

The Differences Between 'Uken' and 'Toa' in the Gayo Dialect

Evi Lestaria
Universitas Muhammadiyah Mahakarya
Aceh
evilestariaummah123@gmail.com

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Abstract

This paper examines the distinctions between the terms 'uken' and 'toa' within the Gayo dialect, spoken in the Gayo Highlands of Aceh, Indonesia. Both terms hold significant semantic and functional roles in the Gayo language, yet they differ markedly in usage and context. 'Uken' is typically employed in formal or traditional contexts, often carrying connotations of respect or authority. In contrast, 'toa' is more frequently used in informal or everyday interactions, reflecting different aspects of social hierarchy and communication style. Through a comparative analysis of these terms, this study aims to elucidate their respective meanings, cultural significance, and the roles they play in shaping social dynamics within the Gayo-speaking community. By understanding these differences, we gain insights into the intricate ways language reflects and influences social relationships in this unique cultural setting.

Keywords: *dialect; semantic; cultural; social dynamics, linguistic analysis*

1. Introduction

The Gayo dialect, spoken by the Gayo people in the highlands of Aceh, Indonesia, is a rich linguistic tapestry that reflects the cultural and social complexities of its speakers. This dialect features a variety of unique terms that carry distinct meanings and functions, two of which are 'uken' and 'toa.' Although both terms are integral to communication within the Gayo community, they serve different purposes and convey varied levels of formality, respect, and social hierarchy.

Understanding the differences between 'uken' and 'toa' is crucial for grasping the nuances of social interaction in Gayo-speaking contexts. 'Uken' often appears in formal settings and carries connotations of respect or authority, reflecting traditional values and hierarchical structures. In contrast, 'toa' is used in more casual or everyday contexts, signifying different aspects of interpersonal relationships and communication styles.

This study aims to explore the distinctions between 'uken' and 'toa,' providing a comparative analysis of their usage, meanings, and cultural implications. By examining these terms, we seek to uncover how they contribute to the social fabric of the Gayo-speaking community and offer insights into the broader linguistic and cultural practices of the region.

A. Dialect

A dialect is a variant of a language spoken by a specific group of people, distinguished by unique features in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and usage. These variations arise from factors such as geographic location, social class, or ethnic background, leading to differences that set one dialect apart from others within the same language. Dialects are typically mutually intelligible with the standard form of the language, but they can reflect the distinct cultural and social identities of their speakers. Janet Holmes defines a dialect as "a variation of language used by groups of people based on their geographical location or social status. Dialects include variations in pronunciation (accent), vocabulary, and grammatical structure."

George Yule describes a dialect as "a variation of language based on geographical or social differences, including variations in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical structures."

David Crystal defines a dialect as "a variation of a language that can be identified with a particular geographical region or social group, including differences in accent, vocabulary, and sentence structure."

From the definition above we can take the conclusion that a dialect is a distinct form of a language that varies based on geographical or social factors, and it includes differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Dialects reflect the linguistic diversity within a language and the social and regional identities of its speakers.

B. Aspects Studied in Dialectology:

1. Phonology: Examines the sound system of a dialect, including pronunciation patterns, phonetic variations, and differences in accent. This aspect focuses on how sounds are produced and perceived within a dialect.
2. Morphology: Investigates the structure and formation of words in a dialect. This includes variations in word endings, prefixes, and inflections that may differ from the standard language.
3. Syntax: Analyzes the sentence structure and grammatical rules specific to a dialect. This includes word order, sentence construction, and the use of grammatical markers.
4. Vocabulary: Studies the unique set of words and expressions used in a dialect. This includes regionalisms, slang, and terminology that may not be found in the standard language.
5. Semantics: Looks at the meaning and usage of words and phrases within a dialect. It explores how meanings can shift or expand in different dialectal contexts.
6. Pragmatics: Examines how context influences language use in a dialect, including aspects like politeness, formality, and social norms that affect communication.
7. Sociolinguistic Context: Considers how social factors such as age, gender, occupation, and social status influence dialectal variation and usage.

By studying these aspects, dialectology provides a comprehensive understanding of how dialects function and contribute to the broader linguistic landscape.

2. Method

Method in this research the researches used qualitative research this approach will be used to gain in-depth insights into the differences between 'uken' and 'toa,' including their meanings, usages, and social-cultural contexts. The study will describe the linguistic features of both terms and their differences. Data analysis transcription: transcribe interviews verbatim for further analysis. Qualitative analysis coding: code the transcriptions to identify key themes related to the differences between 'uken' and 'toa.' categorization: group findings into categories such as meanings, usage contexts, and cultural differences.

3. Finding and Discussion

There are four uniqueness of Gayo compared to other regions in Indonesia that can be found in the distribution of clan groups. First, Gayo, a minority group in Aceh province, refused to be said as Acehnese even though they live in the Aceh region. It occurs since Gayos have different histories, languages, cultures. The differences between the Uken and Toa in Gayo dialects.

