

Language, status planning, and political stigma in Leila S. Chudori's *Namaku Alam*

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Abstract

*This study aims to deeply analyze the role of language as an instrument of language planning in the formation and maintenance of political stigma against the descendants of political prisoners (tapol) during the New Order era, as reflected in Leila S. Chudori's novel *Namaku Alam*. While previous studies have explored the novel's historical themes, there remains a significant research gap regarding how state-sponsored language planning specifically engineers the social marginalization of second-generation victims. This research offers a novel approach by integrating the framework of status planning typically used in sociolinguistic policy studies with literary critical discourse analysis to examine how linguistic policies dictate social hierarchy. The research data consist of excerpts from dialogue, narratives, and key terms in the novel related to political discrimination. The results show that the New Order regime successfully engineered social status through three main linguistic strategies: 1) Codification of Official Stigma: Through bureaucratic terms such as "clean environment" (bersih lingkungan) and "clean self" (bersih diri), which functioned as euphemisms to justify systematic surveillance and discrimination. 2) Construction of Binary Oppositions: Dividing society into ideological categories of "State" (good, high-status) versus "Traitor" (bad, low-status) through punitive phrases like "child of a traitor to the state" (anak pengkhianat negara). 3) Internalization of Stigma: The stigmatizing language was acquired by the wider community, including the social environment and peers, making discrimination a daily practice. Language does not merely reflect but actively plans social status, transforming the identity of the main character, Segara Alam, into a marginalized existence. This novel reflects the failure of authoritarian language planning in fostering social integration, instead creating segregation and trauma inherited through language.*

Keywords: Language Planning; Status Planning; Political Stigma; *Namaku Alam*

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1. Introduction

Language is frequently perceived as a neutral medium for communication; however, within socio-political contexts, it functions as a vital instrument of power used to define and restrict social hierarchies. This phenomenon is a primary concern of language planning, specifically status planning. According to Cooper (1989), status planning involves deliberate efforts to alter the function and standing of a language or a speech community within a society. While language planning is often associated with the promotion of national identity, standardization, and linguistic unity, scholars have increasingly argued that language policies

can also be employed to marginalize certain groups and legitimize unequal power relations. Language, therefore, does not merely reflect social reality, but actively constructs it by determining who is considered legitimate, trustworthy, or socially acceptable within a nation-state. In this sense, language planning becomes inseparable from political authority because the state possesses the institutional power to circulate and normalize particular discourses through education, bureaucracy, media, and legal systems. As Shohamy (2006) explains, language policies are often mechanisms through which governments exercise ideological control, shaping citizens' identities and social participation according to dominant political interests.

In post-1965 Indonesia, the authoritarian New Order regime utilized language to execute oppressive status planning through systematic stigmatization. This process reflects what Fairclough (1989) describes as ideological hegemony, where discourse becomes a means of sustaining unequal relations of power by controlling public consciousness and normalizing state ideology. Under the New Order administration, political language was strategically manipulated to create rigid distinctions between "loyal citizens" and "enemies of the state." The government institutionalized particular labels that framed individuals associated with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) as morally dangerous, anti-nationalist, and permanently suspicious. Such discourse was continuously reproduced through school textbooks, state propaganda films, public speeches, and administrative procedures, resulting in the normalization of discrimination against certain social groups. The stigmatizing language employed by the regime was not incidental; rather, it represented a systematic attempt to reshape social identity and public memory through discourse. As Foucault (1972) argues, discourse functions as a form of power because it determines which narratives are accepted as truth within society. Consequently, language became a political technology used to silence alternative histories and legitimize state violence.

The group most severely impacted by this linguistic engineering was the descendants of political prisoners (*tapol*). During the New Order era, terms such as *bersih lingkungan* ("clean environment") and *pengkhianat negara* ("traitor to the state") functioned not merely as descriptive labels, but as institutionalized categories embedded within administrative and social systems. These labels significantly influenced access to education, employment, political participation, and social mobility. Individuals associated with former political prisoners were frequently denied civil rights because they were perceived as ideologically contaminated by association. The concept of *bersih lingkungan*, for instance, operated as a bureaucratic screening mechanism to determine whether a person possessed an acceptable political background before entering universities or government institutions. This demonstrates how status planning can extend beyond language preference into the regulation of citizenship and social legitimacy. According to Heryanto (2006), anti-communist discourse during the New Order transformed political suspicion into a cultural norm, where fear and silence became deeply internalized within Indonesian society. The state's linguistic categorization effectively created a hierarchy of citizenship, positioning the descendants of political prisoners as perpetual outsiders despite their formal nationality.

