017). Various studies have explored the relationship between language and context, emphasizing how language develops as a tool of social interaction (Darheni, 2020; Smith & Roberts, 2019). As a tool for engaging in social interactions within a community (Darheni 2020), a language has been

employed by society to generate collective social outcomes. Hence, language is also regarded as a cultural creation. This concept is also reflected in studies that assert the strong connection between language and cultural identity (Prihadi, 2015; Lee & Zhang, 2018). Language and culture are inseparable components. This concept extends to the act of naming a specific cultural framework (Prihadi 2015). Names are assigned to things or people that hold cultural significance, and naming traditions often mirror the social beliefs and cultural values of a community (Völkel, 2023).

Place names serve as more than mere geographical markers; they capture the essence of a region, its history, culture, and, relationship with the environment (Jordan, 2012). The act of naming a place is a complex process that involves linguistic creativity, cultural significance, and geographical significance. This interaction between linguistic expressions and environmental features has been widely discussed in previous research (Shoval, 2020; Nugraha et al., 2020). Consequently, the presence of distinctive naming patterns within a society serves as an immediate reflection of its society, capturing its identity and inherent traits. These patterns combine cultures' linguistics, histories, habitats, and spatial and environmental perceptions that form a composition of their past (Jett, 1997).

Rich narratives emerge through the naming of places, capturing the essence of a region's culture, historical journey, natural surroundings, and the lifestyles of its inhabitants. Scholars have noted the importance of these names in connecting individuals to their ancestral heritage (Wilson, 2018; Kihara, 2020). Notably, they show a sense of connection and ownership within the local populace. Beyond their symbolic function, place names often reflect the customary practices, beliefs, and economic activities of a community. For example, villages named after agricultural terms, such as *blang* ('rice field') and *alue* ('ditch'), indicate a historically agrarian lifestyle, whereas names referencing coastal features, such as *pasi* ('beach') and *suak* ('estuary') accentuate the maritime heritage of certain regions. Place names are more than just poetic; they're valuable tools for understanding language. They show the language preferences of a region, feature its linguistic landscape, and reveal how people creatively use language to describe the world around them (Demska, 2019; Puzey, 2011). In many cases, these names also preserve historical narratives, commemorating significant local figures, battles, or migrations that shaped the identity of the region. Shoval, as noted by Nugraha et al. (2020), observed that place names often serve as memorials for historical events, stories, or individuals, while also mirroring geographical settings.

A place's distinct identity can be identified through its names, which may consist of a single word or a combination of simple or complex words, distinguishing it from others. It is not just about the name; when a name is given, it always carries meaning with it. This is because language is a cultural emblem that tightly binds to ethnic identities. According to De Sousa and De Quadros (2021), the act of naming spaces is a distinctly human endeavor that reveals imprints of the culture and social community associated with the individual assigning the name, whether through spoken or sign language. This perspective has been echoed in the work of various scholars who emphasize the cultural implications of naming practices (De Sousa & De Quadros, 2021;

Anderson, 2019). As we explore the features of cultures across the world, it is clear that different groups not only speak different languages but also possess varying perspectives on the world, all of which find their reflection in their respective languages (Hîrbu, 2023; Mykhailyuk & Pohlod, 2015).

In linguistics, the study of naming patterns is commonly known as toponymy (Madden, 2018). Geographical factors, the local population, and the prevailing culture within a society all hold pivotal roles and share a strong connection with the field of toponymy. Recent research has focused on the impact of these factors on naming conventions in different regions (Turayevich, 2021; Green & Roberts, 2020). According to Turayevich (2021), toponymy pertains to the examination of geographical names, encompassing cities, villages, rivers, lakes, and their historical origins. This field provides valuable linguistic resources for scholars and linguists.

The knowledge and information related to naming are referred to as onomastics, which delve into names from all angles. CholaMusonda et al. (2019) suggest that onomastics, as the study of proper names, involves anthroponyms and toponyms which are personal names and place names, respectively (CholaMusonda et al. 2019). This field is extensive because practically anything can possess a name. Moreover, the study of names theoretically encompasses every language, all geographical and cultural regions, as well as all historical periods. This can be interpreted broadly to include various entities like inhabited places, structures, roads, nations, mountains, rivers, lakes, celestial bodies, and more. Alternatively, it can be specifically limited to inhabited places, such as cities, towns, villages, and hamlets. The broad scope of onomastics has resulted in a variety of research in various regions, with a focus on understanding cultural identity through place names (Kihara, 2020; CholaMusonda et al., 2019).

