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# Lexical Innovation in Digital Space as an Effort to Preserve the Riau Kampar Malay Language

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## ABSTRACT

The threat to regional languages posed by globalization has spurred lexical innovation in digital spaces to preserve language. This phenomenon is influenced by various factors, including dialect variation, geographical boundaries, number of speakers, place of residence, identity and cultural pride, as well as socio-economic conditions. This study aims to identify (1) complete lexical forms, (2) semantic fields that exhibit complete lexical forms, and (3) complete lexical forms that undergo variation in the Riau Malay language in Kampar Regency. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method, with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and audio recording. The results show that complete lexical innovation comprises 29 glosses with 98 variants across eight observation points in Kampar District. The semantic field with the highest occurrence of complete lexical forms is the domain of house and its surroundings, consisting of 7 complete lexical items with 23 variants. Additionally, the lexical forms with the greatest variation reach four variants across two glosses, namely *kaka? laki-laki* in Riau Malay in Kampar. Lexical innovation, particularly in digital spaces, plays an important role in maintaining and preserving regional languages, especially Riau Malay in Kampar Regency.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Riau Kampar Malay is one of the Malay language varieties that possesses distinctive lexical, phonological, and cultural characteristics. This language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for expressing the values, traditions, and identity of the Kampar community. However, the forces of globalization and the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages threaten the sustainability of this regional

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1 language. The younger generation tends to be more fluent in the national or global languages than in their mother tongue.

1 One effort to preserve the existence of Riau Kampar Malay is through digitalization and lexical innovation. Digitalization enables the language to exist in virtual spaces, while lexical innovation ensures its relevance in the modern era. One strategic solution to maintain this language is Android-based digitalization. The use of Android devices is highly relevant considering that smartphone penetration in Kampar Regency continues to increase. Through digitalization, Kampar Malay is not only documented but also actively used through lexical innovations that adapt its vocabulary to contemporary developments.

1 This study aims to describe language preservation in terms of lexical innovation, geographical distribution, and the diffusion of Riau Malay within the Riau-speaking community in Kampar Regency, using an Android-based platform. Kampar Regency is one of the regencies in Riau Province where the majority of the population speaks Riau Malay in the Kampar dialect. Geographically, Kampar Regency is located in Riau Province.

According to Fishman [1], language maintenance depends on a society's national ideology, or at least on the community's ideology in maintaining its social context against incoming innovations. In this regard, some members of the Kampar community, particularly the older generation, demonstrate a strong ideological commitment to their regional language by continuing to use it despite environmental influences. This is indicated by their consistent use of Riau Malay in communication, both at home and outside, when interacting with people from the same ethnic group. At times, they also use Riau Malay even when they know that their interlocutors are from different ethnic backgrounds. In this case, they show loyalty to their regional language despite environmental pressures. They continue to use and preserve their local language even though they represent a minority community within Kampar Regency.

1 In contrast, adolescents show less ideological attachment to their regional language. They tend to use Indonesian in daily communication. Not only in everyday interactions but also within the family domain, they use Indonesian when communicating with their parents, even though both parents are ethnically Malay. Adolescents are inclined to follow social changes. This situation poses a threat to their regional language. If they fail to maintain it, the language may gradually shift and eventually face extinction due to ongoing innovations and external influences.

1 Riau Malay in Kampar Regency has experienced certain innovations, such as the words *ayi* ("water") and *aso* ("taste"), which can be considered internal innovations within the local Riau Malay variety. These innovations are classified as internal because they result from phonological changes within the language itself. In this case, *ayi* and *aso* have undergone the deletion of the phoneme /r/, as many speakers generally have difficulty pronouncing /r/. The form *deyen* ("I"), derived from *den*, is also an internal innovation within Riau Malay because the change occurs within the language system itself.

