



## Variations of Food in Traditional Muslim Ceremonies in Minangkabau Isolect, Indonesia

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### Abstract

This study describes the variations of food in Minangkabau's isolect that are commonly used in traditional Muslim ceremonies. Informal discussion and observation were conducted using various techniques on selected ceremonies. Five distinct traditional Muslim ceremonies are found in this study. Furthermore, the result discovered that there are nine foods for dishes and vegetables, eleven items for snacks, three items for drinks and one item for fruit. This included the foods that were classified into one, two, and three lexicons. Overall, it may be concluded that food variations always occur in every traditional Muslim ceremony.

**Keywords:** food; Minangkabau isolect; Muslim traditional ceremony; variation

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### 1.0 Introduction

This study discusses several foods in the Minangkabau isolect frequently used in traditional Muslim celebrations. This study is interesting because one of the social characteristics of Minangkabau society, as stated by Kato (1982), is Muslim. The social characteristics of the community are reflected, among other things, in their activities, such as in the traditional ceremonies and the foods that accompany them. The reason for choosing food variations of Minangkabau isolect used in traditional Muslim ceremonies is because it contains a wide range of variations and can be regarded as a product of traditional knowledge. Furthermore, traditional food passed down through generations indicates the identity background of the community. This study only concerned Nagari Pariangan in the Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatra, Indonesia. Based on *Tambo* (historically recorded folklore) and *Kaba* (historically oral folklore), it is believed that this place is the Minangkabau people's ancestral home (Nadra, 2018). Nagari is the lowest level of government in Minangkabau, a unit of Minangkabau culture, as indicated by the proverb "*adat salingka nagari*" (tradition surrounds the *nagari*). Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the varieties of food in Minangkabau's isolect that are commonly used in traditional Muslim ceremonies in Nagari Pariangan.

This study is a continuation of prior studies that focused on the variation of language elements, utilisation, and comparison. This particular study on the lexical characteristics of the Minangkabau isolect about the food utilised in traditional Muslim celebrations in Nagari Pariangan, Tanah Datar Regency, has never been carried out before. Because interaction with the outside world, made easier by contemporary technologies, may impact the development of this isolect, it is necessary to record the existence of lexical diversity in the Minangkabau isolect used in Nagari Pariangan. After all, the influence of globalisation has caused other foods from other areas of Indonesia and foreign foods enter to Minangkabau, such as *bakso* 'meatball', *nasi uduk* 'an Indonesian-style steamed rice cooked in a coconut milk dish', *mie ayam* 'chicken noodle', *pangsit* 'dumplings/a type of food in the form of minced meat wrapped in flour sheets', *fried chicken* 'from Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant (American fast food restaurant chain specialising in fried chicken)', *pizza* 'a popular Italian dish with a flat dough-based base and toppings' and *kebab* 'a variety of meat dishes originating in the Middle East. So, the research aims to describe the varieties of food in Minangkabau's isolect that are commonly used in traditional Muslim ceremonies. The following section explains the literature review related to this study.

## 2.0 Literature Review

Saleh et al. (2022) and Quaranta & Salvia (2011), traditional food that has been handed down through the generations represents the identity background of a community and holds a higher status (Elizabeth, 2006; Chambers et al., 2007; Aykan, 2016). Misran et al. (2022) expressed a similar point that traditional foods are consumed over extended periods by generations and traditions. Food leaves a legacy that includes creating a place as a symbolic destination in being from those areas and organically growing there (Cook & Crang, 1996). The idea of inheritance encompasses advantages in politics and the economy as well as social qualities that serve as social markers. It also makes new claims about modern ideas and cultural systems (Matta, 2016). Hervieu-Léger (1996), Bessière (1998), and Ellis et al. (2018) all made similar claims about the importance of local food, including traditional food, in forming the identity and history of a location or ethnic community. Wahid (2009) also notes that traditional food that has been passed down typically does not alter much regarding flavour.