Previous studies have explored various ways place names are constructed, revealing distinct patterns and their cultural significance. For instance, Nugraha et al. (2020) examined the morphological mechanisms used in the naming of subdistricts within the Bandung region. Their research identified three key morphological processes, compounding, borrowing, and blending, each of which manifests in different toponymic patterns. These patterns include combinations of proper nouns, generic nouns followed by proper nouns, and proper nouns with adjectives. The study showed how morphological choices in place naming can reflect underlying social and cultural factors.

Similarly, Janggo and Uran (2023) focused on place naming within Sikkanese culture, aiming to explore the relationship between naming conventions, cultural meanings, and values. Through in-depth interviews and existing literature, their study revealed that naming structures in Sikka regency often combine single words, noun phrases, or descriptive adjective-noun pairs. They identified three fundamental dimensions of toponymy in the region, they are manifestation, social, and cultural. The study found that place names sometimes blend elements of nature (such as flora) with cultural aspects, such as local myths, showing the strong connection between the landscape and cultural heritage. Furthermore, the meanings of these names were found to be

closely tied to historical narratives, folklore, and community beliefs. This finding reinforced the importance of preserving these cultural connections.

Fauzi (2020) conducted a study in Sirnabaya to uncover the naming patterns in the village and their connection to local folklore. The research indicated that the naming procedures were heavily influenced by cultural contexts, particularly the folklore surrounding the Kingdom of Singopuro. This study emphasized how place names can act as carriers for cultural heritage and carry meanings tied to the historical and mythical narratives that form the local community's identity.

These studies together contribute to a better understanding of how place names reflect not only linguistic structures but also the influential relationship between culture, history, and geography. Their findings are relevant to the current research by illustrating the diverse ways naming conventions can encode cultural, historical, and environmental significance, which can be applied to the analysis of naming patterns in other regions, such as Aceh.

In Aceh, place names often incorporate a blend of national languages, local dialects, and even foreign languages (Aziz et al. 2023). This practice reveals a distinctive pattern that characterizes the region's approach to naming locations. This pattern is not limited to Aceh; it extends to the broader context of place names in Indonesia. More than 1,500 villages across Indonesia follow a similar convention by adopting names in the local language, typically falling under three broad categories related to geographical features such as mountains, rivers, and bays (Lauder & Lauder 2015). This underscores the existence of a unique naming tradition that manifests the relationship between language, culture, and the natural environment.

Previous studies have discovered various findings about how things are named, including the processes and the patterns that emerge. However, this study focuses on a specific goal: uncovering the main and most frequent naming patterns in West Aceh and Nagan Raya. These two regions were chosen due to their shared history which resulted in cultural-linguistic overlap, providing a relatively homogenous context for examining naming patterns. While sharing a broader Acehnese identity, their unique local traditions and dialects allow the exploration of both shared and distinct naming conventions. Furthermore, as a region where Acehnese remains relatively strong (despite Indonesian influence), studying their toponymy is important because it helps uncover the cultural, historical, and linguistic significance embedded in their place names. It can reveal the region's history, including ethnic migrations and cultural exchanges, and is also vital in influencing social relationships and reinforcing identities in modern contexts (Matiza & Dube, 2020; Suvankulov, 2024).

## METHOD

The methodology employed in this study was derived from the theory of Nash's toponymy rules as a theoretical framework. Nash's comprehensive set of patterns or toponymy rules informs us about the diverse ways in which places are named. Several studies have used a similar framework to investigate the role of toponyms in shaping cultural and geographic identity (Smith, 2005; Brown & Johnson, 2010). Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke (2006)

framework, was used to systematically explore and identify recurring themes within the data collected from regional databases, documents, and the SIGAP (Sistem Informasi Gampong-Village Information System). SIGAP is particularly relevant to this study as it provides an extensive, localized dataset that reflects the linguistic and geographical characteristics of the region. Furthermore, thematic analysis allowed us to comprehensively examine the data and to reveal the underlying patterns and relationships among place names.

In this particular context, the objective of this recent study is to uncover specific cultural and linguistic aspects within the West Aceh and Nagan Raya regions that are intricately tied to the naming conventions observed from an Acehnese perspective. The primary focus of this research was to dissect the naming patterns prevalent in these regions. To achieve this, the study exclusively examined the naming structure. Thematic analysis has been used in a variety of linguistic and cultural studies to analyze qualitative data, particularly when exploring patterns of language and meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Green & Roberts, 2012). The data for this investigation were sourced from various areas covering the western, central, and eastern sections of both West Aceh and Nagan Raya.

