

Sociolinguistics in the digital era: Minang language as cultural identity

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia is renowned for its abundant ethnic and cultural diversity, where each community upholds its unique language and traditions. This study aims to delve into the sociolinguistic dynamics in the digital age, focusing particularly on the Minang language as a cultural emblem. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the research meticulously delineates the distinctive features of the Minang language as an inseparable facet of cultural heritage. Methodologically, a literature review is employed to gather data from diverse secondary sources such as books, literature, and relevant media, subsequently subjecting them to content analysis techniques to decipher the meanings embedded in expert expressions and perspectives within the realm of scholarly discourse. The findings underscore the intricate impact of the digital era on the Minangkabau language and culture, encompassing the pervasive influence of technology and mass media on its usage, preservation, and evolution within society. The dynamics of urbanization and population mobility also wield significant influence, presenting challenges in preserving traditional cultural practices amidst the currents of modern urban life. To safeguard the rich tapestry of Minangkabau culture, concerted efforts are imperative, including educational initiatives rooted in local cultural values, leveraging digital technologies for cultural documentation and advocacy, alongside governmental support and active engagement from local communities. Collaborative endeavors across sectors are envisaged as pivotal in safeguarding the Minangkabau language as a cherished symbol of cultural identity, resonating not just locally but also on the global stage increasingly interconnected in the digital era.

Keywords: Cultural Identity, Minang Language, Sociolinguistics.

Article History: Received 6 Jul 2024, Final draft 31 Jul 2024, Published 10 Aug 2024

Introduction

Sociolinguistics is a branch of science that examines the relationship between language and society, offering a relevant analytical framework for understanding these dynamics. Sociolinguistics is not just a combination of linguistics and sociology or other social sciences, but also includes the principles of various aspects of life related to social and cultural functions (Dahniar & Sulistyawati, 2023). According to Kridalaksana, sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies the reciprocal interaction between language behavior and social behavior. Patterns of language use in a particular culture reflect linguistic and social behavior related to language choice, topic of conversation, place, and other factors (Arsanti & Setiana, 2020). In the context of the digital era, sociolinguistics can explain how technological changes influence the use of Minang language, as well as how this

language continues to survive as a cultural identity amidst the current of globalization (Fitri et al., 2024).

Current technological developments are very rapid. Both adults and children can use technology easily (Kezia, 2021). The number of internet users in Indonesia continues to increase along with advances in information technology (Agata & Saifullah, 2022). Currently, Indonesia has 204.7 million internet users, which is around 73.7% of the country's total population. This data shows that the majority of Indonesian people use technology. On average, each person spends eight hours and 36 minutes per day using the internet. This shows how intensely Indonesian people use the internet and spend a lot of time communicating in cyberspace (Fadlilah et al., 2023).

In the digital era, the use of digital media has replaced paper-based oral and

written communication as the main tool for communication. This change in communication patterns affects various other aspects of life, including ways of obtaining information such as reading (Permatasari et al., 2024). The digital era has brought major changes in various aspects of human life, including the use of language. Humans use language to fulfill their life needs, because by nature humans are social creatures who cannot live alone and need interaction with other people (Susanto et al., 2023). Language functions as a means of communication between individuals. Language not only plays an important role in communication, but also has a significant social function in shaping identity and strengthening social relationships among individuals in society. Apart from that, language also reflects the values and social norms that exist in society (Fitri et al., 2024). Currently, social interactions increasingly occur through online media such as social media, instant messaging applications and other communication platforms. This phenomenon has an important impact on the dynamics of language use, including regional languages such as Minang.

Minang language is the language used by the Minangkabau people in West Sumatra and in various Minangkabau communities overseas. This language is not only a means of communication, but also a cultural identity that reflects the values, customs and traditions of the Minangkabau people. Culture and communication are closely related, because culture influences who communicates with whom, what is discussed, and how the communication process occurs. Culture also influences how people encode messages, the meaning they attribute to those messages, and the conditions under which messages are sent, received, and interpreted. In fact, culture

Research Method

This study utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach which aims to describe in detail the Minang language as a cultural identity (Wada et al., 2024). The method applied in this research is the literature study method or literature review. The literature study method is a series of activities related to collecting data from various library sources,

determines how a person conveys a message with ethics, manners and courtesy, as well as taking care not to offend other people's feelings (Ayu Ningtyas, 2024).