1 Android-based digitalization, combined with lexical innovation, represents a strategic step toward preserving Riau Kampar Malay. An application that integrates an interactive dictionary, modern vocabulary, and multimedia content can make the language

relevant in the digital era. With the support of the speaking community, the government, and technology developers, Riau Kampar Malay can survive, develop, and be transmitted to future generations in more engaging and interactive ways.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Android-Based Digitalization as a Preservation Strategy

Android-based digitalization utilizes mobile applications to document, learn, and promote the Kampar Malay language. This application may include the following features:

1. Interactive Digital Dictionary
  - a. Providing a comprehensive list of Kampar Malay vocabulary along with meanings, word categories, example sentences, and pronunciation audio.
  - b. Quick search and bookmark features to facilitate user access.
2. Lexical Innovation Feature
  - a. Presenting a list of newly created or adapted modern vocabulary, for example:
    - 1) *komputeh* (computer)
    - 2) *internek* (internet)
    - 3) *gambor sendiri* (selfie)
  - b. Equipped with explanations of word-formation processes, such as borrowing, coinage, revitalization, and semantic enrichment.
3. Educational Multimedia Content
  - a. Videos, songs, and folktales in Kampar Malay.
  - b. Interactive learning modules such as vocabulary quizzes, word puzzles, and conversation exercises.
4. Speakers' Social Networking Platform
  - a. Discussion forums and content-sharing spaces in Kampar Malay.
  - b. Weekly challenges, such as composing a digital *pantun*.

### The Concept of Language Maintenance

Language maintenance refers to an individual's or community's ability to continue using their regional language or dialectal variation within certain functions and domains [2]. Language maintenance occurs alongside language change. In this context, community members are required to preserve and sustain their regional language, even as it may evolve. Language maintenance is closely related to innovation [2]. Innovation often involves variations influenced by other languages, yet the language itself must be safeguarded.

Language also reflects a community's identity. Through language, other communities can recognize the identity of a particular group. This is because every community possesses linguistic diversity, which serves as its distinctive characteristic.

According to Harimurti Kridalaksana, language maintenance, as demonstrated by studies conducted by language preservation scholars, is an effort to ensure that a language continues to be used and appreciated, especially as a marker of group identity within a speech community [3]. Meanwhile, I Nyoman Jendra defines language maintenance as a

situation in which a community can sustain its language from one generation to the next despite conditions that may encourage a shift to another language.

A positive attitude among community members toward maintaining their language can prevent a language shift that may lead to language extinction. Conversely, without community awareness to preserve or maintain their language, the process of language extinction will accelerate [4].

Based on several definitions proposed by experts, language maintenance can be formulated as the continued use of a community's customary language from one generation to the next within social life.

Language maintenance may also be interpreted as an effort to prevent language extinction despite the influences of modernization and technological development. It can be promoted by consistently using the language in daily communication and by fostering cultural development within the social environment.

### **Cases of Language Maintenance**

#### **The Case of Loloan Language Maintenance in Bali**

Sumarsono [2] describes that the approximately 3,000 inhabitants of Loloan Village in Bali do not use Balinese but instead speak Loloan Malay. They have maintained this language since the eighteenth century, when their ancestors from Bugis and Pontianak arrived in the area. The factors contributing to their language maintenance are as follows:

- a. **Concentrated Settlement Area.** Their residential area is concentrated in one location, geographically integrated with but socially distinct from the broader Balinese settlement area.
- b. **Tolerance from the Majority Community** The Balinese majority demonstrates tolerance by allowing the Loloan minority to use Loloan Malay in social interactions, even though Balinese is sometimes also used in such interactions.
- c. **Religious and Cultural Attitudes** Members of the Loloan community possess a strong Islamic identity and maintain a non-accommodative stance toward Balinese society, culture, and language. For the Loloan Malay community, the Balinese language is closely associated with Hinduism; therefore, they choose not to use it.
- d. **High Loyalty and Identity Symbolism** The Loloan Malay community shows strong loyalty to their language as it functions as a symbol of group identity. For them, Loloan Malay represents their self-identity, fostering pride and faithfulness in consistently using the language.
- e. **Intergenerational Transmission** There is continuity in transmitting Loloan Malay from older to younger generations. Due to their strong loyalty, the older generation ensures that the mother tongue is inherited by the younger generation, resulting in sustained language transmission.

