

## Conference Paper

# Cultural Expressions of *Mananam Padi* 'Planting Rice' Procession in Minangkabau Society

**Eriza Nelfi and Iman Laili**

Faculty of Humanity, Bung Hatta University, Padang, Indonesia

### Abstract

This paper discusses the various expressions in *mananam padi* 'planting rice' procession in Biaro Gadang village, IV Angkat district, Agam residence, West Sumatra. The expressions are studied in ecolinguistics perspective which views language as a system in relation with environment and human behavior. The change in Minangkabau agricultural expression reflects major social change in Minang environmental awareness and behavior. The extinctions of traditional expressions and words really disrupt some key aspects in Minangkabau agriculture. This phenomenon is caused by advanced agricultural technology. The loss of lexicons results the extinction of a number of Minangkabau cultural assets and values. This method of this research is survey and interview related areas in West Sumatera. This problem brings further effect in Minangkabau culture as a whole.

**Keywords:** term of agricultural procession, Minangkabau, character of nation

Corresponding Author:

Eriza Nelfi  
 erizanelfi@gmail.com

Received: 18 January 2019

Accepted: 24 March 2019

Published: 31 March 2019

Publishing services provided by  
**Knowledge E**

© Eriza Nelfi and Iman Laili. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the First ELEHIC Conference Committee.

## 1. Introduction

[1] reported that there are 731 potential endangered languages in Indonesia. A number of languages such as Hulung considered as serious endangered language. Some of them are assumed to be moribund language. In Papua only one Mapia speakers that still lives and it can be regarded as extinct language. Similar threats seem to start a number of lexicon Minangkabau expressions particularly in the agricultural tradition.

The extinction of the expressions found in the agricultural tradition will also be effected in the extinction of values in the socio-cultural community itself. The extinction of social values will erode socio-cultural identity that would trigger a systemic effect of social psychology. This has bad impact because it will undermine the impact resistance of the cultural pillars that support the national security of national character. The

 **OPEN ACCESS**

extinction of a utterance term actually has a serious impact in the long-term national identity.

Minangkabau agricultural expressions have ingenious cultural values which represent the richness of West Sumatra's culture. Therefore they are worth protected from extinction. Based on ecolinguistics point of view, language and speech community user is a living organism that lives in a system and together with other organisms. As one of the subsystems, language is a binder of togetherness, means of interaction, and verbal communication, the interrelationship between people, values and norms of life, and ideas that must be present, grow, and develop. Language alive and thriving is that language is used intensively in a number of life domains [2].

Based on those quotations, it can be interpreted that the extinction of a language will trigger the effect of death of the ideology in social identity (Minangkabau) which is a part of the nationwide Indonesian society. Degradation of social identity can create a society with social psychology unstable conditions that is easily interrupted by foreign culture. This is a serious problem that could weaken the defence mechanisms of the strategic culture of Indonesia. It becomes urgent. Various Indonesian national cultural preservation efforts have been undertaken. One of the national culture elements is Minangkabau language. Documenting various forms of expression associated with agricultural procession run to be extinction due to the influx of technology.

Minangkabau agricultural practices are one of modes of productions in West Sumatera. [3] views mode of production, social practices, discourse and semiosis have dialectical relationships. In this research, the extinction of some expressions can be categorized as semiosis.

The expressions used in a process associated with the agricultural community in Minangkabau especially speech community in Biaro Gadang village, IV Angkat district, Agam residence, West Sumatra, which is used as the location of this research has not comprehensively documented. When these words are not brought to the surface, it is not impossible that these words in the next few years will be threatened with extinction. Specifically this paper describes the expressions in one of the agricultural processions in Minangkabau society in particular growing rice (*mananam padi*) in Nagari Biaro.

The typological geographic region of West Sumatra, especially Biaro area is an agricultural region. This is evidenced by many areas that produce crops and rice. In connection with it, it is assumed that many of expressions associated with the agrarian ecology, especially the activities of rice planting procession comes up.

