

GENERIC NAMES ACROSS LANGUAGES IN THE REGION¹

INTRODUCING AN INDONESIAN CASE STUDY

by
Jacub Rais²

ABSTRACT

Generic elements of geographical features are actually the spatio-morphological names of features that make up the landscape in spoken languages of those people who were roaming or settling for the first time in the areas in the past. Rivers, lakes, hills, mountains, valleys, etc. are just examples of generic elements of features of the landscape. River, for example, in the Indonesian or Malay languages are called “sungai” Different races or ethnics name them differently. For example, the word “River” for “Wai” in Lampung, “Krueung” in Aceh, “Batang” in Jambi, Riau, and North Sumatra, etc. The generic element “Wai” is the most extensive generic terms across the languages all over Indonesia, such as in Sumbawa, Flores, Toraja (South Sulawesi), Buru, Seram, Sula (Maluku). West Papua. In other places it is called Uai (Talaud, North Sulawesi), Uwei or Uwae (Central Sulawesi).

Wai as river, stream or water is also found in the South Pacific islands, such as in Nauru, Tonga, Hawaii and New Zealand. In some places in New Zealand it is called “Vai”. It might be also true that water in West Jawa (Sundanese language) is called “Cai”, a derivation of “wai”, and for river it is called “Ci”, such as Ci Tarum, Ci Liwung. etc.

It is indeed worth studying the spread of the word Wai, from the western part of Indonesia to the South Pacific islands, so as to study the mobility of our ancestors in the past.

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² Prof. Dr. Jacub Rais: Emeritus professor at the Institute of Technology at Bandung (ITB), Member of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences and the Chairman of the Indonesian Group of Experts in Toponymy

INTRODUCTION TO LANGUAGES IN INDONESIA

Indonesia is a country of multi-ethnics/multi-races. Even though “Bahasa Indonesia” is the official unity language, there are 726 spoken ethnic languages recorded by the Language Institute of the University of Indonesia. These figures make up 12% of the world languages. Fifty percents of the World languages are found in Asia and Oceania. (Lauder 2008) ³

There are 5 largest ethnic languages spoken by more than 10 mill. people, namely the Javanese language in East and Central Jawa (75,6 mill.), the Sundanese language in West Jawa (27 mill.), the Madurese language on the island of Madura with 13,7 mill. speakers. The island of Jawa comprises the Jawa island and the Madura island, now connected with a bridge across the Madura strait with a geographical name coined as “Suramadu”, which actually is a shortened name “Surabaya-Madura”.

The Malay language, the root of the Indonesian language which has been spoken in Riau, East Sumatra, Bangka-Bilitung, Kalimantan (the Indonesian Borneo) from the Upper Kapuas River (the Mbau tribes) to coastal population (see attached map), and scattered as lingua franca in other islands, spoken by 20 mill. speakers. There are nine other ethnic languages spoken by more than 1 to 6 mill. speakers, distributed in Sumatra (Aceh, Batak, Lampung, Rejang), Bali, Lombok and Sulawesi (Makassar). The rest of the languages are spoken by less than three speakers up to a couple of thousand of speakers. (Lauder *ibid.*). Within the languages there are not to mention here the colloquial dialects and slangs which are different from place to place

A geographical/place/topographical name, in fact, consists of two elements, the generic and the specific elements, respectively. Most local languages relate to the generic terms since naming of features already exist during the early settlement of those people in the regions in the past.