Various studies have been conducted on language as cultural identity including research by research discussed by Nisak which aims to analyze the strategies of West Sumatra overseas students in adapting when leaving their hometown to study at Syiah Kuala University. The results of this research show that students from West Sumatra do not face obstacles or difficulties in communicating with the community. They can adapt and adapt very well without experiencing significant changes in identity or attitude while studying at Syiah Kuala University (Nisak et al., 2022). Second, research conducted by Aulia and Rachman shows that the use of regional languages greatly influences the social identity of respondents in a multicultural society (Aulia & Rachman, 2024). Third, research by Nu'ma and Haryanti found that in multicultural romance films there are identity issues related to culture, race, ethnic realm and social class in Indonesia (Nu'ma & Haryanti, 2023). Based on these three studies, the discussion of Minang language as a cultural identity is currently an interesting study.

This research will analyze in depth sociolinguistic dynamics in the digital era with a focus on Minang language as a cultural identity. This research aims to provide better insight into how language is used in society in the digital era, as well as the sociolinguistic implications that arise. It is hoped that the conclusions of this research will provide an important contribution in developing an understanding of the complexity of language change in the digital era.

reading and recording relevant information, and managing research materials (Zed, 2014).

In the context of this research, the data used comes from secondary data sources. Secondary data is a data source that does not provide data directly to data collectors (Sugiyono, 2015). Secondary data refers to data sources that are not obtained by researchers directly, but are the result of notes or documents such as books, literature, and

materials from various media, websites, or other sources that support the aspects of the research being studied. The collected data was analyzed using content analysis techniques, namely the author's analysis of the meaning of

Results and Discussion

The interaction between language and culture has been a major focus in various disciplines, especially in the fields of sociolinguistics and anthropology. Especially in the fields of sociolinguistics and anthropology. In this context, language is not only understood as a means of communication, but also as a cultural mirror that reflects the values, norms and history of a community. This concept underpins the understanding that language not only influences interpersonal communication, but also influences the way individuals perceive the world and respond to it. Hence this section discusses the data findings and research results regarding the problem: Minangkabau language as cultural identity and the influence of the Digital Age on Minangkabau language and culture.

Basic Concepts of the Minang Language

Language is the main means that humans use in communication to convey their thoughts, desires, opinions and feelings (Revita & Fathiya, 2020). The form of language used by individuals is engineered according to the background and personal interests of the speaker (Saifudin, 2019), and various forms of language delivery adapted to the situational context experienced by speakers in interactions with conversation partners (Ardiati et al., 2020). Freedom to express opinions and use language is a right that every individual desires (Aldiansyah et al., 2024). Each language has unique characteristics, and the function of language is reflected in people's ability to remember and use language naturally (Latifah et al., 2023).

The shift from a regional language to a national or international language has a significant impact on the identity and culture of a community. Language is a crucial element in cultural identity, and changes in language use can influence how communities identify themselves as well as how they are perceived by others (Batrisyia et al., 2024). This is also in line with the Minangkabau people who have a unique language and culture compared to

expressions, writings, and/or opinions of experts in their scientific work (Fitrah & others, 2018).

various other ethnic groups in Indonesia. In terms of language, they use a language known as Minangkabau in everyday life. According to Rahmat and Maryelliwati, Minangkabau language is a regional language that developed in the West Sumatra region (Rahmat et al., 2021). Koentjaraningrat explains that the Minangkabau people speak the same language, known as Minangkabau language, a variant closely related to Malay, although it is often considered a dialect (Arwemi et al., 2023).