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach and interview techniques. In addition to interviewing techniques, it is also used participant observation. Validity

of the data/information is measured by triangulation techniques, namely triangulation resource, triangulation methods, and theory triangulation.

The rationale of this research is to explore the words, expressions and terms that are now near to extinction in Minangkabau agricultures. Those lexicons need to be saved in order to protect the cultural legacy of Minangkabau culture. This culture sustains the identity of West Sumatera. The losses of these expressions will also be the loss of precious cultural assets, awareness, and key cultural foundations of Minangkabau tribe.

Furthermore, the purpose of this study is also focused on formulating discourse analysis for ecolinguistics regarding ecosystem studies that involve ingenious language in use. This research also describes how language expression reflects the social behavior of the people around that ecosystem. This analysis shows apparent potential to map the impacts of human behavior and language use to the change of agricultural environment, vice versa.

## 2. Method

The method of research is language and ecological survey and interview to document the data of expressions. Most of Minangkabau cultural expressions relate to agricultures as one of mode of production in west Sumatera. The terms or the names of the artifacts, the processions, and all activities included are social semiosis of Minangkabau society. Fairclough (2003:28) coins a concept dialectics of discourse in which the society produce and consume discourse as the effect of mode of productions in the relation of control, action and representation. The discourses of these agricultural social practices have layers of meaning and values as one of social dynamics in West Sumatera.

Numerous names of artefacts as discourses show the aspects of how Minangkabau cultures develop actions in human social life and how the social system is realized in actions and representations. The loss of these terms will inflict damage to social control and systemic Minangkabau values. Therefore, documentation in this research can be categorized as discourse conservation.

The theories used in this research is dialectics of discourse and language in ecosystem. Fairclough also explains the relationship of discourse and social event is often mediated (2003:30). In Minangkabau agriculture, the names of artefact mediate mode of productions which have good effect to natural ecosystem in West Sumatera. Old Minangkabau traditions show respect for the nature. In the old time they do not even use modern chemicals to repel the pests, but this nature friendly activity and its term

have been lost. The rest of terms are also in the face of extinction. This is a process of maintaining and protecting the traditional values of agriculture and the expressions.

The loss of traditional expressions in Minangkabau agriculture shows the aspects of negative dialectics. Modern machineries and chemicals come to West Sumatra and destroy nature friendly old traditions.

The complete vocabulary of a language may be indeed looked upon as a complex inventory of all ideas, interests, and occupations that take up the attention of the community [4]. The relationship of language and environment is apparent. It also relates to human identity and the characters of the society in that environment. Ecolinguistics can explore more general patterns of language that can influence people's mental model and behavior to the nature. The procession of *mananam padi* in West Sumatra and related vocabularies mediate socio-cultural identity and behavior of Minangkabau people.

The method in this research is observation, interview, and documentation. Observations were done in Biaro Gadang village, IV Angkat district, Agam residence, West Sumatra. The informants are the farmers relevant for the research and meet academic criteria. The data were taken by using interview and taking the picture of activities and processions as documentation. The vocabularies relate to processions and artifacts are documented and well explained. This documentation is intended for conserving those vocabularies before extinction since they are categorized as artifacts of Minangkabau people's behavior in ecology.

### 3. Result and Discussion

[5] states that objects, events, concepts, and certain activities may be reflected in certain lexical forms (see also [6]). This reflection is a recording of facts and experiences that illustrate the situation at the time. Number of expressions related to plant rice processing (*mananam padi*) emerges, persist, and eventually experiencing shift due to friction with the environment (ecological) that has changed. Here some expressions that almost extinct related to rice planting procession.

#### 3.1. Malateh procession

*Malateh* are activities throw rice stubble after harvest. In the past these activities are done before plowing activities by using stump cutting tool called *palateh*. The tool has long handle, approximately one meter.