In fact, those generic terms (names) have existed since the early history of human migration from South Asia, Burma/Myanmar, China, Indo-China, Middle East and Europeans (Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, British), Arabs, South India, Sri Lanka. As a matter of fact, those early inhabitants of Borneo, the first flux of migration of people from the Valley of Irrawaddy at late Pleistocene, when the big islands of Borneo, Sumatra and Jawa were part of the land mass of the Eurasian continent, those people travelled to the dead end region of the Continent, which later became the island of Borneo, when the Sunda Shelf was formed during the Holocene period and those people who lived on the island of Borneo became isolated. The survivals are to be found in the present Punans, Kenyahs, and Klemantan tribes (Klemantan tribes live along the border between Sarawak and West Kalimantan).⁴ Two thousand years later after the first flux, the second flux of people from the same valley of Irrawaddy moves southwards and settled in Borneo and Sumatra. These are the Kayans, Muruts and Ibans. In the case of Ibans, even though they were newcomers, so the speak, they brought with them something which is older than

³ Lauder, M. 2008. *Info Kebahasaan untuk Toponymy di Indonesia* (Languages Information for Topographical Naming in Indonesia.) Paper presented at Toponymic Workshop. Jakarta 2007

⁴ Hose, Ch. 1988. *Natural Man – A Record from Borneo*. Singapore: Oxford University Press

themselves, namely, their language. Iban, which would seem to be the tongue out of which Malay, as spoken today⁵

In the spreading of Malay languages as lingua franca spoken by coastal people from S.E.Asia up to the Polynesian Islands in the Pacific, and this group of languages has been called the Malayo-Polynesian Languages.

This group of languages were found from Malagasy (Madagaskar), Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Philippine in South East Asia, and in Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Western Samoa, Tonga, and New Zealand Maori.⁶

It should also be mentioned here, that geographically the following groups: (a) Australian aborigine languages; and (b) Papuan Languages in the Indonesian Papua Province and the State of Papua New Guinea. Another source of information stated that the Austronesian language family comprises the Indonesian, Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian sub-family and the Malayo-Polynesian.^{7,8}

The Generic terms in the Specific Names

For example: the Indonesian/Malay word for River or “Sungai”. The local language of “sungai” in Lampung Province) is called “Wai”. If the specific name of the river is “Seputih” then, the topographical name should be written in two words, as **Wai Seputih**. This is also true for other generic names, in Indonesian or local languages that the generic names should be separately written from the specific name. A number of examples : **Gunung Merapi, Bukit Menoreh, Tanjung Apiapi**, etc. Merapi, Menoreh, Apiapi, etc. is the “Gunung, Bukit, Tanjung”, respectively

However, there are many cases that the specific names themselves use generic term as prefix or affix, while the generic term may be different or the same as the generic term used as a compound word in the specific name. In these cases the specific names should be written as a compound word. For example, Kota “**Gunungsitoli**”, Kota “**Bukittinggi**”, Kota “**Tanjungpinang**”, **Pulau Waigeo**, kota **Waingapu**, **Kota Kotamubago**, **Pulau Pulaulaut** (the last two examples show, where generic term is included in the specific name with the same generic terms of the topographical names, resp.)

The word “kuala” or “muara” or “muaro” in local dialect is a generic name, meaning “ the mouth of a river”. There is a village/town in Jambi, now called Muarojambi (as a compound word). In the 7th century, during the rein of a Budhist Kingdom it was the mouth of Batang Hari (batang is a generic term for river in central Sumatra) and it was written as Muaro Jambi);

⁵ Hose, *ibid.* p.6

⁶ Usman, Z. 1975. Bahasa Melayu sebelum dan sesudah menjadi Lingua Franca. Jakarta: Yayasan Idayu

⁷ <http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austronesia>. Also in Webster New World Dictionary of the American Language.

⁸ Burton, J and J.Kennedy (Eds.). 1990. The Earlier Prehistory of Melanesia. Dept. of Anthropology and Biology. University of Papua New Guinea.

