SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGES: A FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE CHANGE OF THE PATTERNS OF THE USE OFNUMERAL CLASSIFIER IN CONTEMPORARY MINANGKABAU

Oleh: Rina Marnita AS

Abstract

Bahasa Minang, sebagaimana umumnya bahasa-bahasa Austronesia, adalah bahasa yang memiliki sistem *kata pengolong* atau *kata bantu bilangan* yang lazim disebut dalam ilmu tipologi bahasa sebagai *classifier*. Dalam bahasa Minang, *classifier* ini biasanya selalu dipakai dalam frase numeratif. Menghilangkan unsur classifier ini dalam frase numeratif akan menghasilkan ekspresi bahasa Minang yang tidak gramatikal. Morfem *urang* pada frase *duo urang anak* dan *ikua* pada frase *sikua kabau* adalah contoh *classifier* dalam bahasa Minang.

Perbahan sosial budaya, ternyata telah ikut mempengaruhi perubahan yang terjadi dalam pola pemakain *classifier* dalam bahasa Minang dewasa ini. Dibandingkan dengan generasi yang lebih tua, tingkat pengetahuan serta frekuensi pemakaian *classifier* oleh generasi muda dalam bahasa mereka sehari-hari ternyata lebih rendah. Pengenalan teknologi baru yang menggantikan teknologi lama dan penyederhanaan bentuk serta pengabaian praktek-praktek budaya dalam masyarakat Minang menyebabkan hilangnya sejumlah kata dan ekspresi yang berhubungan dengan teknologi dan tradisi lama tersebut.

Introduction

Classifiers are generally considered as a reflection of human mind and cognition (see Lakoff, 1986). They reflect how human beings view the world and categorize objects. Some languages categorize human and animal as one class as opposed to inanimate objects, while others treat humans separately from animals and inanimate objects. In languages with classifier system, such as most of languages in Asia, there can be a classifier for humans, a general classifier for animals or just general animate classes.

The change of patterns of use of classifier depending on the relative age of the speakers is exhibited by most languages with classifier system such as Chinese (see Erbaugh, 1986) and Thai (see Conkin, 1981; Adams and Conklin, 1986). This most often involves a reduction in the inventory of classifiers. Erbaugh's quantitative study (1986: 407) of the use of classi-

fiers by contemporary Chinese adult shows that even though according to Chinese grammar teachers classifier uses are obligatory and invariable, in reality they are not constant. Erbaugh finds that specially used classifiers are rarely uses, while the general one is "hundreds of times more often". In modern Japanese, (Onishi, personal communication), younger speakers tend to use fewer classifiers than older and more traditional speakers.

The pattern of classifier use in bahasa Indonesia is also undergoing changes. According to Conklin (1981), after the nationalization of Malay as the Indonesian national language, the number of classifiers which were in common use were reduced. In contemporary Indonesian, there are only three common and general classifiers used. They are: *orang*, classifier for humans, *ekor*, for animals, and *buah*, for inanimate. However, their use in colloquial speech is still often avoided by most speakers (Mac Donald and Darjowidjoyo, 1967).

The same phenomenon is found in the patterns of use of classifier in contemporary Minangkabau. A sociolinguistic research conducted in Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota indicated that there are significant differences in the patterns of classifier use between young speakers with middle-age and old speakers. Different group of speakers show a different number and variety of classifier, different degree of familiarity with classifiers as well as different frequency of use of classifier used in their daily speech. The most significant changes are shown by young speakers' classifiers. It appears that, besides bilingualism and linguistic interference, socio-cultural changes also contribute to the changes.

2. Numeral Classifiers in Minangkabau

The term ' numeral classifier' is commonly recognized as lexeme or morpheme which co-occurs with numerals. There have been various terms used to refer to this category. Conklin (1981) mentions that in Thai it is called 'designatory particles' by Campbell and 'numeral designations' by Pallecoix. In Austronesian it is called 'hoofdtelwoorden' by Adriani and 'designatory particles' by Malinowski (in Conklin, 1981). In Indenesian, it is called *kata penggolong* by Kridalaksana (1986) and *kata bantu bilangan* by Nio (1981).