*Malateh* activities are almost similar to the movement of playing golf. However, *malateh* activities are now rare, and even no longer done by farmers. This is due to the ecology that supports *malateh* term shifts due to the influx of new technology. This time farmers prefer use hand tractors that directly flatten and plowing rice stubble. *Palateh* is a tool that used to *malateh* or dispose rice stumps. Shaped like a small hoe, but the sharpness only one side (on the side).

*Malateh* (v) is rooted from the word *lateh*. The hint of linguistic extinction of this word proven through the meaning of *lateh* has been unknown in West Sumatra nowadays. Minangkabau people do not use this word anymore in their daily conversation. This linguistic phenomenon also shows the shift in Minangkabaunese social behavior and cultural ideology. They have neglected this activity, so its values and meaning start to vanish.

The aspects of word and meaning extinction have strong influence in the way of people seeing their world or how they change their behavior. Since cultural identity is related to social behavior, this form of extinction should be anticipated not to endanger Minangkabau social behavior and identity.

Ecosystem wise, unlike the use of modern machinery, *malateh* is competently nature friendly since it does not administer any poisonous treatment and the acts of non organic chemicals related during the process.

### 3.2. Manguwie procession

*Manguwie* are activities to collect rice straw / stubble of rice that have been disposed (after *malateh* process) to be burned. Combustion ashes are collected to be used as fertilizer at planting rice paddy in the next season.



However *manguwie* activities are no longer performed due to ecological changes that support these activities. The changes occur as a result loss of these activities because *malateh* activities do not longer exist. Thus, farmers no longer collect ash which is usually used as fertilizer when planting rice. The tool used to collect rice straw /stubble of rice disposed (after *malateh* process) called *Kuwie* [kuwiꞌ].

*Kuwie* (n) is a bigger land comb used to in traditional agricultural activities. The extinction of this activity cause the words *kuwie* and *manguwie* (v) meet their demise in Minangkabau language. If this word is seen as a cultural discourse instead of cultural expression, we can explore the further impacts of this phenomenon.

The values of this word have been lost together with the loss of this word in the last decade in Minangkabau language. This happens because of the shift in agricultural behavior, The people in West Sumatera are more interested in using modern machinery than this traditional tool. The process of losing the meaning and its word in this phenomenon cause direct effect in some parts of Minangkabau identity.

### 3.3. Manjaja

*Manjaja* are activities using traditional plow pulled by buffaloes. Buffaloes pull the plow and controlled by a farmer from behind. Beside used by the owners to plowing their rice field buffaloes and plows also used to earn money by working in other rice field.



In plowing activities that used traditional tools there is tradition called *maantaan kawa*. *Maantaan kawa* is delivering food activities by owners' rice field to the farmers who are working or plowing fields. The values contained in *maantaan kawa* tradition are family value and solidarity value.



However, with the influx of new technology *manjaja* activities using the plow and buffalo is rarely done. Currently *manjaja* activities have done by using a hand tractor. With the change of ecological, *manjaja* activities with hand tractors eliminating the values contained in *maantaan kawa* tradition.

The word *manjaja* (v) has multi-relations with nature friendly activities such as non chemicals exposure during the process, no fossil fuels needed. Ecolinguistically, this verb and its meaning support organic agricultural activities which also save natural ecosystem and environment. Thus, when this word disappears, its meaning and nature friendly agricultural values also vanish from Minangkabau culture.

Further strategy is required to save this word from extinction in accordance with the conceptual purpose of ecolinguistic studies. The use of this word in the old times also show higher eco-awareness in Minangkabau society, but it starts to disappear now.

### 3.4. Malunyah procession

*Malunyah* are activities to leveling the soil that have been plowed or hoed. *Malunyah* activities done after the rice paddies plowed by using traditional tools. These activities do by women. In this activity, there is also a tradition *maantaan kawa*.