Minangkabau language is one of the regional languages in Indonesia with more than 4.8 million speakers (Eberhard, et.al, 2022). The native speakers of this language come from West Sumatra. However, because Minangkabau culture tends to move, the use of the Minangkabau language has also spread to various other regions in Indonesia such as Jambi, Riau, North Sumatra, and even to other countries such as Malaysia.

In West Sumatra, Minangkabau is the mother tongue used by the local community. This language tends to be used by adults and the elderly. The younger generation uses Indonesian more often in daily communication. In terms of language, educated Minangkabau women began to master Dutch in addition to Minangkabau and Malay (Velini & Suryadi, 2023). Mastery of the Dutch language allows them access to Western literature, knowledge and culture. Despite this, they still use the Minangkabau language in everyday life and in local cultural contexts, thus creating an identity that combines traditional and modern elements. (Ilma & Andoni, 2024).

The sociolinguistic function of the Minang language plays a vital role in understanding how language is used in the social and cultural context of Minangkabau society. Sociolinguistics links language to social factors such as cultural background and social status, which helps in understanding the use of language in various situations such as traditional ceremonies, everyday conversations, and formal communication. Apart from that, sociolinguistic studies also identify the variety of languages that exist in

Minangkabau society, including formal, informal, and various varieties used in various social layers. In addition, sociolinguistics examines how language is used in social interactions, such as in discussions and formal communication, as well as studying the role of language as a tool of identity and culture in

Minang Language as Cultural Identity

Identity is the identity that a person has from birth and continues to develop through the process of daily interaction in his life, forming a special pattern that defines him. Meanwhile, culture is a way of life that is developed and owned by a person or group of people and passed down from generation to generation (Nisak et al., 2022). Therefore, cultural identity refers to the special characteristics inherent in a culture, which differentiate it from other cultures. In a cross-cultural context, everyone should understand the differences between each culture.

Hall states that there are two approaches to thinking about cultural identity. First, by placing cultural identity in a specific cultural context. Second, by recognizing similarities and differences in cultural identity. In this second approach, Hall also revealed that cultural identity is related to how a person shapes himself as a process of becoming and existence (Nisak et al., 2022).

In communication practice, cultural identity not only expresses meaning about a person's personality, but also becomes a characteristic of the underlying culture. This characteristic allows a person to recognize the origins of individuals he knows. In Indonesian culture, there are two types of traditions, namely oral traditions and written traditions. The difference lies in the use of the senses, where the oral tradition relies on hearing while the written tradition relies on sight. Written traditions can be found in the form of manuscripts and inscriptions, while oral traditions have many forms such as fairy tales, pantuns, certain rituals and traditional ceremonies. In West Sumatra, *randai* and eating *bajamba* are two examples of oral traditions of the local community. Apart from that, traditional games are also part of an oral tradition that is passed down from generation to generation. Through local traditions and traditional games, language maintenance can

Minangkabau society. Lastly, sociolinguistics also examines the influence of social factors such as status and cultural background on language use, all of which contribute to understanding the complexity of language and culture within Minangkabau society. (Rifalda et al., 2022).

be done to prevent the shift of the Minangkabau language (Velini & Suryadi, 2023).

According to Zainuddin, Minangkabau culture is often associated with Minangkabau customs because this tradition was previously passed on orally from generation to generation. Rahmat and Maryelliwati revealed that the Minangkabau people identify their territory as the Minangkabau area which includes Mount Marapi, Mount Sago, Mount Singgalang, Mount Talang, Mount Kerinci and Mount Pasaman. The boundaries of the Minangkabau region are estimated to be to the north of Sikilaing Air Bangis, to the east of Taratak Air Hitam (Indragiri), to the south of Sapucuk Jambi Sambilan Lurah, and to the west of Bengkulu and Indopuro (Rahmat et al., 2021).

