***Sorba*: A Minangkabau Ludling**

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Ludlings or backwards languages are of interest to linguists because of their socio-interactional features, but also because they provide valuable insights into the structure of the languages on which they are based. Malayic ludlings are abundant and are a productive source of lexical material in a number of Malay/Indonesian slangs such as *Bahasa Gay* (Boellstorff, 2004), *Prokem* (Sloane, 2003) and *Bahasa Gaul* (Gil, 2002). Malayic ludlings also provide clear evidence about the internal structure of syllables as well as revealing the facts about what constitutes a word in Malay/Indonesian. Gil (2002; 2007) demonstrates this in his discussion of seven ludlings encountered during fieldwork in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia and in Riau, Jakarta and Sumatra Barat in Indonesia.

This paper builds on the facts about syllables and words in Malay/Indonesian already established by Gil by examining *Sorba*[1], a Minangkabau ludling. To speak in this ludling, the following basic rule is applied:
  Replace the coda of the final syllable with [r], then move the final syllable to word initial position.[2]
Thus in *makan*, 'eat', the coda [n] is replaced by [r], the final syllable *kar* is moved to word initial position, and the word becomes *karma*. If the word ends in a vowel like *jadi*, 'become, happen', then the null coda is replaced by [r] and the word becomes *dirja*.

This paper will show that *Sorba* provides evidence for the existence of canonical CV and CVC syllables in Minangkabau. This paper will also present the evidence for word boundaries in Minangkabau, citing reduplicated words and compound words as examples. Evidence for the existence of affixes, clitics and particles will also be discussed. It will be shown that *Sorba* treats affixes as part of the word and subjects them to the same transformational rules, whereas clitics and particles do not undergo any transformations as a result of the ludling.

The ludling also provides further evidence for the existence of epenthetic vowels in Minangkabau. In the ludling, epenthetic vowels that appear in citation forms of Minangkabau words disappear, for example, the [a] in the final syllable of *caliak*, 'see', is removed and the *Sorba* form of the word becomes *lirca*. There are two possible analyses for this phenomenon. The first is that the epenthetic vowels form part of the syllable coda and are thus deleted when the coda is replaced by [r]. The second is that Minangkabau has utterance final stress rather than word final stress, as discussed in Gil (2006). In fluent speech the epenthetic vowels often disappear when the syllable is not in utterance final position. In the ludling, the epenthetic vowels may disappear when they are not in utterance final position because they are subject to the same stress constraints.

Speakers often make performance errors when using ludlings (Gil, 2002) and intuitions about applying the structural rules of the language to the ludling may vary considerably from speaker to speaker. So, to provide a complete picture of the ludling, this paper will also describe some of the performance errors made by the *Sorba* speakers. It will also provide examples of variation in the ludling, for example the treatment of nasal consonants across syllable boundaries.

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[1] *Sorba Lirtaba* is the name speakers use to refer to the ludling but I refer to it here just as *Sorba,* following Gil's practice of naming the ludling after the Malay/Indonesian word *bahasa*, after it has undergone the transformational rules of the ludling. Thus *sorba* comes from Minangkabau *baso*, 'language' (and *lirtaba* comes from *tabaliak*, 'backwards').
[2] The ludling data comes from conversations recorded by researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology Field Station at Universitias Bung Hatta in Padang. Many thanks to the Minangkabau researchers Yessy, Silvie and Santi for all their help and hard work. Many thanks are also due to the *Sorba* speakers: Rustam, Andi, Defri, Evita, Rostina, Maisyarah, Alek, Teti, Reni and Indah.

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