The following is a table that describes the researcher's data related to the contrastive analysis of the Gayo Uken and Toa dialects.

Differences Between 'Uken' and 'Toa' in the Gayo Dialect

No	Data Dialect	Analysis		Definition
		Uken	Toa	
1	<u>Cuge</u> tos ko pe mulo kupi a <u>Cube</u> tos ko pe mule kupi a	✓	✓	Coba buat kopi itu
2	<u>Male</u> beloh ke kam <u>Mele</u> beloh ke kam	✓	✓	Mau kemana kalian
3	Kam <u>neme</u> iumah ku deh Kam <u>nome</u> iumah ku deh	✓	✓	Kalian tidur di umah ku aja
4	Male <u>kuhi</u> ham beloh Mele <u>kusi</u> kam beloh	✓	✓	Mau kemana kalian pergi
5	Pakea nge mangan sine orom kami Pakewa nge mangan sine orom kami	✓	✓	Orang itu sudah makan tadi sama kami
6	Kam <u>nalamku</u> geh sine Kam <u>nagakku</u> geh sine	✓	✓	Kalian kukira datang tadi
7	Umah bapak gecik ne <u>iho</u> ya Umah bapak gecik ne <u>iso</u> ya	✓	✓	Rumah bapak gecik tadi di sana

8	Kam gere <u>daleh</u> mubetehi masalah oya Kam gere <u>taleh</u> mubetehi masalah oya	✓	✓	Kalian gak usah tau masalahnya
9	<u>Mulo nye kam kone</u> <u>Mulo nye kam kone</u>	✓	✓	Duluan terus kesana
10	Kami engih ara cerite Kami gih ara cerite	✓	✓	Kami tidak ada cerita

In the research area, changes in vowel phonemes have emerged. These vowel phoneme changes do not alter the meaning of the words. The vowel phoneme changes are influenced by the cultural and geographical background of the speakers. In the overall mapping of the vowel system of the Gayo language of Central Aceh, there are 8 vowel phonemes: /i/, /e/, /é/, /è/, /a/, /u/, /o/, and /o/. The classification of these vowel phonemes is as follows: 2 high vowels (/i/, /u/), 2 upper mid vowels (/e/, /o/), 3 lower mid vowels (/e/, /é/, /è/), and 1 low vowel (/a/). In the Uken community, the vowel system consists of 6 phonemes: /i/, /e/, /é/, /a/, /u/, and /o/. The classification of vowel phonemes in this community includes 2 high vowels (/i/, /u/), 1 upper mid vowel (/e/), 2 lower mid vowels (/é/, /e/), and 1 low vowel (/a/).

1. In the first sentence, "Cuge tos ko pe mulo kupi a" means "try to make the coffee first" and represents a Toa dialect. In the second sentence, "Cube tos ko pe mulo kupi a" is a Uken dialect. Both terms "cuge" and "cube" mean "try," but they differ in pronunciation. The Toa dialect uses the consonant phoneme "g," while the Uken dialect uses the consonant phoneme "b." In the Uken dialect, "cu" involves the lower and upper lips moving forward, while "be" has the upper and lower lips touching. In the Toa dialect, "cu" also has the lips moving forward, but "ge" involves the upper and lower teeth touching.
2. In the first sentence, "male beloh ke kam" means "are you going?" and is a Uken dialect. In the second sentence, "mele beloh ke kam" represents a Toa dialect. Both "male" and "mele" mean "going," but their pronunciation differs slightly, with a vowel phoneme "a" in the Uken dialect and a vowel phoneme "e" in the Toa dialect. In the Uken dialect, "ma" involves the lower and upper lips touching slightly, then the mouth opens, while "le" has a slightly open mouth and the tongue touching the roof of the mouth. In the Toa dialect, "me" involves the upper and lower lips touching and open, while "le" has a slightly open mouth with the tongue touching the roof of the mouth.
3. In both sentences, "Kam neme iumah ku deh" and "Kam nome iumah ku deh," the meaning is "you can sleep at my house." The terms "neme" and "nome" both mean "sleep," but they differ in pronunciation. The Toa dialect uses the vowel phoneme "e," while the Uken dialect uses the vowel phoneme "o." In the Uken dialect, "no" involves the lower and upper lips moving forward, with the tongue touching the roof of the mouth, and "me" has the lower and upper lips slightly touching, then the mouth opening. In the Toa dialect, "ne" involves a slightly open mouth with the tongue touching the roof of the mouth, and "me" has the lower and upper lips slightly touching, followed by the mouth opening.
4. In the sentence "Male kuhi ham beloh," which means "where are you going?" it represents the dialect commonly used by the Uken community. In the sentence "Mele kusi kam beloh," which means the same thing, it is a dialect used by the Toa community, especially in everyday conversations in the Toa region. The terms "kuhi" and "kusi" both mean "where," but the pronunciation differs between the Toa and Uken dialects. In the Uken dialect, "ku" is pronounced with the lower and upper lips moving forward, and "hi" is pronounced with the upper and lower teeth almost meeting, with the mouth slightly open and air expelled. In the Toa dialect, "ku" is pronounced with the upper and lower lips moving forward, and "si" is pronounced with the upper and lower teeth meeting, with the mouth slightly open. The Uken dialect uses the consonant phoneme "h," while the Toa dialect uses the consonant phoneme "s."
5. In the sentence "Pakea nge mangan sine orom kami," which means "they have already eaten with us," it represents the Uken dialect commonly used when referring to "they." In the sentence "Pakewa nge mangan sine orom kami," which has the same meaning, it is a Toa dialect. The words "pakea" and "pakewa" both mean "they," but differ slightly in pronunciation. In the Uken dialect, the vowel phoneme used is "a," while in the Toa dialect, "wa" is used, adding a consonant sound. In the Uken dialect, "Pa" is pronounced with the upper and lower lips touching and air being expelled, while "ke" is pronounced with the lips apart and the mouth open slightly, with the vowel "a" drawing the tongue back and down, accompanied by a wide open mouth and air expulsion. In the Toa dialect, "Pa" is pronounced with the upper and lower lips touching and air expelled, "ke" has the lips apart and the mouth slightly open, and "wa" is pronounced with the upper and lower lips touching, with the tongue not touching the roof of the mouth.
6. In the sentence "Kam nalamku geh sine," which is an example from the Toa dialect commonly used in interactions, and in the sentence "Kam nagakku geh sine," which represents the Uken dialect, both expressions mean "I thought" or "I presumed." The words in these two dialects differ in form but have the same meaning.