Today *malunyah* activities is no longer apparent anymore because the ecology that supports has changed. The changes caused by the influx of new technology, which are hand tractors.

*Malunyah* in Minangkabau culture shows the aspects of gender equality at work between women and men. Women take parts even in difficult works that require strength like this. This verb has meaning in wider spectrum that reflects multi-dimensional social aspects. It mediates one of the actions in agricultural practices. This word is not only a verb, it is a cultural discourse which transfer the some Minangkabau social values. When this word disappears, it is gone with its social values and precious cultural ideology of ingenious traditional invention in West Sumatera. Discourse analysis in ecolinguistic approach should figure out possible procedures to save words like this that face extinction.

### 3.5. Mamancau, mayikek, malindih procession

After *manjaja* activity 'plowing' another three activities done, namely *mamancau*, *manyikek*, and *malindih*. These three activities have different function. *Mamancau* is the same activities with the plowing, but done after levelling soil (*malunyah*) of rice field. *Manyikek* activities are activities to levelling soil that have been plowed (after *mamancau* activities). The tools used for *manyikek* shaped like a comb with bars 15 cm long, made of wood, pulled by a cow or buffalo. *Malindih* are activities levelling the soil that has been levelled in *manyikek* activities. In these activities, there are also a *tradition maantaan kawa*.

Nowadays, these three activities are no longer done in Minangkabau agriculture. They have been replaced by modern machineries. Those modern instruments produce high exposure of chemicals to the environment from the use of fossil fuels.

These three words have distinct cultural values as the sequences of previous traditional processions. The aspects of discourse in these words are focused on how the spectrums of behavior and cultural ideology operate in discourse mechanism. Since they are related to social dynamics in Minangkabau culture, their extinctions will disrupt some cultural construction in West Sumatera. Therefore, good documentation is needed.

### 3.6. Manambak pematang procession

*Manambak pematang* are activities to patch the rice field in to hold the water in the rice fields. The tools used for *manambak pematang* namely cangkua (hoe). Besides the expression *manambak pematang*, there is expression *maamba pematang*. The purpose of these two activities are same, they both patching dike to hold water in the rice fields. However, functions of these two expressions are different. *Manambak pematang* done before the farms are planted, while *maamba pematang* done after harvest and the rice fields will be used as *parak ikan* 'fish breeding'. *Parak ikan* is rice field that transformed into fish pond for temporarily until next planting season.

Currently *manambak pematang* activities are rarely done by farmers. Farmers tend to let rice field not transformed to fish pond (Manama). While expression *maamba pematang* no longer known. The expression *manambak pematang* is near extinction in Minangkabau language even the people of west Sumatera still run it for their paddy.

### 3.7. Mamangkua suduik sawah procession

*Mamangkua suduik sawah* are activities to clean corners of rice field with hoe. This activity was done because plow can not reach the corners of rice fields. Today some farmers let that corner of the rice field becomes wide. This expression is still used today. It is not near extinction. This term has shared values of previous near extinction Minangkabau expressions such as solidarity and social cooperation. So we can see those expressions are rooted from similar values and social behaviour.

### 3.8. Batanam procession

*Batanam* are activities planting *banih* 'seed'. At the first time *batanam* activity is done by inserting a pinch of ash / fertilizer to the root *banih* 'seed'. The goal is that the rice can thrive without the use of fertilizers and pesticides. Fertilizer ash comes from burning straw and kitchen ash. However, this time the farmers no longer use the ash. Currently the farmers are now more familiar with pesticide fertilizer than ash fertilizer.



At the first time *batanam* activity have done together with close family or family in one clan. In this activity there is also tradition *maantaan kawa*. In the past, *batanam* activities are only done by women, but now *batanam* also performed by men.

The word *batanam* (*v*) is still used in most areas of West Sumatera nowadays. It is not near to extinction in Minangkabau language. This word can be categorized as cultural discourse since its social construction has direct meaning to Minangkabau mode of agriculture.