Another example in West Java. The generic name of a river is called “Ci” such as Ci Tarum (two words). Later a dam (also a generic term) was built and the dam is called “Bendungan Citarum” (Citarum is written as a compound word, since it has been the name of the dam, and not of the river). Later a proposal from the society of West Java was submitted to rename the dam with a name of someone to commemorate his extra ordinary services to the country as a prime minister, and the dam is now called “Bendungan Djuanda”.⁹

The Spreading of the Generic Term “Wai”

The first word in the world is “aqva” (in Arabic), which means “water”, when the first walk of people “Out of Africa” crossing the Red Sea.¹⁰ Water is the substance of life. During the centuries and through language evolution, the word “wai”, designates water for stream or river. the Indonesian/Malay word for water is **air**, and **ayer**, **ai**, **aek** in local dialects. This word is used as generic term for “river” in Sumatra, such as Air Molek. Aek Nopan, or as place names: Airmadidi, Airmere, Aileo, Airpanas, etc.

The generic name “Wai” is the most extensive generic terms across the languages all over Indonesia, such as in Sumbawa, Flores. Toraja (South Sulawesi), Buru, Seram, Sula (Maluku). West Papua). In other places it is called Uai (Talaud, North Sulawesi), Uwei or Uwae (Central Sulawesi).

Wai as river, stream or water is also found in the South Pacific islands, such as in Nauru, Tonga, Hawaii and New Zealand. In some places in New Zealand it is called “Vai”.¹¹

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Objectives of the Divisional Toponymic Activity

The objective of this activity is to trace and to study the human mobility in the past in this part of the world through the study of toponymy. Other references quoted from the study made by Steve Olson (2002)¹² and Stix 2009¹³, quote “*If we know the whole human genealogy then we can classify the human races according the current use of languages, and the slow*

⁹ Djuanda is the name of a prime minister of the Republic in 1957. He proposed to the UN that Indonesia should be an archipelagic state with boundary connecting the outermost points of the outermost islands, and the breadth of the territorial sea be increased from 3 nautical miles to 12 nautical miles. We called the “Djuanda Declaration” and his proposal in now included in UNCLOS 1982

¹⁰ Olson, S. 2002. *Mapping the Human History* (Genes, Races, and the Origin of Human Being) through tracing Mitochondria DNA). Mariners Book, New York (translated in Indonesian by Serambi Ilmu Semesta in 2004)

¹¹ New Zealand Geographic Board. 1991. Proceedings: South Pacific Place Names. Wellington 5 – 7 November 1990

¹² Olson, S. (*ibid.*)

¹³ Stix, G. 2008. Traces of Distant Past – DNA furnishes an ever clearer picture of multimillennial trek from Africa all the way to the tip of South America.. In *Scientific American*. **299 (1): 38-44**

change of the dialects, based on the genealogy, then the genealogy of human races is the only correct one”, unquote

The language aspects in the Division will be exposed in the proposal to change the name of the Division to language division, as this is worth studying the interaction of people in the past history. “The Polynesians In Hawaii were the descendents of those people who live in South-east Asia and Melanesia, including Papua New Guinea and the surrounding islands”¹⁴, which might be more interesting to study the mobility of the population in the past.

Attachments

The Indonesian Case study of generic terms in the ASEPSW Division

Attachment 1 shows the Indonesian case study. We plan, for the time being, to limit the generic names only on natural features, such as rivers, mountains, hills, lakes, islands, etc

The template consists of 6 columns:

Column 1. consecutive number

Column 2: the generic name in Indonesian language

Column 3: the English name

Column 4 : the local generic name

Column 5 : the position of the generic names in the administrative division (Provinces)

Column 6 : the name of the local language; in most cases, the local name is identical with the name of the administrative division. We still have to talk to the local tribal/clan head in order to obtain the exact name of the local languages.

In Appendix II, is a map of language distribution in Kalimantan in order to obtain a picture of languages in Kalimantan.

