

- (1) Title: Excrescent Vowels in Minangkabau
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Comparison of the West Sumatran language Minangkabau with closely related Malay reveals the existence of excrescent vowels in word-final codas in certain phonological environments, for example:

- (1) (a) Minangkabau: *masuk* 'enter'
 Malay: *masuk*
 (b) Minangkabau: *putuih* 'cut off'
 Malay: *putus*

The correspondences may be represented in the following two re-write rules of epenthesis, reflecting the historical directionality of the process:

- (2) (a) $\emptyset \rightarrow a / i, u _ _ k, ng, h, r, l \#$
 (b) $\emptyset \rightarrow i / u _ _ p, t, s \#$

(The above rules are couched in the standard orthography: *ng* is a digraph representing a velar nasal, while *k* is realized word-finally as a glottal stop. Further sound changes entail that in Minangkabau in word-final position, *r* and *l* are deleted, while *s* is realized as *h*.) The Minangkabau forms cited above are the citation forms; a hitherto unnoted fact is that in actual speech they alternate with forms in which the excrescent vowel is absent, e.g. *masuk* ~ *masuk*, *putuih* ~ *putuh*.

Excrescent vowels in Minangkabau are not syllabic; for example, in (1), *-suak* and *-tuih* constitute single syllables, with the syllabic peak falling on the original vowel *u*, the excrescent vowel being of reduced nature. Most commonly, such words are analyzed as containing a complex offglide nucleus; however, under an alternative analysis, supported by some evidence from the *Sorba* ludling, the excrescent vowel may instead "go with" the final consonant, either as a complex coda or else even as a single complex segment (Crouch 2008). The alternations between forms with and without excrescent vowel raise the question which of the two forms is the underlying one. Arguments can be constructed in favour of either of the two forms being underlying, perhaps suggesting that the most appropriate analysis lies elsewhere, as for example is provided for within non-derivational frameworks such as Declarative Phonology (Bird ed. 1991 and others).

A central question is: Under what conditions do the two alternative forms, with and without the excrescent vowel, occur? Examination of a naturalistic corpus of Minangkabau speech suggests that the answer lies in the realm of phrasal phonology; specifically, forms with the excrescent vowel tend to occur at the end of a phonological phrase, or tone group, whereas forms without the excrescent vowel are more often encountered in non-final positions. However, the phrasal conditioning of the alternation is not categorical but rather a mere tendency, albeit one that is statistically significant. Thus, for a given word, the excrescent vowel is more likely to occur utterance finally than utterance medially, more likely to occur phrase finally than phrase medially, and more likely to occur at the end of a complex word (formed by compounding or reduplication) than in the middle of such a word.

In conclusion, the distribution of excrescent vowels in Minangkabau is compared with other hitherto undescribed alternations in other Malayic languages also exhibiting phrasal-phonological conditioning of an apparently statistical, non-categorical nature: among these are final excrescent nasals in Tapan, preoralization of final nasals in Balai Berkuak Malay, final glottal stops in Jakarta Indonesian, and the alternation between final *-n* and *-ng* in the Manokwari dialect of Papuan Malay. Such phrasal phonological alternations also provide a plausible diachronic basis for the process of grammaticalization leading to the development of morphological alternations between so-called absolute and oblique forms in the dialects of Kerinci (Usman 1988).

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