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Lexicon of Medicinal Plant in Gayo Ethnic

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe the ethnobotanical lexicon of traditional medicine of the Gayo community and to understand its lexical meaning based on the ecological and cultural experiences inherent in the speech of the community. This study uses a qualitative approach to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups derived from social problems, with a focus on the natural context and descriptive data such as words or pictures. Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the Gayo community in Blangkejeren has a wealth of lexicon in local languages that are closely related to traditional medicine practices. These lexicons reflect not only linguistic knowledge, but also local knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation.

Keywords: Traditional medicine, Ethnobotanical lexicon, Gayo society

ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi dan mendeskripsikan leksikon etnobotani pengobatan tradisional masyarakat Gayo serta memahami makna leksikalnya berdasarkan pengalaman ekologis dan budaya yang melekat dalam tuturan masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk mengeksplorasi dan memahami makna dari individu atau kelompok yang berasal dari masalah sosial, dengan fokus pada konteks alami dan data deskriptif seperti kata-kata atau gambar. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian yang telah dilakukan, dapat disimpulkan bahwa masyarakat Gayo di Blangkejeren memiliki kekayaan leksikon dalam bahasa daerah yang berkaitan erat dengan praktik pengobatan tradisional. Leksikon-leksikon tersebut mencerminkan tidak hanya pengetahuan linguistik, tetapi juga pengetahuan lokal yang diwariskan secara turun-temurun.

Kata kunci: Pengobatan tradisional, Leksikon etnobotani, Masyarakat Gayo



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1. Introduction

The community has a local knowledge system that is passed down from generation to generation, including the use of plants as a means of traditional medicine. This knowledge is recorded in the form of language, especially the lexicon used to name, classify, and explain the functions and properties of medicinal plants. In this case, traditional medicine can be known orally and in writing. However, traditional medicine that is carried out orally will eventually be forgotten. So that traditional medicine that is carried out orally is not lost, documentation needs to be carried out. This is very important to do considering the lack of studies on traditional medicine terms, including traditional medicine of the Gayo people.

The Gayo tribe is one of the indigenous tribes in the central region of Aceh Province that inhabits the Gayo highlands, especially in Central Aceh, Bener Meriah, and Gayo Lues Regencies [1][2][3]. The Gayo people live side by side with nature that is rich in biodiversity, ranging from herbal plants, shrubs, to trees that thrive in the tropical rainforest environment of the mountains [4][5]. The life of the Gayo people who have long interacted closely with nature, has given birth to forms of local knowledge, including in terms of the use of plants as traditional medicine.

The empirical experience of the Gayo people towards the flora around them not only functions practically as

a treatment, but is also reflected linguistically through special lexicons in the Gayo language that refer to various types of medicinal plants and their uses. This knowledge is passed down orally from generation to generation and becomes an important part of the identity of the Gayo people. The lexicon, in this case, not only reflects the richness of the language but also represents the ecological relationship between humans and their environment. The lexicon is interpreted as all the words in a language, including their meaning and use [6]. Ethnobotany in this case is the science of using plants for daily life needs and customary activities of a tribe in community life [7]. The interaction of society with the natural environment gives birth to a culture that should be maintained. So ethnobotanical studies are very important for documenting traditional knowledge, which is at risk of being lost due to modernization [8].

The Gayo community's ethnobotanical lexicon records local ecological knowledge rooted in daily life practices, including traditional medicine practices. However, over time and the development of modernization and the dominance of chemical medicine, the existence and use of the Gayo community's traditional medicinal plant lexicon has decreased. The younger generation who grew up in the influence of global culture and the dominance of the national language tend to be no longer familiar with local terms related to medicinal plants. This indicates a symptom of linguistic extinction that is closely related to ecological damage and the decay of cultural knowledge.

