



## Identity Construction through Language Use (A Case Study of Jakartanese Personal Pronoun)

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**ABSTRACT:** Recent studies have reported that the use of language does not merely reflect on the communicative function, but also identifies the social status of the speakers. This research presents an explanation and of these findings in terms of the use of Jakartanese personal pronouns *gue* by non-Jakartan regarding the construction of social identity seen from the perspective of Social Identity Theory (SIT). Observation was employed to investigate the occurrence of this pronoun in conversations among the participants, and semi-structured interviews are used to find out the underlying motivations. Results show that by using *gue*, participants undergo the process of social Identity Theory and are able to enact stances, mostly familiarity and ‘coolness’ which becomes a prime aspect for them to construct self-identity.

**KEYWORDS:** Identity, Personal Pronoun, Social Identity Theory.

### INTRODUCTION

Language is a socially shared code, a complex and dynamic system representing messages in exchange communication. Language as speech is built on eight parts, including pronouns that become the primary focus of this study. According to Errington (1985), pronouns are assumed to be the most salient features in conversation. Thus, speakers are said to be aware of the meaning, including the social significance. In a grammatical context, personal pronouns function to index speakers in conversation.

As a critical part of grammar structure in language communication, personal pronouns become a key identification in multilingual communities. It helps to determine that the variant of personal pronoun being employed by a speaker has its specific purpose and motivation lies behind it that contribute to self-identity construction (MacIntyre, 2017). The study of personal pronouns not only functions to index the speaker’s identity but also to determine the membership status of the ingroup (people who belong to a particular community) and outgroup (people who come from outside a specific community) in society. The result of a personal pronoun study shows the analysis of motivation that drives the participants to choose a particular or to shift from one to another variety of personal pronouns.

Indonesia is a multilingual country in which the majority of the citizens grow up speaking a regional language as ingroup interactions. As a means of adaptation, the citizens vary their speaking styles to conform to multiple communities (Manns, 2012). Bahasa Indonesia has an open pronominal system. There are various forms for referring to speaker and addressee, such as personal pronouns that speakers relatively quickly adopt for first- and second-person reference (Djenar, Ewing, & Manns, 2017).

Bahasa Indonesia is the official language that prescriptively should be used in conversation. However, having multiple and various ethnicities does give rise to different local languages. For instance, the Javanese language is associated with Java ethnicity, Sundanese is associated with Sunda ethnicity and many more. The same case happens with the Jakartan language, which is linked to a social group of people living in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. This local language has so-called Bahasa Gaul with the most known language variants: personal pronoun *gue* and their variants *gua*. Unlike other local languages that have a single thought of a language identical to a particular social group, the Jakartan language has more than that. It also generates a speaking style and more on identity as Gaul (Smith-Hefner, 2007). Djenar et al. (2017) state that this language is commonly used by Indonesian youth, and it is an essential element that informs the nature of the youth language. Further, Bahasa Gaul or the language of sociability could be understood as an informal Bahasa Indonesia heavily influenced by the Jakartan dialect to accentuate an attitude of casual ease, cool cosmopolitanism, flexible and serene interaction, and a sense of belonging among the speakers. It is further explained that in contrast to formal Bahasa Indonesia, which is considered stiff, the speakers attempt to detach this persona by speaking using Jakartan language to achieve an attitude of playfulness.



As Ochs (1990) studies the relationship between language and social identity, the findings suggest a need to examine the extent to which the use of language features, in this case, personal pronouns, are related to the construction of self-identity. In addition, specifically for this research, Smith-Hefner (2007) argues that *gue* has the multivocality essential to understanding its social role and linguistic value. Therefore, referring to the context of this research, even though Jakartans specifically use *gue*, its usage is beyond Jakarta, meaning that people living outside Jakarta are exposed and use this pronoun. Because the use of personal pronouns can show something more considerable than only using that, there could be some other messages it implies. Therefore, research is needed to find out the reason or motives for using *gue* by non-Jakartans.