Some linguists such as Becker (1975) and T'sou (1973) use the term 'numeral classifier' more restrictedly for lexemes semantically functioning to individuate the noun being counted. Here, the term numeral classifier is not used for measure words such as 'litter or metre'. However, some other linguists, such as Burling (1965) and Nguyen Din Hoa (1957), use the term to refer to all lexical items that occur in the classifier slot or which are adjacent to numerals. It means that measure such as' litre' are included.

A further subdivision of numeral classifier is into *sortal* and *mensural classifiers* (Craig, 1994, forthcoming). *Mensural classifiers* are those used for measuring units and they classify bith mass and count nouns. They are

familiar to everyone including speakers of noun-classifier languages such as English, because they correspond to measure term such as 'a pound of tobacco' or 'a slice of bread'. *Sortal classifiers*, on the other hand, function to specify units, not quantity. They express the inherent semantic characteristic of the noun they occur with. They do not have a direct equivalent in non-classifier languages.

Following Craig's definition of classifier (1994), it is found that there are about a hundred of numeral classifier in Minangkabau language. They can be distinguished into sortal and mensural types. Classifier such as *urang* , literally means person or human being, as in *duo urang anak* 'two Cl. Childs'; *ikua* 'lit: tail' as in *tigo ikua ikan* 'three Cl. Fishes'; *tangkai* 'lit: stalk' as in *satangkai bungo* 'a Cl. Flower'; *alai* as in *duo alai kain* 'two Cl. Cloth', are of sortal types. Classifiers such as *kabek* 'lit: tie up' as in *sakabek bungo* corresponding to 'a bunch of flower'; *jarek* 'lit: to tie' as in *sajarek karambie* 'a Cl. Coconuts'; *jangka* 'lit: span' as in *jarak sajangka* corresponding to 'a soan of; *ungguak* 'lit: to heap' as in *saungguak kasiak* which corresponds to 'a heap of sand'; *palik* as in *sapalik samba lado* corresponding to a bit of chili sauce', are of mensural types. However, the semantic distinction between the two types is gradual and often overlapped.

In Minangkabau, animate/inanimate are the basic semantic parameters underlying the categorization of classifiers. Animates is distinguished into humans and animals. Each class has different classifier which can not be used interchangeably: human being (as well as holly spirit or creatures such as angels) take classifier *urang* while animals take classifier *ikua*. Shape is the most prominent semantic parameter in classifying the inanimates. It centres around flat/thin or sheet-like; long/round or stick-like; circular; and granular. Small roundish objects such as seeds and grains are classified by *incek* or *buah*, while long, cylindrical or stick-like objects such as log and pencil are classified by classifier *batang*. Other objects are caregorized in terms of function and substance or material of the classified objects. Classifiers *lareh* as in *salareh sanapan; bilah* as in *sabilah pisau* and *kaki* as in *payuang sakaki* are of function-based type, while *kalipak* as in *duo kalipak bungo; rumpun* in *sarumpun batuang;* and *cariak* as in *sacariak karateh* are of material-based classifiers. Some classifiers whose semantic parameter is not yet clear, such as *piriang* 'lit: plate' as in *sapiriang sawah*, are categorized as specific classifiers. However, some classifier for paper and cloth, and *butia* 'lit: grain', classifier for small round organic and inorganic objects, can be placed into more than one categories due to their overlapping semantic parameters (see Marnita, 1996, for detail).

