

Sigulai: One of Minority Language in Simeulue Island

Ratri Candrasari^{1*}, Harinawati², Teuku Kemal Fasya³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Malikussaleh

*Corresponding author. Email: ratri@iunimal.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This article describes the Sigulai language, one of the minority languages on the island of Simeuleu. Simeuleu Island is a district in the province of Aceh, Indonesia. This province has several speech community groups including the Acehese language which is still strong because it has the widest speech area, around 70% of the total population of Aceh. Besides Acehese, this province has at least 9 other regional languages, Gayo language, Tamiang language, Aneuk Jamee language, Kluet language, Haloban language, Singkil language, Devayan language, Leukon language, and Sigulai language. The last three languages are in the speech area group on the island of Simeuleu. The Devayan language has the widest speech area with the most speakers in 2/3 of the island area, namely East Simeuleu, Central Simeuleu, West Teupah, Middle Teupah, South Teupah, Simeuleu Cut, and Teluk Dalam. The Leukon language has the least spoken area, which is only two villages in the Alafan sub-district, while the other villages in one sub-district speak Sigulai. Meanwhile, Sigulai is spoken in 3 sub-districts, namely, West Simeuleu, Alafan, and Salang. Sigulai has been increasingly marginalized since the island has become increasingly open to sea and air transportation.

Keywords: Sigulai, minority language, simeuleu

1. INTRODUCTION

The name of the island of Simeuleu, based on oral tradition obtained from several sources, comes from the name of a princess from the island of Simeuleu who was brought to Aceh and named Si Melur. Then the Sultan of Aceh married Princess Melur to Tgk. Halilullah, a cleric from Minang who was studying Islam in Aceh before continuing to go on pilgrimage to Arab lands. However, after marriage, the cleric was assigned by the Sultan to spread Islam to the island of Simeuleu, which at that time had no name. During the Dutch era, people called it Hook Island (Edge) and people called U (coconut) [1]. So when the ulama and his wife arrived on the island, they named the island Simeuleu, taken from the name Si Melur. From here begins the history of the inhabitants of the island of Simeuleu until now. Simeuleu Regency is in the form of a large island also named Simeuleu, which is located approximately 150 km off the west coast of mainland Aceh, and the capital city is Sinabang and several small islands around it. Previously, the island of Simeuleu was included in the territory of West Aceh, so it is not surprising that the Aceh language and Jamee language were also spoken in that area, which was brought by immigrants from mainland Aceh, namely the district of West Aceh. In 1999, this region separated from West Aceh and became

independent under the name Simeuleu district. Figure 1.1 is a map of the location of Simeuleu Island in Aceh province. Simeuleu Island which is red (dark), and the small islands to the east are islands that belong to the Singkil district, one of which is named Pulau Banyak, which also has a Devayan-speaking community with different dialect variations. The following is the location of the island of Simeuleu which is on the map of the province of Aceh.



Picture 1.1 Simeuleu Island

Simeuleu Regency is an archipelago consisting of 147 large and small islands. The total area of the island is 1,838.09 km² or 183,809 ha. The largest island is Simeuleu Island. In addition to Simeuleu

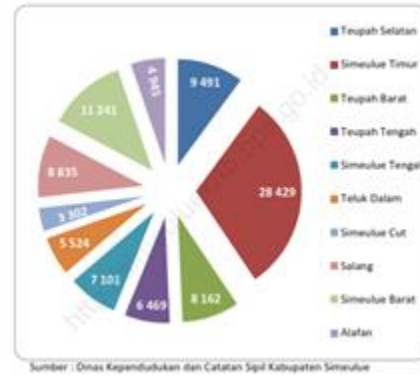
island, there are other islands including: Sumat island, Panjang island, Batu island, Teupah island, Mincau island, Simeulue Cut island, Pinang island, Dara island, Langeni island, Linggan island, Leukon island, Silaut Besar island, island Silaut Kecil (outermost island), Edge island, Ina island, Alafulu island, Turtle island, Tinggi island, Kecil island, Khalak-khalak island, Asu island, Babi island, Lasia island, and other small uninhabited islands. Figure 1.2 is a picture of the island of Simeulue which is located at the coordinates of 2015' - 2055' North Latitude and 95040'- 96030' East Longitude.



Picture 1.2 Districts in Simeulue Island

Simeulue Regency is divided into 10 sub-districts, namely: South Teupah, East Simeulue, West Teupah, Central Teupah, Central Simeulue, Teluk Dalam, Simeulue Cut, Salang, West Simeulue, and Alafan. The district capital is located in Sinabang which is in the East Simeulue region. Alafan, West Simeulue, and Salang sub-districts are the 3rd furthest sub-districts, which are 13, 75 km, 93 km, and 70 km from the center of the district capital, because the district capital is at the eastern end and the three sub-districts are at the western end of the island of Simeulue.

The largest population is East Simeulu and followed by West Simeulue. Meanwhile, South Teupah sub-district has the largest number of villages, the population is only about 10 percent of the total population of the district. The smallest population is in Simeulue Cut sub-district. The composition of the population when depicted on a pie graph will describe the state of the population more clearly, as shown in diagram 1.3 below:



Picture 1.3 Composition of Simeulue Population
The diagram above shows that the population in East Simeulue sub-district is the largest, followed by West Simeulue sub-district, and then South Teupah as the top 3 with the largest population. In the next order are the sub-districts of Salang, West Teupah, Central Simeulue, Central Teupah, Teluk Dalam, and the smallest population is Simeulue Cut sub-district.