As the problems are clearly defined, two research questions are proposed: (1) Do non-Jakartans who live in Jakarta use *gue* intentionally, and what motivates them to do so? (2) How does the use of *gue* related to the construction of identity seen from the perspective of social identity theory? The specific objectives of this study are to determine the underlying motives of people coming from outside Jakarta who live in Jakarta to use the personal pronoun *gue* and how it is seen from the perspective of Social Identity Theory (SIT) regarding identity construction.

This paper contributes to the literature in the following ways. First, the study of personal pronouns helps linguists to have a better understanding of how social structures are established and how language as the medium of social interaction contributes to the identity construction of the speakers. Second, this study hopes to engage students interested in learning more about pronominal variation by giving insights on what needs to be investigated more to provide comprehensive results.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Language Variation

Language variation is the differences in how a particular language is used. According to Meyerhoff (2006), Variable and Variant are the two aspects of language variety construction. Variable is defined as the language features being investigated, whereas variant is the concrete instance produced to represent the language features (variable). In the case of intraspeaker communication, language variation happens due to the willingness of the speaker to emphasize likeness and commonality with the addressee. The occurrence of language variety also is often associated with the certain motivation of the speaker. By using different language varieties, the speakers can present themselves differently or conform to the norms and values of a particular language variant in a community. Hence, language variation can be used to identify certain social groups or differentiate speakers from others.

### Audience Design

Audience design is a sociolinguistics theory proposed by Allan Bell in 1984 that highlights the sociolinguistic phenomena that state that language variation occurs as the consequence of the speakers paying attention to their addressee (Meyerhoff, 2006). This statement is supported by Giles, Coupland, and Coupland (1991), who argues that to accommodate and attune with the norms of different addressees, the speakers need to be aware and pay attention to linguistic differences and modify their language accordingly. Consequently, audience design resulted in language variation that led the speaker to have a style-shifting process. Furthermore, it is stated that being able to attune with different speech contexts and addressees is a process of being socialized in a speech community as the speakers try to conform to the same norms and expectations to use a particular language.

### Style-shifting

According to Meyerhoff (2006), style-shifting refers to the speaker switching between two or more languages or language styles and varieties or can be defined as an alternation process between dialects or language styles based on the aspect of formality or informality. Several factors contribute to the occurrence of style-shifting, including whom the speakers are talking to (addressee), the social context of the conversation, the personal goal that the interlocutors or someone who takes part in a conversation want to achieve, and imposed task which refers to the goal that the speakers want to get from the addressee.

### Regional Dialect

Meyerhoff (2006) defines regional dialect as the distinct form of language variants in a particular geographical area which includes the language level of the lexicon (vocabulary) and grammar, phonology (pronunciation), and sentence structure. Considering the context where a regional dialect originated, thus regional dialectology can be used to identify and categorize a particular group of the language in a multilingual community.



## Stance

Du Bois (2007) defines stance as an act by individuals achieved through evaluating objects, positioning self and others, and aligning with other speakers. Enacting stances involves practicing alignment in conversation to help people define their sense of society (Djenar et al., 2017). Jaffe (2009) supported this idea and mentioned that stance had become an essential focus in studying style and language variation. In addition, Eckert (2012) posits that social categories are built around common stances through social practice. These stances are enacted in discourse through linguistic resources drawn from the wider community. Eventually, through the repetition of stances, styles emerge as stabilized ways of doing things linked to situations and social identities (Djenar et al., 2017). From this idea, thus, studying stance can reveal the processes by which individual performances are indexically associated with social meanings. An example study on stance and indexicality is Kiesling (2004), who examined the term *dude*. The findings show that the use of *dude* by young American men to index stances of effortlessness came to help constitute masculinity as a social identity.

## Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Tajfel (1974) defines Social Identity Theory (SIT) as part of an individual's self-concept, which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group and the emotional significance attached to that membership. Emotional significance is determined by the likes and dislikes of the subject that are settled dispositions to find a certain situation pleasant or distressing. Another theory on social identity, Meyerhoff (2006), describes SIT as intergroup relations in which language can be used as a key identification of ingroup members over outgroup members and testing or maintaining boundaries between groups. It was developed to explain how individuals create and define their place in society (Meyerhoff, 2006). As mentioned in Social Identity Theory (SIT), the term group can be expanded to the social class, which refers to a categorization system based on attributes such as occupation, aspirations, or life choices. These attributes provide a valuable basis for grouping individuals together.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) is marked by the presence of salient language that refers to a condition in which a language variant is dominantly being perceived/heard. For example, suppose a group identity where the speaker belongs is more salient than the personal identity of the speaker. In that case, thus, the language behavior of the speaker will tend to accentuate the uniformity and the normal way of talking for a member of that group. Giles and Johnson (1981) add that if language is a salient marker of group membership, the individual may face linguistics adaptation that may result in subtractive bilingualism or even language erosion if many members of a particular group assimilate into another to achieve a more positive group identity.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) is built on three psychological processes: social categorization, social identification, and social comparison. These three aspects are the process in which individuals may proceed to construct self-identity. Social categorization refers to a process classifying people into groups based on particular traits, characteristics, or behavior in order to identify people to which they belong. This process later will create and define the place of an individual in society. Social identification is the process in which people become emotionally invested in their group membership which leads them to behave in a way they believe the group members should behave. As a result of social identification, individuals' self-esteem is impacted positively by the status of their groups. In addition, appropriate behavior is defined by reference to norms of group people belong to. Social comparison is when people compare their group with another group in terms of prestige and social standing. SIT believes that to maintain individual self-esteem, they need to perceive their group (in-group) has higher social standing than the other groups (out-group). Social comparisons between groups are focused on establishing distinctiveness between one's own and other groups. Several linguists postulate that positively valued psychological distinctiveness aims to achieve an acceptable form of social identity, which can be attained by establishing appropriate kinds of intergroup comparison. Further, another theory on social comparison mentioned that dominant social groups tend to mark themselves off symbolically as distinct from the groups they dominate and to interpret their symbols of distinctiveness as evidence of superior moral and intellectual qualities (Chambers, 2007). From the earlier discussion, it should be clear that positive social identity is inseparably a matter of mutual comparisons between groups.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Procedure

The focus problem is Jakartanese personal pronouns *gue*, which people from outside Jakarta use. Djenar et al. (2017) mentioned that *gue* is associated with cosmopolitanism and portrays the life of the people living in the capital. Therefore, the use of *gue* by non-Jakartan people may imply certain messages that need to be addressed and investigated. Thus, two research questions were



formulated: 1) Do non-Jakartans who live in Jakarta use *gue* intentionally, and what motivates them? 2) How does the use of *gue* relate to the construction of identity seen from the perspective of social identity theory?

A qualitative study is employed to provide a focused analysis on the motivational use of *gue*. The following procedure was selecting the participants using purposive sampling. University students were selected as target participants. There are two considerations for selecting university students as participants. First, as Manns (2012) argued, linguistic change predominantly happens between youth. Thus, it gives focuses on understanding social and linguistic change. Second, institutional sites are prime locations for tracking down networks of youths and moving outward into the community, enabling linguistic change to occur (Manns, 2012). Hence, based on these two considerations, university students make a great fit to provide answers for this study.

Proceeding to data collection and analysis, observation was conducted as a preliminary step of choosing the participants that fit with the criterion set and seeking evidence that the use of personal pronoun *gue* does exist in the conversation among people coming from outside Jakarta. After the observation, the interview was the next procedure to seek responses and clarification from the participants. The last step is analyzing the data using theories and writing the conclusion.

## Research Context

This research was set in the researcher's place of study, Sampoerna University, which is located in Jakarta. The location of this institution is in which personal pronoun *gue* is associated and exposes its usage to the students who come from the city. Therefore, it eases the data collection process and minimizes the time constraint for this research. Thus, Sampoerna University serves as a basis for a multilingual place, which enables this occurrence of exchanging regional languages.

## Participants

The participants for this research are students from the Faculty of Education at Sampoerna University, which are selected through purposive sampling. Several criteria are set to determine the participants: (1) students who come from outside Jakarta, (2) currently living in Jakarta, and (3) use *gue* and their variants. These three criteria are based on the argument made by Chambers (2007), who argues that in a multilingual community where individuals have to go outside their enclave for work or educational purposes, they will eventually conform to the speaking style used by the people. Therefore, these three criteria are sufficient to help determine the participants. After setting the criteria for purposive sampling, observation was done to find out the use of pronoun *gue* in conversation to help find out the suitable participants to partake in this study. From this process, two students were chosen to participate in this study. This study aims to give a thorough and focused research analysis with this number of participants.

