

A Geography Dialect Of Wakatobi Language In Southeast Sulawesi

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Abstract— The problems on Wakatobi language variations and there is not any completed dialectology study of Wakatobi which is relevant and beneficial to conduct this study. This study aims at (1) describing and analyzing the phonology and sound change of Wakatobi; and (2) analyzing the group of Wakatobi based on dialectometry.

This study uses generative dialectology to analyze the phonological aspect, and traditional dialectology to analyze the lexical aspect. The primary data is obtained through interviewing method in 25 villages as observation point in Wakatobi regency, and document study as secondary data. In analyzing the data, this study uses apportion and equal methods, and dialectometry method.

Wakatobi language has five vowels, namely /i, a, ε, ə, u/; and 32 consonant phonemes, they are /b/, /b̥/, /p/, /d/, /d̥/, /t/, /g/, /g̥/, /k/, /j/, /ʃ/, /ŋ/, /ñ/, /m/, /n/, /s/, /h/, /l/, /r/, /β/, /c/ /y/, /^mb/, /^mp/, /ⁿd/, /ⁿt/, /ⁿs/, /ⁿg/, /ⁿk/, /ⁿc/, /ⁿj/, and /ʔ/. There are two kinds of phonological processes of Wakatobi language discussed in this paper, namely assimilation and the structure of syllable. The assimilation process of Wakatobi occurs mostly on vowels, particularly for vowel harmony. Besides, it includes progressive and regressive assimilations. Further, Wakatobi can be grouped into six subdialects, they are (1) Waha, (2) Kapota, (3) Mandati-Lia, (4) Kaledupa, (5) Tomia, and (6) Binongko. The names of subdialect come from the names of small islands of Wakatobi and Wakatobi community.

Key words: *phonology, lexical, generative, dialectometry.*

1. Introduction

Language is one of community signs that is very crucial because it constitutes a tool to know the changing and give description about the activity in the past. In Indonesian Archipelago, there are many local languages including in Southeast Sulawesi. In this case, languages in Southeast Sulawesi have become the interesting object for the researchers since it is very unique

and various. Moreover, there are some languages in Southeast Sulawesi that have not been investigated yet, mainly the geography dialects of Wakatobi in Wakatobi island.

Wakatobi Island or Regency is an enlargement of Buton regency that has four small islands. Although those islands are separated by the sea, they use the similar language, Wakatobi. Wakatobi is a language used in Wakatobi Regency (*Tukang Besi* Island). However, Wakatobi language is not investigated yet deeply by the previous researchers and one of the reasons is the Wakatobi Island is very difficult to be reached. Wakatobi language is sometime called as *Tukang Besi* language because it has many forgers (Keraf, 1991: 212; Donohue, 1995). Besides, Donohue (1995:8) tends to use “*Tukang Besi* language” in his research since it has been known by the people at the time. Further, this language is categorized as language family of *Suai* that consists of Wanci, Kaledupa, Tomia, and Binongko dialects (Taalami, 2008: 5). Therefore, the name of Wakatobi as an abbreviation of **W**angi-**W**angi, **K**aledupa, **T**omia, and **B**inongko islands that constitutes four small islands in Wakatobi Island. Nowadays, the name of Wakatobi is very popular or famous in the society either in or out of Wakatobi’s society.

Basically, there are two main reasons why this study is conducted. First, there have not been any completed geography study of Wakatobi language, particularly for qualitative aspect. Second, the previous researchers have different result in grouping the Wakatobi. Burhanuddin (1979) and Lauder, et al. (2000) group Wakatobi in four dialects; SIL (2006:70-71) groups Wakatobi in two languages; and Language Center (2008) groups Wakatobi in four subdialects. Based on the problems, it is very relevant and beneficial to conduct the geography study of Wakatobi language (WL). The purpose of this paper is describing and analyzing the phonology and sound change of Wakatobi; and (2) analyzing the group of Wakatobi based on lexical dialectometry.

2. Theoretical Framework

Language is a communication tools that often undergoes changing related to the changes in the around environment either internal or external changes in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. Crowley and Claire (2010: 23) state that all languages may change by time to time with similar ways and interested to be investigated. The linguists believe



that every language will loss a fifth of its words and change with new words in every one thousand year, and even the change will be fast with the condition today.