Moreover, the stigmatization imposed by the regime generated long-term psychological and intergenerational consequences. The descendants of former political prisoners often inherited social exclusion, fear, and collective trauma despite having no direct involvement in political conflict. The persistent use of derogatory political labels contributed to what Goffman (1963) conceptualizes as "spoiled identity," where individuals become socially discredited because of attributes imposed upon them by dominant societal narratives. In many cases, families concealed their histories to avoid discrimination, resulting in fragmented identities and silence across generations. Such experiences illustrate that language is not merely symbolic, but materially influential in shaping people's opportunities, self-perception, and social

relationships. As Rahayu et al. (2021) argue, language planning extends beyond educational or linguistic concerns into broader socio-political dimensions where discourse can significantly determine an individual's life trajectory and societal inclusion. The New Order regime thus exemplifies how linguistic policies may operate as instruments of structural violence by embedding exclusionary ideologies into everyday communication and institutional practices.

Leila S. Chudori's *Namaku Alam* (2023) serves as a critical literary reflection of this engineered trauma and discursive marginalization. Through personal narratives, family memories, and social interactions, the novel illustrates how political stigma continues to shape the identities and experiences of those associated with the victims of the 1965 tragedy. Chudori portrays language not simply as dialogue between characters, but as a site of ideological struggle where silence, labeling, and suspicion reproduce historical trauma. The novel demonstrates how discriminatory discourse persists even after the fall of the New Order, revealing the enduring influence of state-sponsored narratives on collective memory. Literary texts, therefore, become important cultural documents for examining how political power infiltrates everyday language and interpersonal relations. According to Wodak and Meyer (2009), discourse analysis enables researchers to uncover hidden ideological structures embedded within texts and social interactions. In this regard, *Namaku Alam* provides valuable insight into how linguistic stigma is internalized, resisted, and negotiated by marginalized individuals within post-authoritarian Indonesian society.

While previous studies on the novel have primarily focused on historical representation (Apriyani & Daulay, 2023) or broader issues of social class (Mayangsari et al., 2024), this study identifies a significant gap concerning the intersection between macro-level language planning and micro-level literary discourse analysis. The novelty of this research lies in its interpretation of stigmatization as a deliberate form of status planning rather than merely a social or historical phenomenon. This perspective broadens the theoretical scope of sociolinguistics by demonstrating that status planning can operate subtly through discourse, symbolism, and narrative representation rather than exclusively through explicit state policy. Furthermore, this study highlights how literary works can function as archives of linguistic oppression, documenting the long-term consequences of political discourse on marginalized communities. Practically, the research seeks to increase public awareness regarding the dangers of using language as an instrument of political control. By examining how stigmatizing discourse creates enduring segregation, fear, and inherited trauma, this study contributes to broader discussions about linguistic justice, historical reconciliation, and the ethical responsibility of discourse in post-authoritarian societies.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative research design centered on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), specifically utilizing Norman Fairclough's Three Dimensional Model. This framework is chosen for its capacity to bridge the gap between micro linguistic features and macro social structures, allowing for a deep exploration of how language, power, and ideological stigma intersect. The primary data source is the novel *Namaku Alam* by Leila S. Chudori, with the analysis focusing on textual units such as dialogue, narrative descriptions, and internal monologues that reflect political labeling and the negotiation of social status. To support this, secondary data including theoretical literature on status planning and historical accounts of the New Order era were integrated to provide a robust contextual foundation for the study.

The data analysis was conducted through a systematic three-stage procedure. First, in the textual description (micro-level) stage, the researcher identified and selected excerpts containing specific stigmatizing labels and bureaucratic euphemisms. Second, these excerpts underwent a process of discursive interpretation (meso-level), where the data were categorized

based on how these linguistic choices were produced and circulated within the social interactions of the characters to engineer social status. Finally, the analysis reached the social practice (macro-level) stage, where the findings were linked to the broader sociopolitical reality of the New Order. In this phase, the study explains how the integration of status planning and literary discourse reveals the state's systematic efforts to maintain ideological hegemony and marginalize the descendants of political prisoners.

3. Findings and Discussion

The findings Analysis of Status Planning Through Three Linguistic Strategies

Status planning is the deliberate effort to influence the social status and functional role of a language or a group of speakers through linguistic policies. In the context of the authoritarian politics reflected in *Namaku Alam*, the New Order regime successfully engineered the social status of political prisoner descendants (tapol) through three main linguistic strategies:

- 1) Codification of Official Stigma (Bureaucratic Euphemisms): This strategy focused on using bureaucratic language to create demeaning labels, packaged in lexically positive-sounding forms (euphemisms).
- 2) Construction of Binary Oppositions (Punitive Labeling): This strategy involved dividing society into two opposing ideological categories using language.
- 3) Internalization of Stigma (Acquisition of Stigmatizing Language): This strategy describes how the stigmatizing language originating from the regime was acquired (learned) by the wider community, including the social environment and peers. The analysis confirms the role of language not just as a reflection, but as an active tool that plans social status and changes the identity of the main character, Segara Alam, into a marginalized identity.

