

The Archaic Forms of the Kamang Hilir Isolect of the Minangkabau Language

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Abstract. This research describes archaic forms of the Kamang Hilir isolect of the Minangkabau language. These are forms no longer in current use but still recognized by some speakers. An inventory will preserve these forms for future studies of culture and history, preventing them from becoming lost to prosperity. The research uses observational and interview methods. The observations used discrete microphones to record oral exchanges in daily life in the Kamang Hilir district. Interviews were conducted with native speakers of the isolect. The data obtained were transcribed orthographically. A comparison was made between the forms that were recorded from spontaneous conversation and the forms elicited from the interviews to determine which forms could be considered archaic. The results found a number of archaic forms. Forms had become archaic because the object or concept was no longer used or because the form had been replaced by one from another dialect or language (with or without modification to isolect phonological rules). The development from the archaic forms into contemporary ones can be either a one or two-step process.

Keywords: *archaic, Kamang Hilir isolect, development, influence, contemporary form.*

1 Introduction

The advancement of both technology and communication can result in more rapid language change, either within the language itself or as it is influenced by outside sources. This change is clearly observable from one generation to the next and may result in the loss of certain components in a language, the appearance of new lexical components, or the replacement of one component with another. This paper will discuss the changes taking place in the Kamang Hilir isolect of the Minangkabau language from the District of Kamang-Magek, Agam Regency which is 12 km from the City of Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, Indonesia. There are many words and terms that have disappeared or been replaced by newer words or terms. A new word or term may arise in response to the emergence of new objects or concepts. These words are often borrowed from other languages, particularly Indonesian, other local languages, and other Minangkabau isolects, chiefly, the general Minangkabau isolect used between speakers from different isolects (*Bahasa Minangkabau Umum*).

In other cases, the form has become redundant as the object referred to or the concept defined is not used anymore. For example, the Kamang Hilir isolect term *kapuak* ‘rice storage’ was

recognized and also known as a rice *lumbuang*. *Kapuak* is no longer used, thus, the form is deemed archaic. Now the rice is stored in a *goni* ‘gunny sack’ or *karuang* ‘sack’ and both these forms are in active usage. Similarly, *padati* ‘cart’ is a wagon pulled by a buffalo. These wagons are no longer used so the term *padati* is also categorized as archaic. To prevent loss of cultural heritage an inventory of such forms is being compiled by the authors. This research is part of the documentation of this process.

Various linguistic aspects of the Minangkabau language have been extensively studied for a variety of purposes. In the past, Nothofer[1] attempted to reconstruct Proto Malayo-Javanic and [2] did the same for Proto Malayic. The present author has researched both innovative and conservative dialects of Minangkabau language[3], reconstructed a proto-language[4], retraced the geographic origin and migration direction[5], and discussed Minangkabau language with respect to language and identity[6]. Nadra[7] have also studied the Minangkabau lexicon related to food (including verbs and nouns related to ingredients). Wahyuni et al., have discussed numeral classifiers used in local Minangkabau wisdom from the Halaban Isolect of Lima Puluh Kota[8] and from Tanah Datar isolect [9].

The Kamang Hilir isolect of the Minangkabau language used on *WhatsApp* by the group members of *Kamang Saiyo Bagurau* has been investigated [7], [10]. The results of this research indicated that *WhatsApp* may serve as a tool for language maintenance.

Isolects are not static. Change can be slow or rapid[5], [11]. One of the causes of the change is the speakers of the isolect concerned. If the speakers do not have pride in their isolect and consider that the other isolects are better, they will switch to the isolect they consider better. Based on my experience, some speakers are ashamed to use their own isolect feeling it to be obsolete.

Another influence in isolect change is migration, which in the Minangkabau culture is referred to as *marantau*. Usually, the emigrating Minangkabau will adjust their language to the one spoken in the host area. If they migrate within the Minangkabau region (*marantau di subaliak dapua* or ‘local migration’) they will tend to use a general form of the Minangkabau language and rather than using their regional characteristic forms.

The disappearance of certain forms such as words and terms referred to here in this paper is not that caused by migration but rather by the disappearance of certain objects or concepts due to the influence of another dialect or language, mainly, the national Indonesian language.