There have only been a few prior studies on Indonesian culinary lexicons. Shapira (2014) identified twenty-one monomorphemic words, three polymorphemic words, and twenty-six lexical elements classed as noun phrases in the lexicon entries for food and tools used in the traditional Wuku Taun ceremony in Cikondang Traditional Village, Bandung. The other item is a literature review that discusses how anthropology can be used to examine food, eating behaviours, and nutrition (Nurti, 2017). The same year, Pamantung (2017) used metaphor to describe the structure and meaning of the names of common Minahasa foods and beverages.

Zulfa and Kaksim (2014) investigated the status of *malamang* (cooking sticky rice in bamboo) in Padang, West Sumatra. They concluded that relying on traditional ways to pass it on to the customer will not ensure its survival. Nadra and Wahyuni (2015) investigated the numeral classifiers found in cookbooks. Nadra et al. (2016) have also studied the lexicon of food in the Minangkabau language based on the verb and the ingredients. Then, Nadra (2018) studied the terms of wedding tradition in Minangkabau isoelect in Nagari Pariangan and its development. The result showed variations and differentiations found in terms of wedding tradition. Lately, only a small group of people understand these terms because of a limited understanding of the tradition and the influence of other cultures. Moreover, marriage between people from different regions and cultures also significantly impacts a declining knowledge of these terms. Yovani (2019) has studied about *lamang tapai*: the ancient Malay food in the Minangkabau tradition consisting of *lemang* 'a food made from white glutinous rice mixed with coconut milk in bamboo, which the inner part coated with banana leaf and cooked using an open fire' and *tapai* 'the fermented black sticky rice using yeast'. That article discusses the history of *lemang* and *tapai*, the philosophy and method of serving *lemang* in Minangkabau cultural traditions, and the flavour characteristics of *lemang* and *tapai* from a scientific standpoint. Rahman (2020) also researched the history of *rendang*, including its evolution. In conclusion, Mardatillah (2020) discovered that Minangkabau cuisine has a high level of variability in its resource assets. The result of this study can be used to build a sustained competitive advantage through historical value. Nadra and Nesti (2021) then compiled a lexicon of food-related terms using the Minangkabau language.

Rianti et al. (2018) stated that as the world's largest Muslim population, many Indonesian traditional foods are related to Islamic traditions. They also said that cultures are strongly associated with religion, such as the Indonesian habit of eating *ketupat* at Eid Al-Fitr. Another popular meal, according to Wardana et al. (2023), is *lepet*, the symbol of innocence and purity of the soul. The tradition of *lepet* consumption has been spread, particularly on Java Island. It is usually prepared for self-consumption, family and neighbours, consumed a week after Eid Al-Fitr or "syawalan" together with "ketupat". The other study was done by Syarifuddin et al. (2020). One of the results is the name of *apem banyu*. *Apem banyu* is one of the Palembang people's culturally significant food, both religiously and socially. These foods are consumed socially together, facing the dish served. Meanwhile, in religious terms, this food is typically consumed at the seventh-day ceremonial *tahlilan* (commemorating a family member's death on the seventh day).

This study is different from and a continuation of previous studies, which focuses on a linguistic analysis of the differences between various types of food. This is a specific study on the lexical characteristics of the Minangkabau isoelect regarding the food utilized in various traditional Muslim ceremonies in Nagari Pariangan, Tanah Datar Regency. It is also essential to record the existence of food variations in the Minangkabau isoelect used in Nagari Pariangan because contact with the outside world may influence the development of this isoelect.

## 3.0 Methodology

The information needed for this study came from various sources in the Nagari Pariangan, Tanah Datar Regency. In Nagari Pariangan, there are four *orong* (namely, Orong Pariangan, Orong Padang Panjang, Orong Sikaladi, and Orong Guguk. According to the people who provided this information, each *orong* in Nagari Pariangan has its unique food lexicon and a unique set of traditional ceremonies with various names and formats. In this study, data collection was only carried out in Orong Pariangan. Orong Pariangan is the oldest *orong* in Nagari Pariangan. The term *orong*, according to Thaib (1934:64), refers to the smallest unit of local governance in the Nagari.