The meaning of this verb is layered from discourse points of view. The aspects of solidarity and mutual gender cooperation in Minangkabau culture are part of its meaning. It is not only a term to represent social practice in Minang agriculture but also to form the very basis of traditional cooperation and gender equality in West Sumatera since the ancient times. The process of *batanam* and its term has been symbol of gender equivalence in Minangkabau culture for hundreds of years. There is no single sexism evident during this procession. Men and women work together in mutual relation. Perhaps patriarchal ideology has lesser effect in Minangkabau culture from long time ago.

### 3.9. Manggaro procession

*Manggaro* is an activity to repel the birds when the rice begins to turn yellow. *Manggaro* activities were carried out by farmers in the morning and afternoon. For now manggaro activities is no longer performed.

The word *manggaro* has another variation in Payakumbuh, *manggoro*. Both of them are known only to traditional farmers in West Sumatera. They are no longer used in Minang current generations, therefore they are near to extinction.

*Manggaro* is nature friendly bird's repellent process. It neither kills the birds nor administers adverse treatment. It only uses sound effect from used cans and robes. The cans are tied with the robes so the farmers can pull it to produce sound from the motions of the cans. The birds are afraid of this sound and fly away from the land. Most of traditional expressions in Minang agricultural practices are ecosystem friendly, even when those farmers encounter the pests, they use nature tolerant treatment. So based on the use of this traditional expression, it is obvious Minang people already have nature conserving awareness for hundreds of years. Thus, when these expressions are no longer used and start to vanish, nature conserving awareness also meet its demise in Minangkabau agriculture. We have to save these words and expressions.

### 3.10. Manyabik, mairiak, mangirai, maangin procession

*Manyabik*, *mairiak*, *mangirai*, *maangin* done when the rice was harvested. *Manyabik* is harvesting rice activities by cutting rice stalks using the scythe.

*Mairiak* is an activity to separate rice grains from the stem by stepping on rice and scrape both feet on rice straw (and flipping it upside down) while resting on one or two sticks for balance. Currently *mairiak* activities replaced with *malambuik* activities.



*Malambuik* is also an activity to separate grains of rice from the stalk, but done in a different way, it is done by threshing rice stalks tied to a tool made of wood, like a small ladder.



*Mangirai* is an activity to separate rice that left on the stalk. *Maangin* is an activity to separate empty rice (after *mairiak* process) with good quality rice (boneh). Currently *maangin* activity has been rarely used by farmers because of the influx of the same technology with *maangin* function.

This four activity (*manyabik*, *mairiak*, *mangirai*, *maangin*) at first usually done together by family member who live near rice field. These activities have culture values such as togetherness, mutual aid, deliberation, solidarity, and family sense. In this activity, there is also a *tradition maantaan kawa* as activities that have been mentioned previously (*manjaja*, *mamanca*, *manyikek*, *malindih*, *malunyah*, *batanam*). However, current research indicates that cultural values contained in this harvest activity have begun to erode. This is caused the owner no longer worked in the rice field. Parents who used to farm to support his family in general do not inherit to his farming activities to their children. Farmers' children have other job and commonly succeed in other region.

Today, rice field generally cultivated by someone else with sharing systems payment or called *disaduaian*. Even the current crops were not taken back to the house. Rice that has been harvested directly sold in the rice fields. Before, harvested rice generally is brought home and stored in *kapuak*, *lumbuang*, or *rangkiang*. Currently *lumbuang* or *rangkiang* do not used anymore, this situation very concerning because it no longer used to store grain.

*Manyabik*, *mairiak*, *mangirai*, *maangin* are four of sequences of actions using traditional tools in Minangkabau agriculture. *Manyabik* (*v*) is rooted from the word *sabik* (*n*) a short curved traditional Minangkabau medium range knife used to cut the grass and rice stems. This word now is near to extinction because most farmers use grass cutter motors. This modern instrument can do the job more efficiently and effectively but it administers adverse effects of fuel ignition to the atmosphere, whereas *manyabik* is much more environment friendly since it only use human strength.



