



FROM VULGAR TO VALUABLE: REFRAMING THE COARSE SUNDANESE REGISTER 'AING-SIA' IN THE WEST JAVA GOVERNOR'S POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how the politician Dedi Mulyadi employs the coarse Sundanese pronouns *aing* and *sia* in public communication. It focuses on how these expressions, traditionally regarded as impolite, are strategically used in official and public settings to challenge conventional linguistic norms while reinforcing political authority. The research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design, analyzing eight video clips collected from YouTube and TikTok using Halliday's register theory, Silverstein's indexicality, and Du Bois' stance theory as analytical frameworks. The findings reveal that the social meanings of *aing* and *sia* have shifted from markers of rudeness to effective political resources. By combining humor with an informal speaking style, Dedi Mulyadi reduces social distance, projecting authenticity, sincerity, and solidarity with ordinary citizens. These linguistic strategies enable him to establish a stronger connection with grassroots audiences while reshaping public perceptions of linguistic politeness in political discourse. This study offers valuable insights for scholars and students of political linguistics and cultural studies by demonstrating how regional languages can function within contemporary political communication. It further argues that the strategic use of non-standard or coarse local language can serve as a constructive political asset, challenging the conventional assumption that political credibility depends solely on formal and polite language. In doing so, the study contributes to broader discussions on the role of regional languages in constructing political identity in multicultural societies.

Keywords: coarse register, sundanese language, political discourse.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is an important factor in the process of building political identity, social relations, and political action. Politically, language serves not just the purpose of communication, but also for the construction of image, legitimacy and public acceptance (Casañ-Pitarch, 2018; Ardiyansah & Auliya, 2023; Becerra-Posada et al., 2022). Thus, the general rule is that public officials have to conduct themselves in a polite, formal and authoritative manner. As a result, it is often said that communication is formal and polite

and is controlled by rhetoric in the political arena, especially at the institutional level.

While political discourse is generally associated with formal and polite language, the political reality in West Java presents a strikingly different dynamic. Dedi Mulyadi, the Governor of West Java for the 2025–2030 term, frequently employs the Sundanese pronouns *aing* ("I") and *sia* ("you") in various public interactions. This linguistic practice is not merely spontaneous, but represents a consistent communicative strategy used in community visits, informal conversations, and even semi-formal political settings. Such usage

contrasts sharply with conventional expectations of political communication, in which coarse or informal language is typically considered inappropriate for public officials.

In his speech at the 392nd anniversary of Karawang (Kang Dedi Mulyadi Channel, 2015), Dedi Mulyadi emphasized that his use of the *aing-sia* register, although frequently criticized as inappropriate for a governor, was highly effective in engaging the public and calming mass demonstrations. He argued that linguistic proximity enabled him to establish an emotional connection and social trust with the people. This statement suggests that the effectiveness of political communication may depend not solely on formal politeness, but also on the speaker's ability to employ culturally resonant and socially relatable language.

“Kenapa Gedung Sate tidak jadi dibakar? Karena saya dekat dengan mereka, karena mereka mengenal wajah saya, dan karena saya bergumul dengan bahasa sederhana mereka. Banyak yang mengkritik saya waktu itu, “kunaon gubernur ngomongna sia-aing?! namun ternyata bahasa itu sangat efektif menghadapi gelombang demonstrasi”.

[*“Why was Gedung Sate not burned down? Because I was close to them, because they recognized my face, and because I engaged with their simple language. Many criticized me at that time ‘why does the governor speak with sia-aing?!’ yet in fact that language was very effective in dealing with the wave of demonstrations.”*]

In the Sundanese speech-level system (*undak-usuk basa*), the pronouns *aing* (“I”) and *sia* (“you”) are traditionally categorized as *basa kasar* (coarse language), a register commonly associated with intimacy, anger, or expressions of dominance. Within Sundanese sociocultural norms, these forms are generally considered inappropriate in formal interactions and are often stigmatized as impolite expressions (Hamid, 2014). The use of *aing-sia* in political and institutional contexts therefore represents a significant deviation from conventional expectations of linguistic politeness and social hierarchy.

