



Linguistik Terapan 18 (2) (2021): 128 - 138

**Jurnal Linguistik Terapan Pascasarjana**

*Available online*

<http://jurnal.unimed.ac.id/2019/index.php/JLT-Unimed>

---

## **VARIATION OF RIAU MALAY LANGUAGE IN ROKAN HILIR REGENCY**

**Nurmayana  
Amrin Saragih  
Sri Minda Murni**

**English Applied Linguistic Program  
Postgraduate Program–Universitas Negeri Medan**

*Diterima Mei 2021; Disetujui Juni 2021; Dipublikasikan Agustus 2021*

---

### **ABSTRACT**

Language variation is the study of those features of language that differ systematically as compare different groups of speaker or the same speaker in different situation. As a multicultural country, Indonesia has so much variety of language. In addition to the official language, Indonesian people also have regional languages in each region. Rokan Hilir is one of them. Rokan Hilir, where the majority of the population is Malay, has a special regional language, namely the Malay language. This descriptive qualitative study identifies the variation of Riau Malay language in Rokan Hilir Regency review by analyze realizations of variation Riau Malay language in Rokan Hilir Regency. To understand the Realization of variation Riau Malay language in Rokan Hilir observation and interview were used in this study. The result indicates that realization of language variation were found there, phonology that is found as the most kinds of realization of language variation for about 21 times appearing or (53.8 %). Followed by Lexical 16 times or 41.1%, then grammar only found 2 times or 5.1%

**Keywords:** *Language Variation, Riau Malay Language, Rokan Hilir*

---

**How to Cite:** Nurmayana. (2021). Variation of Riau Malay Language in Rokan Hilir Regency. *Jurnal Linguistik Terapan-Pascasarjana Unimed*. 18 (2): 128 – 138.

**ISSN: 2407 - 7410**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Language is recognized as the most powerful means of communication. The existence of language cannot be separated from human life because as human beings, people cannot be separated from the process of communication. In their lives, people need to interact with others since they cannot live by themselves. Language allows humans to form social groups as a fulfillment of their need to live together with language in a different social environment. The existence of these social groups, causes the language used varies.

This is in line with what has been suggested by Wardaugh (1992: 8) who states that

“Language allows people to say things to each other and expresses communicate needs”. In short, language is constantly used by humans in their daily life as a means of communication. Communication is also defined as the interaction between two persons. In communication, the society deals with the meaning. Whereas a word can have the different meaning. It means that speaker and listener must have the same perspective or goal.

In sociolinguistic studies, language is not only understood as a sign system, but is also seen as a social system, a communication system, and as part of the culture of a particular society. Mesthrie et al. (2009: 5) said that sociolinguistics is focusing on language in society on social contexts throw upon language. In social life, each region always has its own dialect as its group identity. Each region has dialect characteristics that are different from other regions. The differences in dialects found in each region lead to language variations.

Language variation is the different ways of human language to express the some meaning at different structure. Variation at different levels of linguistic structure are phonetic levels, morphological levels, syntactic levels, semantic levels (vocabulary choice). Hudson (1996, p. 22) defines a variety of language as “a set of linguistic item with similar distribution”, this definition also allows us to treat all the language of some multilingual speaker, or community, as a single variety, since all the linguistic items concern have similar social distribution. A variety can therefore be something greater than a single language as well something less, less even than something traditionally referred to as dialect.

As a multicultural country, Indonesia has so much variety of language. In addition to the official language, Indonesian people also have regional languages in each region. Rokan Hilir is one of them. Rokan Hilir, where the majority of the population is Malay, has a special regional language, namely the Malay language. Therefore, the use of Malay language in Rokan Hilir is not homogeneous or uniform. The use of Malay language always differs based on place. So that there are several variations of the Malay language in Rokan Hilir.