The data collection was done by using observation, interviews and documentation. Interviews were conducted with three informants. The criteria for informants in this study were: at least 50 years old; they were born and raised in the area; married a native from Orong Pariangan; they had not left their home village in the previous year; and they had not received any formal education beyond junior high school (SMP). In addition to these informants, the researcher also spoke with three prominent figures and the coordinator of a traditional ceremony. The interviews were conducted both structured and unstructured. Documentation of data was done immediately after the observation and interviews to ensure no data was lost.

## 4.0 Findings

People in Nagari Pariangan celebrate five distinctive traditional Muslim ceremonies. The first traditional ceremony is *mamanggia urang babuko*, which means 'inviting people to break the fast (in a fasting month)'; the second is called *sunatan*, which means 'circumcision ceremony'; the third is called *mandoa/malapeh niek*, which means 'expression of gratitude to God', the fourth is called *muluik Nabi*, which means 'Prophet's birthday', and the fifth is called *pangajian urang mati*, which means 'recitation for a death'.

The lexical items used for food during these traditional Muslim ceremonies were found to vary from one event to another. As a result, these lexical items will be presented uniquely during the respective ceremonies. It was discovered that lexical items about food could comprise not just one word but also the combination of two and three different words (a phrase). The lexical items for each ceremony are arranged into categories according to the types of foods that are consumed during the event. These categories include side dishes and vegetables (eaten with rice), snacks (various cakes), drinks, and fruits.

#### 4.1 Mamanggia urang babuko 'inviting people to break the fast (in fasting month)'

During the holy month of Ramadhan, newlywed couples are encouraged to participate in an event known as *mamanggia urang babuko*, which translates to 'inviting people to break the fast'. The locals refer to them as *panyaram baru*. In the context of this celebration, every member of the family is invited to come to the home of the bride to break their fast. The variations of food are required to be served:

- (1) *randang* 'meat simmered in spices and coconut milk,
- (2) *gulai (cubadak/toco)* 'curry (unripe jackfruit/a kind of curry made of bean)', and
- (3) *mi goreng* 'fried noodles'.

These three variations of food must be present at this event. The curry could be called *gulai cubadak* 'curry made from unripe jackfruit', or *gulai toco*, which refers to a variation of curry made from beans. It is acceptable to serve other types of food besides these three, but the total number of dishes should be at most five.

#### 4.2 Basunat 'circumcision ceremony'

Male Muslims are required to undergo circumcision as part of their religious practice. In the event of circumcision, there are four variations of food required to be served:

- (1) *randang* 'meat simmered in spices and coconut milk,
- (2) *gulai kambing/dagiang* 'goat curry' mixed with *rabuang* 'bamboo sprouts',
- (3) *kacang tanak* 'a kind of food made from kacang paga (a kind of bean/fence bean) and thick coconut milk
- (4) *talua salaru* 'a kind of omelet'.

If there is space, we can also serve various foods. Whether or not it is provided is entirely up to the host. If it is supplied, then the host will select the various options available for the food. However, *pinun aie*, 'snack', must not be served.

#### 4.3 Mandoa/malapeh niek 'expression of gratitude to God'

*Mandoa* or *malapeh niek* is a ceremony performed as an act of gratitude as a form of acknowledgement that a prayer or request has been granted to God. There are three distinct kinds of food that must be served at this event in their respective variations, namely:

- (1) *randang* 'meat simmered in spices and coconut milk',
- (2) *gulai (cubadak/buncih/rabuang)* 'curry (unripe jackfruit/bean/bamboo sprout) and it can be mixed with meat, but this is not compulsory, and
- (3) *goreng (ikan/ayam/talua)* 'fried (fish/chicken/eggs)'.