Previous studies on Sundanese speech have consistently described *undak-usuk basa* as a hierarchical system in which speech levels encode respect, social status, and interpersonal relationships. Within this system, *basa lemes* functions as an index of politeness and deference, whereas *basa kasar* is generally restricted to particular social contexts and is typically avoided in formal interactions (Anderson, 1993; Sudaryat, 2007).

Studies of Indonesian political discourse have predominantly focused on elite rhetoric, populist communication, presidential speeches, and the discursive construction of political legitimacy (Aspinall, 2015; Hadiz&Richard Robison, 2017; Rochmansjah&Saputra, 2024). While these studies have provided important insights into how political language constructs authority and public legitimacy, they rarely examine the role of socially stigmatized linguistic forms in political performance. In particular, little is known about how local coarse registers, such as Sundanese *basa kasar*, can be strategically employed to project authenticity, reduce social distance, and foster solidarity with audiences. This omission is noteworthy because linguistic choices in multilingual political settings are not merely stylistic devices but also index social identities, cultural values, and interpersonal relationships. Examining the strategic deployment of *basa kasar* therefore extends current understandings of Indonesian political discourse beyond elite rhetorical practices to include locally embedded forms of political authenticity.

Despite identifying the social hierarchy of Sundanese speech levels, previous studies have largely treated coarse registers as socially deviant forms rather than as meaningful communicative resources. Nevertheless, limited attention has been given to how stigmatized linguistic varieties function as instruments for constructing political identity, particularly within localized sociocultural contexts such as West Java. More importantly, existing studies have not sufficiently explained the linguistic and interactional mechanisms

through which such forms acquire new social meanings in political discourse.

To address this gap, the present study examines how Dedi Mulyadi's use of the *aing-sia* register transforms a traditionally stigmatized linguistic form into a meaningful political resource. This study draws on the theoretical frameworks of Register (Halliday, 2019; Lukin, et al, 2011); Indexicality (Silverstein, 2003; Ochs, 1992), and Stance Theory Du Bois (2007) to analyze how linguistic forms operate across different communicative contexts, how they index social meanings, and how speakers construct authority, intimacy, humour, and political identity through interaction. Through these perspectives, the study seeks to explain how *aing-sia* undergo re-indexicalization and acquire new meanings associated with authenticity, solidarity, and populist authority within political discourse.

Halliday conceptualizes register as a configuration of meaning shaped by situational context, particularly through the dimensions of field, tenor, and mode. Within political discourse, these dimensions help explain how linguistic choices shift according to communicative setting, social relations, and interactional purposes. Meanwhile, indexicality theory explains how linguistic forms point to particular social meanings, identities, and ideological positions (Breen & Candlin, 2020; Jaihow & Sinwongsuwat, 2024; Pokrivcakova, 2019). In this study, the use of *aing-sia* is examined not merely as a linguistic form, but as a socially meaningful register that indexes authenticity, solidarity, authority, and resistance within political interaction.

In addition to register and indexicality, this study also draws on stance theory proposed by Du Bois (2007), which conceptualizes stance as a relational process involving evaluation, positioning, and alignment within interaction. This perspective is particularly relevant for examining how the use of *aing-sia* enables speakers to negotiate authority, humor, intimacy, and political identity in public communication.

By addressing this issue, this study contributes to political sociolinguistics and register analysis by demonstrating how stigmatized linguistic forms can acquire new social meanings and function as strategic resources in political discourse. The study further argues that the transformation of *aing-*

sia from “vulgar” to “valuable” is not an inherent property of the linguistic forms themselves, but a socially constructed process shaped by context, speaker identity, and interactional goals. In doing so, this research highlights how coarse linguistic forms may become markers of authenticity, solidarity, and populist authority within localized political communication.

To guide this analysis, the present study is formulated around the following research questions: 1) how do the Sundanese pronouns *aing-sia*, traditionally categorized as *basa kasar*, undergo re-indexicalization within political discourse? 2) what linguistic and interactional mechanisms allow the shift of meaning from negative (vulgar) to positive (solidarity, authenticity)? 3) how does the deployment of *aing-sia* contribute to constructing political identity, authenticity, and authority in public communication?