3. Data, Methods, and Linguistic Consultants

The data was obtained from a sociolinguistic research conducted in Padang Japang, Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota on April 1995. The methods used in the study are quantitative and qualitative. The data was collected

using two different techniques: elicitation and questionnaires. elicitation was used to obtain types and number of classifiers used by three different age-groups of speakers, and to know how they use classifiers with particular objects. Questionnaires were required to obtain quantitative data on the use of classifiers by young speakers in terms of varieties of classifier used, familiarity with classifiers, and frequency of use of classifiers.

There were 6 linguistic consultants of three different age groups in elicitation technique, ie: two old speakers (50 years old-up), two middle-ages (30-49). There were 20 young speakers involved in filling questionnaire. They are all students whose age between 18-20 years old.

4. Patterns of Classifier Use

Data obtained showed that there are significant differences in the patterns of use of classifier by each generation. Different group of speakers show a different number and varieties of classifier, different degree of familiarity with classifiers as well as different frequency of use of classifier used in their daily speech. There are significant differences in the pattern of classifier use between young and old speakers. They are discussed in detail below.

4.1 Number and varieties of Classifiers Used

Numbers of classifiers used. There is a reduction both in number and in variety of classifiers used by young speakers compared to those by middle-age and old speakers. Of 109 classifier listed, only 77 classifiers or about 70% of traditional Minangkabau classifiers reflected in literature are recognized and used by old speakers. There are two possible reasons for this. First, it is probable that the classifiers which are not recognized or used by old speakers are those which come from a different dialect or adopted from Malay/Bahasa Indonesia, such as *hulu* and *gagang*, classifiers for knifes. Secondly, it is possible that this indicates a reduction in number and variety of classifiers used by old speakers compared to those used in the previous generation in Lima Puluh Kota or in Minangkabau, in general.

Middle-age speakers recognized and used 55 of classifiers listed or 71% of classifiers used by old speakers in my data. It appear that middle-age speakers use less classifier than old speaker. However, they recognize and use more classifier than younger speakers.

A more significant reduction of number of classifier used in shown by young speakers. Of 77 classifier used by old speakers, only 27 classifiers or classifiers or 36% are still frequently used by young speakers. The difference between the number of classifier used by young speakers and middle-age speakers is also significant. Young speakers only used about 49% of classifiers used by middle-age speakers.

Varieties of Classifiers Used. Old speakers knowledge on Minangkabau classifiers is still high. Data show that they used a wide range of classifiers. There is still a high specification in the use of classifiers and a clear seman-

tic preference for choice of classifier. For example, specific classifier such as function-based classifiers (e.g. *pucuak* 'lit: shoot' for letter and long weapon) are still used for the particular objects, and shape-based classifiers are still used distinctively for a particular object of particular shape (e.g. there is a distinct use between *alai*, classifier for flat, thin objects such as paper and cloth, and *lempeang* classifier for flat pieces such as gold, tobacco, and dirt).

Middle-age speakers' knowledge on Minangkabau classifiers has reduced compared to the old ones. This can be seen from the range of varieties of classifier they know and use. Shape-based and material make up classifier are still highly used, but function-based classifiers and specific classifiers are not. However, most of mensural classifiers is still frequently used.

In general, young speakers still recognize a wide range of classifiers. Degree of their familiarity with a given classifier is still high. This is displayed in the answers given in the questionnaires. However, the frequency of classifier use are lower than that of the old middle speakers, and the range of choice of classifiers are narrower. This can be seen from their degree of classifier use, choice of classifier for a particular object, and choice of objects for a particular classifier. This id discussed in detail in section 6.4 below.

4.2 Familiarity with Classifiers

Compared to old speakers's knowledge on classifiers, middle-age speakers' knowledge shows a decrease. There are some classifiers that they are not really familiar with, for instance: *cariak* 'lit: piece' for objects that can be broken up or divided such as paper and cloth; *kaki* 'lit: foot/leg' for umbrella; *rawan* 'lit: cartiledge' for fish nets, and *mato* 'lit: eye' for nets and things with core. They mostly recognize them as nouns than as classifiers (all of these classifier are derived from nouns). There are also classifiers which are familiar to them, but are signaled as very rarely used as *bilah* 'lit: blade' for knife and sword; *pucuak* 'lit: shoot/young leaf' for letters and long weapons; and *sosok* (no meaning as a free noun), classifier for shadows but not inanimate shadows.