This phenomenon can be seen as part of a broader threat to the sustainability of local languages and the ecological knowledge of indigenous peoples. Language reflects not only social reality, but also ecological reality, where the lexicon is the main medium in recording human relationships with their environment. Therefore, an ecolinguistic approach is used in this study to understand the relationship between language, culture, and the environment of the Gayo people.

The ecolinguistic approach views language as an integral part of the human ecological system, where language is a medium for expressing, understanding, and constructing ecological experiences. Ecolinguistics includes the relationship between language and the natural, social, and cultural environment. In the context of the Gayo people, the lexicon of medicinal plants is not only the names of plants, but also symbols of local knowledge, cultural experiences, and reflections of ecological values that have been passed down from generation to generation. Unfortunately, the flow of modernization and social change has caused a shift in values and the loss of traditional medicinal plant practices. As a result, many lexicons are no longer used and have the potential to be lost along with the generation of speakers. Languages that are not used in various areas of community life are at risk of extinction [9].

Based on this background, this study is important to be conducted as an effort to document and analyze the lexicon of medicinal plants in the Gayo community. The purpose of this study is to identify and describe the ethnobotanical lexicon of traditional medicine of the Gayo community and to understand its lexical meaning based on the ecological and cultural experiences inherent in the community's speech. By re-exposing the richness of the lexicon of traditional medicinal plants of the Gayo community, it is hoped that this study can contribute to the preservation of regional languages, the maintenance of local knowledge, and the strengthening of ecological awareness amidst the challenges of modernization and environmental change [10][11].

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is an approach to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups that originate from social problems, with a focus on natural contexts and descriptive data such as words or images [12]. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth the relationship between language, culture, and the natural environment as reflected in the lexicon of traditional Gayo medicine. This method also functions to describe and understand the lexical meaning of medicinal plants that have been used for generations by the Gayo people in traditional medicine practices. The data in this study are in the form of lexicons or local vocabulary in the Gayo language related to traditional medicine.

The data sources in this study are native Gayo speakers who live in the Blangkejeren area. In this study, data collection techniques were free listening techniques, note-taking techniques, and recording techniques [13]. The free listening technique is the main method used to obtain linguistic data from informants. Through this technique, researchers listen to the use of language from native speakers without actively participating in the conversation. This means that the researcher acts as an observer who taps the use of language from the

informant in a natural situation, without directing or intervening in the conversation. Furthermore, the note-taking technique is used as a follow-up to the listening method. The researcher records linguistic data, especially the lexicon of traditional medicine in the Gayo language, as spoken by the informant. The recording is done systematically to facilitate the analysis process, both in terms of form, meaning, and use in social and cultural contexts. The recording technique is used simultaneously with the note-taking technique to strengthen the accuracy of the data obtained. Through a recording device, the researcher documents each informant's utterance related to the lexicon of traditional medicine [14][15][16]. This recording is very important for observing phonological aspects, such as word pronunciation, stress, intonation, and typical pronunciation in the Gayo language. With the sound documentation, the researcher can transcribe carefully and verify the form and pronunciation of the lexicon used by the informant. This technique helps ensure that the data obtained is not only valid in terms of content, but also accurate in terms of pronunciation and linguistic form.

3. Result and Discussion

The results of the study show that the Gayo community in Blangkejeren has a wealth of lexicon in their local language that is closely related to traditional medicine. Through interviews and documentation, local terms were found that are used to refer to medicinal plants along with the parts used, how to process them, and their medicinal functions [17][18][19]. Each lexicon not only has an informative function as a naming of plants, but also contains cultural values and ecological knowledge that are passed down from generation to generation. The analysis is presented in the form of tables and descriptive descriptions, including phonetic forms, scientific names, parts of plants used (sections), and descriptions of their use.

