



TOPONYMY OF VILLAGE NAMES IN PENGABUAN DISTRICT, TANJUNG JABUNG BARAT DISTRICT: ETHNOLINGUISTIC STUDY

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Abstract :

This research was carried out with the aim of finding out about the origins of the village name and finding out the meaning of the village name. The basic problem that led to this research was knowing the origins and meaning contained in the naming of villages in Pengabuan sub-district. This research is descriptive in nature, where the researcher will describe what happens in the field. And this research uses qualitative methods so that data collection is not so complicated. The results of data analysis contained 13 data, including the use of embodiment aspects and social aspects. In the embodiment aspect, there is a natural environmental background in the form of plants and water settings in each village. In the social aspect, there are legendary stories where people carry out social interactions when carrying out daily activities

Keywords : toponymy, name, village, ethnolinguistic

INTRODUCTION

Linguistic anthropology is an interdisciplinary part of knowledge that examines oral links through the details of human existence including into civilizations such as the focus of creature existence. The various parts of the literature appear there are special terms linguistic anthropology, cultural linguistics, and ethnolinguistics. Culture and speech become the wholeness that speech plays as some in civilization (Ananda, et al. 2025).

The civilization of various people has changed the choice of names, some of them are the choice of names for various regions. Giving a name to a village is not possible just to give a name but there must be an event or incident that is linked to the name so that the local villagers make that name to be the name of their village (Putri, et al. 2024). Names are used as an object to make it easier to know or remember a place, but names do not only exist in the names of objects, people, and animals but also regions.

The eastern coast of Sumatra, particularly the region of West Tanjung Jabung Regency, holds linguistic and cultural riches that are reflected in its place names (Firliyana, et al. 2023). Pengabuan sub-district, located in this region, has a landscape dominated by rivers, swamps, and mangrove forests. The dominance of these natural elements greatly influences the way the local Malay community names their places of residence. The study of ethnolinguistics, as a discipline that examines the relationship between language and culture (Foley, 1997), is an appropriate lens to understand the reciprocal relationship between people,



language, and their environment through the medium of toponymy.

Toponymy, or the science of place names, is a part of onomastika that not only functions as a geographical location marker but also as a cultural marker (Ainiala et al., 2016). Each place name holds narratives, beliefs, history, and the way people interact with the surrounding nature. Therefore, this study conducted an in-depth analysis of the toponymy of villages in Pengabuan sub-district to uncover the layers of cultural and linguistic meanings they contain, while documenting local wisdom that may be under threat of erosion.

Pengabuan Sub-district has 13 villages, namely Karya Maju Village, Mekar Jati Village, Parit Bilal Village, Parit Pudir Village, Parit Sidang Village, Pasar Senin Village, Suak Samin Village, Sungai Baung Village, Sungai Jering Village, Sungai Pampang Village, Sungai Raya Village, Teluk Nilau Village, and Sungai Serindit Village. Pengabuan Sub-district is in Tanjung Jabung Barat Regency, Jambi Province, the villages are not far apart and it only takes a few minutes to get from village to village. The names of the villages in Pengabuan Sub-district are not related to each other (Afria, et al. 2025).

Toponymy bears a connection that is strong through physical geographical conditions, the civilization inhabits then the civilization increases then now is around various residents. The name of the village has a history and the meaning is too broad, not through a real similar place but only from the originator, together and the civilization of the local community about giving the name given to the villages in the Batang Asam sub-district (Anderbeck, K. 2012).

Research on the toponymy of a village is very interesting to study, one of which is the villages in Pengabuan Sub-district in West Tanjung Jabung Regency, Jambi Province, because this area has never been studied by anyone. The village area has its own characteristic name based on the characteristics of the village and has its own toponymy in each village.

Previous studies related to this research include Nugraha et al. (2023), who identified a stratification of meaning: the mythical layer (*Dewi Sri, Nyi Roro Kidul*), the ecological layer (mangrove vegetation, current patterns), and the economic layer (fishing activities). Myths function as implicit conservation of nature. Smith & Ismail (2023) identified proto-Malayic lexemes for river features (e.g., *batang, sungai, lautan, alur*). They demonstrated patterns of linguistic spread and diversification alongside the migration of Malayic peoples. Chen (2024) Toponymy is a traditional ecological database recording the history of biodiversity, changes in coastlines, and long-forgotten natural disasters. Pratomo & Dewi (2024) Developed an interactive digital map featuring audio recordings of native speakers explaining the meanings of toponyms. Linking place names to rituals, legends, and traditional agricultural systems.