The study uses theories of generative and traditional dialectology. Generative dialectology is used to describe and analyze the phonological aspects, while traditional dialectology is used to analyze the lexical aspect. Traditional dialectology considers that all language variations have the same base characteristics. Generative dialectology uses theory frame of transformational generative. It has deep and surface structures or forms. The differences of dialects is supposed as the applying of phonological formula in the deep structure. It thus source language is supposed as deep form, and its dialects as surface (integral) form from the deep structure. Further, generative dialectology can describe or explain the change of features in more detail.

3. Research Methods

This study is conducted in four islands of Wakatobi, namely Wangi-Wangi, Kaledupa, Tomia, and Binongko isands. It is mainly conducted in 25 villages as the place of data collection, namely (1) Waha, (2) Maleko, (3) Wandoka, (4) Numana, (5) Matahora, (6) Kapota, and (7) Lia Bahari Indah in Wangi-Wangi island; (8) Sombano, (9) Lauluo, (10) Buranga, (11) Lagiwai, (12) Tanjung, (13) Pajam, (14) Horuo, (15) Darawa, and (16) Kasuwari in Kaledupa island; (17) Onemay, (18) Patua, (19) Waitii, (20) Kulati, and (21) Bahari in Tomia island; (22) Rukuwa, (23) Palahidu Barat, (24) Taipabu, and (25) Popaliha in Binongko island.

The instrument used in this study is question lists consisting of 978 words and 30 phrases of Wakatobi language. The words and phrases come from the question lists arranged by Lauder (1993:311--368), Bawa (1983), and Putra (2007), and then modified based on the characteristics of study object (Wakatobi). The data collecting was done through interviewing method (Sudaryanto, 1993:131; Mahsun, 1995: 94-101). Interview was carried out by visiting all of the research locations and did the interview through the question lists provided. The collected data was then tabulated and analyzed based on the sequences of the objectives of the study. It was analyzed synchronically using apporportioned and interlingua equal methods (Sudaryanto, 1993:21-30). For grouping the Wakatobi language, it uses lexical dialectometry method.



4. Discussion

The discussion covers (1) the brief of phonology of WL, (2) the sound change of WL, and (3) grouping of WL based on lexical dialectometry.

4.1 The Phonology of WL

To identify phonemes in Wakatobi language, this study uses minimal pairs.

4.1.1 Vowel Phoneme

Based on result of the analyzed data collected in the field and compared to the previous studies, Wakatobi language has five vowel phonemes, they are /i/, /u/, /ɛ/, /ɔ/, and /a/. The following are minimal pairs to prove or to find the vowels in WL.

- 1) [a] and [ɔ] ka^mba : 1-25 `flower`
 ko^mba : 1-25 `moon`
- 2) [a] and [ɛ] mɔana : 1—25 `rught`
 mɔanɛ : 1-25 `men`
- 3) [a] and [i] ana : 1-25 `child`
 ina : 1-25 `mother`
- 4) [a] and [u] aɛ : 1-25 `leg`
 uɛ : 1-21, 24,25`rattan`
- 5) [u] and [ɔ] ɔⁿku : 24 `crooked`
 ɔⁿko : 1-7 `tie`
- 6) [i] and [ɔ] saⁿki : 2,4—25 `sew`
 saⁿko : 1-7, 17-25 `cultivate`
- 7) [i] and [ɛ] laŋi : 8-25 `sky`
 laŋɛ : 5,6 14,21-25 `tomorrow`
- 8) [i] and [u] lupi : 2,4,9,23-25 `parcel/pack`
 lupu : 6 `hide`
- 9) [ɛ] and [ɔ] kɛⁿta : 8-25 `fish`
 koⁿta : 1-10,12-25 `hand`
- 10) [ɛ] and [a] ɛ:la : 1-7 `tongue`
 ala : 2-25 `take`

4.1.2 Consonant Phonemes

The following are minimal pairs to prove or to find the consonants in WL.