## Data Collection

As this study uses a qualitative method, researcher is the key instrument of research who functions as the primary data collection tool (Cohen, 2011). To answer the research questions, two kinds of data: a) the evidence that the participants use *gue* in conversation, and b) the underlying motivations of using *gue* were collected in this study.

Observation allows looking at what is happening at a certain event and gathering data on international settings. Bailey (1978), as cited in Cohen (2011), points out that case study observations are less reactive than other data-gathering methods. The observation process was conducted as preliminary research. It was done unobtrusively, meaning that it was done without the knowledge of those being observed to reduce the participants' reactivity or unnatural reactions. The observation results are further used as a starting point to investigate the motivational use of this pronoun through interviews.

Interviews facilitate a way to go deeper into participants' motivations and their reasons for using Jakartanese personal pronouns *gue*. The semi-structured interview process covers both cognitive and affective self-report measures. Meanwhile, effective self-report measures how individuals feel, including their emotional reaction to something. The semi-structured interview is guided using these six questions and is subject to change and flexibility: (1) What do you know about first-person personal pronouns *gue* and what do you think about them? (2) Based on the observation, it is found out that you are using *gue* in conversation. What are your reasons for doing so? (3) Do you use *gue* to everyone or when talking to Jakartan only? (4) How do you see the difference in yourself when using and when not using *gue* in conversation? (5) Do your Jakartan friends realize your use of *gue*, and how do they react? (6) Do your non-Jakartan friends realize your use of *gue*, and how do they react? Besides the six guiding interview questions stated above, probes or sub-questions were used to elicit additional information, elaborate statements, and clarify responses from the participants.



## Data Analysis

Observation result was used to find out the occurrence of pronoun *gue* in conversation among non-Jakartan participants. It was used as a starting point to investigate their reasons for doing so. For the interview result, responses are coded, and several themes are generated to classify the responses. The themes are primarily made by referring to the three elements of Social Identity Theory (SIT). However, it is free to generate other themes to provide richness in analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Observation and interviews are utilized to collect the data. The observation was done unobtrusively to find out the use of the Jakartanese personal pronoun *gue* in the natural setting of conversation. Meanwhile, the interview process was employed to find the reason for its usage.

Participant A perceives *gue* as a common personal pronoun used by people living in the capital. Still, its use has spread to other regions despite its exclusiveness to a specific area, Jakarta. Participant A perceives *gue* as cool. She reveals that using *gue* is intended to adapt to her new society. Further, by using *gue*, she can talk freely and loosely and feel more enjoyable when talking with other people. Though participant A feels *gue* gives her several benefits in terms of building their self-esteem, she does not use his pronoun when talking to her close friend who has known her well because it may sound rude especially for those who are not used to it and those who do not know how to spell it properly. Therefore, she prefers to use *gue* only to talk with whom she feels comfortable enough and has close relationships. By using *gue*, participant A claims that there is a cool sense attained to herself and gets a presupposition of acceptance by her Jakartan friend. She assigns that using *gue* is not merely about self-identification but also an alignment process. Through the wide use of *gue* outside Jakarta and living in Jakarta for educational purposes, she possesses this pronoun as a means of adaptation to her new circumstances. Even though it does not last long because her adjusting process depends on the circumstances she belongs to.

Similar to the opinion shared by participant A, participant B also perceives *gue* as a personal pronoun exclusively used by natives and strongly associated with youth and wealth. Using *gue*, she feels more comfortable talking to her Jakartan peers. She adds that by using *gue*, her friends treat her differently, which means they will be more open and blunt with her, unlike when she uses different personal pronouns such as *Aku*, which her friends will react in a way that seems more polite and try to draw a distance with her. These findings are similar to what Smith-Hefner (2007) found in her study. In a situation where people speak different regional languages, *gue* is often used to express familiarity and solidarity.