Table 1. Lexicon of Medicinal Plants

Lexicon	Phonetics	Latin Name	Section
<i>Kupi</i>	[kopi]	<i>Coffea</i>	Seed
<i>Beuing</i>	[baɪŋ]	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Rhizome/root
<i>Keramil</i>	[kramil]	<i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Fruit
<i>Belo</i>	[bəlu]	<i>Piper betle</i>	Leaf
<i>Lengkues</i>	[leŋkuəs]	<i>Alpinia galanga</i>	RHizome/root
<i>Ulung gadung</i>	[uluŋ gaduŋ]	<i>Manihot esculenta</i>	Leaf
<i>Asam kuyun</i>	[asam kuyun]	<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>	Fruit
<i>Gumis kucing</i>	[gumis kucing]	<i>Orthosiphon aristatus</i>	Leaf
<i>Mungkur</i>	[muŋkur]	<i>Citrus hystrix</i>	Fruit
<i>Pokad</i>	[pokad]	<i>Persea americana</i>	Leaf

1. *Kupi* [kopi]



Figure 1. *Kupi* [kopi]

Coffee, is not only known as a warming and refreshing drink, but also has other functions in traditional medicine, especially for treating scars. The use of coffee as an external medicine shows how everyday ingredients that are easy to find are also used for health benefits. In practice, coffee beans are roasted (fried without oil) until cooked, then ground or smoothed into powder. This coffee powder is then applied evenly to the scars on the skin. This use is topical or external, and is usually done routinely for a certain period of time until the wound dries and the scars fade.

2. *Beuing* [baɪŋ]



Figure 2. *Beuing* [baɪŋ]

Ginger, in addition to being used as a spice in everyday cooking, can also be used as a traditional medicine to treat various health problems, especially coughs and colds. Ginger is known for its warming properties, making it very suitable for use in cold weather or when the body starts to feel unwell. In traditional medicine practices, ginger is usually used in two main ways. First, the ginger is peeled, washed clean, then chewed directly. This method provides a quick warming effect and is suitable for treating early symptoms such as an itchy throat or dry cough. Second, the ginger is boiled in water until boiling, then the boiled water is drunk while warm. This method is more common because it tastes milder and is easy to consume, especially for children or people who cannot stand the spicy taste of raw ginger.

3. *Keramil* [kramil]

Keramil, or coconut, is one of the versatile plants that is widely used, not only as a source of food and drink, but also as a traditional medicine to reduce fever. Coconut water is believed to have natural properties that can help lower body temperature and restore fluids lost during fever. In traditional medicine practices, young coconut water can be drunk directly to provide a cooling effect on the body. However, for more optimal results, the Gayo people often add free-range chicken eggs and a little coriander to the coconut water, then boil the mixture over low heat until boiling. After boiling, the concoction is allowed to cool, then drunk slowly by people who are experiencing fever.

4. *Belo* [bəlu]



Figure 3. *Belo* [bəlu]

Belo or betel leaf, is one of the medicinal plants that has many benefits. One of its uses is to treat nosebleeds, which is a condition where blood suddenly comes out of the nose due to the rupture of fine blood vessels in the nasal cavity. Fresh betel leaves are taken and washed first. After that, the leaves are twisted or rolled into small rolls, then slowly inserted into the bleeding nostril. The leaves are left in the nose for a few minutes, until the bleeding stops naturally.

5. *Lengkues* [leŋkuəs]



Figure 4. *Lengkues* [leŋkuəs]

Galangal or lengkuas is one of the rhizomes that is not only used as a kitchen spice, but also used to treat skin diseases, especially tinea versicolor. Tinea versicolor is a type of fungal infection of the skin that is characterized by white or dark spots and often causes itching. The part used is the fresh galangal rhizome. The processing method is quite simple: the rhizome is peeled and washed thoroughly, then grated or mashed. The grated result is then directly applied to the skin infected with tinea versicolor. This treatment is usually done two to three times a day routinely until the spots disappear

6. *Ulung gadung* [uluŋ gaduŋ]



Figure 5. *Ulung gadung* [uluŋ gaduŋ]

Ulung gadung, or cassava leaves, are one of the plants used as a traditional medicine to treat minor wounds, especially wounds caused by sharp objects such as knives, thorns, or scratches. This plant is easy to find so it is the main choice in natural first aid. The method of use is very simple and practical. Fresh cassava leaves are taken and washed until clean, then chewed directly by the user until smooth. Once smooth enough, the chewed leaves are attached directly to the surface of the injured skin. This concoction is usually left on for some time until the bleeding stops or the wound begins to dry.