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design to investigate the use of the coarse Sundanese register *aing-sia* in political discourse. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it enables an in-depth exploration of the social meanings, contextual functions, and ideological implications of linguistic choices as they emerge in naturally occurring discourse rather than through numerical measurement (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

A case study design was adopted because it facilitates an intensive examination of a bounded case within its real-life sociocultural context, allowing the researcher to explore complex interactions between language, identity, and political practice (Amin, 2023; Yang & Kyun, 2022; Thornbury, 2023). The case focuses on Dedi Mulyadi as a prominent public figure whose communicative style provides a particularly rich context for examining how linguistic choices contribute to the construction of political identity, authenticity, and communicative strategy. The analysis was conducted using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis, which emphasizes the interpretative identification of

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patterns of meaning across qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2021)

The data for this study were drawn from publicly accessible audiovisual materials obtained from YouTube and TikTok platforms. The primary dataset consists of official speeches, informal interactions with citizens, semi-formal public talks, and bureaucratic meetings documented between 2025 and 2026 to capture his recent linguistic patterns.

Data selection was conducted through purposive sampling, which enables the researcher to identify information-rich cases relevant to the research objectives (Ahmad, M., Wilkins, 2024). The selection criteria included: (1) the presence of the pronouns *aing* and/or *sia*, (2) clearly identifiable communicative contexts, and (3) sufficient audio quality to ensure accurate transcription.

To ensure a comprehensive analysis, the dataset prioritizes analytical depth and contextual variety over statistical representation. The selected excerpts represent critical interactional moments across four communicative domains: spontaneous field interactions, formal speeches, semi-formal talks, and institutional/bureaucratic meetings. Rather than aiming for statistical representativeness, the eight excerpts were selected for their analytical richness and contextual diversity. Together, they provided sufficient evidence to identify recurring patterns in the use of *aing* and *sia* across different communicative settings, with additional data unlikely to generate substantially new insights (Saunders et al., 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2021)

The data collection process involved several stages. First, relevant videos were identified and selected based on the established criteria. Second, utterances containing *aing-sia* were manually transcribed to preserve their linguistic features, including instances of code-switching between Sundanese and Indonesian. Third, each utterance was accompanied by contextual annotations concerning the situational background, participants, and communicative purposes of the interaction.

Such contextualization is essential for understanding how linguistic meanings are constructed and negotiated within specific interactional settings.

In analysing the data, this study integrates three theoretical frameworks: register theory (Halliday, 2019), indexicality (Silverstein, 2003; Ochs, 1992), and stance theory (Du Bois, 2007). The analysis was conducted through several stages. First, each utterance was categorized according to its communicative context using Halliday's register variables: field, tenor, and mode. Second, the use of *aing-sia* was examined in terms of its indexical meanings, particularly how these pronouns signal social relations such as authority, intimacy, solidarity, and resistance. Third, stance analysis was employed to examine how the speaker positions himself and others through evaluative, humorous, and directive expressions within interaction.

To enhance the credibility of the analysis, this study compares linguistic patterns across four communicative contexts, namely spontaneous interactions, public speeches, semi-formal talks, and bureaucratic meetings. Rather than relying on isolated examples, the analysis examines whether similar patterns of *aing-sia* use recur across different interactional settings. This comparative strategy strengthens the trustworthiness of the findings by demonstrating that the observed linguistic patterns are consistent across multiple contexts rather than being limited to a single communicative event. Such an approach is consistent with the principle of triangulation in qualitative research, which enhances credibility through the convergence of evidence across different contexts and sources (Denzin, 1978 ; Carter, 2012).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The qualitative analysis reveals that the deployment of the coarse Sundanese pronouns

aing and *sia* by Dedi Mulyadi occurs across various interactional spaces. Instead of operating as markers of vulgarity, these pronouns are systematically recontextualized to construct populist authority and social proximity.