### Discussion

This research attempts to find out the underlying motivations of Non-Jakartan speakers to use the first person singular personal pronoun *gue* and how it relates to their social identity constructions seen from the perspective of Social Identity Theory (SIT). Underlying motivations are defined as specific reasons to know that the participants use this pronoun regardless of their homeland and initial social group. In contrast, *gue* is commonly known and associated with a specific area, Jakarta. For this reason, Social Identity Theory helps explain social behavior, which is determined by the motivation of the person as an individual and the group member of a society in terms of language usage.

*Gue* with several variants such as *gua* or in writing *gw* or are assumed to exclusively belong and associated with a particular area, Jakarta. However, despite this association, the use of *gue* with several variants such as *gua* or in written *gw* or *w* has spread beyond Jakarta with which they are associated. Despite this association, *gue* and its variants are the most common informal personal pronoun used by speakers living in Jakarta (Djenar et al., 2017). During the semi-interview process, participants have provided their concerns about the use and meaning of this pronoun. The major findings focus on the motivational use of this pronoun stating that both participants A & B are concerned with attunement to Jakartan peers as a means of adaptation to the new environment.

*Gue* is a variation of the first single personal pronoun employed by participants of this study. This pronoun is a distinct language feature in the lexical level associated with a particular geographical area, Jakarta. Referring to the concept of language variation, there must be a certain motivation of a speaker willing to accomplish, be it to accommodate or to present a different self persona. According to interview responses, participants stated that the use of *gue* is contextual depending on whom they are talking to. This response reflects the idea of audience design theory which concerns the accommodation and attunement process in conversation. The contextual consideration had the participant switch between two or more language variants, in this case, the first single personal



pronoun. Thus, the contextual use of *gue* by the participants shows their awareness of the linguistic differences. Hence, they need to modify their language and speaking style accordingly.

As Chambers (2007) mentions that distinctive linguistic features may imply a sense of identity, the interview responses further investigate correspondingly with the three elements of Social Identity Theory (SIT) to find out how the use of *gue* may affect the identity constructions of the speakers and the possible stances that may appear during the process. Therefore, the interview responses are discussed and arranged based on the three-core cognitive of Social identity Theory (SIT) respectively:

### Social Categorization

Social categorization refers to individuals categorizing people into groups based on particular characteristics or behavior. In this research context, the behavior mentioned is the use of the Jakartanese personal pronoun *gue*, which becomes the main determinant of the categorization. This process later will create and define the place of individuals in society. Therefore, variation of first-person pronouns should be viewed as a strategic act of self-categorization to manage stance-taking concerns (Englebreston, 2007).

Participant A categorizes two social groups regarding the use of *gue* between Jakartan people and people coming from outside Jakarta who is not supposedly using this pronoun. Through self-categorization, Djenar et al. (2017) propose that the selection of the personal pronoun *gue* enables people to present a persona that is friendly and accessible. This argument is found in the finding of Participant A who stated that *gue* makes her talk in a way that is not too firmly and tightly, thus the conversation is accessible for both parties.

On the other hand, Participant B is aware of the Jakartan association that the personal pronoun *gue* carries. Further, she mentions that crazy rich and youth are those who come to mind whenever she thinks about this pronoun. This way of categorization could be explained by the argument of Smith-Hefner (2007), who states *gue*, which she argues is a language of sociability heavily influenced by the Jakartan dialect associated with cool cosmopolitanism and language of youth. The speakers of this language purposely conceive an attitude of playful disregard for the social strictures and status differentials of formal Indonesian, distancing themselves from what they perceive as the stiffness and inflexibility of the official standard. Young people may also use language styles associated with the Jakarta variety of Indonesian to index a *Gaul* identity.

### Social Identification

Participant A shows an attempt and willingness to accommodate her Jakartan peers, especially the use of personal pronouns *gue* because she believes it enables her to talk freely and comfortably. It is in line with Djenar et al.'s (2017) study stating that *gue* is used to accentuate casual ease, cool cosmopolitanism, flexible and serene interaction.