### **Factors of Successful Language Maintenance**

According to Holmes [5], three main factors determine the success of language maintenance:

- a. Number of Native Speakers. From a quantitative perspective, a large number of speakers who identify the language as their mother tongue strengthens its survival.
- b. Supporting Media within Society The presence of supporting media—such as schools, publications, and radio—plays a crucial role. If mass media (radio, television, newspapers, and literary books) use the regional language, they significantly support language maintenance.
- c. Proportional Index of Recognition and Media Support. The index comparing the number of people who recognize the language with the total number of supporting media outlets also influences maintenance.
- d. Combination of Speaker Quantity and Media Support: A substantial number of speakers, combined with strong media support, greatly contributes to the sustainability of a language.

#### Factors of Language Maintenance According to Miller [6]

- a. Prestige and Loyalty Factor

If speakers feel proud of their culture, including their language, they will continue to use their regional language even within heterogeneous communities.

- b. Migration and Territorial Concentration Factor

If a group of speakers migrates to a new area and their population gradually increases to surpass that of the local population, language shift may occur. However, if they form a concentrated settlement pattern, this territorial concentration can support language preservation.

- c. Mass Media Publication Factor

Radio and television often advertise products in regional languages to create familiarity and closeness with audiences. The greater the number of media outlets supporting a language, the stronger the likelihood of successful language maintenance.

#### Definition and Types of Dialect

Dialect, as a system or language variation, is reflected in several scholarly perspectives. According to Ayatrohaedi [7] and Ayatrohaedi [8], a dialect is a linguistic system used by a particular community to distinguish itself from neighboring communities that employ different, though closely related, systems. In contrast, Kridalaksana [9] defines language as an arbitrary system of sound symbols used for self-identification.

Essentially, both definitions align in viewing language as a system that serves a practical daily function within its user group, namely as a means of communication. In the author's view, this definition can also be applied to dialects or language varieties, insofar as they are considered systems that function within particular user communities, since the substance of language and its varieties is fundamentally the same [10]. In this context, variation refers to dialect, whether it is used in a specific geographical area, within a particular social group, or during a certain historical period.

Several dialects that originally derive from a single language may attain the status of separate languages due to political factors. For example, the language used in Indonesia is officially called Indonesian, whereas a closely related variety is used in Malaysia. In

formal contexts, these two languages are not significantly different, and Indonesians and Malaysians can generally communicate with one another due to mutual intelligibility. However, in informal situations, differences become more apparent, and communication may be more challenging for both parties.

Therefore, what Chambers and P. Trudgill [11] refer to as the concepts of autonomy and heteronomy, though not originally grounded in linguistic theory, help clarify the issue of language and dialect status. In certain situations, a dialect or language is autonomous, meaning it functions as an independent system (autonomy). In other situations, a language or dialect depends on another system and is therefore heteronomous. The phenomenon of a dialect continuum often illustrates this condition, as boundaries between dialects or languages become blurred. In such cases, non-linguistic factors (such as politics) often determine whether a variety is recognized as a language or a dialect.

### Full Lexical Innovation

Full lexical innovation refers to renewal at the lexical level, marked by the emergence of entirely new lexical forms within a language or language variety that differ completely from the original forms. This phenomenon includes phonetic aspects observable in the new lexicon through sound changes, such as assimilation, dissimilation, sound addition, sound deletion, metathesis, and weakening.

The theory of full lexical innovation in this study refers to the views of Mahsun [12] and Wahya [13], who define it as a comprehensive change in sound, word form, or meaning that originates from a specific geographical location and spreads to surrounding areas, or that begins with an individual and disseminates through imitation among members of a speech community.

Internal lexical innovation is divided into two types: full lexical innovation and partial lexical innovation (or phonetic innovation). Full lexical innovation involves forms that differ entirely from their original forms, including differences in structure or phonotactics, as Pei stated in Wahya [14].