In this study, a combination of primary and secondary data sources was employed. The primary data were extracted directly from the regional database sites of both regions to ensure an authentic representation of the collected content analysis, i.e. SIGAP. Similar regional databases have been used in previous research (Anderson & Miller, 2014) that emphasize their effectiveness in capturing local naming conventions and giving clarity to regional linguistic practices. In contrast, secondary data were collected by the researchers from various pertinent and pre-existing literature sources. A total of 131 place names from 29 villages were then collected from West Aceh and Nagan Raya. During the data analysis phase, a series of structured steps were performed. By employing the thematic analysis technique, the researchers' objective was to attain an all-encompassing understanding of the data and offer insightful interpretations. This method facilitated a methodical scrutiny of the data, enabling the identification of prominent themes that surfaced during the analysis process (Braun and Clarke 2006).

The West Aceh and Nagan Raya regions are characterized by their rich geographical diversity, which includes mountains, rivers, and coastlines. The landscape has deeply influenced the lives and culture of local communities. The impact of the physical environment on place-naming practices has been explored in other geographic contexts (Evans, 2016). The naming patterns in these regions reflect this symbiotic relationship between humans and the environment. Words like *alue* [aluə] 'ditch', *blang* [blaŋ] 'rice field', *pasi* [pasi] 'beach', *suak* [suaʔ] 'estuary', *cöt* [cət] 'highland' are incorporated into village names, intertwining linguistic expressions with geographical attributes. This finding agrees with Wilson (2018). This practice not only provides practical information about the location but also captures the cultural significance of the land.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed a variety of dominant naming patterns, each with its own unique characteristics and linguistic structures. The naming patterns include the use of specific base elements, such as *alue* (18%), *blang* (23%), *pasi* (13%), *suak* (11.5%), *cöt* (11.5%), and others (23%), combined with nouns, adjectives, numerals, and verbs. These patterns reflect the creativity of the Acehnese people in using language to communicate the multilayered identity of each village. The patterns also depict the deep emotional connection between local communities and their surroundings. Table 1 shows the pattern of naming places in the investigated areas starting with the base element 'Alue'.

Table 1. Dominant naming patterns of the base Element *Alue* in West Aceh and Nagan Raya

| Base Element | Added Pattern | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| *Alue* | +Noun | *Alue Batee* 'stone'<br>*Alue Sundak* 'a coconut peeling tool'<br>*Alue Bakong* 'tobacco'<br>*Alue On* 'leaf'<br>*Alue Peudeung* 'sword'<br>*Alue Blang* 'rice field'<br>*Alue Leuhop* 'mud'<br>*Alue Permen* 'candy, sweet'<br>*Alue Bilie* 'Bamban (Donax canniformis)'<br>*Alue Empeuk* 'a taro peeling tool'<br>*Alue Kuyun* 'lime'<br>*Alue Geutah* 'latex'<br>*Alue Rambot* 'rambutan'<br>*Alue Waki* 'representative'<br>*Alue Buloh* 'bamboo reed'<br>*Alue Gajah* 'elephant'<br>*Alue Bata* 'brick'<br>*Alue Labu* 'pumpkin'<br>*Alue Siron* 'flame tree, red cotton tree' |
| | +Adjective | *Alue Lhok* 'lowland'<br>*Alue Raya* 'big'<br>*Alue Panyang* 'long'<br>*Alue Tho* 'dry' |
| | +Numerical | *Alue Lhee* 'three' |
| | +Noun+Adjective | *Alue Ie Mameh* 'sweet water' |

Table 1 shows that West Aceh and Nagan Raya villages mostly use distinctive phrase-based patterns that incorporate recurring elements. The first or base element of the name that is usually used is *alue* 'ditch', and it can be followed by either a noun, adjective, numerical, or noun plus an adjective. Furthermore, the numerical elements in these village names explicitly refer to quantity. For example, Alue Lhee, meaning 'three river streams' (denoting the presence of three water channels or river streams). Each of these numerical components signifies a quantitative aspect, serving as a geographic marker or indicating a natural feature of the environment. In addition to *alue,* other words that are usually used in the first or base element are *cot* 'highland', as shown in Table 2. The repetitive patterns and the ability to insert words within these names contribute to a meaningful reflection of the region's heritage and linguistic traditions.