7. *Asam kuyun* [*asam kuyun*]



Figure 6. *Asam kuyun* [*asam kuyun*]

Asam kuyun or lime is one of the natural ingredients commonly used as a traditional medicine to relieve coughs. The part used in the treatment is the juice from fresh limes. The processing process is quite simple, namely the lime is sliced and squeezed to produce a liquid. The juice is then mixed with sweet soy sauce in sufficient quantities, and drunk directly.

8. *Gumis kucing* [*gumis kucing*]



Figure 7. *Gumis kucing* [*gumis kucing*]

Cat's whiskers or cat's whiskers is one of the herbal plants that is used as a traditional medicine to treat kidney disease. This plant has pointed leaves and purplish-white flowers with long stamens resembling whiskers. In traditional medicine practices, the part that is used is the leaves. How to use it is by boiling cat's whiskers leaves in clean water until boiling. After that, the boiled water is cooled, then filtered to separate the dregs from the liquid. The boiled water is then drunk regularly.

9. *Mungkur* [*munjur*]



Figure 8. *Mungkur* [munjur]

Mungkur or kaffir lime is used as a traditional medicine to treat chicken pox, especially in the form of external treatment. In this treatment practice, the part used is the skin of the fruit, which is known to have a distinctive aroma and high essential oil content. How to use it is by peeling the outside of the kaffir lime, then the inside of the skin is rubbed or applied slowly to the skin area affected by the chicken pox rash. The application is done carefully so as not to cause irritation, and is usually done several times a day until the rash dries up.

10. *Pokad* [pokad]

Figure 9. *Pokad* [pokad]

Pokad or avocado is not only known for its fruit which is rich in nutrients, but also for its leaves which are used as a traditional medicine to lower high blood pressure (hypertension). How to process it is by taking several fresh avocado leaves, generally one handful of an adult's hand. The leaves are washed clean, then boiled in enough water until boiling. After the boiling process is complete, the water is filtered to separate the leaf pulp and allowed to cool before drinking. This concoction is usually consumed warm.

Findings regarding the lexicon of medicinal plants in the Gayo community in Blangkejeren show that the use of language in traditional medicine practices not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a medium for storing local knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation. Each term or lexicon used such as *kupi*, *Beuing*, *Belo*, and others reflect the Gayo community's attachment to the surrounding natural environment and their understanding of the natural properties of plants. This lexicon is part of a language system that represents the reciprocal relationship between humans and the environment.

The lexicon of plants used by the community not only functions as a naming device, but also reflects a way of viewing nature and utilizing resources properly. It contains ecological values, such as sustainable management of nature, awareness of ecosystem balance, and respect for biodiversity. For example, the use of *keramil* to reduce fever not only illustrates its function as a traditional concoction, but also reflects the community's habits in using easily accessible natural ingredients without damaging the environment. This lexicon also reflects local knowledge formed from life experiences and direct interaction with the surrounding environment.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the Gayo community in Blangkejeren has a wealth of lexicons in regional languages that are closely related to traditional healing practices. These lexicons reflect not only linguistic knowledge, but also local knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation. Each term used to refer to medicinal plants contains important information about the parts used, how to process them, and the medicinal functions that are believed to have been passed down from generation to generation. The medicinal plant lexicon not only functions as a naming system, but also represents the community's perspective on nature and health. It contains ecological values, such as wise use of resources, balance in the relationship between humans and the environment, and respect for the

biodiversity around them. Through this lexicon, it can be seen that language functions as a medium for storing ecological and cultural knowledge that lives in everyday practice.

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