

# **HISTORICAL, SOCIO-CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL RELATIONS OF KOMERING LANGUAGE DIALECTS IN SOUTH OKU DISTRICT-SOUTH SUMATRA TO REGIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

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## **Abstract**

*Komering* language is one of the native regional languages of South Sumatra. The spread of the *Komering* language is in East OKU Regency, South OKU Regency and OKU Regency. The aim of this research is to find out whether there are historical, socio-cultural and political relations in the *Komering* language in South OKU Regency. The method used in this research is qualitative method. Interview and literature study data collection techniques. Based on the research results, it was found that the historical relationship between the *Komering* language dialect and the development of tourism in the South OKU region can be seen from how the cultural heritage and local traditions are still maintained today, such as *waya?*, *wewayahan*, and *peneto? adok*. The socio-cultural aspects of the *Komering* language can also be a special attraction for tourists who want to experience a different experience in South Oku. Get to know local culture more closely, such as customs (*lamban gedung*), traditional music (*gambus*), dance (*sumbah*), and typical culinary delights (*mujair*). From a political perspective, the South OKU government protects local culture and identity in tourism development and promotion.

**Keywords:** *Historical, sociocultural, political relation, Komering language*

## **Introduction**

Komering language is one of the local languages in South Sumatra. Based on the results of research by the Language Center of South Sumatra Province that in South Sumatra there are 7 (seven) recognized languages, namely Javanese, Kayu Agung language, Komering language, Lematang language, Malay language, Ogan language, and Pdamaran language. The Komering language is spoken in the areas of Negeri

Batin Village, Sriwangi Village, Semendawai Suku III District; Campang Tiga Village, Cempaka District; Sukaraja Village,; Pulau Negara Village, East Lubuk Linggau District; Batu Raja Bungin Village, East Ogan Komering Ulu Regency (OKUT), Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, and South Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, South Sumatra Province.

The speakers of the Komering language who are spread across 3 (three) districts based on

the research by the South Sumatra Language Center certainly communicate in different ways. In addition to intonation, emphasis, accent (accent) when speaking is influenced by the geographical location of each region. The Komerling language in South Sumatra Province consists of two dialects, namely (1) the Pulau Negara dialect and (2) the Aji dialect. The Pulau Negara dialect is spoken by people in Sriwangi Village, Semendawai Suku III Sub-district; Campang Tiga Village, Cempaka Sub-district; Sukaraja Village; Pulau Negara Village, East Lubuk Linggau Sub-district; Batu Raja Bungin Village, East Ogan Komerling Ulu Regency (OKUT). The Aji dialect is spoken in Negeri Batin Village, South Ogan Komerling Ulu District (OKUS). (Kemdikbud Language Map, 2019).

South OKU Regency has two dominating tribes, the Daya tribe and the Ranau tribe. The Daya tribe in South Sumatra is closely related to the Ranau and Komerling tribes in South Sumatra and the Lampung tribe that inhabits Lampung province. The four tribes are proto-Malay (Old Malay) sub-ethnic originating from Southeast Asia, precisely the region of Burma and Thailand that inhabit the mountains, hills and banks of large and small rivers. The tribes are also related to the Karen, Toraja, Tayal, Batak, Igorot, Bontok, Meo and Wajo tribes (Jakob, Firdaus & Rakfat Ben, 2010).

The Daya tribe is part of the Seminung cultural family and has a close language kinship with the Komring language and Lampung Api dialect. Daya language writing uses Komerling ka ga nga letters. The use of these letters/Ulu letters continued until the colonial period, and only ended when the use of Jawi and Ulu letters was introduced. (Jakob, Firdaus & Rakfat Ben, 2010).

The first Western record about the Daya tribe comes from 1927. In his writing, W.V. van Royen wrote that Jelma Daya means a strong/empowered/strong person or a resilient and dynamic group of people. While

the word Komerling by van Der Tuc, a Dutch writer, notes that the Kembiring tribe comes from the word kembiring which means a human who can disappear/human who can turn into a tiger/mortal human. The word Komerling also comes from the name of a big trader who collected areca nuts who lived by the river, his tomb was found near the confluence of the Selabung and Waisaka rivers in the upper town of Muara Dua (Ismail, H.M. Hatta & H.M. Arlan Ismail, 2002). It is from the river that communication between the tribes along the Komerling River is facilitated. Because of the attachment of the newcomer tribes to the river, they named themselves as people who walk along (semenda) the river (way).