Table 2. Dominant naming pattern of the base element *Cot* in West Aceh and Nagan Raya

| Base Element | Added Pattern | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| *Cot* | +Noun | *Cot Kumbang* 'ripe hog plum (*Spondias dulcis*)' <br> *Cot Rambong* 'umbrella tree' <br> *Cot Punti* 'punti fruit tree' <br> *Cot Kuta* 'town' <br> *Cot Buloh* 'bamboo reed' <br> *Cot Lada* 'pepper' <br> *Cot Manggie* 'mangosteen' <br> *Cot Darat* 'land' <br> *Cot Mesjid* 'mosque' <br> *Cot Murong* 'moringa tree' |
| | +Adjective | *Cot Dirui* 'breezy' <br> *Cot Manyang* 'high' <br> *Cot Keumuneng* 'yellowish' <br> *Cot Seulamat* 'safe' |
| | +Noun+Noun | *Cot Teuku Dek* 'Teuku Dek is a name of a person' |

In addition to *Alue* and *Cot,* the other most common base elements of place names in West Aceh and Nagan Raya districts are *Pasi, Suak,* and *Blang,* as shown in Tables 3, 4, and 5.

Table 3. Dominant Naming Patterns of the Base Element *Pasi* in West Aceh and Nagan Raya

| Base Element | Added Pattern | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| *Pasi* | +Noun | *Pasi Ara* 'fig tree' <br> *Pasi Jambu* 'rose apple' <br> *Pasi Jeumpa* 'frangipani flower' <br> *Pasi Kumbang* 'ripe hog plum (Spondias dulcis)' <br> *Pasi Mesjid* 'mosque' <br> *Pasi Pinang* 'betel nut palm' <br> *Pasi Aceh* 'Aceh' <br> *Pasi Birah* 'taro' <br> *Pasi Pandan* 'pandan (Pandanu amaryllifolius)' <br> *Pasi Janeng* 'wild yam' |
| | +Adjective | *Pasi Teungoh* 'middle' <br> *Pasi Malee* 'shy' <br> *Pasi Panyang* 'long' <br> *Pasi Luah* 'wide' |
| | +Noun+Adjective | *Pasi Aceh Baroh* 'low-land Aceh' <br> *Pasi Aceh Tunong* 'high-land Aceh' |
| | +Noun+Noun+Noun | *Pasi Ara Kuala Batee* 'rocky river bank fig' |

From Table 3, we can see that the base element *Suak* is usually combined with other lexical categories such as nouns, adjectives, noun plus adjectives, and in one case with triple nouns. The base element *Suak is* mostly found in the two districts. However, we observed that the West Aceh district has the majority of naming places with this word.

Table 4. Dominant naming patterns of the base element *Suak* in West Aceh and Nagan Raya

| Base Element | Added Pattern | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| *Suak* | +Noun | *Suak Palembang* 'name of a place in South Sumatera' <br> *Suak Bilie* "Bamban (*Donax canniformis*)' <br> *Suak Pangkat* 'rank' <br> *Suak Indrapuri* 'name of a place in Greater Aceh' <br> *Suak Ribee* 'thousands' <br> *Suak Sigadeng* 'the ivory' <br> *Suak Awe* 'rattan' <br> *Suak Pandan* 'pandan' <br> *Suak Seuke* 'thatch screw pine' <br> *Suak Timah* 'lead' <br> *Suak Trieng* 'bamboo' |
| | +Adjective | *Suak Puntong* 'half-cut' <br> *Suak Raya* 'big' |
| | +Noun+Noun | *Suak Ie Beuso 'iron water'* <br> *Suak Pante Breuh* 'rice beach' |

Interestingly, the use of *Blang* as the base element of name patterns in West Aceh and Nagan Raya districts varied with the combination of nouns, adjectives, verbs, noun plus noun, adjective plus adjective, adjective plus noun, adjective plus noun plus adjective, and adjective plus double nouns (as can be seen in Table 5 below). This element has been mostly used to name places in the research areas because of the presence of many rice fields in the districts.

Table 5. Dominant naming patterns of the base element *Blang* in West Aceh and Nagan Raya

| Base Element | Added Pattern | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| *Blang* | +Noun | *Blang Beurandang 'a storage place'* <br> *Blang Geunang 'small lake'* <br> *Blang Balee 'widow'* <br> *Blang Puuk is an 'a type of tropical fruit'* <br> *Blang Bintang 'star'* <br> *Blang Murong 'moringa'* <br> *Blang Bayu 'birch tree'* <br> *Blang Geudong 'building'* <br> *Blang Teungku 'Islamic cleric'* <br> *Blang Muling 'gnetum gnemon'* <br> *Blang Sapek '* |
| | +Adjective | *Blang Leumak 'fatty; tasty'* <br> *Blang Dalam 'inside'* <br> *Blang Teungoh 'middle'* <br> *Blang Luah 'wide'* <br> *Blang Makmur 'prosperous'* <br> *Blang Baro 'new'* <br> *Blang Panyang 'long'* <br> *Blang Meurandeh 'across a river'* |
| | +Verb | *Blang Preh 'to wait'* |
| | +Noun+Noun | *Blang Puuk Kulu 'breadnut punk (a type of tropical fruit)'* <br> *Blang Ara Gampong 'country fig'* <br> *Blang Ara Keude 'town fig'* <br> *Blang Seumot Seunong 'wild animal Drinking place for ants'* |
| | *+Adjective+Adjective* | *Blang Cot Mameh 'high sweet'* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Adjective+Noun* | *Blang Baro Rambong,* | *'new ficus'' Elastica tree'* |
| | *Blang Cot Rubek* | *'high calotropis gigantea'* |
| *+Adj.+Noun+Adj.* | *Blang Luah Leuhop Mameh* | *'wide Muddy sweet'* |
| *Adj.+Noun+Noun* | *Blang Baro Pulo Raga* | *'new basket island'* |

