

LANGUAGE VARIATION USED FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN MINANGKABAUNESE

Okti Wilymafidini¹, Arpan Zaman², Herayati³
^{1,2,3}Lecturer of Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Kerinci
 Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Kerinci
 Jl Kapten Muradi Desa Sumur Gedang Kecamatan Pesisir Bukit
 Kota Sungai Penuh, Jambi, 37112
 Phone: (0748) 21065 Indonesia
 e-mail: oktiwily@gmail.com

Abstract: *Minangkabaunese of West Sumatera is known as one of the largest matrilineal societies. Although women have a significant role, social reality demonstrate that gender relation are still negotiated. Therefore, sex role or gender creates language variation almost in all language in this world especially in Minangkabaunese. Due to this case, study about this kind of topic is an important thing because it will be easier for us to comprehend and understand more about a certain language in particular area. This is a descriptive qualitative research. The data was gotten by using observation. The researcher did a kind of interview to some respondents related to language variation used for men and women in Minangkabaunese. From observation and interview, the data can be conducted. From the data conducted, it can be seen that sex difference between men and women can create the difference in language use. In other words, sex can create the variation of language use in Minangkabaunese especially in terms of word choice. Consequently, it can be concluded that sex role has a tight relationship with language in Minangkabau. Sex will influence one's diction when communicate each other and different sex requires different choice of word.*

Keywords: *language, variation, men, women, minangkabaunese.*

INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important and significant role in social interaction process of human being. Through language people express their feeling such as happiness, sadness, anger, and so forth. By using language people share their

knowledge, transfer any idea, and give information to each other. Language has communicative function in social interaction. Gee (1993) as cited in Rabiah in 2012 states that the primary function of language is to communicate information. Jeber (2022) and

Humana (2008) also stated that languages are more than a tool for communication; they carry the histories, cultures, traditions, and experiences of people who speak them. They represent collections of shared cultural values and customs that uniquely identify speakers in a social setting.

Moreover, language has its own variation based on the culture of the community where the language is used. It may vary from one to another cultures. As noted by Holmes (2013), language variation arises as a result of differences in speaker backgrounds, communication goals, and the situations in which language is used.

Variation of language, however, is caused not only by different culture but also by the sex role, men or women. Sex is a biological category that serves as a fundamental basis for the differentiation of roles, norms and expectation in all societies (Eckert, 1990). Sex role or gender creates language variation almost in all language in this world. Although differences in patterns of variation between men and women are a function of gender and only indirectly a function of sex, we have been

examining the interaction between gender and variation by correlating variables with sex rather than gender difference. Then, Wallentin (2020) reported three different hypotheses to explain putative language differences between genders: (a) strongly innate differences linked to genetic sex; (b) cultural differences linked to environmental asymmetries; and (c) interactions in which other differences influence linguistic skills.

However, sometimes we do not realize this phenomenon. Therefore, this phenomenon is important to be analyzed because if we do understand about the gender based variations of language, it will be easier for us to comprehend and understand more about a certain language in particular area. In Minangkabau, women are the key figures in integrating the wealth and family heritage. Despite this, their ability to take decision is limited (Miswardi: 2024). It describes that there are some different role between men and women in Minangkabau. This is shown through language variation used for men and women in Minangkabaunese. Therefore, the researcher in this case would like to highlight Minangkabaunese in this

studies about language variation used for men and women in Minangkabaunese. Although, many studies have been conducted related to this topic, few studies have explored about language variation used for men and women in Minangkabaunese. Minangkabaunese follow “matrilineal” system. It means that the line of heritage is based on the mother. The role of women is very crucial. The researcher would like to see whether the women’s important role influences the variation of their mother tongue (Minangkabaunese) and how about the role of men as well. Therefore, in this article, the researcher will try to analyze about language variation used for men and women in Minangkabaunese in four categories, language variation in pronoun, language variation in name for social status, characteristics, and language variation in traditional accessories used in daily activities.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Language Variation used for men and women in Minangkabaunese

Linguistic differences between men and women can appear at level of grammar: in phonology, in syntax and

pragmatics, and in choice of lexical items. Labov (in Coupland and Adam Jaworski, 1997:376) says that: “the sexual differentiation of speech often plays a major role in the mechanism of linguistic evaluation.” Then, Ahmed (2022) noted that the majority of societies discriminate between males and females’ language in different ways.