In general, most of young speakers are familiar with most classifiers listed in questionaires. Of 109 classifiers listed, about 75 % of them are recognized. However, most of young speakers could not list correctly the name of object that can be used with most of the classifiers listed. This indicates that they are familiar with most of the classifiers but they do not use them in their daily speech. This is discussed in detail in section 4.4 below.

4.4 Young Speakers' Classifiers

Young speakers's knowledge of classifiers varies from one speaker to another and from one classifier to another. When a young speaker indicates that they are familiar with a classifier it does not necessarily mean that they

will actually use it. There are classifiers which are familiar to them but are almost never used. For example, most of the young speakers said that they are familiar with *cariak* 'lit: piece' classifier for objects that can be torn such as paper and cloth, but they said do not often use it for paper or cloth.

Young people tend to use classifiers with a broad semantic range on shape or arrangement instead of more specific classifiers. Mensural and sortal are also often used interchangeably. This can be seen from type of classifier they frequently used and from their choice of classifier for a given abject.

These patterns of classifier use result in category shifts and mergers in young speakers' classifiers. Animacy remains as a distinctive and outonomous semantic base, but specifically used classifiers which are often found in literary work, such as *rantang*, classifier for distance of a journey, *sosok*, classifier for animate shadow, tend to disappeared and replaced by those of more salient semantic base.

Some shape-based classifiers, especially those for objects with unclear or less salient shape, are rarely used and tend to disappear. They have been gradually replaced by classifiers for objects with salient shape. For example, *cariak*, for letter and document is often substituted by alai, classifier for flat, thin objects, and *uteh*, for a short piece of ropes or strings, is often substituted by *alai*, or by loan measure word *meter* 'meter'.

Classifiers *rawan* and *mato*, for fish net, *lareh*, classifier for long weapon and *kaki*, classifier for umbrella are very rarely used, even by old speakers. Classifier *pucuak* 'lit: shoot', traditionally classifier for tapering objects such as letters and long weapons, is still very familiar to the young speakers, however, it is never used with long weapons and rarely with letters; *buah* is more preferably used with these objects.

Mensural classifiers whose semantic is based on size are more likely to disappeared and be replaced by those based on shape/arrangement, quantifier or loan measures. This mainly happens to classifier for small amount or piece such as *lilia*, classifier for small mount of oil, *palik*, classifier for creamy things, *binjek*, classifier for objects taken by tips of fingers, and *pipia* classifier for a small piece of solid things. Classifiers used for lrngth such as *dapo* 'fathom' and *eto* 'cubit' are hardly used and are gradually replaced by standard loan measures such as centimeter or meter begin to replace them. Similarly, classifier *kapalo* 'lit: head', classifier used to refer to distance between racing horses, are known by most of the young speakers, but it is very rarely used.

5. Factors Contributing to the Changes

It is very likely that the change in the patterns of classifier use in contemporary Minangkabau is partly caused by socio-cultural changes taking place in Kabupaten Lima Puluh Kota or Minangkabau in general. As it is noted by Lakoff, classifiers are extremely sensitive to socio-cultural changes. In the case of Minangkabau, at least, there are two socio-cultural factors

contributing to the changes, namely the introduction of new technology and the simplification and obsolescence of some cultural practices.

5.1 Introduction to New Technology

Introduction to new technology, especially ones originated from outside the society, in fishing, planting rice and crops, processing and cooking food, selling and buying products, and so on result in the loss of tradisional terms, tools or equipment related to the old technology. For instance, the disappearance of *mato*, classifier for fishhook and fish net, and *rawan* classifier for fish net may be related to the introduction of new technology in fishing technique.