The observed patterns in place names within the West Aceh and Nagan Raya regions show that there has been a repetition of first elements, and it occurs in the frequency of each category. This can be seen as the identity of the dominant village naming conventions in these areas.

Even though place names found in the West Aceh and Nagan Raya districts are mostly combinations of different words, it is quite common in the regions where place names use single words (23%), as can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Single words for naming places in West Aceh and Nagan Raya Districts

| **Single word** | *Gampa, Kabu, Reudeup, Kubu, Rambong, Rundeng, Panggong, Keuramat, Marek, Muko, Putim, Puuk, Jambak, Lango, Lawet, Manjeng, Antong, Deuah, Tutut, Jawa, Jawi, Panton, Jogja, Bantan, Jeuram, Latong, Padang, Parom, Nigan, Sapek.* |
|---|---|

The graphical representation of the comparative classification frequencies is shown in Figure 1, providing a visual information into the primary approaches employed for naming villages in West Aceh and Nagan Raya.
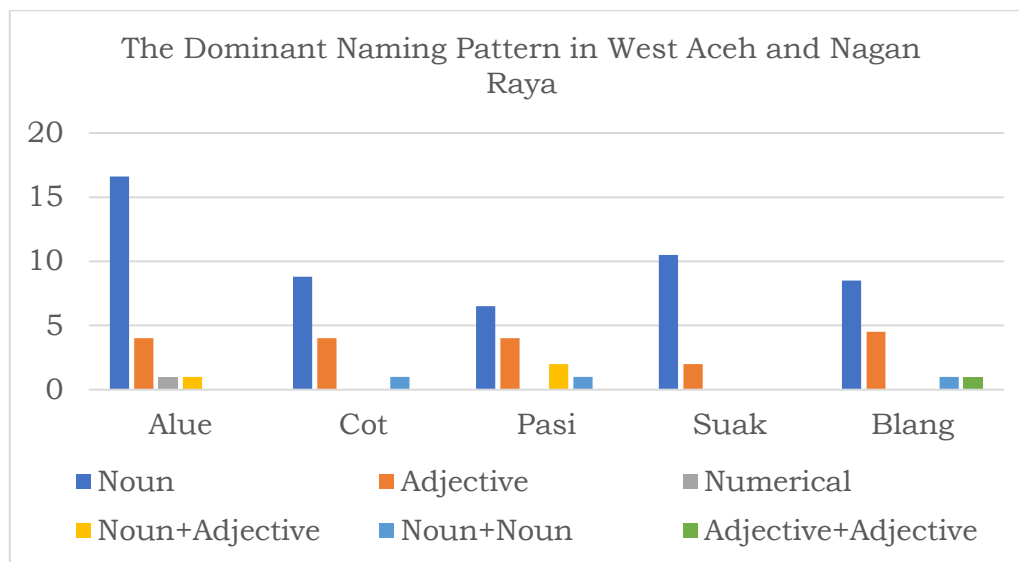