The philosophy of the Minangkabau people is stated in Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 17 of 2022 concerning West Sumatra Province, especially in Article 5C. The article underlines that Minangkabau customs and culture are rooted in the values of the traditional philosophy of *Basandi Syara'*, *Syara' Basandi Kitabullah*, in accordance with the customary rules that apply in *Nagari*, and include rich history, language, arts, traditional villages/*nagari*, rituals, ceremonies, customs, cultural sites and local wisdom that reflect the religious character and grandeur of the customs of the people of West Sumatra. The implementation of the traditional philosophy of *basandi syara'*, *syara' basandi kitabullah* is carried out by adhering firmly to the values of *Pancasila*. The *basandi syara'* custom, *syara' basandi kitabullah* emphasizes that the Minangkabau people follow the *Shari'a* based on the Book of *Bullah*, namely the *Al-Qur'an*. Thus, the local wisdom and customs of the Minangkabau people are rooted in the *Koran*, making it the main basis for their manners and behavior.

In this context, language is understood not only as a means of communication, but also as a cultural mirror that reflects the values, norms and history of a community. This concept emphasizes that language not only influences interpersonal communication, but also the way individuals perceive and respond to the world around them. So it can be concluded that Minangkabau language is not just a means of communication, but also marks the rich culture and identity of the Minangkabau people in West Sumatra. As the mother tongue of most of the local population, this language is a reflection of the values, traditions and norms passed down from

generation to generation. The Minangkabau language is not only used in everyday life, but also in various traditional ceremonies and religious rituals, showing the depth and significance of the culture contained in it. In the era of globalization, the Minangkabau language faces preservation challenges amidst shifts in language use among the younger generation and external cultural influences. Nevertheless, the Minangkabau community, both in their homeland and in the diaspora, continues to strive to maintain and promote this language as one of the guardians of their unique and valuable cultural identity.

The Influence of the Digital Era

The influence of the digital era on Minangkabau language and culture is significant phenomenon in social development and communication in society. The digital era has had a significant impact on the way language is used, maintained and developed in the Minangkabau cultural context. The following are several aspects that influence Minangkabau language and culture in the digital era:

1. International Language Spread
International languages such as English have spread widely in various aspects of global life. The use of this language is not only limited to international communication, but also extends to important sectors such as education, business and media. In Indonesia, the influence of Indonesian as the national language also has an impact on the use of ethnic languages among the younger generation. This situation threatens the preservation of ethnic languages because the younger generation is more likely to choose more commonly used languages to follow global trends.
2. Influence of media and technology
Mass media and digital technology have a crucial role in spreading global culture to various corners of the world, including ethnic communities in Indonesia. Television programs, films, music and social media platforms have introduced new cultural values that are often universal. Younger generations are intensively exposed to these global contents, which can change their interest

and participation in local ethnic cultures and languages. The impact could be a decrease in the use of ethnic languages in their daily lives.

3. Urbanization and Mobility

The process of rapid urbanization and high population mobility have a significant impact on the dynamics of ethnic languages and cultures. When members of ethnic minority communities migrate to big cities in search of work or education, they often face pressure to adapt to the dominant majority culture there. As a result, the use of ethnic languages may decline, and even traditional cultural practices and rituals in their areas of origin may also be threatened with decline.

4. Changes in language style

The digital era has influenced the language styles used in everyday communication. The use of abbreviations, slang, or mixed language in the Minangkabau language can be characteristic in a digital context to express dynamic cultural identity.

The strategies for preserving Minangkabau language and culture, proposed by a study (Sarjito, 2024), can be carried out by:

a. Culture-based education

One of the main strategies is to integrate ethnic languages and cultures into the formal education curriculum. Bilingual education programs can be expanded and improved, where children are taught to communicate in their ethnic language from an early age. Ethnic language

learning can also be integrated into subjects such as history and art, to increase understanding and appreciation of the richness of local culture.

- b. Utilization of digital technology
Digital technology can be used to document and promote ethnic languages and cultures. Social media platforms, websites and mobile applications can be used to share folklore, traditional music, dances and traditional ceremonies from various ethnic communities in Indonesia. These efforts not only expand the influence of ethnic culture, but also help in maintaining the use of the language among the younger generation who are more accustomed to digital technology.
- c. Government Support
The government has a very important role in supporting efforts to preserve ethnic

This research reveals that language plays an important role in shaping a community's cultural identity, and that switching from an ethnic language to a national or international language can have a significant impact on that identity. This finding is in line with Putri's research which shows that ethnic languages are crucial in maintaining cultural identity and social cohesion among minority communities. Language is used in various cultural contexts, such as traditional rituals, religious ceremonies, as well as in daily life to maintain cultural values (Putri et al., 2021).