Furthermore, the literacy tradition in the history of the Daya and Komerling tribes has existed since the 7th-10th centuries AD as evidenced by the discovery of the Baturaja inscription (Andhifani, Wahyu Rizky & Ninie Susanti Tedjowasono, 2022). This inscription is one proof that the literacy tradition is not only known in the Iliran/capital region but also in the Uluan region. The Pallawa letters used in South Sumatra underwent a process of enrichment and user development, so that the writing of notes/information/messages/news developed using Uluan letters/characters known as rencong/incung/Ka Ga Nga script (Andhifani, Wahyu Rizky & Ninie Susanti Tedjowasono, 2022). The ka ga nga script has 28 symbols that signify 28 syllables, namely: ka; ga; nga; ta; da; na; ca; ja; nya; pa; ba; ma; sa; ra; la; wa; ya; ha; mba; ngga; nda; nja; a; nta; nca; ngka; mpa; ra and 12 characters to change the sound of letters. If the Pallawa letters were used to write the ancient Malay language on stone media, then the ka ga nga letters were used to write letters/records on bark, bamboo, and other writing materials. The results of this written work were then named by the Ulu letter (Jakob, Firdaus & Rakfat Ben, 2010).

Based on the description above, the problem in this study is the relation of historical, socio-cultural, and political dialects of Komering Language in South Oku Regency-South Sumatra to the Regional Tourism Development Strategy. The purpose of the research is to synthesize the historical, socio-cultural, and political relations of the Komering Language dialect in South Oku Regency-South Sumatra to the tourism development strategy. The results of this study can encourage people to maintain the cultural heritage of South OKU Regency, avoid the loss of local language and culture, and assist the local government in developing cultural tourism in South OKU Regency.

### **Methodology**

This research analyzes the historical, socio-cultural and political relations of dialects using diachronic dialectology. Komering dialects display rich and complex historical, socio-cultural and political relations. Historically, dialectal differences can be studied through language changes that reflect the history of migration, cultural interaction, and the influence of other languages on Komering. Data collection techniques used are interviews and literature studies. Data analysis using qualitative descriptive analysis.

### **Research Results and Discussion**

Based on the interview results, it was found that in OKU Selatan there are two major tribes, namely the Ranau tribe and the Daya tribe. Daya tribe has a close relationship with Ranau and Komering tribes in South Sumatra. The Ranau tribe is directly adjacent to Lampung Province, so some Ranau areas are included in the Lampung Province. The Lampung region includes the Lampung tribe. The four tribes are proto-Malay (Old Malay) sub-ethnics originating from Southeast Asia, precisely the regions of Burma and Thailand that inhabit the mountains, hills and banks of large and small rivers. The tribes are also related to the Karen, Toraja, Tayal, Batak,

Igorot, Bontok, Meo and Wajo tribes (Jakoeb, Firdaus & Rakfat Ben, 2010).

The displacement of the proto Malay tribes from the area of origin was caused by several factors, including: 1) natural disasters; 2) infectious disease outbreaks; 3) warfare; 4) population pressure; 5) availability of staple food and game; 6) soil fertility factors and shifting cultivation. The migration of the proto Malay tribe (old Malay) to the South or Southeast Asia islands thousands of years ago using boats with outriggers along the West coast of Sumatra and the Malacca Strait. The migration of the Proto Malay tribe went through several waves of migrant groups. They brought their original culture from their ancestral lands such as: language systems, social systems, livelihood systems, technology systems, religious systems, arts, and science systems (Adelaar, 2004). Regarding the history of the origin of the proto-Malay tribe that came to South Sumatra from Tapanuli, referring to the folklore of Ompung Silamponga. This folklore tells that the ancestors of the Daya tribe had kinship relations with the Batak and Bugis tribes and Banten (Adelaar, 2004). Initially, this group of proto-Malay migrants inhabited the coastal area of Krui in West Lampung today, gradually the settlement shifted to a more fertile inland area around Mount Pasagi and Mount Seminung. In this new land, the proto-Malay migrants mingled and assimilated with the indigenous groups that had already settled in the area. This mixture gave birth to the Daya, Komering, Ranau and Coastal Lampung tribes. Their animist and dynamist beliefs Mount Seminung and Mount Pasagi as sacred places where sacred spirits and spirits of their ancestors reside (Ismail, H.M. Hatta & H.M. Arlan Ismail, 2002). When the Daya and Komering tribes decided to migrate and form new settlements along the Komering river, they were not only looking for a place to farm and live, but also created a close relationship with the surrounding