Figure 1. The dominant naming pattern in West Aceh and Nagan Raya

From the data, the following diagram further shows the thematic classification of the naming pattern categories in West Aceh and Nagan Raya:
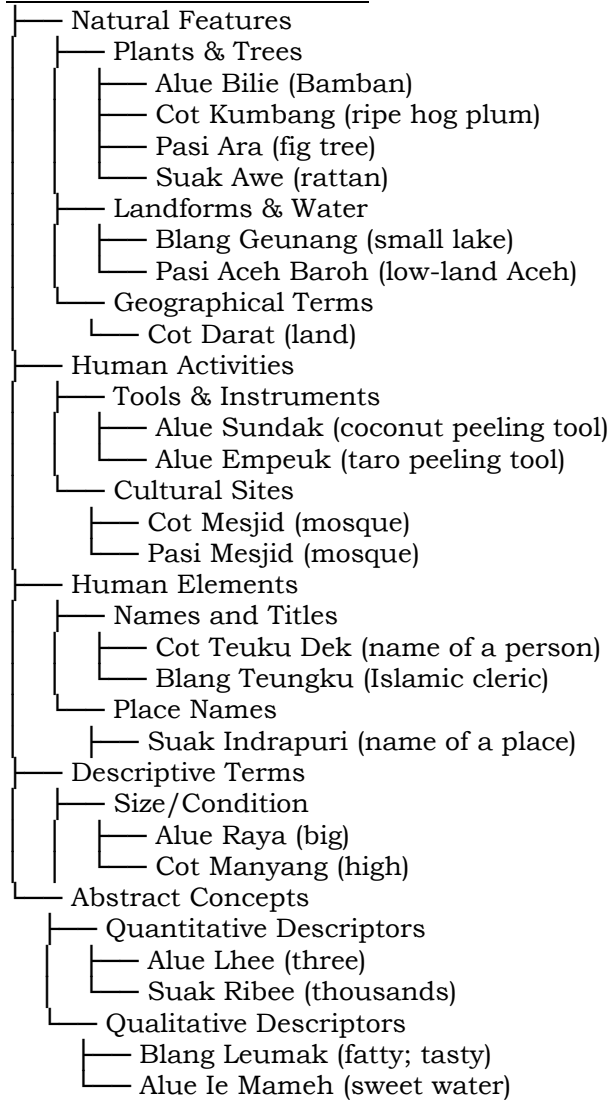
Figure 2. The thematic classification of the naming pattern categories in West Aceh and Nagan Raya

The thematic classification diagram in Figure 2 presents the various terms into distinct categories that show their relationships and shared characteristics. Under Natural Features, there are the subcategories of Plants & Trees, which include examples such as Alue Bilie (Bamban) and Cot Kumbang (ripe hog plum) which represent the region's flora. The Landforms & Water section features the names of Blang Geunang (small lake) that denote the geographical elements of the area. Human Activities is divided into tools and cultural sites, with names of Alue Sundak (coconut peeling tool) and Cot Mesjid (mosque) that symbolize daily life and cultural practices. The Human Elements category includes names and place titles, such as Cot Teuku Dek and Suak Indrapuri, which indicate individual and geographical identities. In Descriptive Terms, there are terms related to size and condition, while Abstract Concepts signify both quantitative descriptors, like Alue Lhee (three), and qualitative descriptors, such as Blang

Leumak (fatty; tasty). This classification provides a structured overview of the diverse elements within the local culture and environment.

### Alue/Blang/Pasi/Suak/Cot/etc. → + Noun

Villages in West Aceh and Nagan Raya are mostly named using a distinctive phrase-based pattern that incorporates recurring elements like *cot, suak, alue, keude,* and others, combined with a noun. This naming convention reflects the Acehnese tendency to capture multiple aspects related to the village's identity in its overall name, also being the second most dominant pattern. For instance, some villages use the pattern *Cot,* followed by a noun such as *darat,* resulting in the village name Cot Darat. Similarly, *suak* can be combined with *awe,* creating the village name Suak Awe. Other examples include Alue Gajah, Keude Aron, and more. This flexibility in village names demonstrates the depth and adaptability of Acehnese cultural practices, emphasizing the importance of preserving each village's unique identity. The repetitive patterns and the ability to insert words within these names contribute to a meaningful reflection of the region's heritage and linguistic traditions.

### Alue/Blang/Pasi/Suak/Cot/etc. → + Adjective

Other morphological patterns found in West Aceh and Nagan Raya involve the combination of specific words such as *alue, suak, kuala,* or *meunasah* with an adjective to form village names. For example, consider the village name Alue Tho. In this instance, *alue* serves as a base element, and *tho* functions as an adjective. Similarly, the village name Suak Puntong combines the base element *suak* with the adjective *puntong,* while Kuala Trang fuses *kuala* with the adjective *trang,* and Meunasah Rayeuk combines *meunasah* with the adjective *rayeuk.* This morphological pattern enables the Acehnese to create village names that vividly describe and represent the various characteristics and identities of each village. This exhibits their skill in combining different elements in a way that reflects the rich cultural heritage of the region. Moreover, it contributes to the distinctiveness and diversity of village names in the region.