There are many distinct variations of curry. The variations include *gulai cubadak* 'curry made from unripe jackfruit', *gulai buncis* 'curry made from a kind of bean', or *gulai rebung* 'curry made from bamboo sprouts'. Eggs, fish, or chicken can all be fried.

#### 4.4 Muluik nabi 'prophet's birthday'

*Muluik Nabi* takes place on the 12th of Rabiul Awal and is intended to commemorate the birth of Prophet Muhammad Saw. At this event, there was no variation of food in the form of *samba* 'side dishes'. This event is commemorated with various *pinun aia* 'snacks' performances. Within the context of this ceremony, eight distinct culinary iterations take the shape of *pinun aia*. 'snacks'.

- (1) *lamang* 'sticky rice cooking in bamboo',
- (2) *jaguang abuih* 'boiled corn'
- (3) *godok* 'banana fried in batter'
- (4) *goreng* 'fried (banana)'
- (5) *kue mayang/dengkek* 'a food made from cassava',
- (6) *kue bolu* 'muffin', and
- (7) *kue bungo durian* 'rice fried in the shape of a durian flower'.
- (8) *pisang* 'banana'

An additional phrase, *nasi baka*, 'rice wrapped in banana leaves and grilled', is connected to this event. There should be at least ten packs of rice in the order. The rice and snacks are carried in on a tray and brought inside the mosque. Then, the event of *basirabuik* 'scrambling of food has been brought to the mosque'. It can be thought of as a religious ceremony. According to the information obtained from the informants, the Nagari will be beset by disaster if this event is not held.

#### 4.5 Pangajian urang mati 'death ceremony'

Recitation of the dead is a traditional ceremony carried out after someone dies. On the day of death, visitors are not served food. Food is served on the second and third day, specifically *sagun* 'a snack made by combining rice flour, coconut, and white sugar'. The seventh day of the fast is marked by the serving of *sarabai*, which can be translated as 'pancake'. The following are the two types of side dishes that are served on the fourteenth and fortieth days of the feast:

- (1) *randang* 'meat simmered in spices and coconut milk' and
- (2) *talua* 'egg'.

In addition, there are three kinds of snacks associated with this ceremony. These are described by a phrase and two words, namely:

- (1) *lapek bugih* 'made from sticky rice and grated coconut and salt',
- (2) *silamak* 'made from sticky rice', and
- (3) *raga-raga* 'a kind of jelly'.

There is also a word for the fruit known as *pisang*, which means 'banana'. In addition, on the one-hundredth day, which is also known as *hari malapeh* 'parting day', the foods served are the same as those served on days fourteen and forty.

## 5.0 Discussion

There are food variations for each traditional Muslim ceremony in the Minangkabau isolect. For every traditional Muslim ceremony, the food lexicon also includes words for drinks, namely *aia putih* 'plain water', and served at certain times such as at night; there is also *teh* 'tea' and *kopi* 'coffee'. Based on the food variations, there are nine foods for dishes and vegetables, eleven for snacks, three for drinks, and one for fruit.

If the lexical item consists of two words, the second word indicates the stuff used for food or the food's origin and the cooking method. For example, *goreng ikan* (fried made from fish), *gulai cubadak* and *gulai kambing* (two different curry dishes made from unripe jackfruit and goat, respectively), *jaguang abuih* (boiled corn), and *lapek bugih* (sticky rice with grated coconut, salt and brown sugar, a snack originating in Bugih 'Bugis', the name of a region in South Sulawesi). If the lexical item consists of three words, the third word indicates a characteristic and condition of the food, for example, *kue bungo durian* (a cake that looks like a durian flower).

