

1. Introduction

In today's globalized society, there are increasingly multilingual communities where several languages are spoken. In multilingual communities, people often use many languages based on the situations, the people they are communicating with, and the purpose of their interaction. For instance, depending on contexts, international students studying at university may decide to communicate in a certain language. This dynamic environment allows individuals to interact and learn from each other in a multilingual environment, which promotes rich cultural exchange and understanding.

Most universities often offer study abroad or student exchange programs to pursue academic goals in a foreign country. These programs help students learn about different cultures, languages, and people from different countries, change their global perspective, and create international relationships. According to UNESCO data (2020), Indonesia, a multilingual country with 1,331 ethnic groups, ranks 22nd globally in the number of students studying abroad, with 55,961 students. Australia is the largest study destination, with 12,852 students or 22.96% of the total Indonesian students studying abroad. These students come from various ethnic groups, one of which is the Minangkabau ethnic group.

According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in the 2010 Population Census, Minangkabau is considered the seventh largest major ethnic group in Indonesia, after the ethnic groups of Javanese, Sundanese, Batak, Sulawesi, Madura, and Betawi. This ethnic group is famous for its moving population and migration (Auliana et al., 2023). The Minangkabau ethnic group is known for having the ability to quickly adjust to the new environment, so the migration has become a continuous tradition. Minangkabau people migrate with the aim of earning a better living and broadening their knowledge. A Minangkabau proverb, "*Karatau madang di hulu, babuah babungo balun, ka rantau bujang dahulu di rumah paguno balun (If you can't significantly help others in your hometown, it is advisable to pursue success outside),*" motivates the Minangkabau youth to migrate/go abroad (Handoko & Putri, 2017).

A number of Minangkabau youth migrate for knowledge-based reasons, focusing on foreign countries, such as Australia, the US, Singapore, Turkey, Japan, etc. In this present study context, the foreign country only focuses on Malaysia. As they live and study outside Indonesia, Minangkabau youth may choose and select a language to understand different linguistic backgrounds, for example, using English that is regarded as academic lingua franca or speaking the local language with the local speakers of the country they study. Characterized differences such as culture, social identity, interlocutors, and personal preference are significant factors that often make the Minangkabau people adjust their language-choice patterns. Along with this condition, it forms their opinions and feelings toward the preference of languages that they use during their college life and educational process. Therefore, it creates an emergence of sociolinguistic issues, particularly language choice and attitude, which make them worth investigating.

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MINANGNESE STUDENTS' LANGUAGE CHOICE AND LANGUAGE ATTITUDE AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF MALAYSIA

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