Participant A mentions that this pronoun helps her build her self-confidence as it sounds cool whenever she uses *gue*. It infers that there is emotional significance to her identification with her Jakartanese peers or group, affecting her self-esteem to be bound up with the group membership. The emotional significance could be referred to the explanation by Ohcs (1990), who suggests two contextual dimensions on defining socio-cultural context, which are affective and epistemological dispositions. Affective dispositions include participants' feelings, moods, and attitudes toward some proposition. Meanwhile, epistemological dispositions refer to some property of participants' beliefs or knowledge. These two contextual dimensions help establish their social identity, the social relationship obtained between them, and the speech act or speech activity they are endeavoring to perform. In this sense, an understanding of effect indexes and epistemological stance is basic to interpreting the socio-cultural organization of a communicative event. Here, participant A is orienting towards an attitude of self-confident cosmopolitanism.

As mentioned by Silverstein (1976), personal pronouns unite both referential meaning and pragmatic meaning. In the case of the Jakartanese personal pronoun *gue*, it has a referential meaning that indexes the speaker's role in the interaction. Simultaneously, *gue* also indexes the pragmatic meaning referring to perduring social association with Jakarta, which indirectly indexes stances associated with people in the capital, such as a sense of 'coolness.'

Participant A mentions that living in the capital for educational purposes and interacting with people from different regions with various ethnic and local languages has made her adaptive to society. This is supported by Boellstorf's (2002) claim stating that "among Indonesian youth there is a growing awareness of and participation in larger social networks that link them with groups cutting across geographically conceived local identities." Individual participation in networks is measurable in terms of density and multiplexity, where density is measured by the frequency of contact a person has with individuals in an identifiable cohort. Multiplexity is measured by the number of bonds shared with those individuals (siblings, neighbors, workmates, recreational



partners, and so on) (Chambers, 2007). This means that for participant A the density of the network has linguistic consequences, which is to adapt and use *gue*. This finding aligns with the multiple studies of insular groups conducted by Chambers (2007) in Harlem, Austria, Belfast, and Philadelphia. He found that the frequent density of participation in social networks resulted in greater use of local language variants in those circumstances. In addition, social networks, as spotted in the response of participant A are assumed to influence attitudes in using a language. In a multilingual country, Chambers (2007) mentions an ethnic enclave, which deals with the attunement of a language. For instance, people who belong to a certain group, in this case, can be referred to as an enclave, have to work outside their community. This means concerning language, and they will eventually accommodate their language. Therefore, participant A's adjustment in first-person pronoun use is not simply her subjective presentation of self-image. Instead, they follow a close intersubjective alignment with their co-participants.

Similarly, Participant B wishes to present herself as more approachable to local Jakartan by using *gue*. Furthermore, she feels the urge to use *gue* as her surroundings routinely exchange using this pronoun. In addition, the use of *gue* is also can be implied as to the shifting process of speakers attempting to put less focus on themselves and adjusting to the way their Jakartan friend speaks. This kind of response could be referred to in the study by Manns (2012) that concerning first-person pronouns. A few participants selected *gue* to enact stances that may be examined in terms of both self-categorization and indirect indexicality. Firstly, these participants wish to assert personal identity beyond the opportunity provided by self-categorization. The different contexts of using this pronoun could also be implied as a capacity of the participants to communicate across social groups. Another thing to discuss is that both participants are reluctant to use *gue* when speaking to friends who share similar ethnic backgrounds. It can be inferred that there is an attempt to preserve identity.

## Social Comparison

Social comparisons explain individuals' behavior to establish distinctiveness between one's own and other groups for evaluative purposes to provide order, meaning, and social identity (Tajfel, 1974). Individuals must first have acquired a sense of belonging to a distinct group from the one they dislike (Tajfel, 1974). As social comparison looks for a comparing act of individuals belonging to two different groups, there is no specific and relevant finding that could be placed in this core cognitive aspect. Instead of comparing two groups, the participants do self-comparison evaluating the effects they obtained when using and when not using *gue* in different social environments. The evaluation includes emotional significance such as self-esteem, the reaction from the addressee (could be positive or negative), and changes in the atmosphere of conversation. According to the data collection, there is no sign of comparison among groups stated by both participants A and participant B. The only comparison refers to the effect of self without attempting to compare two groups she interacted with, especially in terms of perceiving one group to have a higher position or highly valued compared to the other group. However, it is found that comparison exists in the initial group members to which the participants belong.