2 Research Method

Oral data used in this research was acquired from observation of language daily use and from interviews with native speakers living in Kamang Hilir district. The interview is used to find out the archaic forms. The use of recordings from daily life is referred to as the observational method whereas the interview process is referred to as the conversing method. Both sets of data were transcribed orthographically.

Then, the obtained data were analyzed by comparing the two sets of data. Forms not found in daily life but still recognized by the speaker are classified as archaic. In this article, the archaic form is marked Arc(haic) and is listed first and followed by the equivalent contemporary (modern) form, marked Con(temporary), then by an English explanation.

3 Result and Discussion

Based on the result of both interview and data analysis, the archaic forms of Kamang Hilir isolect include:

mancutu ‘to muse on’

The form *mancutu* ‘to muse on’ is an archaic form. However, such a form is still recognized by the speakers over 50 years old. The form used currently is *tamanuang* ‘to muse on’. Such forms appear in data 1 as follows:

Data 1: Lah **mancutu** sen no duduak di sinan.

(Arc.)

Lah **tamanuang** sen inyo duduak di sinan. (Con.)

‘S/he sat musing over there.’

The form *tamanuang* ‘to muse on’ based upon the interview with the speakers of Minangkabau isolect of Kamang Hilir, is a new form.

kicin ‘small’

The form *kicin* ‘small’ is not found nowadays being replaced by the form *kicik* ‘small’ and then replaced again by *kaciak* ‘small’. However, *kicin* and *kaciak* are still recognized by the speakers over 50 years old. This can be seen in the following example below.

Data 2: Badanno **kicin** bana, tasalek sen. (Arc. 1)

Badanno **kicik** bana, tasalek sen. (Arc. 2)

Badanno **kaciak** bana, tasalek sen. (Con.)

‘His/her body is very small, he/she gets squashed in a crowd.’

3) *bapiriak* ‘to get pinched’

Formerly, the form *bapiriak* was used to refer to ‘to get pinched’ This was derived from *piriak* ‘to pinch hard with twisting’ and the ergative prefix *ba-* but is no longer used but replaced by the form *bapiciak* ‘to get pinched’ derived from *piciak* ‘to pinch’ and plus the ergative prefix *ba-*. Such forms may be seen in data 3 as follows:

Data 3: **Bapiriak** amuahno talingono. (Arc.)

Bapiciak amuahno talingono. (Con.)

‘His/her ear(s) should be pinched.’

4) *kulikat* ‘behavior’

The form *kulikat* ‘behavior’, or sometimes the recent variation *kalikat*, are no longer used so categorized as archaic. *Parangai* is used to replace it. Look at the examples below.

Data 4: Ganjia bana **kulikat** paja ‘tu. (Arc.)

Ganjia bana **parangai** paja ‘tu. (Con.)

‘That boy’s behavior’s very odd.’

5) *(ka)kiun* ‘(to go) there’

In the Kamang Hilir isolect, the form *kiun* or *ka kiun* meaning *(to go) there* is no longer used. *Ken* used to be used instead. The *ken* form, however, is now only spoken by over 50-year-old speakers. The more common contemporary spoken form is *ka sinen* ‘to go there’. See the following example:

Data 5: **Kiun** den beko. (Arc. 1)

Ken den beko. (Arc. 2)

Ka sinen den beko. (Con.)

'I will come there later.'

6) *sangkek tu* 'at that time'

One of the forms used to tell the time in the Kamang Hilir isolect was *sangkek tu* 'at that time'. However, such a form is rarely used now. *Wakatu tu* 'at that time' is more common. The form *wakatu* 'time' is loaned from Arabic via the Indonesian *waktu* 'time' then adjusted to the sound pattern of the Kamang Hilir isolect that it does not recognize close-knit sequences of consonants by inserting a vowel sound between the 'k' and the 't'. Such a form is found in data 6) as follows:

Data 6: ***Sangkek tu wakno nan pai.*** (Arc.)

Wakatu tu wakno nan pai. (Con.)

'At that time it was him/her that left.'