Strategy 1: Codification of Official Stigma (Bureaucratic Euphemisms)

The first strategy involves the use of bureaucratic terms that function as euphemisms to justify systematic discrimination. These terms are the result of status planning aimed at creating ideological hegemony. This strategy is a status planning mechanism used by the authoritarian regime to engineer the social status of a target group the tapol descendants through bureaucratic language. The goal is to justify discrimination by using language that sounds neutral or positive to legitimize systematic surveillance and discrimination. The following table illustrates this:

Table 1. Codification of Official Stigma (Bureaucratic Euphemisms)

Data Source and Quote	CDA and Status Planning Analysis
<p>"bersih lingkungan" (clean environment) and "bersih diri" (clean self) (Chudori, 2023:229)</p>	<p>This term is a primary example of the codification of official stigma. Lexically, the word "bersih" (clean) has positive connotations, but in the New Order context, this term is a political euphemism. The term effectively established a low social status, obligating Tapol descendants to go through administrative and surveillance processes that justified lifelong discrimination. Thus, this language did not merely label, but became a linguistic policy that restricted and defined the social status of that group</p>

The terms "bersih lingkungan" (clean environment) and "bersih diri" (clean self) are primary examples of this codification. While the word "clean" carries positive lexical connotations, in the New Order context, it served as a restrictive linguistic policy. This

established a social hierarchy where descendants were forced into specialized surveillance processes, effectively legitimizing lifelong discrimination under the guise of administrative neutrality

While Apriyani & Daulay (2023) noted these terms as historical reflections, this study adds a new dimension by identifying them as Status Planning mechanisms. Unlike previous literature that views these labels as mere historical artifacts, this research demonstrates how they functioned as "linguistic checkpoints" that actively restricted the functional role of individuals within the state apparatus.

Strategy 2: Construction of Binary Oppositions (Punitive Labeling)

The second strategy is the construction of binary oppositions that divide society into contrasting ideological categories: "State" versus "Traitor". Language is used to establish this social hierarchy and to "de-status" the opposition group.

Table 2. Construction of Binary Oppositions (Punitive Labeling)

Data Source and Quote	CDA and Status Planning Analysis
" <i>anak pengkhianat negara</i> " (child of a traitor to the state) (Chudori, 2023:193)	This phrase is punitive labeling that explicitly designs a low and ideologically "bad" status. This is an ideological phrase that was created, codified, and disseminated to justify discrimination and surveillance. This oppressive Status Planning resulted in complex political stigma against <i>Tapol</i> descendants. This label, used widely, functioned to limit social status and justify discriminatory practices
" <i>warga negara haram</i> " (illegal/unholy citizen) (Chudori, 2023:193)	The phrase " <i>warga negara haram</i> " completely destroys the status of citizenship itself. The word <i>haram</i> (forbidden, illegal, or unholy) is used to negate the status of <i>warga negara</i> (legal and legitimate citizen). This places the subject outside the boundaries of state legitimacy. This phrase functions as the harshest punitive labeling because it not only declares the subject a "Traitor" but also revokes their fundamental identity as part of Indonesia's political society. The status of <i>tapol</i> and their descendants was made into a non-citizen status, morally and functionally. With the label " <i>haram</i> ", all forms of surveillance, discrimination, and stripping of civil rights could be justified. The phrase " <i>warga negara haram</i> " is an extreme effort in the perspective of Status Planning to design a permanently marginalized social status. The goal is to ensure that this low status is not only recognized by the rulers but also internalized by the wider community as absolute truth.

Phrases such as "*anak pengkhianat negara*" (child of a traitor to the state) and "*warga negara haram*" (illegal/unholy citizen) function as punitive labels that design a permanently "bad" ideological status. The term *haram* is particularly potent; it negates the subject's status as a legal citizen, placing them outside the boundaries of state protection. This "de-statusing" process justifies the stripping of civil rights as a moral necessity.

This finding expands upon Mayangsari et al. (2024), who discussed social class in the novel. This study argues that the marginalization of Segara Alam is not just a result of social class, but a deliberate revocation of political identity through language. This study highlights that the regime did not just label the characters; it used language to "un-citizen" them.

Strategy 3: Internalization of Stigma (Acquisition of Stigmatizing Language)

The third strategy shows that the stigmatizing language was acquired (learned) by the wider community, including the social environment and peers, making discrimination a daily practice.