4.1 Register Shifting and Institutional Recontextualization

From the perspective of Halliday (1978) Register Theory, the linguistic meaning of *basa kasar* (coarse register) is not static; it is driven dynamically by the configuration of *field*, *tenor*, and *mode*. In institutional settings, Mulyadi routinely breaks the conventional bureaucratic register by injecting these stigmatized pronouns into formal policy discussions. This mechanism can be observed in his interaction with the Mayor of Bandung regarding a 600-ton waste management crisis:

Data 1:

Walikota: "Jadi tiga ini kemudian punya tanggung jawab sendiri-sendiri, Pak."

KDM : "Heeh, heeh."

Walikota: "Dari bulan Desember sampah memang tidak ada pengelola."

KDM : "Pada akhirnya menumpuk?"

Walikota: "Menumpuk 600 ton."

KDM : "Pada akhirnya, sia anu mungut, aing nu ngangkut. Nasib jadi gubernur. Walikota ayeuna teh kitu Ujang.... Haha."

In Data 1, the *field* is a serious institutional discussion regarding municipal neglect. Traditionally, the *tenor* between a Governor and a Mayor demands formal deferential language (*basa lemes*) to maintain professional distance. However, Mulyadi alters the register by introducing a rhyming, coarse Sundanese phrase. The pronoun *sia* targets the Mayor's administrative duty, while *aing* positions the Governor as the ultimate laborer (*nu ngangkut*). By wrapping a serious

administrative reprimand in a humorous, colloquial register, the institutional distance is collapsed, turning a dry political evaluation into a shared regional responsibility.

This interaction also illustrates how language choice is shaped by the speaker's communicative purpose rather than by the formality of the setting alone. Although the discussion takes place in an official government meeting, Dedi Mulyadi intentionally uses everyday Sundanese expressions to create a more relaxed atmosphere. Instead of increasing social distance, the use of *aing* and *sia* makes the interaction sound more natural and easier for the public to understand.

From the perspective of register theory, the field remains institutional because the discussion concerns public administration and waste management. However, the *tenor* changes from a formal relationship between government officials into a more personal and familiar interaction. This shift allows criticism to be delivered in a way that sounds firm but not excessively formal. As a result, the message becomes more engaging for both the participants and the wider audience who later watch the video through digital media.

The use of humor also plays an important role in this interaction. Rather than embarrassing the mayor, the humorous expression softens the criticism and reduces possible tension during the discussion. This communication strategy enables the governor to express dissatisfaction while maintaining a positive relationship with his subordinate.

Therefore, the coarse register functions not as a sign of disrespect but as a tool for effective political communication.

Data 2:

"Saya katakan, jadi gubernur baru dua bulan, terus ketika dicek jalannya jalan kabupaten. Kunaon jalan kabupaten ngambek ka aing, ari sia, kunaon teu ngambek ka bupati?" (Public Speech, Cirebon, May 2025).

In Data 2, the *field* is a public infrastructure complaint. Mulyadi uses *aing* to absorb public anger directly, constructing an image of an accessible leader who does not hide behind bureaucratic protocols. Simultaneously, *sia* is used rhetorically to redirect the public's critical focus toward local municipal authorities. The coarse register transforms a potentially rigid political defence into an engaging, emotionally charged dialogue.

This example further demonstrates that Dedi Mulyadi prefers direct and conversational language when addressing public concerns. Rather than responding with formal political explanations, he speaks in a way that resembles everyday conversation among local people. This approach helps citizens feel that the governor understands their frustrations and is willing to communicate openly.

In terms of register, the topic remains a serious discussion about infrastructure, but the language style becomes informal and culturally familiar. This combination allows Mulyadi to maintain his authority while appearing approachable. The use of *aing* and *sia* therefore supports his public image as a leader who is close to ordinary people instead of being distant behind official language.

Overall, the findings in this section demonstrate that register shifting is not merely a stylistic choice but a strategic communicative practice. Across the two examples, Dedi Mulyadi consistently combines institutional authority with everyday Sundanese expressions to create a more personal relationship with his audience. Although the interactions occur in formal or public settings, the use of *aing* and *sia* reduces interpersonal distance without diminishing the seriousness of the issues being discussed. This pattern suggests that the coarse register serves as a bridge between official political communication and the linguistic practices of local communities, allowing complex public issues to be communicated in a way that feels more accessible and relatable.

