

Long and Short Question Words in Minangkabau

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In Minangkabau, the two most common content-question words, for 'what' and 'which'/'where', each have two different forms: in addition to the long forms, *apo* and *mano*, clearly related to their counterparts in other Malayic languages, there are also short, monosyllabic forms, *a* and *ma*, formed by truncating the final syllable of the corresponding long form. This paper provides a preliminary description of the distribution of the long and short question words in Minangkabau: their presence or absence across different dialects, and the conditions on their usage within individual dialects.

The first part of this paper is concerned with mapping the distribution of long and short question words across Minangkabau dialects. Some relevant data is presented in Table 1 below. In the Padang and Bonjol dialects of Minangkabau, 'what' has both long and short forms, while 'which'/'where' has only the short form. The data suggest that these dialects lie at the center of a historically-innovative "short-question-word" region, and that as one moves outwards from this region — downwards in Table 1 — the relative weight of the short forms decreases while that of the long forms increases. However, the presence of the short forms is not coextensive with that of the Minangkabau language, since the short forms are absent from the Minangkabau dialect of Sungai Lansek, but can be found in the non-Minangkabau Malayic dialect of Tapan.

The second part of this paper deals with the conditions governing the long-short question-word alternation within individual dialects, focusing on the alternation between *apo* and *a* in the Padang dialect of Minangkabau, making use of data from the MPI EVA Padang Field Station naturalistic corpus, supplemented with native-speaker judgments. As in many other languages of the region, content-question words in Minangkabau are polyfunctional, with a wide range of other non-interrogative usages. Table 2 below shows the availability of these different functions for *apo* and *a* in the Padang dialect of Minangkabau: whereas the long form *apo* is available for all of the relevant functions, the short form *a* is available only for the core interrogative function and the closely related indefinite. Another important characteristic of these two forms is their ability to function as bases for morphological derivations; the relevant data are presented in Table 3 below. The first three rows show morphological derivations applying to both long and short forms, while the next two rows present derivations applying only to the long form. The next group of four rows, showing derivations involving the various voice markers, demonstrate differential behaviour: whereas *di-* and *ma-* apply only to the long form, *maN-* and *ba-* apply only to the short form. However, as shown in the final four rows, this difference is neutralized when the same voice markers co-occur with the applicative: in this case, the derivation may only apply to the long form of the question word.

In conclusion, some broader generalizations are proposed which may account for the diversity of the observable patterns. The truncation of the final syllable in Minangkabau question words is rather atypical of the western archipelago, in which it is usually pre-final syllables that are truncated, in accordance with the prevalent phrase-final intonational prominence. Instead, it is reminiscent of truncation in eastern Indonesian varieties of Malay, reflecting their characteristic penultimate lexical stress. However, it differs from truncation in eastern varieties of Malay in that it would appear not to be sensitive to linear order and grammatical relations. One may speculate that the short forms of the question words in Minangkabau result from the conventionalization and subsequent lexicalization of focus intonation which, in Minangkabau as in other western archipelago languages, is manifest in lengthening of the penultimate syllable.

<i>Dialect</i>	'what'		'which'/'where'	
	<i>long</i>	<i>short</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>short</i>
<i>Minangkabau, Padang</i>	apo	a	*	ma
<i>Minangkabau, Bonjol</i>	apo	a	*	ma
<i>Minangkabau, Maninjau</i>	apo	a	(mano)	ma
<i>Minangkabau, Payakumbuh</i>	apo	a	mano	ma
<i>Minangkabau, Surantiah</i>	apo	a	mano	ma
<i>Tapan</i>	apo	a	mano	ma
<i>Minangkabau, Sungai Lansek</i>	apo	*	mano	*
<i>Besemah</i>	ape	*	mane	*
<i>Malay, Siak</i>	apo	*	mano	*

Table 1: Distribution of Long and Short Question Words across Minangkabau and OtherDialects

<i>Function</i>	<i>form</i>	
	<i>apo</i>	<i>a</i>
<i>interrogative</i>	√	√
<i>indefinite</i>	√	√
<i>dummy ('whatchamecallit')</i>	√	*
<i>polar question</i>	√	*
<i>disjunction</i>	√	*

Table 2: Functions of *apo* and *a* in Padang Minangkabau

<i>Morphological Derivation</i>	<i>Function</i>	<i>base</i>	
		<i>apo</i>	<i>a</i>
<i>reduplication</i>	DISTRIBUTIVE etc.	apo-apo	a-a
<i>si-</i>	'who'	siapo	sia
<i>bar-</i>	'how much'	barapo	bara
<i>sa-</i>	'as many as what'	saapo	*
<i>-an</i>	APPLICATIVE	apoan	*
<i>di-</i>	PATIENTIVE	diapo	*
<i>ma-</i>	AGENTIVE	maapo	*
<i>maN-</i>	AGENTIVE	*	manga
<i>ba-</i>	'how'	*	baa
<i>di- -an</i>	PATIENTIVE	diapoan	*
<i>ma- -an</i>	AGENTIVE	maapoan	*
<i>maN- -an</i>	AGENTIVE	mangapoan	*
<i>ba- -an</i>	'how'	baapoan	*

Table 3: Morphological Derivations of *apo* and *a* in Padang Minangkabau