Data Source and Quote	CDA and Status Planning Analysis
Spread of stigmatizing language by the social environment and peers	This shows that the regime's Status Planning was not only enforced at the macro-policy level, but also operated subtly at the level of discourse. When the wider community acquires and uses this stigmatizing language, political discrimination becomes an internalized and informally institutionalized practice. The novel <i>Namaku Alam</i> presents textual data on how this engineered stigma interacts with the daily life of the main character, Segara Alam. This stigmatizing language actively changed Segara Alam's identity into a marginalized one, forcing him to hide
"Kita memang dianggap penjahat, Lam," gumam Bimo, "atau keturunan penjahat" (We are indeed considered criminals, Lam," muttered Bimo, "or descendants of criminals) (Chudori, 2023:261)	This sentence, spoken by Bimo, Alam's friend, shows that the high-status labels have been acquired by individuals in Alam's social environment. Bimo uses the word "dianggap" (considered) but says it with a mutter, indicating awareness of the imposed status. The use of the pronoun "Kita" (We) shows that Bimo recognizes the status attached by the political stigma as a social reality they both face. This stigma has become a collective understanding among them. When this label is repeated and used internally by the peer community, it signals that the regime's status planning has been successfully distributed horizontally. Bimo's sentence underscores that discrimination is no longer a threat, but a daily practice and accepted reality by those who are marginalized. The stigmatizing language actively plans social status, changing the identity of Segara Alam and Bimo into marginalized identities. This phrase expresses the forced acceptance of an engineered low status. It reflects trauma inherited through language. This awareness is why Segara Alam is forced to hide or "bow down" (acquiring a behavior of concealment) to survive, showing that the internalization of stigma forces the main character to change his identity into a marginalized one

The internalization is evident in dialogue such as, "*Kita memang dianggap penjahat... atau keturunan penjahat*" (We are indeed considered criminals... or descendants of criminals). The use of the collective pronoun "*Kita*" (We) by Alam's peers indicates that the regime's status planning was successfully institutionalized at the discursive level. This forced acceptance transforms the character's identity into a "marginalized identity" characterized by concealment and trauma.

This analysis goes beyond the "historical trauma" identified in previous studies by linking it to Language Acquisition theory. This study highlights that the regime's power was most effective when it moved from macro-policy (government decrees) to micro-discourse (daily peer conversation).

4. Conclusion and suggestion

Conclusion

This study concludes that language functions as an active tool in Status Planning used by the New Order regime to engineer and maintain political stigma against the descendants of Political Prisoners (Tapol). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the novel *Namaku Alam* shows the success of this Status Planning through three main linguistic strategies

Codification of Official Stigma (Bureaucratic Euphemisms): The regime used bureaucratic terms with positive connotations such as "clean environment" (*bersih lingkungan*) and "clean self" (*bersih diri*). These terms functioned as political euphemisms to legitimize systematic discrimination and lifelong surveillance. This language effectively established a low social status for the labeled group. Construction of Binary Oppositions (Punitive Labeling): This strategy divided society into the categories of "State" (high status) versus "Traitor" (low status). Punitive labels like "child of a traitor to the state" and the extreme phrase "*warga negara haram*" explicitly designed a low and ideologically "bad" status, revoking the fundamental identity of the subject as part of Indonesia's political society.

Internalization of Stigma (Acquisition of Stigmatizing Language): The stigmatizing language originating from the regime was successfully acquired and internalized by the wider community, including the social environment and peers. Dialogue, such as, "*Kita memang dianggap penjahat, Lam,*" gumam Bimo, "*atau keturunan penjahat*" (We are indeed considered criminals, Lam," muttered Bimo, "or descendants of criminals) , shows that the stigma had become a collective understanding and a reluctantly accepted daily reality for those who are marginalized. Overall, the novel *Namaku Alam* is a clear reflection of the failure of authoritarian language planning in creating social integration, instead creating segregation and trauma inherited through language. This stigma actively changed the identity of the main character, Segara Alam, into a marginalized identity forced to hide.

Suggestion

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations are proposed:

1. For Sociolinguistics and Language Planning Studies: Further research is suggested to expand the CDA on Status Planning by analyzing linguistic resistance (language of resistance) used by Tapol figures and their descendants (for example, the language of intimacy and truth used within the family) as a form of rejection of the codified stigma.
2. For Policymakers: This research serves as a warning about the danger of using language as an instrument of power to divide and stigmatize. There needs to be a systematic effort to conduct Corpus Planning on the nation's historical and political discourse to eliminate stigmatizing bureaucratic terms and restore the social status of marginalized groups.
3. For Literary Readers: The novel *Namaku Alam* should be viewed not only as a literary work but as a critical sociolinguistic document that helps increase public awareness regarding the long-term impact of ideological hegemony disseminated through language.

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