### 3. METHOD

The method employed in this study is a descriptive-qualitative approach. The descriptive method is a problem-solving procedure that investigates and describes the current condition of the research subject or object based on existing facts or phenomena as they naturally occur. Descriptive research aims to portray and interpret data on facts, variables, and phenomena observed during the research process, presenting them objectively as they are. A qualitative approach means attempting to understand the socio-linguistic phenomena under investigation [14]. The term “understanding” refers to the effort to uncover the meaning of a phenomenon from the perspectives of the research subjects. Qualitative research seeks to construct reality and interpret its meaning. Therefore, it emphasizes processes, events, and authenticity. Qualitative research is deeply engaged in interaction with the reality being studied.

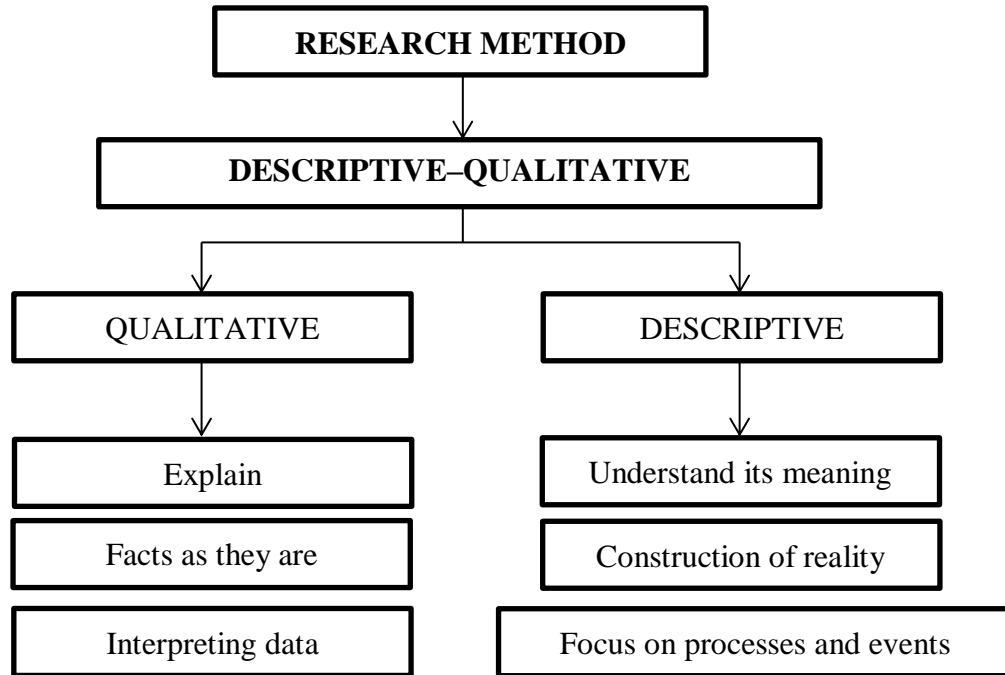


Figure 1. Research Method Diagram

The methods and techniques of data collection follow the view of Sudaryanto [15], which states that oral data are collected through direct field observation or the listening method. The techniques employed include interviews, recording, and note-taking. Interviews were conducted using a questionnaire guide. During the interviews, both audio recordings and note-taking were conducted.

The interviews applied directed communication techniques, including direct questions, indirect questions, provocative responses, and multiple questioning techniques [16]. Directed conversation was conducted by inviting informants to talk about a particular topic, usually beginning with general matters. Once a comfortable conversational atmosphere was established, the discussion focused on topics relevant to the research objectives. Direct questions were used to ask about concrete matters, such as parts of the house or the body. Indirect questions were used to overcome limitations in direct questioning, particularly when asking about abstract concepts, activities, or occupations. Provocative responses were employed to confirm the informants' answers, encouraging them to restate or clarify their responses. Multiple questioning techniques were also used to ensure the accuracy of the informants' answers. Through this technique, the researcher could ask different questions about the same concept, for example, to elicit synonymous forms or different lexical items referring to the same meaning.