Moreover, many results which are also shown by (Wardhaugh & Fuller: 2021) and (Yule: 2020) indicate an evident difference between females and males in their way of using the language in the domain of using sound system. As noted by Wenjing (2012) women always use a word with exaggerated significance, such as gorgeous, lovely, cute, divine, adorable, darling, precious, sweet, charming, and so on. In contrast, men use plain words to enhance the effect, like good, beautiful, and so on. There are also differences in the use of adverbs between men and women. Women tend to use such adverbs like awfully, pretty, terribly, vastly, quite, so; men like to use very, utterly, really. Sex role (men or women role) refers to social expectations associated with biological sex within

a particular cultural context. It means that the sex role is an important factor toward the creation of the variation of language use. Traditionally, sociologists distinguished between sex as a biological category and gender as a socially constructed identity. Meanwhile, gender roles are therefore shaped by cultural norms, social institutions, religious beliefs, and historical experiences. As Ridgeway (2009) stated that gender is a primary frame for social relations. Contemporary gender studies emphasize that gender identities are fluid, negotiated, and influenced by power relations. Then, gender norms are social norms defining acceptable and appropriate actions for women and men in a given group or society (Cislaghi and Heise, 2020). Wood and Eagly (2010) also noted gender provides the strongest category for differentiation between people.

Furthermore, feminist sociologists advanced argued that gender is best conceptualised as a social system that apportions resources, roles, power and entitlements according to whether a person or practice is perceived as male or female, masculine or feminine

(Ridgeway and Correll 2004). Most existing gender systems are deeply hierarchical, privileging that which is male or masculine over that which is female or feminine (although this need not be the case) (Heise et al. 2019, Weber et al. 2019). Then, Roberts and Utych (2020) demonstrate through statistical investigation, “words are indeed often perceived as either masculine or feminine” without an added positive or negative connotation based on biological gender.

In language usage pattern: Young women are more advanced or further in the linguistic change than older people and young men. Most of the studies found that: the women use the newer, and advanced forms more frequently than men, newly introduced forms used by women are sometimes prestigious (Trudgill’s in Coupland and Adam Jaworski, 1997:376) and sometimes not (Fasold in Coupland and Adam Jaworski, 1997:376). Compare to men of the same class, the women use more the new non prestigious form in casual speech while moving further towards prestige models in formal speech. Women’s role in language change:

rarely been linked to the social position of women in the communities' studies. In present studies: men's and women's ways of speaking are viewed as the results of strategic and socially meaningful linguistic choices.

James and Leley Milroy (1997) found that "different roles men and women play in social networks are reflected in their speech behavior" (in Caulams, 2005:42). It means that there is the difference roles between men and women in their activities in the society, and these are reflected in their language. And then, Labov (in Caulams, 2005:40) in his research more than three decades found that: "Women tend to choose the standard variants more frequently than men". It means that in their daily life, women tend to use more standard variation in their language than men.

In addition, Simon (2021) explained that based on the physiological factors, biological differences between men and women decide men and women are different. From the development of language skills, the women's left hemisphere develops earlier than men's. So, the girl speaks more frequently and is

more emotional than the boy from the beginning. On the other hand, the latest voice experiment proved that the male and female voice on the resonance peak is very different voice tone quality because of their gender. Then, based on sociolinguistic features of women's language which are mainly presented through tone, pitch, and pronunciation. Women are generally polite, abundant, and euphemistic in vocabulary choices than men. Women's English language is also characterized by exaggerated adjectives, nicknames, colour words, and intensifiers (Bi, 2010).