In Appendix III, a model of form presented by Asia Pacific Institute of Toponymy (APIT) at the 10th Divisional Meeting in Kuala Lumpur for the “project of Generic Names Across Languages in the Region”

¹⁴ Olson, *ibid.* p. 319

Attachment I

Generic Terms of Topographic / Geographic Names Across the Local Languages in Indonesia

No.	Indonesian	English	Generic Name	Administrative Position	Local Languages
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Sungai	River	Aalaa	C. Sulawesi	
			Aek	N. Sumatra	Mandailing
			Air	W. Sumatra	Malayu
			Ake	N. Maluku	Ternate
			Baho	C. Sulawesi	
			Balang	C. Sulawesi	
			Banagga	C. Sulawesi	
			Bangkalang	C. Sulawesi	
			Batang	N. Sumatra	Tapanuli
			Batang	Jambi	
			Batang	W. Sumatra	
			Batang	S. Sumatra	Palembag
			Batangdanum	C. Kalimantan	Ngaju
			Binanga	S. Sulawesi	Makassar
			Binangga	C. Sulawesi	Donggala
			Boho	C. Sulawesi	
			Botakio	C. Sulawesi	Buolitolitoli
			Botakna	C. Sulawesi	Buolitolitoli
			Botaonyo	Gorontalo	Buolitolitoli
			Botau	C. Sulawesi	Buolitolitoli
			Bataia	Gorontalo	Gorontalo
			Bataia	C. Sulawesi	
			Butakio	C. Sulawesi	
			Brang	Sumbawa	Sumbawa
			Ci	W. Jawa	Sunda
			Hungai	W. Kalimantan	Ma'nyan
			Jenne	C. Sulawesi	
			Jol	Papua	
			Kali	Sumatra-Jawa	Melayu
			Kokar	Sumbawa	
			Kokok	Lombok	Sasak
			Krueng	Aceh	Aceh
			Lahar	C. Sulawesi	
			Lao	N. Sumatra	Tapanuli
			Lawe	Aceh	Aceh

			Lebak	S.Sumatra	Palembang
			Liu	C.Kalimantan	Ngaju
			Loku	Sumbawa	
			Lowo	Flores	
			Mota	Timor	
			Meta	Timor	Wetar
			Nguai	Halmahera	
			Noil	Flores	
			Oil	Flores	
			Pangu	C.Kalimantan	
			Pangkung	Bali	Bali
			Paisu	Halmahera	
			Paisu	C.Sulawesi	Banggai
			Poisu	C.Sulawesi	Banggai
			Salo	C.Sulawesi	Buoltolitoli
			Salok	C.Kalimantan	Otdanum
			Salu	C.Sulawesi	
			Sava	Papua	Selaru Isl.
			Selat	C.Kalimantan	Ngaju
			Terusan	C.Kalimantan	Banjar
			Tatah	S.Kalimantan	Banjar
			Tukad	Bali	Bali
			Tulung	S.Sulawesi	
			U	Timor	Timor
			Ue	C.Sulawesi	Poso
			Owai	C.Sulawesi	Poso
			Uwai	C.Sulawesi	Donggala
			Uwe	C.Sulawesi	Poso
			Uwei	C.Sulawesi	Poso
			Uai	N. Sulawesi	Talau
			Wai	Sumatra	Lampung
			Wai	NTT	Sumba
			Wai	Buru	Maluku
			Wai	Seram	Maluku
			Wai	Sula Isl.	Maluku North
			Wai	W.Papua	
			Wai	S.Sulawesi	TOraja
			Waiyan	Seram Isl.	Maluku
			Werkana	C.Sulawesi	
			Weye	Papua	
			Yeh	Bali	Bali
			Yer	Papua	
2.	Pulau	Island	Alibuto	Gorontalo	Gorontalo
			Busung	C.Kalimantan	Kayan
			Gili	Flores	
			Gili	Lombok	