- 1) [p] and [β] pulu : 1-8; pullu : 9-16 `sap`
 βulu : 1—7 `fur`
- 2) [r] and [k] raha : 1-25 `blood`
 kaha : 2,6-25 `beat`



- 3) [j] and [d] ijo : 1-4; 7-25 `green`
 idɔ : 1-5,7; i:dɔ: 6 `develop`
- 4) [d] and [d] pɔdaga : 3,5-8,10,15-22,24,25 `sell`
 pɔdaga : 4,5,7 `keep`
- 5) [m^b] and [b] m^buri : 7-16 `back`
 buri : 1-25 `write`
- 6) [n] and [b] nɔha: 5-7 `wet`
 bɔha: 1-25 `heavy`
- 7) [b] and [b] {tɔ}- baβa: 1,4-7 `brought`
 baβa: 1-7 `onion`
- 8) [p] and [k] paha : 1-4,6-7,20 `thunder`
 kaha: 2,6-25 `beat`
- 9) [m} and [p] maŋa : 1, 5 `food`
 paŋa : 1-13, 15-18, 20-24 `branch`
- 10) [r] and [s] asa: 1-25 `one`
 ara: 1-25 `if`
- 11) [t] and [h] rata : 5 `land`
 raha : 1-25 `blood`
- 12) [m] and [s] pamɔ : 1—10; 12-16 `skin fungus`
 pasɔ : 1-3,5,7,10,14-16 `cocks` spur`
- 13) [t] and [d] itɔ : 1-16; 22-25 `cry`
 idɔ : 1-5,7; i:dɔ: 6 `develop`
- 14) [k] and [j] ka^mba : 3,5,10,17-22,25 `flower`
 ja^mba : 10,21; damba:7 `bath room`
- 15) [p] and [t] paⁿku : 1-3,4—8,10,14-20,22,24; paŋko:25 `back`
 taⁿku : 1,3-5; taŋkuni:2,6 `near`
- 16) [p] and [β] paⁿdɛ : 1-5,7-811—13,16 `clever`
 βaⁿdɛ : 2—7; `rain`
- 17) [r] and [h] raha : 1-25 `blood`
 nana : 1-25 `pus`
- 18) [m] and [n] ama : 1-25 `father`
 ana : 1-25 `child`
- 19) [g] and [t] gaⁿdu : 2,4-6,8-12,14-25; tanddu:13 `corn`
 taⁿdu: 1-25 `animal horns`
- 20) [g] and [ğ] gɔlu : 1-25; `ball`
 ğɔlu-ğɔlu: 25 `cloudy`
- 21) [l] and [r] lɔ^mbu : 1-7,10,12,15,17-25 `hole`
 rɔ^mbu: 1,3,18-21 `dirty`



- 22) [g] and [ŋ] bəgə : 1-7,12,14,16 `cheek`
 bəŋə : 6,12,13,21-25 `back tooth`
- 23) [s] and [t] sɔ^mbɔ : 2,5,7-8; sombo-a: 9-11,20,22-25 `seclusion`
 tɔ^mbɔ : 4-8,10-25 `jump`
- 24) [l] and [β] lɛ^mbə : 1-4,6-16,20-25 `bear`
 βɛ^mbə : 2-7, ; vembə:8-13,15,16; φembə: 17-25 `bamboo`
- 25) [c] and [k] ca^mbə : 13 `whiskers`
 ka^mbə : 3,5,10,17-22,25 `flower`
- 26) [ñ] and [r] jambu mɔ^ñɛ : 4,7,11,15 `cashew`
 mɔ^rɛ : 1-7,12,13,15,17-25 `cough`
- 27) [s] and [m] saⁿkɔ : 1-7,16-21,24,25 `mattock`
 maⁿkɔ : 1,3-9,11 `cup`
- 28) [β] and [d] βəβɔ : 2,4,5, `smoke`
 dʌβɔ : 1-7 `brother in law`
- 29) [y] and [k] yilu : 1,3-5,7-9,15 `spittle`
 kilu : 21 `incurved`
- 30) [ʰk] and [∅] siⁿka : 1-8,10-14,16-20,22-25 `crowbar`
 sia : 20-25 `see`
- 31) [ʰk] and [ʰd] liⁿka : 2,5-7,12,16,22,25 `sideways`
 liⁿda : 1-15 `move`
- 32) [ʰb] and [ʰd] ka^mbə : 3,5,10,17-22,25 `flower`
 kaⁿda : 1,9,11,13,15-17,19-25 `stable`
- 33) [ʰp] and [k] tɔ^mpə : 5,6 `throw`
 tɔkə : 17 `or`
- 34) [ʰt] and [n] lɔⁿtɔ : 1,2,4,6-8,10-12,14-25 `float`
 lɔnɔ : 4,8-25 `cloud`
- 35) [ʰd] and [ʰs] ʰdala : 5,6 `light`
 ʰsala : 4,5 `pavement`
- 36) [ʰg] and [ʰd] liⁿga : 23,24 `sideways`
 liⁿda : 1-15 `move`
- 37) [ʔ] and [β] dʌʔɔ : 8-13,15 `bad`
 dʌβɔ : 1-7 `brother in law`
- 38) [ʃ] dan [j] əfərə : 2,3,9,14,21 `horse` (541)
 əjərə{e} : 1,3,18-20 `teach` (813)
- 39) [ʰc] dan [ʰj] kaⁿcia : 8-16 `junk` (980)
 kaⁿjia : 8-16 `telling fortunes by card` (994)