Riau Malay language is a language that is rich in dialects from every district, sub-district, and village in all regions in Riau. The widespread Malay ethnicity makes the Malay language in each region have its own characteristics, for example, the Malay language in Rokan Hilir district is different from the Malay language in others district. Rokan Hilir Regency which is part of the Riau Malay tribe also has its own distinctive language. Each region in Rokan Hilir also has language differences. Although the difference is only in accent or in certain words, this slight difference is able to prove the diversity of languages that exist in Rokan Hilir Regency. There are 18 sub-districts in Rokan Hilir Regency and from the people of Rokan Hilir Regency who are Malay ethnic, there are almost differences in each area in the sub-

districts in Rokan Hilir. This research is limited to only 3 districts out of a total of 18 sub-districts in Rokan Hilir Regency they are Tanah putih, Kubu and Bangko districts. The Theory by Chrystal (1989) was used to analyze the kinds of variations.

#### **A. *Language and Society***

Language cannot be separated from human life because language as the important role in the process of social interaction. It is possible that few of us understand what language actually is, and what fundamental nature of its role is. People often think of language in term of grammar test rather than the major way people transfer creativity, feelings and thought to and from one to another. Language is not simply a means of communicating information about a subject, but it is also a very important means of establishing and maintaining relationships with other people. Sapir (1965: 78) states that "Language is a purely human and non instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols".

#### **B. *Language Variation and Variety***

Language variation is the study of those features of language that differ systematically as compare different groups of speaker or the same speaker in different situation (Fasold:1990). Variation also is the study talk about by the uses or the speaker. Rather than comparing features of two different languages, language variation studies regional varieties of the same language, social varieties of the same language (upper-middles class, lower-working class) and stylistic varieties of the same language (how a speaker uses the language). Where you are from, of course, will not be the only thing which influences how you speak.

People speak different kinds of language depending on what kind of social background they come from. These social and geographical kinds of language are known as dialect. Dialects, then, have to do with a speaker's social and geographical origins and we are talking here about all speakers. It is important to emphasize that everybody speaks a dialect. Dialects are not peculiar or old-fashioned or rustic ways of speaking.

#### **C. *Realizations of Language variation***

The variations of language with reference to the user or the speaker are called dialect. The variation of language can be identified through the way to say the language. Chrystal (1989) states there are three realizationsof language variations, they are language variation in Phonological, lexical and grammar.

Phonology refers to the details of pronunciation of a sound which may, nevertheless, appear in the same lexical set in two varieties, it also differences in the way sounds are pronounced which often reveals differences in the way phonemes are distributed in the

dialect. Phonological variation in all languages is massively structured and orderly; there is random component, such that the surface realization of a given utterance cannot be predicted categorically, but the pattern of realization in particular realization is strongly favored by a particular phonological context.

Lexical is the kind of pronunciation difference which is most easily noticed and commented on. Lexical also relates to words or the vocabulary of a language as distinguished from its grammar and construction. Lexical meaning of natural language expressions is formulated in terms of sets of inferences from "lexical sentences", i.e. minimal environments for the occurrence of a lexical expression.

Grammatical is conforming to or the rule of grammar (oxford dictionary). Grammar is the structure of a language or dialect. It describes the way individual words change their form, such as when *play* becomes *played*, to indicate an event in past time. It also refers to the way words are combined to form phrases or sentences.

#### ***D. Riau Malay Language***

The Riau Malay language had been developed in such a way by Raja Ali Haji, so that this language already had the standard of its time and was also widely published, in the form of; literary books, history books and religion in the era of classical Malay literature in the 19th century. Dialect Edit Riau has various kinds of Malay sub-dialects which can be divided into two, namely the Mainland and the Archipelago sub-dialects. The mainland sub-dialect has phonological features close to that of Minangkabau Malay, while the archipelago sub-dialect has phonological features close to that of Malaysian Malay in the Selangor, Johor and Kuala Lumpur Alliance areas (because other parts of Malaysia have very different dialects).