### Alue/Blang/Pasi/Suak/Cot/etc. → + Noun + Adjective

There is also a prominent naming pattern observed in West Aceh and Nagan Raya using the pattern 'pasi/Blang/Alue/Lueng/etc. + Noun + adjective'. This pattern was found used by the Acehnese people, where villages are named by combining a noun and adjective with the elements *pasi, blang, alue,* or *lueng.* For instance, villages with names like Pasi Aceh Tunong, where *pasi* is combined with *Aceh* and *tunong.* Similarly, Blang Cot Mameh combines *blang, cot,* and *mameh,* and Alue Ie Mameh fuses *alue, ie,* and *mameh.* Another example is Lueng Keubeu Jagat, where *lueng* is paired with *keubeu* and *jagat.* This feature emphasizes the depth and versatility of Acehnese cultural traditions and presents the importance of preserving each village's unique identity. By incorporating repetitive patterns and allowing for word insertion, the names vividly reflect the rich heritage and linguistic customs of the region.

### Alue/Blang/Pasi/Suak/Cot/etc. → + Noun + Noun

The notable naming pattern is also characterized by the use of *blang, suak,* or similar elements, followed by two nouns to form village names. For instance, the village named Blang Ara Keude. In this example, *blang* serves as the initial

element, followed by *ara* and *keude* as the two nouns. Another illustration of this naming pattern is the village name Suak Ie Beuso. Here, *suak* serves as the base element, and *ie* and *beuso* are combined to complete the name. The combination of these nouns provides a vivid description of key aspects of the village's identity.

### Alue/Blang/Pasi/Suak/Cot/etc. → + Adjective + Adjective
The naming pattern involves combining base elements like *alue, blang, pasi, suak, cot,* or others with a pair of adjectives in the place name is also found in the two districts. For instance, an example of this pattern is Blang Cot Mameh, where *blang* serves as the base element, and it is combined with two adjectives, *cot* and *mameh,* to form the village name.

### Alue/Blang/Pasi/Suak/Cot/etc. → + Noun + Verb.
Another intriguing pattern discovered in the toponymy is the incorporation of base elements such as *alue, blang, pasi, suak, cot,* or others with a combination of Noun + verb in the place name. A noteworthy illustration of this pattern is the village named Babah Krueng Teklep. In this case, *babah* serves as the foundation, and it harmoniously combines with the noun *krueng* and the verb *teklep,* to form the village name.

### Alue/Blang/Pasi/Suak/Cot/etc. → + Noun + Noun + Noun
The naming pattern involving multiple nouns within the name is intriguing and grammatically rich. The format typically begins with a base element such as *alue, blang, pasi, suak, cot,* or others, followed by a series of nouns. This combination of nouns creates a layered and descriptive name for the village; an example of this naming pattern is Pasi Ara Kuala Batee. In this instance, *pasi* serves as the base element, followed by the nouns *ara, kuala,* and *batee.*

### Alue/Blang/Pasi/Suak/Cot/etc. → + Adjective + Noun + Adjective
One of the distinctive naming patterns observed is the combination of base elements like *alue, blang, pasi, suak, cot,* or others with the sequence of 'adjective + noun + adjective' in the place name. An example of this pattern is Blang Luah Leuhop Mameh, where *blang* serves as the base element, and it is combined with the adjectives *luah* and *leuhop,* followed by the noun *mameh* to create the village name.

### Single-word
The most dominant naming pattern is single-word toponyms, which are found in the regions of West Aceh and Nagan Raya, reflecting a prevalent and significant cultural practice in naming villages. In this pattern, each village is identified by a single word, with no additional qualifiers or descriptors. For example, village names like Jogja, Pulo, Kabu, Sapek, Nigan, and Muko. exemplify the single-word toponyms observed in the area. The prevalence of this pattern, with 74 of 554 villages following it, indicates its popularity and importance in local naming traditions.

The prevalent naming patterns in West Aceh and Nagan Raya offer a unique perspective on the geographical identity of the regions. These patterns portray the mutually beneficial connection between humans and their surroundings, reflecting how geographical attributes are embedded to signify

cultural identity. Prior studies have emphasized the role of toponymy in shaping cultural and geographical identities. For instance, Nugraha et al. (2020) examined the morphological processes in the naming of subdistricts in Bandung, identifying three key mechanisms: compounding, borrowing, and blending. These findings underscore how different linguistic processes are employed to create place names that reflect cultural and environmental ties. In contrast, this study reveals that in West Aceh and Nagan Raya, place names are constructed using specific base elements such as *alue, blang, pasi, suak,* and *cot,* which are deeply tied to the geographical landscape. This suggests a different approach to toponymy, in which environmental features play a more dominant role than linguistic borrowing or blending.