Data documentation was conducted using phonetic transcription techniques, meaning that the data were written in phonetic notation. The recording was carried out through direct recording techniques rather than covert recording. The collected data were stored in separate files. The data analysis method employed was the matching method using the equalization comparison technique [17]. The procedure was implemented as follows: to determine internal lexical innovations in Riau Malay in the field, one variant—both in form and meaning—was compared with other variants, either at the same observation point

or at different observation points in isolated areas. The resulting variant entities were then identified based on their internal structure after comparison with other variants considered the original forms. The field data were also compared with other varieties of Riau Malay. If differences were found, the differing forms were identified as elements of innovation in Riau Malay in Kampar Regency. These innovative elements may be local in origin or may result from influence or borrowing from other languages.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### Language Maintenance in the Form of Lexical Innovation

In line with the research focus, this section presents lexical innovations in Riau Malay in Kampar Regency, based on 64 glosses with 201 innovative variants. These include:

(a) Internal full lexical innovation forms, comprising 29 glosses with 98 full lexical innovation variants. Full lexical innovation refers to innovations observable in variants that display entirely new lexical forms. The determination of these innovative variants as full lexical innovations is based on the discovery of forms that are completely different from the original forms found at Riau Malay observation points [18].

These innovative variants include, among others: *kaka? mantan*, *acu*, *uwo* ('older brother'), *bujan*, *siawan* ('term of address for a boy'), *tuo? tuo*, *mama?*, *apa? tempa?*, *to? uwuo* ('eldest uncle'), *wirit*, *tahlilan*, *bodua* ('tahlilan/prayer gathering'), *sala?*, *lala?*, *periasi* ('ceiling'), *kose?*, *lantai*, *lantai batu* ('cement floor'), *takaghe*, *tim*, *toha* ('rice sack'), *pankin*, *lipan*, *kero*, *ghoai* ('bed'), *ka?kus*, *toilet* ('toilet'), *jomba? batali*, *kumbuo*, *katidion*, *katenda?*, *kento?* ('shopping basket'), *capa beras*, *combuo?*, *tombuan* ('rice container'), *bu?o ayie*, *ana? utio?*, *ana? akan*, *bu?o ayu* ('fish fry'), *jalo*, *puk?*, *ciduo?*, *jayo?* ('small fishing net'), *kampiye*, *tanguo?*, *sonkou*, *ajuwi?* ('fish container'), *ompo?*, *kolio* ('gulai sampode'), *kutu*, *jamur*, *panau* ('water fleas'), *ni?nie*, *cenco?*, *cote* ('talkative'), *dogie*, *dojal*, *nakal* ('stupid'), *si?gi?*, *laho?*, *serigala* ('greedy'), *gho?nai*, *o?nai-o?nai*, *tio? mayan*, *hujan itio?-itio?* ('drizzle'), *jempol*, *bu jayi*, *jayi gaja* ('thumb'), *bakela*, *makan mosamo*, *batobo* ('eating together'), *wakden*, *aden*, *ambo*, *den* ('I'), *i?no*, *uwan*, *naan* ('they'), *kesiten*, *koki?en*, *kakin*, *kasitan* ('over there'), *tatiagho?*, *tata?nkui?*, *tatu?nkui?* ('exact'), *maobuwi ayi*, *menjan ayi*, *manjan ayu an?gie?*, *manjogha?n ayu*, *mamosa? ayu* ('boiled water'), *cikpocon*, *kapocon*, *satiadan* ('tingling sensation').

These forms illustrate the richness of internal lexical innovation in Riau Malay spoken in Kampar Regency.

##### Maintenance of Lexical Innovation Meaning Forms

Based on the data analysis, the most dominant semantic field in Riau Malay in Kampar Regency is that of houses and their surroundings.

The semantic field presenting the most complete lexical items in Riau Malay in Kampar Regency is the domain of house and its surroundings, consisting of six full lexical items with 23 variants [19]. These include: 'ceiling': *sala?*, *lala?*, *periasi*, 'cement floor': *kose?*, *lantai batu*, 'rice container': *takaghe*, *tim*, *toha*, 'bed': *pankin*, *kelabang*, *kero*, *ghoai*, 'toilet': *ka?kus*, *jamban*, 'shopping basket': *jomba? batali*, *kumbuo*, *katidion*,

*katendaŋ, kentaŋ*, ‘rice field container’: *capa nasi, combuon, tombuan*. These findings indicate that lexical innovation and maintenance in Riau Malay are strongly reflected in everyday life domains, particularly those closely related to domestic and environmental contexts.