#### ***E. Rokan Hilir***

Rokan Hilir was formed from three countries, namely Kubu, Bangko and Tanah Putih. These countries are led by a Head of State who is responsible to the Sultan of the Siak Kingdom. The first district was established by the Dutch in Tanah Putih when they occupied this area in 1980. After Bagansiapiapi, which was opened by Chinese settlers, developed rapidly, the Dutch moved their Kontroleur Government to Bagansiapiapi City in 1901. Bagansiapiapi grew after the Dutch built a modern port. and the most complete in the city of Bagansiapiapi in order to balance the other ports in the Malacca Strait until the end of the First World War.

## METHODOLOGY

The data of this study were the variation of Riau Malay Language in Rokan Hilir Regency. The source of data were the informants from Malay people. The researcher collect the data through observation, recording and interview, through observation the research can investigate phenomenon that is happening in real condition about language variation of Riau Malay language in Rokan Hilir Regency. Interview about corona was used to record the data from Malay native speaker. The techniques of analyzing data used in this research were Huberman and Saidana Technique (2014). There are four main components of qualitative data analysis, those are data collection, data condensation, data display and data verification/conclusion.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study indicates with the variation of Riau Malay language in Rokan Hilir Regency. The data of this study were the utterances of Riau Malay language in Rokan Hilir Regency. The sources of data were the informant from Malay people in Rokan Hilir Regency. The data were taken from recording and interview. In analyzing the data, this research follows the step of data analysis based on Miles and Huberman and Saldana (2014) They are data collection, condensation, data display and verification and conclusion.

Table 1. Realization of Variation Riau Malay language in Rokan Hilir

Regency			
No	Realizations of Variation	Total	Percentages (%)
1	phonology	21	53.8
2	lexical	16	41.1
3	grammar	2	5.1
	Total	39	100

The table above indicates that all realization of language variation were found there. They are phonological that is found as the most realization of language variation for about 21 times appearing or 53.8 %, followed by lexical that appeared 16 times or about 41.1 % and the last realization is grammar variation that was found only 2 or 5.1%.

### 1. Phonology

Phonology is the first kind of realization of variation in this study. Phonological variation is a variation that examines the sound system in language, which means that phonological variation is a variation that is characterized by differences sounds in the vocabulary.

Table 2. Phonological of Riau Malay Language in Rokan Hilir

No	Words	Kubu	Bangko	Tanah Putih
1	<i>dari</i> (from)	/dai:/	/dai:/	/daə/
2	<i>dengar</i> (listen) <i>tidur</i> (sleep)	/dɔŋɑ:/	/dɔŋɑ:/	/dɔŋə/
3		/tɪdʊ/	/tɪdʊ/	/tɪdə/

**a. Dari (From)**

- Kubu

“*awal-awal dulu pasar Pelita itu ditutup untuk mencegah masuknyo pedagang-pedagang dai lua*”(data 1)

‘In the beginning, Pelita market was closed to prevent the entry of traders from outside’

- Bangko

“*daimanolah penghasilan kalau diumah ajo*” (data 3)

‘Where does the income come from if we are only at home?’

- Tanah Putih

“*Di donge lah saran dae pemerintah bia aman kito*”(data 6)

‘listen to the advice of the government so that we are safe’

The first sentence spoken by the informant from the Kubu sub-district said the word *dari* is [dai:]. The second sentences is an utterance spoken by an informant from the Bangko sub-district who said word *dari* namely [dai:] and the last sentences was the utterance spoken by an informant from Tanah Putih sub-district who said *dari* is [dae']. Based on the example above, it can be seen that there are two variations of the pronunciation of the word "from" in their speech. Kubu and Bangko have the same pronunciation while Tanah Putih has its own variation, namely [daə].