The contoid pairs existed in minimal pairs. Therefore, they are proved as different consonant phonemes, /b/, /b̃/, /p/, /d/, /d̃/, /t/, /g/, /g̃/, /k/, /j/, /ʃ/, /ŋ/, /ñ/, /m/, /n/, /s/, /h/, /l/, /r/, /β/, /c/ /y/, /^mb/, /^mp/, /ⁿd/, /ⁿt/, /ⁿs/, /ⁿg/, /ⁿk/, /ⁿc/, /ⁿj/, and /ʔ/.

4.2 The Sound Change of WL

There are three kinds of sound changes in WL, namely assimilation, structure of syllable, and vowel lengthening. This subunit only describes two kinds of sound changes of Wakatobi language, namely assimilation and the structure of syllable. The assimilation process of Wakatobi occurs mostly on vowels, particularly on vowel harmony. Besides, it includes progressive and regressive assimilations. For progressive, it can be seen from the example below:

tiⁿkɔɛ: 4,10-12,14-20,22-24 → *tikiɛ*:2 'pick'
ɔta: 1,3,6,9-11,14-16,20,22,24 → *utɔ*: 4,5,8,12,13,18,19,21 'brain'

The examples above show that the assimilation is going to the right. Vowel /i/ assimilates vowel /ɔ/, so /ɔ/ becomes /i/; and vowel /ɔ/ assimilates vowel /a/, so /a/ becomes /ɔ/. It has principle as follows: a word or a gloss that has two syllables with different features of the vowels [+high, -back, -round]: /i/ and [-high, +back, +round]: /ɔ/ become vowels with similar features [+ high, -back, -round] : /i/ and [+ high, -back, -round] : /i/ by following the first or vowel in the front.

For regressive, it can be seen from the following examples.

tɔki-tɔki: 2,5-8,10-18, 20-25 → *tiki-tiki*: 1,3,4,9 'knock'
ⁿdudi: 8-11,14 → *ⁿdili*: 2-7 'kacoa'
kanɔkau: 9-19,21,22,25 → *kɔhɔkau*: 23 'cassava'

The examples above show that the assimilation is going to the left. Vowel /i/ assimilates vowel /ɔ/ and /u/, so /ɔ/ and /u/ becomes /i/; and vowel /ɔ/ assimilates vowel /a/, so /a/ becomes /ɔ/. It has principle as follows: a word or a gloss that has two syllables with different features of the vowels [+high, +back, +round]: /i/ or [+back, +round, -low): /ɔ/, and [+high, -back, -round]: /i/ become vowels with similar features [+high, -back, -round] : /i/ and [+high, -back, -round] : /i/ by following the second or vowel in the following.