At the *mamangia urang babuko* 'inviting people to break the fast (in fasting month)' ceremony, three variations of food were found, namely *randang*, *gulai (cubadak/toco)*, and *mie goreng*. Two more food types can be added (maximum five). In the *basunat* 'circumcision' event, four foods must be present, namely *randang*, *gulai kambing/dagiang*, *kacang tanak*, and *talua salaru*. This food can be added according to the wishes of the event organizer. There are no snacks in this ceremony. Then, at the *mandoa/malapeh niek* 'expression of gratitude to God' ceremony, there are three foods that must be available, namely *randang*, *gulai (cubadak/buncih/rabuang)*, and *goreng (ikan/ayam/talua)*. At the *muluik Nabi* ceremony 'Prophet's birthday', there was no food in the form of *samba* 'side dishes and vegetables'. At this event, eight kinds of *pinun aia* 'snacks' were found, namely *lamang*, *jaguang abuih*, *godok*, *goreng*, *kue mayang/dengkek*, *kue bolu*, *kue bungo durian*, and *pisang*. *Pisang* 'banana' is a fruit, but in this event, it is also grouped into *pinun aia* because the banana is eaten together with *lemang*. Besides that, there is also *nasi baka* 'rice wrapped in banana leaves and grilled'. Finally, at the *pangajian urang mati* 'death ceremony', the variety of food depends on the implementation of the ceremony, which is divided into four groups, namely: (1) the day of death and the second day, (2) the third and fourth day, (3) the seventh day, and (4) fourteenth and fortieth day. There was no food in the first group (day of death and second day). In the second group (days three and four), only one snack was found, called *sagun*. In the third group (seventh day), one snack was found, namely *sarabai*. Then, in the fourth group (the fourteenth and fortieth days), two side dishes were found, namely *talua* and *randang*, and three snacks, namely *lapek bugih*, *silamak*, and *raga-raga*. Especially on the fortieth day, also known as *ari malapeh* 'day of letting go', there is additional food in the form of fruit, namely *pisang*. For all traditional Muslim ceremonies that include *samba*, there is always *randang* as a mandatory meal.

It has been stated previously by Hervieu-Léger (1996), Bessière (1998), and Ellis et al. (2018) that traditional food is essential in shaping the identity and history of a location or ethnic community. As a result, the diversity of foods must be documented and inherited so that the social and cultural characteristics do not simply disappear, primarily due to the influx of foods from other regions in Indonesia and other foreign foods. Apart from that, developing local food can also have a financial impact. Moreover, the food used in traditional Muslim ceremonies differs from one region to another because the custom only applies to the *Salingka Nagari*. This, as stated by Mardatilah (2020), can be used to build sustainable competitive advantages.

## 6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

To sum up, this study found five types of traditional Muslim ceremonies; those are *mamangia urang babuko* 'inviting people to break the fast in a fasting month', *sun at* 'circumcision ceremony', *mandoa/malapeh niek* 'expression of gratitude to God', *muluik nabi* 'Prophet's birthday', and *pangajian urang mati* 'death ceremony'. For all traditional Muslim ceremonies that include *samba*, there is always *randang* as a mandatory meal. Based on its range of ceremonies, there are nine foods for dishes and vegetables, eleven forms of snacks, three forms of drinks, and one form of fruit. The foods can be classified into one, two, and three lexicons based on their quantity. The food consisting of two or three lexicons is known as a phrase. Further, for every traditional ceremony, there is always appear a lexicon of drinks. Overall, it can be concluded that food variations always occur in every traditional Muslim ceremony in the Minangkabau isolect.

This research was only carried out with food variations in traditional Muslim ceremonies in Nagari Pariangan. Therefore, it is necessary to continue with other traditional ceremonies, not only in the Pariangan area but also in other areas because *adat* 'custom', including traditional ceremonies, only applies in a *nagari*. Those traditional foods must be passed down and developed. One method is

to pass it down from one generation to the next. The development of traditional foods is not only for ceremonial and cultural characteristics but it can also have an economic impact, like in a business or food industry.

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## Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This paper contributes to the research on food variations in traditional Muslim ceremonies, which is still very limited, even though such research can reveal the identity of a location or ethnic community.

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