4.2 Indexical Shift: From Vulgarity to Solidarity

Applying Silverstein (2003) framework of indexicality, the data indicates a clear shift from first-order to second-order indexical meanings. Within the traditional ideology of *undak-usuk basa*, the pronouns *aing* and *sia* carry a first-order indexical value of vulgarity and disrespect (Hamid, 2014). However, KDM's discourse triggers a re-indexicalization process during spontaneous field interactions with ordinary citizens:

Data 3: “*Ceuk aing ge, jujur sia ka aing.*” (Dialogue with a citizen during a market visit, June 2025).

Data 4: “*Ayeuna mah di puncak ge banjir, da beak ku sia kebon teh na...*” (Dialogue with citizens during a flood inspection, followed by collective laughter, April 2025).

In these spontaneous field interactions, the first-order indexicality of anger or dominance is completely erased. In Data 4, *sia* functions as a tool for a collective, humorous ecological critique during a natural disaster inspection. Instead of creating interpersonal hostility, the coarse register indexically points to regional authenticity, unmasked honesty, and grassroots solidarity.

These findings suggest that the meaning of *aing* and *sia* cannot be understood only through their traditional dictionary definitions. Their interpretation depends heavily on the interactional context and the relationship between the speaker and the audience. During spontaneous conversations with local communities, the coarse pronouns do not create social conflict because they are supported by shared cultural knowledge and mutual familiarity. As a result, listeners interpret the expressions as signs of openness and sincerity rather than disrespect.

This shift illustrates the process of re-indexicalization proposed by Silverstein, (2003). The pronouns gradually acquire new social meanings through repeated use in

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different public situations. Instead of indexing anger or low social status, they come to represent authenticity, local identity, and solidarity with ordinary citizens. Therefore, the same linguistic forms produce different interpretations because the surrounding social context has changed.

Data 5:

“...ari TK, SD, SMP mah lain wisuda ngarana ge, kenaikan kelas jeung kelulusan, eta. Dibagi rapot cirina naon, cirina indung bapana nyuhun tumpeng, susugu ka guruna, mere sasajen ka guruna, tanda hubungan, nuhun **anak aing nu olo leho geus naek kelas, budak aing nu budug geus lulus...**” (Speech at Universitas Pasundan, 2025).

By describing children with raw cultural terms like *olo leho* (snotty-nosed) and *budug* (scabby) combined with *aing*, KDM parodies the everyday language of grassroots parents. The coarse register loses its vulgarity and is re-indexed as a symbol of deep cultural intimacy and shared socioeconomic reality with ordinary people.

This example further demonstrates that coarse language may function as a cultural resource rather than simply as impolite speech. By reproducing expressions that are familiar within everyday family conversations, Dedi Mulyadi creates a communicative style that many listeners recognize as natural and authentic. Instead of distancing himself from ordinary people through formal political language, he adopts expressions that reflect their daily experiences.

The findings also indicate that authenticity is constructed through shared linguistic practices. The audience is more likely to accept the speaker because his language resembles the way people communicate in their own communities. Consequently, the social value of *aing* and *sia* changes from negative to positive, illustrating

how linguistic meaning is continuously negotiated in public discourse.

Overall, the findings in this section demonstrate that the social meaning of *aing* and *sia* is not fixed. Across different communicative situations, these pronouns consistently move away from their traditional association with rudeness and instead index honesty, solidarity, and local identity. This pattern supports the argument that linguistic forms acquire meaning through social interaction rather than through linguistic conventions alone.

Stance-Taking and Political Positioning (Du Bois', 2007)

Stance Triangle, the deployment of *aing-sia* functions as a tool for evaluation, positioning, and alignment. This interactional mechanism is visible when KDM handles spontaneous interruptions from the audience during public talks:

Data 6:

Audience : “Bank Emok!”

KDM : “**Cicing heula sia, aing keur ngomong!**” (The audience laughs collectively, June 2025).