Lestari & Arifin (2024) Focus on village names that use plant elements (phytonyms). Revealing symbolic beliefs (magical powers of trees) and pragmatic values (use of wood, medicine, food). Alamsyah & Putra (2024) Identifying archaic Kerinci language vocabulary in place names that are no longer understood by young speakers. Toponymy is related to micro-habitat

characteristics (soil type, elevation, endemic fauna). Garcia (2025) Analyzes how personal place names were changed during colonialism and the process of (re)claiming original names post-independence. Toponymy is a battleground for identity. Febriyanti & Suryadi (2025) Identify character education values such as religiosity, hard work, and love for the homeland contained in village names derived from the Javanese language. Rahman et al. (2025) Analyzing the shift in meaning and function of street names from descriptive (e.g., “Jalan Ampang”) to commercial property brands detached from their historical meaning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach. The primary data of this study are the names of villages in Pengabuan Subdistrict, which are taken from official government sources such as Regional Regulations and regional monographic documents. Data collection techniques were carried out through literature studies of relevant literature, including books on Jambi Malay history and culture, linguistic journals, and regional maps.

The data were analyzed using the ethnosemantic analysis technique proposed by Spradley (1979), which involves three stages: (1) Domain Identification, i.e. grouping village names based on certain categories of meaning; (2) Taxonomic Analysis, i.e. looking for structural relationships between meaning components in each name; and (3) Componential Analysis, i.e. interpreting each lexical element (word) that makes up the toponymy by referring to the local Malay Jambi dialect vocabulary and its cultural context. The analysis is strengthened by tracing the etymology and folklore that may be behind the naming.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pengabuan is one of the sub-districts in Tanjung Jabung Barat Regency that has village names or designations that have meaning and reflect the identity or characteristics of the village and community. In this study, researchers took thirteen villages to be studied, namely Karya Maju Village, Mekar Jati Village, Parit Bilal Village, Parit Pudir Village, Parit Sialang Village, Pasar Senin Village, Suak Samin Village, Sungai Baung Village, Sungai Jering Village, Sungai Pampang Village, Sungai Raya Village, Teluk Nilau Village and Sungai Serindit Village. To understand the characteristics of the village and community, it is necessary to know the origin of the village name, including the origin of the word, history, meaning and so on. The results of this research will be presented in the table below.

No	Villages	Origin of Village Naming
1.	<i>Karya Maju</i>	According to the local community, Karya Maju Village has a name that reflects the spirit of development and progress. Based on interviews with local community leaders, the name “Karya Maju” was chosen in the

		<p>1980s when the village underwent a major transformation in terms of infrastructure development and improving community welfare.</p> <p>Karya: this word symbolizes the results of the community's hard work and joint efforts in developing the village.</p> <p>Maju: identifies the hope and vision of the community to continue to develop and advance in various aspects of life.</p>
2.	<i>Mekar Jati</i>	<p>According to the local community, Mekar Jati Village has a name that reflects growth and solidity. The name was chosen at the time of the village's establishment in the 1970s when the local government and community saw great potential for economic and social growth in the area.</p> <p>Mekar: the word "mekar" describes dynamic growth and development. It indicates that the village is expected to continue to grow and become more prosperous.</p> <p>Jati: the word "Jati" is a type of tree that is known to be strong and durable. It symbolizes sturdiness, permanence, and stability, which is expected to be reflected in the lives of the villagers.</p> <p>According to the local community, Mekar Jati Village has a name that reflects growth and sturdiness. The name was chosen at the time of the village's establishment in the 1970s when the local government and community saw great potential for economic and social growth in the area.</p> <p>Mekar: the word "mekar" describes dynamic growth and development. It indicates that the village is expected to continue to grow and become more prosperous.</p> <p>Jati: the word "Teak" is a type of tree that is known to be strong and durable. It symbolizes sturdiness, permanence, and stability, which is expected to be reflected in the lives of the villagers.</p>