Moreover, the diverse range of combinations involving these base elements, such as their pairing with nouns, adjectives, and more complex structures, demonstrates a high level of linguistic creativity among the Acehnese. This finding is consistent with Janggo and Uran's (2023) observations in Sikka regency, where place names also integrate linguistic structures like single words, combinations of words, and noun phrases that reflect cultural narratives and natural surroundings. However, while Sikka's place names often incorporate social and cultural dimensions, this study finds that West Aceh and Nagan Raya emphasize environmental features more prominently, likely due to the region's distinct geographical context. The layering of meanings and the use of specific terms that connect with the cultural heritage of the Acehnese people provide distinct perspectives into how language functions as a living expression of their identity, setting these patterns apart from those found in other regions.

An important finding of this study is the predominance of single-word naming patterns, such as Pasi, Cot, Blang, and Pulo, which appear to be the most common structure in these regions. This finding aligns with the broader naming traditions in Indonesia, as highlighted by Lauder and Lauder (2015), in which place names are often based on geographical features like mountains, rivers, and bays. However, this study contributes to our understanding by showing how single-word toponyms in West Aceh and Nagan Raya not only simplify the naming process but also serve as cultural markers. These names preserve local heritage through memorable terms that encapsulate key aspects of regional identity, reflecting a community's emphasis on simplicity and recognition.

This study identifies significant differences in the distribution of certain base elements between West Aceh and Nagan Raya. For example, the element *suak* (meaning 'estuary' or 'lowland area') is more frequently found in certain areas, whereas *blang* (indicating 'open land' or 'field') shows a broader distribution. This variation suggests that geographical factors and cultural practices differ between districts, influencing naming patterns in unique ways. These differences echo the findings of Nugraha et al. (2020), who found that distinct morphological processes reflect regional specificity and cultural nuances.

Another notable finding is the layering of nouns and adjectives in some place names, such as Blang Ara ('open field with vegetation'). This practice not only provides descriptive detail about the location but adds layers of meaning that may reflect historical events, cultural practices, or environmental features

specific to the region. This observation resonates with Janggo and Uran's (2023) study in Sikka, where the fusion of manifestation and cultural aspects in place names reflects local myths and beliefs.

The complex naming patterns observed in West Aceh and Nagan Raya can also be attributed to the strong oral history and storytelling traditions of the Acehnese people. By embedding stories, descriptions, and cultural significance within place names, the community can preserve and pass on important knowledge across generations, ensuring that cultural heritage remains vibrant and relevant. This mirrors the findings of Fauzi (2020), who noted that the naming patterns in Sirnabaya village are heavily influenced by local folklore and cultural heritage, underscoring how place names function as cultural repositories.

Although this study enhances knowledge about the naming patterns of West Aceh and Nagan Raya, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. One limitation is the reliance on secondary data sources, which may not capture recent changes or nuances in local naming practices. Future research could address this gap by incorporating field studies or interviews with local communities to understand contemporary naming dynamics and how these practices may be evolving due to social, cultural, or environmental changes.

To summarize, this research adds to the broader understanding of toponymy by illustrating how naming patterns in West Aceh and Nagan Raya reflect both natural environments and cultural identities. The findings underscore the intricate ways in which language, culture, and geography intertwine in regional identity formation. Future studies could delve deeper into the historical development of these patterns and how they relate to changes in cultural practices and language dynamics.

## CONCLUSION

This study explores naming patterns in West Aceh and Nagan Raya, revealing deep connections between language, culture, and geography. Through toponymy, we have shown that place names are more than labels—they symbolize historical events, cultural identity, and the relationship between human communities and their environments. The findings identified nine prominent naming patterns in these regions that show a blend of various elements like *alue* [aluə] 'ditch', *blang* [blaŋ] 'rice field', *pasi* [pasi] 'beach', *suak* [suaʔ] 'estuary', and *cöt* [cət] 'highland', which are frequently paired with nouns or adjectives. These findings confirm that these names are a symbolic reflection of the history and identity of the region.

Future research could examine the historical evolution of these naming patterns and their relationship to changing cultural and environmental factors to enhance our understanding of the interrelationships between language, culture, and geography. By exploring these topics more thoroughly, we can better appreciate how local identities are expressed and preserved through language.

## AUTHOR STATEMENT

The authors confirm that this work was a collaborative endeavor. **Said Miftahul Fahmi** led the research as the primary investigator, overseeing data collection and spearheading the drafting of the manuscript. **Zulfadli Abdul Aziz** contributed to the methodological framework and validation of the research findings. **Yunisrina Qismullah Yusuf** and **Cut Dewi** provided critical oversight, rigorous evaluation, and feedback to ensure the quality and coherence of both the research process and the final manuscript. All authors collectively engaged in refining the work to uphold its scholarly integrity.

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