

## **State of Linguistic Research in (South) Sumatera**

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Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa (Agency for Language Development and Fostering) (formerly Pusat Bahasa/Center for Language) is an institution under the Ministry of Education and Culture which handles Indonesian and the regions linguistic and literary problems in Indonesia. The agency oversees 33 language centers and offices in all provinces in Indonesia. In Sumatera, there are five language centers (balai bahasa), namely Balai Bahasa Aceh, Medan, Pekanbaru, Padang, and Palembang, as well as five language offices, namely Kantor Bahasa Jambi, Lampung, Kepulauan Riau, Bengkulu, and Bangka-Bellitung.

Related to the problems of languages in Indonesia, the Agency for Language Development and Fostering from 1991 to 2008 administered research on the language mapping throughout Indonesia. This study resulted 442 languages spread over eight regions in Indonesia. These eight areas meant include (1) Sumatera: 26 languages, (2) Java and Bali: 10 languages, (3) Borneo: 55 languages, (4) Sulawesi: 58 languages, (5) West Nusa Tenggara: 11 languages, (6) East Nusa Tenggara: 49 languages, (7) Maluku: 51 languages, and (8) Papua: 207 languages.

From the 26 languages that exist in Sumatera, there are some language that are not originally from Sumatera region. Some of these are Javanese, Bugis, Sundanese, Balinese, etc. Each of these languages exists in some provinces in the Sumatera Island. Overall, it can be reported here that in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) was found seven languages. Those are Acehnese (3.5 million speakers), Batak (51 000 speakers), Devayan (60,000 speakers), Gayo (450,000 speakers), Java (80,000 speakers), Minang (60,000 speakers), and Sigulai (23,000 speakers). From the seven languages in NAD, three of them came from outside the Aceh province; viz. Javanese, Batak (North Sumatera), and Minang (West Sumatera).

There are four languages in the North Sumatera Province,, namely Batak, Malay, Javanese, and Nias. Batak and Nias languages are the native languages developing in the North Sumatera Province. There has been no information about the speakers who use these languages in North Sumatera, except those reported by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). Even, SIL divides Batak language into three, namely Batak Alas-Kluet (195.000 speakers), Batak Angkola (750.000 speakers), Batak Dairi (1,200,000 speakers), Batak Karo (600 000 speakers), Batak Mandailing (1,100,000 spekaers), Batak Simalungun

(1,200,000 speakers), and Batak Toba (2,000,000 speakers). While the language of Nias, according to the report of SIL, is supported by 770,000 speakers.

There are nine languages in the Riau (and Kepulauan Riau) Province, namely Malay-Mainland, Malay-Islands, Mandailing, Banjar, Javanese, Bugis Tekulai, Bugis Sei Sembesi, Duano/Tribes of the Sea (Suku Laut) (SIL calls it with Duano, and the speakers are around 15,000 people), and Talang Mamak. There are four languages in the West Sumatra Province, namely Minangkabau language (5,530,000 speakers), Mandailing, Mentawai (SIL, 58.000 speakers), and Javanese. In Jambi Province was found Bajau Tungkal Satu language, Banjar, Bugis, Javanese, Kerinci (SIL, 260 000 speakers), Malay, and Minangkabau. Languages found in Bengkulu Province are Bengkulu, Enggano (SIL, 1.500 speakers), and Rejang (SIL, 350 000 speakers).

There are six languages in Lampung, namely Lampung-Komering, Basemah-Semende-Ogan-Pegagan, Java-Jaseng, Sundanese, Balinese, and Bugis. In South Sumatra was found seven languages, namely Pedamaran language (6.000 speakers), Java (3,330 speakers, just across the South Sumatra), Kayuagung (53.415 speakers), Komering, Lematang (34.000 speakers), Malay, and Ogan (300,000 speakers). Pedamaran language in this study was only supported by one locus (in the village Pedamaran 5, District Pedamaran, Komering Ogan Ilir regency). In the latest edition of the SIL report, Kayuagung language was not found anymore. This language becomes a dialect of the Komering language supported by 470.000 speakers. In that report, Lematang and Ogan (and Malay, of course) languages come into the Malay-Central and supported by about 2,350,000 speakers.

The South Sumatra Province (after Bangka-Belitung Province separated from), consists of 10 regencies; viz. the Regency of Ogan Komering Ulu (capital Baturaja), Ogan Komering Ulu East (capital Martapura), South Ogan Komering Ulu (capital Muara Dua), Ogan Ilir Komering (capital Kayuagung), Muara Enim (capital Muara Enim), Lahat (capital Lahat), Musi Rawas (capital Lubuk Linggau), Banyuasin (capital Sekayu), Banyuasin (capital Pangkalan Balai), Ogan Ilir (capital Indralaya) and four cities; viz. the City of Palembang (capital Palembang), Prabumulih (capital Prabumulih), Pagaralam (capital Pagaralam), and Lubuk Linggau (capital Lubuk Linggau). South Sumatera Province consists of 151 districts, 2.421 villages (desa), and 312 villages (kelurahan). The dialectological research in South Sumatra involved 117 locus of observations, 84 of them were the data collected by the Centre for Language (Jakarta) in 2000. These data collection was conducted when Bangka-Belitung Province was still joined with the South Sumatra Province (which separated away in 2003). From these data collection, it was resulted 38 recognition languages (isolek). In 2006-2007 it was

conducted the data collection 33 locus of observation. The data collection was limited in the South Sumatra Province. From these new locus of observations it was resulted 14 recognition languages (isolek). Thus, from the 117 locus of observations, it was found 52 recognition languages. Based on the dialectometrical calculation, from the 52 recognition languages it was found 7 languages in South Sumatra (Bangka-Billiton), namely Pedamaran language, Javanese, Malay, Kayuagung, Komerling, Lematang, and Ogan.

It is, indeed, not many other studies about linguistic conducted. Although Lauder (2008) mentioned several studies about vernacular conducted in the Sumatra Island and did not include the research on regional languages in South Sumatra, the author has found several studies conducted by the Sriwijaya University of Palembang about the *Sindang language* (SIL language called Col), *Structure and Grammar of Kayuagung Language*, *Structure and Grammar of Komerling Language*, as well as some research on oral literature from several language (dialects) in South Sumatra.

Further research, however, related to the dialectology that have ever been conducted by the Balai Bahasa Palembang is the *Dialek Konservatif: Perbandingan Isolek Komerling dan Lampung*, *Analisis Morfologis Kata Kerja (Verba) Aktif Bahasa Kayuagung*, *Permutasi Isolek-Isolek di Kabupaten Lahat*, *Pemetaan Bahasa di Lahat dan Pagaralam*, *Pemetaan Bahasa di Ogan Komerling Ilir*, and so on.

Although the dialectology research conducted by the Agency for Language Development and Fostering has ended, but this all is not yet fully completed. To some extent -especially in the South Sumatra- it is still very necessary to review the research done. Related to this point, the fundamental issue towards the vernacular languages research in South Sumatra is about a more comprehensive study towards these languages. A more comprehensive study meant in this point is the unification of perception on the theory and methodology to be used, including the analysis, as well as complementing the data collected, including the actual data from speakers of the language in question.