In addition, based on conversational styles, men tend to use conversation to show status and independence, in contrast women are more likely to use conversation to build and preserve relationship, seeking connections and support through dialogue (Rakhmatullayeva and Mubina, 2026). In addition, Hussein (2020) noted that vocabulary and emotional expression also vary between the speeches of males and females. Studies suggest that men tend to speak directly, while women use more expressive and empathetic elements. Sadiqi (2023) also noted

that females tend to be more conservative than men, (Sadiqi :2003), moreover, women are better than men in language performance regarding many skills; speaking, listening, fluency and the sentence complexity.

Moreover, the difference between men and women can also create the variation of language, for example in Minangkabaunese, words such as; “laki-laki” (men), “padusi” (women), “jantan” (men), “batino” (women) and also for things that can indicate the gender such as “rok”, “galang”, “subang” etc. for women. “kopiah”, “saluak”, “cawek” etc. for men. It means that if we find such words, we can indicate that certain words of things are for men and the others are for women depends on the culture of each area. According to Budiwati and I Dewa Putu Wijaya (2004, 257) this differentiation will create the difference in gender.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

This is a descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research is selected because this study focuses on understanding social phenomenon related to language

variation used for men and women in Minangkabaunese. According to qualitative research principles, social phenomenon are interpreted through meanings, experiences, and interactions constructed by members of society. Therefore, this approach was considered appropriate to examine language variation used for men and women in Minangkabaunese. Furthermore, descriptive method was used to explain and interpret the data related to the topic discussed.

Related to this phenomenon, in this research, the researcher did such a kind of observation and used indirect interview related to this phenomenon. The data was collected about language variation used for men and women in Minangkabaunese. The researcher conducted the data from some respondents who come from Minangkabau. The data gathered through interview with 10 participants including students and community members related to the phenomenon that is going to be discussed in this article.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Language Variation used for men and women in Minangkabaunese

In West Sumatra generally, sex role has influenced the language variation of Minangkabaunese. Below, the researcher will explain about the variation of Minangkabaunese based on gender. The variation is divided into four; they are pronoun, activities, characteristic and accessories that are used in daily activities.

Language Variation in Pronoun

This is the variation of Minangkabaunese in pronoun based on gender. There are many calls for someone in Minangkabaunese used for men or women. The following table elaborates some of them.

Table 1. Language Variation in Pronoun

NO	MEN	WOMEN
1.	Laki-laki (Man)	Padusi (woman)
2.	Buyuang (Young man)	Upiak (young woman)
3.	Bujang (Young man)	Gadiah (young woman)
4.	Jantan (Man)	Batino (woman)
5.	Uda (brother/husband)	Uni (sister)
6.	Abak (Father)	Amak (mother)
7.	Mamak (Uncle)	Mintuo, (Uncle’s wife)
8.	Aciak (uncle)	One (sister)

9.	Uncu (the youngest uncle)	Amai (Uncle’s wife)
	Etc.	Etc.

Example:

”Sia ka mangawanan *Abak* pai ka dokter gigi?”

(Who will company *You Dad* to go to the dentist?)

The number of pronoun for men and women in table above are the same. It means that in general, the variation of language in pronoun based on gender is relatively the same between men and women.

Language Variation in Name.

Language variation in Name for Social Status

Based on Minangkabaunese custom there are many variations of the name for the leader. We can observe those variations in the following table:

Table 2. Language Variation in Name for social status

NO	MEN	WOMEN
1.	Datuak	Bundo Kanduang
2.	Ustadz	Ustadzah
3.	Cadiak pandai	
4.	Alim ulama	
5.	Urang siak (buya)	
6.	Guru mangaji	
7.	Hulu balang	

8.	Parewa	
9.	Sutan	
10.	Etc	

Example:

”Kini lah payah mencari *bundo kanduang* nan sabananyo di daerah awak ko”

(It is difficult to find out an ideal woman leader in our village now)

The family system in Minangkabau is Matrilinear. It means that the heritage in minangkabau is based on the mother line not the father’s. Therefore, all family’s properties are for the women. However, man is still as the leader of the custom or the leader of religion. Therefore, from the table above we can conclude that there are many calls for the men compare with the women.