The sound change of WL based on structure of syllable consists of addition of segment, loss of segment, change of segment, and metathesis. This paper only focuses on addition and loss of segments. Based on the data, the addition of segment covers 1) addition of vowel, particularly for vowel [a] and 2) addition of glottal [ʔ]. The addition of vowel [a] can be seen in the following examples.

tuuki: 2,6,10,12 → *tuuki^ya*: 4,5,7,14,16-20,22-25 'fireplace'
mate: 1-7,16-25 → *mate^ya*: 8-15 'death'

The example of addition of glottal [ʔ] can be seen in the data below.

karaja: : 1-7,17-25 → *karajaʔa*: 8-16 'work'
ɔlɔ: :1,2,4-7 → *ɔlɔʔɔ*: 8-24 'sun'

Wakatobi language has three kinds of lossing of segment, namely (1) lossing of vowel, (2) lossing of consonant, and (3) lossing of syllable. Lossing of vowel covers lossing of vowels /i, ε, a/, as in the following examples.

ilaŋε: 2-4,7,9-12,14,16-21 → *laŋε*: 5,6,15,22-25 'tomorrow'
tεʔεmaŋa: 17-21 → *tεmaŋa*: 8-16 'food'
asahatu: 17-22 → *sahatu*: 1-16,23-25 'a hundred'

Lossing of consonant can be divided into four parts, namely (1) lossing of plosive, (2) lossing of trill, (3) lossing of fricative, and (4) lossing of semivowel. Lossing of plosive can be seen in the following examples.

kaluku:1-16,22-25 → *kulɔu*:17-21 'coconut'
akɔdia:8,10-16,20-23,25 → *akɔia*: 17,19 'often'

Lossing of trill can be seen in the following example.

kurapu:2-16,22-24 → *kuahu*:17-19 'kind of fish'

The data below is the example of lossing of fricative (h) and semivowel (y).

hɛlɔppɔ:16-24 → *ɛlɔpɔ*: 8,9,14 'wall'
yimaŋa: 1,5 → *imaŋa*: 2-4,6,7 'food'

The last, lossing of syllable can occur in all position either in the preantepenultimate, antepenultimate, penultimate, or ultimate, as in the following examples.

mɔkɔluluŋɔ:23 → *mɔluluŋɔ*: 7,11,14,15,25 'silppery'
lɔlabi: 2,5,21,22,4 → *ladi*: 4,10,12,13,17-20 'a place to put food'
hɔari:8-25 → *aria*:1-4,6,7 'locust'
saⁿdu kaafulu: 2,7 → *saⁿdu kauβa*:8,9,11-15 'spoon from coconut shell'



4.3 Grouping of WL Based on Dialectometry

Grouping of WL is conducted by applying the lexical dialectometry method. It is done by counting the gloss range (in the amount of 978 glosses) among 25 villages as observation centers (OC). The result of dialectometry is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Result of Dialectometry

OC	LF	OC	LF	OC	LF	OC	LF
1 : 2	gp	6 : 8	gs	12 : 13	nd	18 : 20	gp
1 : 3	nd	6 : 9	gs	12 : 15	gp	18 : 21	nd
1 : 6	gs	6 : 14	gs	13 : 14	gp	19 : 21	gp
2 : 3	gp	6 : 24	gs	13 : 15	gp	19 : 22	gp
2 : 5	gp	7 : 8	gs	13 : 16	gp	19 : 24	gs
3 : 4	gp	8 : 9	gp	14 : 16	nd	20 : 21	gp
3 : 5	gp	8 : 10	nd	14 : 19	gs	20 : 22	gp
3 : 6	gp	9 : 10	gp	14 : 24	gs	20 : 23	gs
4 : 5	nd	9 : 11	gp	15 : 16	gp	20 : 25	gs
4 : 6	gp	9 : 14	gp	15 : 17	gs	21 : 22	gs
4 : 7	gp	10 : 11	nd	15 : 18	gs	22 : 23	nd
5 : 7	gp	10 : 12	gp	16 : 17	gs	22 : 24	gp
5 : 8	gs	10 : 15	gp	16 : 19	gs	23 : 24	gp
5 : 10	gs	11 : 12	gp	17 : 18	gp	23 : 25	gp
5 : 15	gs	11 : 13	gp	17 : 19	gp	24 : 25	gp
6 : 7	gp	11 : 14	nd	18 : 19	gp		