			Lalemo	C.Sulawesi	
			Libuton	N.Sulawesi	Minahasa
			Lihuto	Gorontalo	Gorontalo
			Liito	Gorontalo	Gorontalo
			Liito	Halmahera	
			Mios	Maluku	
			Meos	Maluku	
			Nisa	Sumbawa	
			Nusa	Bali, Jawa	Sanskrit
			Nuha	Sulawesi	
			Nuha	Sumbawa	
			Nus	Bali	
			Pulo	Jakarta	Betawi
			Pusung	S.Sulawesi	
			Togong	C.Sulawesi	Banggai
			Tokong	Riau	
			Toade	N.Sulawesi	Minahasa
			Towade	N.Sulawesi	Sangir
			Yef	W.Papua	
			Yus	Papua	
			Yu	Riau	Chinese
			Togong	C.Sulawesi	Bugis
			Tokong	Riau	Chinese
3.	Gunung	Mountain	Adian	N.Sumatra	Tapanuli
			Buiro	N.Sulawesi	
			Bukii (Bt)	C.Sulawesi	
			Bulu	S.Sulawesi	
			Bulu	S.E.Sulawesi	
			Bulud	C.Sulawesi	
			Bulud	N.Sulawesi	
			Bulur	N.Sulawesi	
			Buluye	C.Sulawesi	
			Buluye	Gorontalo	
			Bungkuinyo	C.Sulawesi	
			Buntu	S.Sulawesi	
			Buntu	S.E.Sulawesi	
			Buttu (Bt)	S.Sulawesi	Bugis
			Buttu (Bt)	W.Sulawesi	Bugis
			Buyu	S.Sulawesi	
			Buyu	W.Sulawesi	
			Buyule	C.Sulawesi	
			Bur	Aceh	Gayo
			Cot (Bt)	Aceh	Aceh
			Coppo	S.Sulawesi	Bugis?
			Dede	Timor	

	Deleng	N.Sumatra	Tapanuli
	Deleng	Aceh	Gayo
	Delong	N.Sumatra	Tapanuli
	Delong	Aceh	Gayo
	Doto	Sumbawa	
	Doto	Flores	
	Doro	Sumbawa	
	Doro	Flores	
	Dungusan	N.Sulawesi	
	Fatu	Timor, Flores	
	Foho	Timor, Flores	
	Fude	Buru	Maluku
	Fuyul	C.Sulawesi	
	Geger (Bt)	C.Jawa	Javanese
	Gle (Bt)	Aceh	Aceh
	Golo	NTB	Flores
	Gunong (Bt)	ACEH	Aceh
	Guguk	Jambi	
	Gumuk (Bt)	C.Jawa	
	Hatu	Seran	Maluku
	Hili	N.Sumatra	Nias
	Hol	Timor	NTB
	Huidu	C.Sulawesi	
	Huidu	Gorontalo	
	Huidu	N.Sulawesi	
	Hukiri	N.Sulawesi	
	Hukiru	Gorontalo	
	Hukiru	N.Sulawesi	
	Huhun	Wetar Isl.	Timor
	Igir (Bt)	C.Jawa	
	Ili	Flores	
	Kentur	N.Sulawesi	
	Keli	Flores	
	Kong	E.Kalimantan	Kayan
	Kosibak	N.Sulawesi	
	Kuntung (Bt)	N.Sulawesi	
	Lolo	Timor	
	Lubang	N.Sulawesi	
	Mbotu	Flores	
	Mbukit (Bt)	Gorontalo	
	Mbukit (Bt)	N.Sulawesi	
	Moncong	S.Sulawesi	
	Mundu	Bali, Lombok	
	Ngalau	N.Sumatra	
	Ngga	Papua	
	Nuaf	Timor	

	Olet	Subawa	
	Padang	Sumbawa	
	Palindi	Sumba	
	Pasir (Bt)	W.Jawa	Sunda
	Pematang	Sumatra	
	Poco	Flores	
	Pucuk	N.Sumatra	
	Puruk	C.Kalimantan	Ngaju
	Putuk	E.Jawa	
	Sampar	W.Sumatra	
	Tanete (Bt)	S.Sulawesi	
	Tanete (Bt)	W.Sulawesi	
	Tangkit	N.Sumatra	
	Tandulu	Sumba	
	Tinetan	Seram	Maluku
	Tintane	Seram	Maluku
	Tintin	E.Kalimantan	
	Tor	N.Sumatra	Tapanuli
	Tutu	N.Sumatra	Tapanuli
	Uker	Seram	Maluku
	Uruk	W.Sumatra	
	Ulate	Seram	Seram
	Unter	Sumbawa	
	Wagir	C.Jawa	
	Wolo	Flores	