7) *cek piah* 'a hundred'

The form *cek piah* meaning Rp 100.00 (one hundred rupiahs) using an abbreviation '*cek*' for '*ciek*' (one) and the contracted form *piah* for rupiah is no longer used but the form *saratuh* (*rupiah*) is used instead. See the example below:

Data 7: ***Aragono cek piah sakabek.*** (Arc.)

Aragono saratuh sakabek. (Con.)

'The price is Rp 100.00 a bunch.'

Other archaic forms for money include *sasuku* 'Rp 50.00'; *saringgik* 'Rp 250.00'; and *limo rupiah* 'Rp 500.00.' being replaced by; *limo puluh rupiah*, *duo ratus limo puluh rupiah* and *limo ratus rupiah* respectively.

8) *baruah* 'down'

In the Kamang Hilir isolect, there were two forms for the direction down, *baruah* 'down' or 'downhill' and *ilia* 'lower' or 'downstream'. These are not used anymore except in place names such as Kamang Ilia 'Kamang Hilir' and *Bara Bukik* derived from *Baruah Bukik* 'Below the Hill'. Such forms have been replaced with place names like *Ladang Darek*, *Dangau Baru*, and *Cegek* whereas for direction, loan forms borrowed from Malay are used such as *ka timur* 'to the east'; *ka barat* 'to the west'; and *ka utara* 'to the north'. This use may be seen in the examples as follows:

Data 8: ***Wak dek ka ka baruah sabanta.*** (Arc.)

Waden ka ka Ladang Darek sabanta. (Con.)

'I am going to the Ladang Darek for a while.'

In the example above, *Ladang Darek* is a proper noun of a place whereas use for direction may be seen in the following example below:

Data 9: ***Latakno arah ka baruah.***(Arc.)

Latakno arah ka selatan. (Con.)

'It is located to the south.' (depending on the geography of the location)

9) *kapuak* 'rice storage (barn)'

In the Kamang Hilir Isolect, the term *kapuak* was used for 'rice storage barn'. However, the forms used now are *goni* 'gunny sack' or *karuang* 'sack'. The change from *kapuak* to *goni* or *karuang* is due to the change of the form of storage as rice barns are no longer used. See the examples below:

Data 10: *Padino talatak di kapuak.* (Arc.)
Padino talatak di goni/karuang. (Con.)
'His/her rice is stored in the gunny sack.'

10) *padati* 'cart'

The form *padati* 'cart' means a wagon pulled by a buffalo. This means of transportation has been replaced by the motorbike, truck or car. Hence, the lexicon *padati* has automatically disappeared to be replaced by words such as *onda* 'motorbike' from the Japanese brand name 'Honda' and *oto* 'car'. See the example below:

Data 11: *Baban tu dibao jo padati.* (Arc.)
Baban tu dibao jo oto. (Con.)
'The load is transported with a buffalo cart/car.'

11) *darok* 'state', 'situation'

The form *darok* meaning 'state', 'situation' is an archaic form. Now Kamang Hilir isolect speakers use *angin* instead. An example may be seen as follows:

Data 12: *Caliak darok dulu, Pak.* (Arc.)
Caliak angin dulu, Pak. (Con.)
'Let's see the situation first, Sir.'

12) *mek* 'very'

The form *mek* 'very' in *kuek mek* meaning 'very strong' or 'truly strong' is no longer used and the form *bana* 'true' is used instead. The form *mek* serves as an intensifier for the word *kuek* 'strong'. See the following example.

Data 13: *Pakiak si Del kuek mek iah Da, takajuk wak.* (Arc.)
Pakiak si Del kuek bana yo Da, takajuk wak. (Con.)
'Del's scream is very loud, isn't it? We were startled.'