In Data 6, KDM responds to an audience member shouting about illegal mobile banks. He adopts a hyper-serious, authoritative stance by commanding silence using *sia* and *aing*. In a conventional setting, this would be interpreted as verbal aggression. However, because it is delivered as a theatrical performance, it triggers immediate collective laughter. This response represents a successful alignment (Du Bois, 2007); the audience recognizes the stance not as actual anger, but as a form of “playful dominance” that bridges the gap between the ruler and the ruled.

This interaction also demonstrates that the audience plays an important role in shaping the meaning of the utterance. Although *aing* and *sia* are traditionally categorized as *basa kasar*, they are not interpreted as offensive in

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this situation. Instead, the audience immediately responds with laughter, indicating that they understand the expression as part of Mulyadi's characteristic speaking style. The shared cultural background between the speaker and the audience allows the coarse pronouns to function as humorous expressions rather than verbal aggression.

From the perspective of Stance Theory, Mulyadi evaluates the interruption as inappropriate by asking the audience member to be quiet. At the same time, he positions himself as the person who has the authority to control the interaction. However, this authority is expressed through humor instead of intimidation. As a result, the audience accepts his authority while remaining actively engaged in the interaction. This combination of authority and humor strengthens his image as a leader who is both firm and approachable.

Furthermore, stance-taking is used as a shield to confront political criticism and build an anti-elitist persona. Beyond managing audience interaction, stance-taking also serves a broader political function. Mulyadi uses the same communication style when responding to criticism from his political opponents. Instead of relying on formal political language, he responds with direct and culturally familiar expressions. This strategy allows him to maintain his authority while presenting himself as an authentic leader who is close to ordinary people.

Data 7:

*"...saya ga ada masalah ketika disebut gubernur konten, lebih baik gubernur konten daripada gubernur molor, tambah lagi gelar saya, gubernur lambe turah... lebih baik jadi gubernur lambe turah daripada gubernur biwir dower... **pek bae lawan aing**."* (Speech at Universitas Pasundan, 2025).

In Data 7, Mulyadi evaluates the negative labels given to him by political critics. Instead of offering a defensive, formal rebuttal,

he reappropriates these stigmatized titles (*lambe turah*) and challenges his detractors with the bold phrase "*pek bae lawan aing*" (go ahead and fight me). Through this stance-taking mechanism, he positions himself as an authentic warrior who values practical results over sophisticated, deceptive political rhetoric.

This response shows that Mulyadi does not avoid criticism but instead turns it into an opportunity to strengthen his public image. Rather than denying the labels given by his opponents, he accepts them and gives them a new meaning. By doing so, he presents himself as a confident leader who is not afraid of public judgment. This strategy reduces the negative impact of political criticism because the speaker takes control of the narrative before his opponents can define him.

From the perspective of Stance Theory, Mulyadi first evaluates the criticism directed at him, then positions himself as a leader who prioritizes action over image. Finally, he invites the audience to align with his perspective by presenting political criticism as something unimportant compared to real work for society. The expression "*pek bae lawan aing*" is therefore not simply a challenge to his critics, but also a way of expressing confidence, determination, and personal commitment to his political role.

The use of the coarse pronoun *aing* also contributes to this stance. Instead of using formal political language, Mulyadi chooses a familiar local expression that reflects his regional identity. This linguistic choice makes his response sound more direct, personal, and authentic. As a result, the audience is more likely to perceive him as an approachable leader who speaks honestly rather than as a politician delivering carefully prepared statements.

This raw honesty is further used to deliver direct moral education to the younger generation:

Data 8:

“...rusakna kolot kunaon? Ku bohong anakna, bohongna kumaha? **Kunaon duit semesteran sia teu dibayarkeun?** Ngakuna dipake kaditu kadieu, padahal mah kabogohna reuneuh...” (Speech at Universitas Pasundan, 2025).

In Data 8, the coarse pronouns are used to deliver a blunt, unfiltered moral commentary on youthful irresponsibility. By bypassing the sterile politeness of conventional elite rhetoric, KDM establishes an interactional alignment with the parents in the audience, positioning himself as a firm parental authority figure who speaks the unvarnished truth.

This example shows that the use of *aing* and *sia* is not intended to insult or embarrass the audience. Instead, these pronouns help create a communication style that is direct and easy to understand. The speaker discusses a sensitive issue using language that reflects everyday conversations within the local community. As a result, the moral message becomes more relatable and easier for the audience to accept.