Dayak Groups of Kalimantan



Fig. 2. Map of Ethnic Distribution and the respective ethnic languages

APPENDIX III

APIT Form for Generic Names across the languages in the Division.

English	Indonesian	Malay	Javanese	Balinese
town	kota		kota	kota
village	desa		desa	
harbour	Pelabuhan, bandar			
sea	laut		segara	
island	pulau		pulau	nusa
reef	Terumbu karang		batu karang	terumbu karang
atoll	atol, pulau karang		atol	laguna
lagoon	laguna		selat	selat
strait	selat			
isthmus	semenanjung sempit			
peninsula	semenanjung			
coast	pesisir		pesisir	pesisir
beach	pantai		pantai	pantai
headland	tanjung			
cape	tanjung			
bay	teluk		teluk	teluk
hill	bukit			
mountain	gunung			
range	barisan pegunungan			
Ridge	pematang, gunung			
Peak	puncak			
Pass	pas, jalan tembus pegunungan			
plateau	dataran tinggi			
cliff	tebing		gigir	
ravine	jurang			
rock	batu-batuan			
valley	lembah			
Plain	dataran rendah			
River	sungai, kali, batang		kali, bengawan, ci	jenne
waterfall	air terjun		coban	
rapids	jeram			
lake	danau	tasik		
spring	mata air			
forest	hutan		alas	
jungle	hutan belantara		hutan belantara	hutan belantara
grassland	padang rumput		padang rumput	padang rumput
marsh	rawa-rawa			
desert	padang pasir		padang pasir	padang pasir
plantation	perkebunan		perkebunan	perkebunan
park	taman		taman	taman
bridge	jembatan		jembatan	jembatan

English	Tagalog	Tetum	Fijian	Maori
town	lunsód	sidadi (P), kota (I)	siti	
village	bayan	vila (P), desa (I)	koro	kāinga
harbour	dáungan	pontikais (P)	Ikelekele ni waga	aka
sea	dágat	tasi	wasa	moana
island	pulò	Ilha (P), pulau (I)	yanuyanu	moutere
reef	bahura		cakau	akau
atoll				
lagoon				hāpua
strait				kìkì
isthmus				
peninsula				
coast	babáy-degat	tasiibun , kosta (P)	bāravi	tai
beach	apláya (P)	tasiibun, praia (P)	matāsawa	tuku
headland			ucuna	kūrae
cape				rae
bay			toba	whanga
hill	buról	rai lonon	delan	puke
mountain	bundók	foho	ulunivanua	maunga
range			veidelana	paeroa
ridge				takukahiwi
peak	tuktók, taluktók	foho tutun		tihi
pass	landás			kapiti
plateau				papataerite rewa
cliff	talbis	rai naruk		pari
ravine				pakohu
cave	kwéba(S)	fatuk kuak, gruta	qaravatu	ana
rock	batuhán	fatuk	vatu	toka
valley	lambák	tetuk	buca	riu
plain			bucabuca	mānia
river	ilog	mota	uciwai	awa
waterfall	talón	be monu	savu	wairere
rapids				au
lake	lawà	Be lhun, lagoa (P)	drano	roto
spring		be matan	waikatakata	puna
forest	gubat	ailaran	veiku	hangaruru

jungle			veikelola	
grassland			veiko	hū
marsh			talāgasiga	
desert	disyerto (S)			koraha
plantation		Plantasaun (P)		
park	parke (S)		rërë	
bridge	tuláy	Ponte (P), jembatan (I)	wavu	piriti

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