As part of the finding, Participant A mentions that her group members, mostly Javanese, constrain the use of *gue*. The group members argue that *gue* is not appropriate and is not supposedly used and as it is contradictory with what they usually have (to talk using *Aku*). The contrast perception of *gue* by local Jakartan and non-Jakartan has made participant A take a careful step to use it, especially to her friends from outside Jakarta who perceive *gue* as impolite. The way friends of participant A perceive *gue* can be implied as to the process of avoidance as they believe that there are significant differences between the speakers from other regions from theirs. It is proven by Djenar (2012) research, which implied that non-Jakartans often consider *gue* to be coarse and overly familiar. They tend to characterize speakers who are not from Jakarta but use *gue* as arrogant. Another explanation is because *gue* is an explicitly out-group language feature and is not considered acceptable within the local environment (Manns, 2012). In addition, young people tend to have a strong aversion or sense of dislike to this pronoun as mentioned by Djenar (2017). Smith-Hefner (2007) also mentions that even though *gue* has positive value and is perceived to have a cool, cosmopolitan sense, this language is assumed to be dual-faceted. It is not only used to refer to social styles identified as cool and trendy but can also reference negative sociability such as being too familiar and rude.

Similar findings were found from the responses of participant B. By using *gue*, Participant B spots a different attitude of her Jakartan friend where they will be more open and blunt in a positive way to build a closer relationship. Conversely, the positive attitude does not apply to the friends of participant B. For them, there is nothing wrong with the pronoun *gue* as it is the local language and part of the culture in Jakarta. Further, they argue that since *gue* is exclusively associated with the life of people living in the capital, it is



not appropriate for those from outside the area, Jakarta, to use this pronoun. They label those who use *gue* as 'pretentious' or *sok-sokan*. This response aligns with the finding in Djenar et al.'s (2018) study, in which one of the participants states that *gue* is not appropriate. The speakers of this pronoun are considered arrogant and unable to integrate with their friends. Hence, they will be pointed out and asked to switch the pronoun considering the place they belong to. Thus, it could be inferred that the responses from the friends of participant B are intended to maintain the group boundaries by preferably using what they believe is standard language *Aku* instead of *Gua*. Another explanation in which refusal on the use of *gue* occurs in the group members of participants, Djenar et al. (2017) called this an othering process. It is a process by which individuals are represented as different from creating an ingroup and outgroup boundary. It is examined how people perceive the collective style of speakers from another region as being significantly different from the style of speakers from their region. A similar case of avoidance and othering was found in the study conducted by Manns (2011) in Malang, East Java. One of the participants mentions that people who use *gue* seem to identify themselves as someone else. In addition, another participant explains that this is because *gue* is an explicitly out-group language feature and not considered acceptable within the local Javanese environment.

The most frequent reason uttered by participants in using the first single personal pronoun *gue* is to align or conform with the surrounding. If it is seen from the concept of stance defined in the theoretical framework, such response is an attunement process to help them determine their sense and position in society. Drawn from the interview responses, several stances are generated due to pronoun *gue*, which are familiarity, intimacy, and close relationship.

## CONCLUSION

This research aims to find out the participants' underlying motivations for their usage of the first single personal pronoun, *gue*, and how it is related to the identity construction seen from the perspective of Social Identity Theory (SIT). First, to conclude, participants of the study who are Non-Jakartans use *gue* in their conversation. Second, through the use of this pronoun, it was found that the participants undergo the process of social categorization and social identification. Yet, the social comparison was absent as none showed responses comparing the two groups. Third, due to social categorization and social identification, participants can enact stances, mostly familiarity and 'coolness' which becomes a prime aspect for them to construct self-identity.

This study adds to the literature by studying personal pronouns, allowing linguists to grasp better how social structures are formed and how language contributes to the speakers' identity building as a medium of social interaction. Second, this research aims to pique students' curiosity who want to learn more about pronominal variation by revealing what has to be explored further to produce thorough results.

As there is no sufficient evidence that the participants commit or show an act of social comparison, in-depth observations through designated events to see whether an act of social comparison occurs in a certain social event can be meaningful research in the future.

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