1.1. Traditions

The arts in Simeulue Regency are very basic, namely Nandong and Rafai Debus. These two arts are owned by the entire district and almost every young man tries to learn them. Nandong and Rafai Debus' performances at all events / Kenduri / Parties even welcoming tarnu are still displayed. Nandong art with its very unique rhymes describes descriptions of overseas, love, profit, advice and so on. The Nandong pantun was originally composed in the herbal language, for example:

*Ala Pandam palito kape
Ambikan minyak panyalonyo
Ala jauh di lauik lape
Buikan surek panjapuiknyo*

In addition, Simeulue and Sigulai rhymes also developed, for example:

*Teen bilah — bilah mawi
Lametik asal mulone
Teen Nitarein Mawi
Man sekesih asal mulonyo*

Another art form is Debus, which is an artistic activity that combines art and incantations or prayers. In addition to Rafai as a tool for his sounds, Debus also uses sharp weapons, namely: Rencong, knives, machetes, chains, bambos and even chainsaw machines that are stabbed or beaten into the body. This art is the pride of the people of Simeulue in every event such as weddings and welcoming guests.

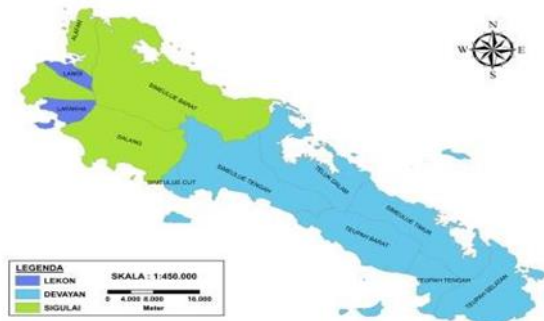
In addition, there are other arts in the form of dances which are also characteristic of the residents of this district but are performed by some Simeulue residents who come from various regions, which at the same time have their original arts carried over and developed in Simeulue, namely:

1. Andalas Dance
2. Kuala Deli / Tanjung Katung Dance

3. Wave Dance
4. Angguk Dance

1.2 Languages

Figure 1.4 is a map of languages on Simeulue island, it can be seen that Simeulue island has 3 native languages, with the distribution as shown on the map that the Devayan language in light blue color dominates usage in 7 sub-districts out of 10 sub-districts. Furthermore, the Sigulai language in green colour is found in 2 sub-districts. And then the dark blue one is the Leukon language spoken area which only exists in one sub-district, namely the Alafan sub-district where the majority of the population speaks Sigulai but the Leukon language is only spoken in 2 villages, namely Langi and Lafakha [2].



Picture 1.4 Map of Languages

1.3 Sigulai Language

Sigulai language is spoken in 3 sub-districts, namely Alafan, Salang, and West Simeulue sub-districts. Actually the word "Sigulai" is the name of one of the villages in the West Simeulue sub-district. So far there has been no legal information regarding its naming. Among the speaking community there are those who call the language Lamamek. Incidentally, one of the villages in West Simeule is also named Lamamek[3].

In the sub-districts of Salang and Alafan, people call them by different names, including Agemei and Dau Batu.

2. VITALITY OF SIGULAI

Language vitality was measured using EGIDS (Ethnologue's Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale). The researcher (Candrasari:2021) proves that the Sigulai language is in category 6b, the category where there is a starting point for the emergence of language shifts [4].

The Sigulai language is positioned as the mother tongue or first language for the indigenous Alafan, Salang, and West Simeulue ethnic groups. Sigulai language as the first language shows a 100% percentage only in the G1 (> 50 th) and G2 (40-50 th) generations, while the percentage of G4 (1-12 th) is 100%, the first language or mother tongue is Indonesian.

The use of Sigulai language is only as an oral language, there is no written language in the form of books or literary works. In informal areas such as family and neighbours, Sigulai language is still actively used, but in the realm of public communication, Indonesian is mostly used.

G1(> 50th) and G2 (30-50th) language attitudes show a positive attitude towards the future of the Sigulai language, but G3 (13-29) and G4 (1-12th) show concern because they plan to teach Indonesian as their first language to their children when they are married[5].

3. WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION

According to [6] there are six efforts that can be made to restore the use of language, namely:

1. Learn a few words, such as slams and introductions or short conversations,
2. Collect linguistic publications, field notes and voice recordings as part of creating community-based resources and archives,
3. Developing a writing system and making community-based dictionaries and pedagogical grammar,
4. Make audio or video recordings of the remaining speakers with the aim of documenting and archiving examples of their use of the language by creating a corpus of various types of material,
5. Take a language class or language camp,
6. Conduct full immersion (schools where the language of instruction is a threatened language) for children in communities that have the resources to support them.

From the description above, it can be concluded that language documentation is the first step in efforts to revitalize a threatened language[7]. Although the Sigulai language is not yet an endangered language at this time, it has experienced the erosion of the power of language, especially in the 3rd and 4th generations, namely teenagers and children. However, it is necessary to formulate an effort plan for strengthening before it becomes critical and difficult to repair [8].

The success of the revitalization still depends on Sigulai speakers, but the central and local governments, in this case the Aceh government and the Simeulue district government, as language policy makers are very responsible for maintaining and preserving the Sigulai language.

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