Explanation:

LF = Level of Difference; gs = group of subdialect; gp = group of parler; nd = no difference

Based on the result of dialectometry presented in the table above, Wakatobi language can be grouped into six subdialects, namely (1) Waha (OC 1), (2) Kapota (OC 6), (3) Mandati-Lia (OC 2-5,7), (4) Kaledupa (OC 8-16), (5) Tomia (OC 17-21), and (6) Binongko (OC 22-25). Subdialect Mandati-Lia can be grouped into three parlars, they are (a) Center and South Wangi-Wangi (OC 3-5), (b) Maleko (OC 2), and (c) Lia Bahari Indah (OC 7). Center and South Wangi-Wangi includes Wandoka, Numana, and Matahora. Subdialect Kaledupa is grouped into three parlars, they are, (a) Southeast Kaledupa covering Sombano, Buranga, Tanjung, Pajam, and Darawa (OC 8,10,12,13,15), (b) Center and West Kaledupa covering Lagiway, Horuo, and Kasuwari (OC 11,14,16), and (c) North Kaledupa Utara, Lauluo (OC 9). Subdialect Tomia is grouped into four parlars, they are (a) Patua-Bahari (OC 18,21), (b) Onemay (OC 17), (c) Waiti (OC 19), and (d) Kulati (OC 20). Subdialect Binongko is grouped into three parlars, they are (a)



North Binongko (OC 22,23), (b) Palahidu (OC 24), and (c) Togo Binongko (OC 25). North Binongko includes Rukuwa and Palahidu Barat (OC 22,23).

5. Novelties

This study which is mentioned has three novelties, as follows. First, theoretically, studying of sound change should consider not only the criteria from some linguists but also the characteristics of language investigated. Second, methodologically, it criticizes the method of linguistics history comparative in grouping the language by relying on only 200 Swadesh lists. Grouping the language in quantitative way should use more number of words or should be more than 800 words in order the language variations are more accurate. Last, empirically, the grouping of Wakatobi language has closed relation to the geographics aspect. From 6 subdialects of Wakatobi language, 5 of them are found or located in different islands, namely Kapota subdialect in Kapota island, Mandati-Lia subdialect in Wangi-Wangi island, Kaledupa subdialect in Kaledupa island, Tomia subdialect in Tomia island, and Binongko subdialect in Binongko island. The aspect of geographic range actually has a very important role for variations of Wakatobi language because other aspects like social and culture, job, education, and environment are not different among islands in Wakatobi.

Furthermore, the grouping of Wakatobi language based on geographic range is in line with the contact intensivity among people of Wakatobi. It means that when the people has high contact, their language tends to be more similar. In contrast, when the people has low contact, their language tends to be more different.

6. Closing

Based on the result of this study, some conclusions can be drawn as follows. Wakatobi language has 5 vowels: /i, a, ε, ɔ, u/; and 32 consonants: /b/, /β/, /p/, /d/, /dʒ/, /t/, /g/, /gʃ/, /k/, /j/, /f/, /ŋ/, /ñ/, /m/, /n/, /s/, /h/, /l/, /r/, /β/, /c/ /y/, /^mb/, /^mp/, /ⁿd/, /ⁿt/, /ⁿs/, /ⁿg/, /ⁿk/, /ⁿc/, /ⁿj/, and /ʔ/. The assimilation process of Wakatobi occurs mostly on vowels, particularly for vowel harmony. Besides, it includes progressive and regressive assimilations. Based on the structure of syllable which focusing on addition and lossing of segment that subdialects of WL has three kinds of addition of segments, namely 1) addition of vowel, 2) addition of glottal [ʔ], and 3) addition of



semivowel glide [^β,^y]; and three kinds of lossing of segments, namely (1) lossing of vowel, (2) lossing of consonant, and (3) lossing of syllable. Wakatobi language can be grouped into six subdialects, namely (1) Waha, (2) Kapota, (3) Mandati-Lia, (4) Kaledupa, (5) Tomia, and (6) Binongko.

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