The shift in West Sumatra's agricultural expressions as the impact of advanced technologies, not only cause the change of terms, but also people's environmental awareness and behavior.

*Lumbuang / rangkiang* are the place that located outside the house, before it used to store the rice. *Lumbuang / rangkiang* are usually located in front of the *rumah gadang* that shaped like rectangular *rumah gonjong*. *Kapuak* is the place to store rice which is located in the room under the wooden house (*rumah panggung*) called cage.

*Kapuak* is so rare nowadays. It a traditional warehouse to store the grain. This term is much closer to extinction now since this house is not used anymore in most areas in West Sumatera.

*Kapuak, lumbuang* and *rangkiang* (n) have strong social function of a family to feed the members in the same matriarchal bond. It relates to apparent identity of Minangkabau culture. It is a discourse of social identity and Minangkabau cultural behavior as one of foundational meanings of Minang culture.

The dynamics of its meaning show the process of word extinction. The meaning of *Kapuak* seems no longer significant in Minangkabau's mode of agriculture because of the use of other types of modern warehouses. Modern storing house is perhaps more efficient, but it has no cultural identity like *Kapuak* does.

*Kapuak, rangkiang* and *lumbuang* as words have mutual aspects with the traditional warehouse it represents. If this house is no longer used, then the word or the term will also vanish. Such a relation reflects the cultural function of language in human civilization

and social practice. So the extinction of the term 'Kapuak' is a process of cultural death in some aspects of Minangkabau culture.

Based on this phenomenon, we can formulate cultural roles and function of discourse as one of the concepts of ecolinguistics. It is evident the loss of cultural words are concerned with the loss of the aspects of related culture. The case of above Minangkabau cultural terms and their values are solid evidence.

## 4. Conclusion

Based on the result of study found that there are some phrases no longer used by the speaker this language. The endangered of some expressions that contained in the rice planting procession will lead to the loss of cultural values such as the value of mutual aid, togetherness, solidarity, and family sense. One of the efforts made to preserve these expressions is to document the expressions contained in agricultural procession.

This study brings some preliminary concepts of discourse analysis in ecolinguistics. The relations of language used in agricultural social practices with human behavior around the ecosystem reveal the roles of discourse in the culture as a whole system.

The extinction of Minangkabau agricultural expressions shows the degrading awareness of west Sumatra people to protect the legacy of Minangkabau cultures and nature friendly farming. This phenomenon apparently reveals language and the meaning in social practices are part of human behaviour, awareness and foundational culture. The loss of those expressions will cause some key parts of Minangkabau ingenious agricultural legacy to vanish.

## References

- [1] Lauder, A.F & Multamia RMT Lauder. 2005. *Bahasa Sahabat Manusia: Langkah Awal Memahami Linguistik*. Depok: Fakultas Ilmu Pengetahuan Budaya UI.
- [2] Mbeti, Aron Meko. 2009. "Problematika keetnikan dan kebahasaan dalam perspektif ekolinguistik". Paper presented at Seminar Nasional Budaya Etnik 3 held by Departemen Sastra Daerah USU together with Balai Bahasa Medan dan Lembaga Penelitian USU, Medan, on April 25.
- [3] Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London: Routledge.
- [4] Fill and Muhlhausler. 2001. Introduction. In Fill and Muhlhausler (eds). *The Ecolinguistics Reader: Language, Ecology, and Environment*. London: Continuum.

- [5] Halliday, M.A.K. 2001. "New Ways of Meaning: The Challenge to Applied Linguistics" in Muhlhausler, Peter and Alwin Fill (Eds.) *The Ecolinguistics Reader. Language, Ecology, and Environment*. London and New York: Continuum.
- [6] Ansaldo, U. 2009. *Contact Languages Ecology and Evolution in Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.