In addition, Aulia's research also found that the use of regional languages greatly influenced respondents' social identity in a multicultural society. Therefore, the interaction between language and culture in ethnic minority communities in Indonesia is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, which requires the support of the government and educational institutions for sustainable preservation (Aulia & Rachman, 2024).

This research also explains that the digital era has a major impact on Minangkabau language and culture. The development of technology and the spread of international languages such as English through mass media are changing the dynamics of language use, maintenance and development in Minangkabau communities. Rapid urbanization and population mobility also

languages and cultures through public policy. This includes the allocation of funds for education and cultural festivals, formal recognition of ethnic languages as part of the national cultural heritage, and the promotion and protection of traditional cultural practices.

- d. Community Participation
Local communities need to be actively involved in efforts to preserve ethnic languages and cultures. This includes holding cultural events, supporting the teaching of ethnic languages at home and at school, and encouraging the use of ethnic languages in everyday life. Active involvement of local communities is an important factor in maintaining Indonesia's rich cultural diversity.

affect changes in ethnic language use, with the challenge of adapting to the majority culture in urban areas that can threaten the survival of ethnic languages and traditional cultural practices. So with this, efforts are needed to maintain the Minangkabau language as a symbol of cultural identity that is upheld, not only echoing at the local level but also on a global stage that is increasingly interconnected in the digital era. This is also supported by Sania Adawiah's research that social and technological changes have brought about a shift in the use of Javanese, with the younger generation tending to turn to Indonesian or foreign languages in daily communication. Factors such as education level, age, social stratification and family attitudes affect language use preferences in society. In the face of these changes, Javanese language development efforts become very important to maintain local language and culture in this era of globalization (sania adawiah et al., 2024). These two studies both discuss language shifts in the digital era and explain efforts to preserve language and culture. However, the difference between these two studies is that they only discuss different languages in Indonesia, this study discusses the Minang language as a cultural identity, while Sania Adawiah's research discusses the dynamics of diglossia in Javanese-speaking communities.

Conclusion

Language is the main tool for communicating and expressing various individual thoughts, desires, opinions and feelings. Each language is formed uniquely according to the background and personal interests of its speakers, and is influenced by the situational context in social interactions. Freedom to use language is a fundamental right of every individual, while society develops and uses language naturally in everyday life.

The shift from an ethnic language to a national or international language has a significant impact on the cultural identity of a community. Language is not only a means of communication, but also a crucial element in forming and maintaining cultural identity, and influences how a community recognizes and is perceived by the outside world. In Indonesia, which has various ethnic groups, the Minangkabau language plays a special role as a unique regional language and is passed down from one generation to the next in West Sumatra.

The digital era has had a big impact on Minangkabau language and culture. Technological developments and the spread of international languages such as English through mass media are changing the dynamics of language use, maintenance and development in the Minangkabau community.

Rapid urbanization and population mobility are also influencing changes in the use of ethnic languages, with the challenge of adapting to majority culture in urban areas threatening the continuity of ethnic languages and traditional cultural practices.

The findings of this study provide some implications for local culture-based curriculum development. The younger generation should not only learn national and international languages, but also understand and appreciate their ethnic languages and cultures. This can be achieved by integrating local cultural content in the school curriculum. In addition, digital technology should be utilized for the documentation and promotion of Minangkabau language and culture. Digital platforms such as social media, mobile applications and websites can be used to archive Minangkabau folklore, traditions and language, and disseminate the information to a wider audience. The research also explains that it is important to preserve and enrich cultural heritage. Community initiatives such as the Tabuik cultural festival, Minangkabau language training, and traditional arts activities can strengthen cultural identity and build pride in ancestral heritage.

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