The disappearance of some traditional equipment, due to the use of new technology, may also play an important role in the collapsing of the Minangkabau classificatory categories. For instance, young people's unfamiliarity with classifier *lareh*, classifier for *sumpik* 'blowing bamboo weapons' and long guns, might be caused by the unfamiliarity to the objects, especially *sumpik*, which are no longer used in the society as the way they were used in the past or during the war times.

Similarly, the increasing use of standard loan measure terms such as metre, litre, and kilogram, decreases the use of not only traditional measure terms such as *tapak* 'lit: leg' and *kapalo* 'lit: head' but also unit of counting such as *uteh*, for piece of thread or rope, *tuka*, classifier for big rolled rope and thread and *baban*, classifier referring to weight.

5.2 Simplification and Elimination of Some Traditional Practices

The loss of some traditional in a society often starts from a simplification in conducting traditional events or ceremonies. In Minangkabau, some complicated and long traditional ceremonies, such as wedding, harvesting, and moving in to a new house, are often simplified, leaving out parts considered not really significant. For example, chewing beetle nut is now often omitted in wedding ceremonies. Offering to beetle nut as a way of inviting relatives coming to the wedding are not very common now. Chewing beetle nut is often replaced by smoking cigarette. Its function has gradually been replaced by invitation cards, except for certain respective close relatives who can not be invited using card. Similarly, chewing beetle nut as a way of welcoming quests coming to a wedding party is also often replaced by smoking cigarettes.

Some other traditional practices such as harvesting rice grains together with the whole family members and relatives within the same clan, while celebrating the success of the harvest, has also almost disappeared. Most Minangkabau farmers now tend to do the harvesting by themselves for the sake of efficiency, human resources and so on.

Abandoning the practice of some traditional ceremonies results in disappearance of objects, expression and words related to the events. The degree of young speakers' knowledge and frequency of use of classifiers re-

lated to chewing activity such as *cuie*, as in *sacuie sadah, cabiek*, as in *sirieh sacabiek*, might be related to lack of familiarity to the activity.

Moreover, young speakers' lack of knowledge of traditional arts such as *pantun* 'traditional poem' and *kaba* 'sung narrative poem' also contribute to the disappearance of certain Minangkabau classifiers. Most of specially used classifiers, such as *kaki* 'lit: to foot', classifier for umbrella, *mato* 'lit: eye', classifier for net fish and thing in its form and *rantang* 'lit: to stretch', classifier for journey, are primarily used in literary works. Moreover, the tendency of younger people to move to cities, whether for studying or earning money, contributes to the obsolescence of some traditional practices. Since performance of these traditional arts has decrease. Thus, we predict that the reduction of patterns of classifier use would be more drastic in cities than in villages.

Conclusion

Socio-cultural changes are very likely to be one of the main factors contributing to the changes of the patterns of classifier use in contemporary Minangkabau, especially in Lima Puluh Kota. Introduction to new technology which replaces the old ones, and simplification and obsolescence of some cultural practices result in the disappearance of some words and expression relating to the old technology and tradition.

These socio-cultural changes, then, have affected people's knowledge, especially young people's, of their own traditional practices and the culture. Current unfamiliarity with certain traditionally used classifiers are very likely related to obsolescence of knowledge of the traditional practices and the culture. The most significant changes in the patterns of classifier use are shown by young people' use of classifiers. Young people use fewer classifiers and more limited range of varieties of classifiers than old people. Their ability to use and choose the appropriate classifier now highly depends on their individual lexical competence.

My conclusions are based on a synchronic in-depth study of the use of classifiers by three generations of speakers of dialect Lima Puluh Kota. We predict that the same phenomena are also happening today in other areas and other dialects of Minangkabau. We are planning to undertake a more deep and comprehensive sociolinguistic study in the near future.

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