From the perspective of Stance Theory, Mulyadi evaluates dishonest behaviour among young people as a serious social problem. He then positions himself as a leader who is willing to address this issue openly, even by using blunt expressions. At the same time, he encourages the audience, especially parents, to align with his concern about honesty and responsibility. This process shows how evaluation, positioning, and alignment work together to construct his public identity as a leader who speaks directly and sincerely.

The use of *basa kasar* also strengthens the speaker's image as someone who is close to ordinary people. Rather than relying on formal political language, Mulyadi adopts expressions that are familiar in daily life. This linguistic choice supports the broader pattern found throughout this study, where coarse Sundanese pronouns no longer function as markers of rudeness but as resources for building

authenticity, solidarity, and emotional connection with the audience.

Overall, the findings in this section demonstrate that stance-taking plays an important role in Dedi Mulyadi's communication style. Across different situations, he consistently uses *aing* and *sia* to express evaluation, position himself as an authentic leader, and build alignment with his audience. Although these pronouns traditionally belong to *basa kasar*, their meaning changes when they are used together with humor, local identity, and shared cultural knowledge. As a result, the coarse register becomes an effective resource for constructing political authority while maintaining emotional closeness with ordinary people.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the Sundanese pronouns *aing* and *sia* no longer function solely as markers of *basa kasar* in Dedi Mulyadi's political discourse. Rather than conveying impoliteness, these pronouns are strategically employed to express criticism, humor, advice, and political evaluation, enabling the speaker to project authenticity, accessibility, and cultural proximity. This demonstrates that their meanings are context-dependent and socially negotiated rather than inherently fixed (Sapitri et al., 2019; Sypré et al., 2025).

These results support Halliday (2019) Register Theory, showing that language choice is determined by the communicative context. Although many interactions occur in formal governmental settings, Dedi Mulyadi intentionally adopts an informal register to reduce social distance while maintaining political authority (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2019). The findings also reinforce Silverstein (2003) concept of indexicality by illustrating a process of re-indexicalization, whereby *aing* and *sia* shift from indexing rudeness to signaling authenticity, regional identity, and

solidarity (Shin, 2022; Megele & Buzzi, 2020; Hogg, 2016). Furthermore, Du Bois' (2007) Stance Theory explains how humor and conversational language facilitate alignment between the speaker and the audience, transforming potentially offensive expressions into shared symbols of trust and familiarity.

Unlike previous studies that primarily associate *basa kasar* with social hierarchy and impoliteness (J. R. Anderson, 2015), this study demonstrates that coarse linguistic forms can acquire new political functions when employed by a leader with strong cultural legitimacy. It also extends research on Indonesian political discourse Robinson (2011) by highlighting the role of regional language as a strategic resource for constructing political identity and strengthening relationships with grassroots communities.

Overall, this study contributes to political sociolinguistics by showing that linguistic meanings are dynamic and continuously reshaped through context, interaction, and ideology (Fairclough, 2023). The findings suggest that regional languages are not merely cultural symbols but can also function as effective political resources for enhancing authenticity, public trust, and citizen engagement in multilingual societies.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Sundanese pronouns *aing* and *sia*, traditionally categorized as *basa kasar*, undergo a functional shift in Dedi Mulyadi's political discourse. Rather than signaling rudeness or social hierarchy, they are strategically recontextualized to index authenticity, regional identity, and solidarity with grassroots communities.

Drawing on Register Theory, Indexicality, and Stance Theory, the findings show that linguistic meaning is dynamic and socially negotiated. By combining informal language with humor and a conversational style, Dedi Mulyadi reduces social distance while maintaining

political authority, illustrating a process of re-indexicalization in which coarse expressions acquire positive political meanings.

This study contributes to political sociolinguistics by highlighting how regional language can serve as an effective political resource. However, its scope is limited to the public discourse of a single political figure and audiovisual data from digital platforms. Future research should examine similar linguistic strategies across other regional languages and political contexts in Indonesia, while incorporating audience reception studies to better understand how different social groups interpret the political use of non-standard language.

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