7. In the sentence "Umah bapak gecik ne iho ya," meaning "the village head's house is over there," the Uken dialect is used. In the sentence "Umah bapak gecik ne iso ya," which has the same meaning, the Toa dialect is used. Both "iho" and "iso" mean "over there," but the pronunciation differs between the two dialects. In the Uken dialect, the vowel "I" is pronounced with the upper and lower teeth nearly touching and the tongue involved, while "ho" involves the lower and upper lips moving forward. In the Toa dialect, the vowel "I" has similar pronunciation with the tongue and teeth alignment, but "so" involves the lower and upper lips moving forward and the tongue touching the roof of the mouth. The Uken dialect uses the consonant "h," whereas the Toa dialect uses the consonant "s."
8. In the sentence "Kam gere daleh mubetehi masalah oya," meaning "you don't need to know the problem," the Uken dialect is used. In the sentence "Kam gere taleh mubetehi masalah oya," which has the same meaning, the Toa dialect is used. Both "gere daleh" and "gere taleh" mean "don't need to," but they differ in pronunciation. The Uken community uses "gere daleh," while the Toa community uses "gere taleh," with the difference being in the syllables "da" and "ta."
9. In the sentence "Mule nye kam kone," meaning "start it now," the Uken dialect is used. In the sentence "Mulo nye kam kone," which has the same meaning, the Toa dialect is used. The two dialects differ in pronunciation, with the Uken dialect using "mule" to mean "start," while the Toa dialect uses "mulo." The difference lies in the vowel phonemes, with the Uken dialect using "e" and the Toa dialect using "o."
10. In the sentence "Kami engih ara cerite," which means "we see the story," it represents the Uken dialect. In the sentence "Kami gih ara cerite," which has the same meaning, the Toa dialect is used. The words "engih" and "gih" both mean "see," but they differ in pronunciation. The Uken dialect uses "engih," while the Toa dialect uses "gih," with the Uken dialect adding the syllable "en" at the beginning.

In phonology, language variations related to phonemes are also known as accents. The Gayo language's accents contrast between the Uken and Toa dialects. Geographically, these accents are distinct: the Uken accent sounds softer, while the Toa accent sounds harsher to Gayo speakers. These accents also reflect the politeness levels in Gayo speech, with Uken speech considered smooth and Toa speech considered rough. The refinement and coarseness of speech are related to politeness values.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis conducted by the researcher on the contrastive analysis of the Gayo Uken and Toa dialects, it can be concluded that there are differences between these two Gayo dialects. The differences are evident in the similar word forms found in both Gayo Uken and Toa dialects, but with the same meanings, and what distinguishes these dialects is their pronunciation. The pronunciation variations between the Uken and Toa dialects lead to differences in phonemes, with each word resulting in variations in both vowel and consonant phonemes. However, the vocabulary with differing phonemes still carries the same meaning, and similarly, the differences in word forms spoken by Uken and Toa speakers do not affect their meanings. The Uken dialect spoken by the Gayo community sounds softer, while the Toa dialect sounds somewhat harsher. The researcher listened to conversations from the Central Aceh community, and the findings from these conversations reveal that the dialect forms used by the community differ in pronunciation and word forms.

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