Language Variation in Characteristic

The variation of language in Minangkabaunese characteristic is dominated by the women, because we know that women are more expressive than men. Here are the elaboration of them.

Table 3. Language Variation in Characteristics

NO	MEN	WOMEN
1.	Pamaneh	Mantiak
2.	Palakek	Jongkek

	tangan	
3.	Pamain	Jalang
4.	Pajalan	Palala
5.	Paisok	Paota
6.		Gata
7.		Bijak
8.		Cadiak Buruak
9.		Parunguik
10.		Manjo
11.		Pangecek
12.		Panangih

Example: “Uda ko *pamberang bana ma*” (You are so high tempered man)

From the data above, we can analyze that women are more expressive than the men. Moreover, the women have more calls for their characteristics and also most of those characteristics are reflected their bad attitude based on Minangkabaunese customs.

Language Variation In Traditional Accessories

The traditional accessories here mean things that usually used by the Minangkabau society in their daily life. We can see them listed in the table below:

Table 4. Language Variation in traditional accessories

NO	MEN	WOMEN
1.	Kupiah	Subang
2.	Sarawa	Galang
3.	Saruang	Kaluang

4.	Singguluang	Salendang
5.	Saluak	Badak
6.	Taluak balango	Baju kuruang
7.	Etc	Suntiang
8.		Lilik
9.		Sanggua
10.		Tingguluak
11.		Pinang
12.		Siriah
13.		Salempang
14.		Tanduak kabau

Example: “*Galang* yang dipakainyo rancak bana” (The bracelet she is using is very beautiful)

Generally, women tend to use and collect many beautiful accessories in their daily life because they belong to the women’s characteristic. In short, in Minangkabau there are more accessories used by the women than the men.

Discussion

From the discussion above, it can be analyzed that the number of pronoun for men and women are the same. It means that in general, the variation of language in pronoun based on gender is relatively the same between men and women. Moreover, related to the language variation in name, as we know that the family system in Minangkabau is Matrilineal. It means that the heritage in

minangkabau is based on the mother line not the father’s. Therefore, all family’s properties are for the women. However, man is still as the leader of the custom or the leader of religion. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are many calls for the men compare with the women. In addition, we can analyze that women are more expressive than the men. Therefore, the women have more calls for their characteristics. Finally, women tend to use and collect many beautiful accessories in their daily life because they belong to the women’s characteristic. In short, in Minangkabau there are more accessories used by the women than the men.

This is in line with Miswardi et al. (2024), women in Minangkabau society play a crucial role in preserving and protecting cultural heritage and also maintaining clan identity. Their study highlights that women are central to the continuity of customary inheritance systems and social organization. Despite this symbolic authority, decision-making processes frequently involve male leaders, indicating a coexistence of matrilineal and patriarchal structures.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Sex difference between men and women can create the difference in language use. In another words sex can create the variation of language use in Minangkabaunese especially in terms of word choice. Consequently, it can be concluded that sex role has a tight relationship with language in Minangkabau. Sex will influence one's diction when communicate each other. Different sex requires different choice of word.

The analysis reveals that the role of sex in creating different variation in Minangkabaunese comes up in four categories. They include, First, language variation in pronoun, which is relatively the same between men and women. Second, language variation in Name namely in the aspects of social status. Socially, there are more calls for men than the women in Minangkabaunese because men are the leaders of the custom and religion. Third is language variation in characteristic. Women have more calls for their characteristics than men. In addition, most of those characteristics are reflected on their negative behaviour. The last one is

language variation in traditional accessories used in daily activities. Women have more accessories than men have because women like to use and collect accessories than the men.

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