**b. Dengar ( Listen)**

- Kubu

“*Mengenai peraturan banyak jugo yang tak mendonga aturan tu*”(data2 )

‘regarding the rules, many people don't listen to the rules’

- Bangko  
 “*Sebonanyo, kalau bulih jujur, muak mendonga berita covid ko*” (data4 )  
 ‘honestly, tired of hearing news about the corona virus virus’
- Tanah Putih  
 “*Di donge lah saran dae pemerintah bia aman kito*”(data6 )  
 ‘listen to the advice of the government so that we are safe’

The first sentence spoken by the informant from the Kubu sub-district said the word *dengar* is [dɔŋa:] The second sentences is an utterance spoken by an informant from the Bangko sub-district who said word *dengar* namely [dɔŋa:]and the last sentences was the utterance spoken by an informant from Tanah Putih sub-district who said *dengar* is [dɔŋə].

### c. *Tidur* (Sleep)

- Kubu  
 ‘*Kalau behompang, makan tidu dapek duik tak masalah do*’(data2 )  
 ‘if eat and sleep we get money, it doesn't matter’
- Bangko  
 “*Karenatak bulih kelua, uwang pun makan tidu diumah*”(data 3 )  
 ‘because people can't go out, they eat and sleep at home’
- Tanah Putih  
*tide ajo kojo tak sehat jugo lamo-lamo*(data 5)  
 ‘too much sleep is not healthy’

The first sentence spoken by the informant from the Kubu sub-district said the word *tidur* is [tidu].The second sentences is an utterance spoken by an informant from the Bangko sub-district who said word *tidur* namely [tidu]and the last sentences was the utterance spoken by an informant from Tanah Putih sub-district who said *tidur* is [tidə].

Based on the example above, it can be seen that there are two variations of the pronunciation of the word "sleep" in their speech. Kubuu and Bangko have the same pronunciation while Tanah Putih has its own variation, namely "tide".

### **Lexical**

Lexical is the first kind of variation of Riau Malay language in Rokan Hilir Regency. Lexical Variation is called a difference in the lexicon field, it means that characterized by different forms of words for the same meaning.

Table 3. Lexical of Riau Malay Language in Rokan Hilir

No	Word	Kubu	Bangko	Tanah Putih
1	kamu (pr)	kau	puan	diang
2	ada takut	dai	ado	ado
3		polosuw	takuik	takuik

**a. Ada (Exist)**

- Kubu

*“Semenjak **dai** korona ko ancuw perekonomian masyarakat”*(data2 )  
*‘since the corona virus, the community’s economy has been destroyed’*

- Bangko

*“Sebelum **ado** covid ko, elok2 ajo aso wak”*(data 4 )  
*‘before corona virus exist, everything was fine’*

- Tanah Putih

*“semenjak **ado** coronu ko, banyak botu peraturan bau”*(data 6 )  
*(from the beginning of the corona until now)*

The first sentence spoken by the informant from the Kubu sub-district said the word *ada* means *exist* ‘*dai*’. The second and third sentences are utterances spoken by informants from Bangko and Tanah Putih sub-district who said word *ada* namely “*ado*”. From this explanation, it can be seen that from the three sub-district mentioned the word ‘*ada*’ with different word and the same meaning. So, it can be concluded that the word is included to the lexical variation.

**b. Kamu (you)**

- Kubu

*“Bona ndok **kau** aso? Kian kalau dah kono sapo nak disalahkan?”*(data2 )  
*‘don’t you think? if you have been exposed to the virus who will be blamed?’*

- Bangko

*“**Puan** dan tuan pun botu-botul di Medan tu, awak ko jaoh dai sanak family”*(data 4 ) *‘you take care of yourself in Medan because you are far from family’*



- Tanah Putih

“*samo lah macam **diang** tak mungkin diam diumah ajo kan*”(data 5 )

‘just like you, it's impossible to just stay at home’

The first sentence spoken by an informant from the Kubu sub-district calling women was "you". The second sentence is the utterance uttered by the informant from Bangko sub-district who said "puan" in addressing women and the last sentence was the utterance uttered by the informant from Tanah Putih sub-district who said "diang" in calling women. From this explanation, it can be seen that the three sub-districts call different word with the same meaning. So, it can be concluded that the word is included to the lexical variation.