### Discussion of Research Findings

This study highlights lexical innovation in Riau Malay in Kampar Regency, particularly innovations that emerge in digital spaces. The findings show that 64 glosses were analyzed, yielding 201 innovative variants. Among them, 29 glosses fall into the category of full lexical innovation, comprising 98 variants. These full variants are characterized by entirely new word forms that differ significantly from their original forms, such as *kaka?*, *mantan*, *acu*, *uwo*, *bujan*, and *satiadan*.

#### 1. Lexical Innovation as Digital Adaptation

The results indicate that digitalization of communication encourages the Riau Malay community to create new vocabulary to keep their language relevant in cyberspace. This phenomenon aligns with the theory that language is dynamic and continuously evolves to adapt to social and technological contexts. For example, terms related to online activities, gadgets, and social media tend to appear as neologisms because they lack direct equivalents in traditional vocabulary [20].

#### 2. Types of Lexical Innovation

Based on the research findings:

- a. Full lexical innovation refers to variants that are entirely new and different from the original forms, such as *kaka?* or *satiadan*. These innovations reflect the community's linguistic creativity in responding to new communicative needs.
- b. Partial innovation (not specifically mentioned in the data, but generally involving morphological modification or the adaptation of borrowed words).

The presence of full innovation confirms that the Riau Malay community does not merely imitate other languages, but instead produces original vocabulary to preserve their linguistic identity in the digital era [21].

#### 3. Social Functions of Lexical Innovation

These findings strengthen the role of lexical innovation as a strategy for maintaining the local language:

- a. maintenance of cultural identity – By creating unique new words, Riau Malay remains authentic even while interacting with global languages such as Indonesian, English, or technological language.
- b. adaptation to digital communication – New terms enable speakers to express ideas, activities, or digital objects that previously had no lexical equivalents.
- c. Youth engagement – Digital spaces encourage young people to use Riau Malay creatively, ensuring that the language remains alive in modern society [22].

#### 4. Implications for Riau Malay

- a. Digital lexical innovation demonstrates that Riau Malay is flexible and adaptive; therefore, language maintenance strategies should not rely solely on formal mechanisms, but also on the creativity of language users.
- b. The development of new vocabulary in digital spaces can serve as a tool for language revitalization, encouraging the community to internalize and use new lexical items in daily communication [23].

#### 5. Relation to Language Theory

The findings are consistent with the view [24] that qualitative research emphasizes understanding meaning within socio-linguistic contexts. The emergence of full lexical innovation in digital spaces reflects the process of constructing linguistic reality by speakers and demonstrates the dynamic nature of language in modern social interaction [25]

### 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research objectives and analysis results, it can be concluded that the preservation of the language in Riau Malay in Kampar Regency, which has undergone full lexical innovation form in Kampar Regency is reflected in 29 glosses with 98 variants. Furthermore, the defense of the form of the meaning field that displays the most full lexical is the form of the meaning field of the house and surroundings, which displays the full lexical as many as 6 full lexicals with 23 variants and the most common lexical variations, namely *male kaka?*, 'elder brother-man, *ompo?* 'Gulai Sampode', with 4 variations and 2 full lexicals. This shows that language preservation is a form of full lexical innovation relatively much found in Riau Malay in Kampar Regency.

The observation led to an innovative variant of full lexical innovation in Riau Malay in Kampar Regency, with different numbers. There are observation points that give rise to one innovative variant, and there are also two innovative variants. Observation points generally only display one innovative variant. The observation point that gave rise to two innovative variants was observation point 8, namely in Kampar District. Safety point 8 in Kampar District is the most innovative observation point in relation to full lexical type innovation. Observation point 8 in Kampar District gives rise to eleven variants of full lexical innovation, namely, *siawan*, *to?* *uwuo*, *wirit*, *latrine*, *cambuon*, *kolio*, *mushroom*, *cote*, *oñai-oñai*, *tatuñkui?*, and *manjoghan ayu*.

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