13) *buntiang* 'pregnant'

In the past, the form used to refer to pregnancy in the Kamang Hilir isolect was *buntiang*. Then, the constituent *mangandung* 'to conceive' was used instead. However, the form *mangandung* is now only used by the speakers over 50 years old. Younger speakers use *hamil* 'pregnant' instead, a word loaned from Indonesian. It is clearly a loan form since it does not follow the sound pattern of the Kamang Hilir isolect. It ends with a /l/ which is not a Kamang Hilir isolect sound pattern. Normally for a word to be absorbed entirely, any final /-l/ position will undergo deletion, e.g. *taba* < *tebal* 'thick', *banta* < *bantal* 'pillow', and *samba* < *sambal* 'condiment'. However, in this case, the 'l' is retained indicating the word does not yet have the status of a truly Kamang Hilir isolect term. See the following example below:

Data 14: *Wakno muntah-muntah dek buntiang.* (Arc. 1)
Wakno muntah-muntah dek mangandung. (Arc. 2)
Wakno muntah-muntah karano hamil. (Con.)
'She kept vomiting because of her pregnancy.'

14) *bacaran* 'to quarrel' 'fight with words'

The form *bacaran* was used to refer to quarreling parties shouting at each other angrily. This is no longer used, being replaced with *batangka* 'to quarrel'. An example may be seen as follows:

Data 15: *Karajono bacaran sen tiok ari.* (Arc.)
Karajono batangka sen tiok ari. (Con.)

‘S/he kept quarreling every day.’

15) *saik* ‘slice’

The form *saik* means ‘to slice’ in the Kamang Hilir isolect. It is used, not only for tiny and thin objects such as onion or garlic slices, but it is also used for other things such as mango, papaya, apple, and bread. This form is beginning to disappear. A new form *irih* ‘to slice’ replaces the word *saik*. See the following examples obtained in the field.

Data 16: *Gadangan saketek saik dagiang tu.* (Arc.)

Gadangan saketek irih dagiang tu. (Con.)

‘Make the meat slice a little bigger.’

16) *sakaciak* ‘a little’

In the Kamang Hilir isolect, the word *sakaciak* meant ‘a little’ but is no longer used. Such a form is still recognized by the speakers especially those over 50 years old. The more contemporary word is *saketek* ‘a little’ see the following example.

Data 17: *Sakaciak no asia sawah tu.* (Arc.)

Saketek no asia sawah tu. (Con.)

‘What a small harvest from the (wet) rice field.’

The present study shows that the archaic forms were found in the Kamang Hilir isolect. The reason was in some cases perhaps due to the disappearance of the use of certain objects or concept the words signified. These have often been replaced by new objects or new concepts, resulting from the advancement of technology and better communication. For example: *kapuak* ‘rice storage barns’ have been replaced by *karuang* ‘sack’ or *goni* ‘gunny’ and *padati* ‘buffalo cart’ by *honda* ‘motorcycle’ or *oto* ‘car’ and every-day use of the language reflects these changes.

Wider communication with the world outside due to mass media and ease of travel also facilitates external sources of language influencing the Kamang Hilir isolect with adjustment to the isolect phonological rules such as insertion of vowel sounds to break up consonant clusters as in ‘*wakatu*’ from *waktu* ‘time’ or dropping final consonant sounds as in ‘*banta*’ from *bantal* ‘pillow’. Sometimes, however, words retain the pronunciation of the original language in which case they remain loan words. The word *hamil* is an example of this.

The development from the archaic forms the Kamang Hilir isolect to newer words or those borrowed from modern Indonesian may be a one or two-step process. Words going through a single change include *mancutu* ‘to muse on’ became *tamanuang*; *sangkek tu* ‘at that time’ became *wakatu tu*; *cek piah* ‘Rp 100.00’ became *saratuh*. Words undergoing a two-phase development include: *kicin* ‘small’ became *kicik* then became *kaciak*; *(ka) kium* ‘(to go) there’ became *(ka) ken* then became *ka sinen*; and *buntiang* ‘pregnant’ became *manganduang* then became *hamil*.

4 Conclusions

A number of archaic forms were found in the Kamang Hilir isolect. The reason was in some cases perhaps due to the disappearance of the use of certain objects or concept the words signified. These have often been replaced by new objects or new concepts, resulting from the advancement of technology and better communication. Wider communication with the world outside due to mass media and ease of travel also facilitates external sources of language influencing the Kamang Hilir isolect. The development from the archaic forms into modern ones can be either a one or two-step process.

The Kamang Hilir isolect continues to change rapidly. Documentation of previous forms not only preserves them for posterity but also help researchers understand the evolution process of isolects in general.

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