### c. **Takut ( Afraid)**

- Kubu

“*Uang tu yg melangga awak yang **losuw***”(data2 )

‘those who violate, we who afraid’

- Bangko

“*petamo tamo **takuik** jugo nonganyo*”(data 3)

‘I'm afraid to hear it at first’

- Tanah Putih

“*Pikirkan keluarga, **takuik** wak, yg rentan kono korona ko uyang tuo*”(data 6 )

‘think about your family, be afraid, many elderly people who are exposed to the corona virus’

The first sentence spoken by the informant from the Kubu sub-district said the word *takut* means afraid ‘*losuw*’. The second and third sentences are an utterance spoken by an informant from Bangko and Tanah Putih sub-district who said word *takut* namely “*takuik*”. From this explanation, it can be seen that from the three sub-district mentioned the word ‘*takut*’ with different word with the same meaning. So, it can be concluded that the words are included in the lexical variation.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data analysis and the research findings, it is concluded that: The researcher found from the realization of language variation of Riau Malay language in Rokan Hilir Regency were all of them, they were phonology (53.8%), lexical (41.1%) and grammar (5.1%). The most dominant kinds of variation Riau Malay language in Rokan Hilir Regency was phonology. In relation to the conclusions, the researcher suggested for further studies

should be conducted to find out more kinds of language variation in other context, because this study has limited data sources because it is currently in the covid-19 pandemic.

## REFERENCES

- Antoni, C; Irham and Gusna, R. 2019. Language Variation in Minang Colloquial Language Spoken in Kabun Region: Sociolinguistic study on Millennial Citizens. *Jurnal Arbitrer*. Vol 6. No 2.
- Baha, O.M.A. 2014. Language Variation and Style: What Makes People More Careful about their Style of Speech and Why?. *International Journal of English and Education*. Vol. 3, No. 4
- Belahcen, A; Ghania, O. 2017. An Investigation of Language Variation and Change Among Three Age-Groups: A Case Study. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*. Vol. 5, No. 3-1, pp. 24-35
- Bogdan, R and Biklen, S. 1982. *Qualitative Research for Education* (2nd ed). Boston: Allan & Bacon.
- Chaer, Abdul, and Agustina, Leonie. 2010. *Sosiolinguistik*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Chambers, J.K. (2003). *Sociolinguistic theory*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing
- Chambers, J.K. and Trudgill P. 2004. *Dialectology*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Faizah, Hasnah; Charlina and Elvrin Septyanti. 2018. Lexical Variations in Riau Malay at Rokan Hulu Regency. *Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program*. Riau University
- Labov, W. (1966) *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. Center for Applied Linguistics: Washington, USA. P. 221
- Latifah, L; Kundharu, S and Nugraheni Eko, W. 2017. Language Variation Background In Social Context of Community Utterances in Central Java-West Java, Majenang. *English Department Faculty of Languages and Arts of Universitas Negeri Padang in collaboration with Indonesian English Teachers Association (IETA)*. Vol. 11, No. 1. Page 95-110.
- Lincoln, G. S. Guba, E. G. 1985. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications
- Mesthrie, Rajend; Joan Swann; Ana Deumert and William L. Leap. 2009. *Introducing Sociolinguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Saragih, A. 2017. *Variation and Functional Varieties of Languages*. Medan: The State University of Medan

- Setiawan, Irma. 2015. Social Dialect Variations in Sasak Monolingual Society. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*. Vol. 1, No. 1. Pages: 1~8.
- Tarigan, Jenheri Rejeki. (2017). *Variation of Karonese Language in Tanah Karo*. Masters Thesis, Unimed.
- Wardhaugh, Ronald. 2006. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistic: Fifth Edition*. United Kingdom: Blackwell