		The village reflects the expectation of village progress and prosperity, perhaps after a process of transmigration or regional expansion.
3.	<i>Parit Bilal</i>	According to the local community, the name "Parit Balil" reflects the importance of irrigation systems and water management in the social and economic life of the village community. The ditches form the backbone of the agricultural activities that are the main source of livelihood for the villagers.
4.	<i>Parit Pudin</i>	According to local people, the name "Parit Pudin" reflects the importance of the irrigation system and the role of community leaders in the social and economic life of the village. The ditches in the village support agricultural activities, which are the main economic sector.
5.	<i>Parit Sidang</i>	According to the local community, the naming of the village parit siding indicates the importance of irrigation systems for local economic activities that depend on agriculture that requires irrigation systems.
6.	<i>Pasar Senin</i>	According to the local community, the local government plays an important role in the management and regulation of the weekly market. Support from the government in the form of infrastructure and regulations helps ensure the smooth and sustainable running of market activities.
7.	<i>Suak Samin</i>	According to the local community, the name "Suak Samin" consists of two words, 'Suak' and "Samin". The name reflects the geographical characteristics of the village as well as a tribute to historical figures or influences. The word "Suak" refers to an indentation or area that is often inundated with water, such as a swamp or floodplain. It indicates the geographical characteristics of the village which may be in swampy or frequently flooded areas.
8.	<i>Sungai Baung</i>	According to the local community, the name "Baung River" consists of two words, 'River' and "Baung". The name reflects the

		geographical characteristics of the village as well as the presence of fish species that may characterize the area. The word “river” refers to a stream or body of water that flows through the village. This suggests that the village is located along a river that plays an important role in the lives of the community. Meanwhile, “Baung” is a type of freshwater fish that is commonly found in the rivers in the region. The name suggests that Baung fish may be one of the important natural resources for the local community.
9.	<i>Sungai Jering</i>	The name <i>Sungai Jering</i> Village reflects the cultural identity of the community, which is closely related to the river and its ecosystem. The river and the <i>Jering</i> plant are integral to traditions, customs, and daily life.
10.	<i>Sungai Pampang</i>	The name “Sungai Pampang” reflects the importance of the river in the social and economic life of the village community. The river serves as a water source, transportation route, and habitat for various flora and fauna that support the local economy.
11.	<i>Sungai Raya</i>	The name “Sungai Raya” consists of two words, ‘Sungai’ and “Raya”. The name reflects the geographical characteristics of the village as well as certain meanings attached to the area. The word “sungai” refers to a stream or body of water that flows through the village. This indicates that the village is located along a river that plays an important role in the life of the community. Meanwhile, the word “raya” in Indonesian means big or main. This naming may indicate that the river is of a large or significant size, or has a very important role for the village.
12.	<i>Teluk Nilau</i>	The name of Teluk Nilau village comes from the word “Teluk” which means a river basin or sea that is located next to the bay of the Pengabuan river or the Tungkal river which flows into Kuala Tungkal city and ends in Tungkal Ulu, while the word “Nilau” comes

		from the name of a tree that at that time grew a lot around the river.
13.	<i>Sungai Serindit</i>	The village name Sungai Serindit reflects the geographical location of the village. The word river refers to the water flowing around the village. Meanwhile, the word serindit refers to the name of a bird that has a large population around the village. According to the local community, Sungai Serindit Village is the oldest village in Pengabuan Subdistrict.

An ethnolinguistic analysis of toponymy in Pengabuan Sub-district reveals some cultural values of the local Malay community:

Ecological Wisdom: Communities have very deep and specific knowledge of their environment. They can carefully identify and distinguish each landscape feature (e.g. types of hole, bay, rantau) and vegetation (terentang, nilau, cape). This naming is a practical form of cataloguing nature based on direct experience (Ingold, 2000).

Riverine Cultural Identity: The river is not only a source of life, but also a major orientation in naming and navigation. Concepts such as rantau and lubuk indicate that the river is central to the cosmology and socio-economic activities of the community.

Simplicity and Literalism: Many names are direct and straightforward (e.g., Sungai Baru). This reflects the community's practical, efficient, and memorable worldview, where the function of signposting is primary.

Historical Dynamics and Expectations: The existence of names such as Mekar Jaya shows a shift from descriptive-natural to visionary-symbolic naming, reflecting the influence of national development discourse at the local level.

The toponymy of the villages in Pengabuan sub-district reflects the symbiotic relationship between the Malay people and their specific natural environment, the wetlands of Sumatra's east coast. Each village name contains deep layers of meaning, which not only describe the geography but also record the history of occupation, economic activity, and local knowledge systems. Language serves as a medium that archives the ecological wisdom and cultural identity of the community. Preserving and documenting these toponymic meanings is crucial to safeguard intangible cultural heritage and to educate future generations about the importance of harmony with nature.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show the origins and meanings behind the names of villages in Pengabuan Subdistrict. Some of these names use aspects of manifestation with a natural environment background, while others use aspects of society, using social interactions within the community to give names that are

rich in meaning. This is in line with the objective of the study, which is to find out the origins and meanings behind the names of each village. Out of the thirteen village data points, eleven of them incorporate both environmental and social aspects, while the remaining two focus solely on social aspects. This is the outcome of the research on village naming in Pengabuan Subdistrict that we can present.

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