nature. They relied on the river as their main source of life, using its water for agricultural irrigation and as a means of transportation.

The Daya or Jelma Daya tribe, who now inhabit South Ogan Komering Ulu Regency and its surroundings, continue to preserve their traditions and culture. They still maintain their own customs and language, which is an important part of their identity as the Daya tribe. Although there have been changes in their lifestyle due to modernization and globalization, the Daya tribe still firmly maintains the heritage of their ancestors.

In their daily lives, the Daya tribe still applies the gotong royong system in working together for the common good. They help each other in planting rice, building houses, and celebrating traditional ceremonies. The spirit of togetherness and solidarity is still very strong among Daya tribe members, so they can overcome all challenges faced together.

In addition, the Daya tribe also has expertise in making traditional handicrafts, such as bamboo plaiting and songket weaving. These handicrafts are not only a source of additional income for them, but also a part of their cultural heritage that they preserve and pass on to future generations.

Despite living in the midst of modernization and technological development, the Daya tribe still maintains a balance between tradition and modernization. They still respect old values while being open to changes that occur around them. Thus, the Daya tribe They have managed to maintain their culture without losing their identity as part of the Komering tribe.

With its rich culture and traditions, the Daya tribe continues to be an integral part of Indonesia's history and cultural diversity. They are a living example of how a community can survive and thrive in the face of changing times. The Daya tribe is a mirror

of the strength and resilience of a culture rich in noble values.

During the Palembang Sultanate, the Daya and Komering tribes were friends of the sultan as guardians of the sultanate's border with Lampung. As friends of the sultan, their territory had the status of Sindang Merdika, which means sindang = border; merdika = independence. The books of Simbur Cahaya were used to organize the Daya and Komering tribes. This book regulates the traditional government administration system known as the clan system led by a pasirah. The word clan comes from Sanskrit, which means road. Meanwhile, pasirah means heads. The Daya and Komering clans as friends of the sultanate were given full freedom to regulate their territory, boundaries, population, economy and culture including the use of tribal languages (Muslimin, 1986).

During the sultanate period in areas inhabited by the Daya and Komering tribes, the rules of language use were very important. This was done to maintain the diversity of cultures and traditions in the region. One example of the rules applied was the use of Javanese language and letters for writing the sultan's charter that would be given to the pasirah of the Uluan ruler. In addition, the use of Arabic letters and language is also indispensable for religious texts. Thus, people can understand religious teachings better and more deeply. Arabic is also seen as a sacred language in Islam, so its use in religious texts is mandatory.

In daily life, people in the area are also accustomed to using various languages and alphabets according to their needs and contexts. For example, in daily communication, they use local languages or Indonesian. However, when dealing with matters of an official or religious nature, the use of certain languages and alphabets becomes a necessity.

This shows how rich and diverse the culture and traditions of the people in the area are. They not only value their ancestral heritage in the form of customs and traditions, but also in the use of language and alphabets. All of this is part of their identity as Daya and Komerling tribes.

By keeping and maintaining these language rules, the people in the area can continue to care for and preserve the cultural heritage that has existed since the sultanate era. They can also continue to develop and revive the noble values contained in each rule they adhere to. To this day, this diversity of languages and alphabets remains a source of pride and strength for the people of the area.

Clans as administrative units of government in Uluan are like small kingdoms that manage the administration and economic development of their own territories. Pasirah governs its population who share a common language, culture and customs. The clans and clan centers of the Daya and Komerling tribes are generally located on the banks of the Komerling river and its tributaries (Muslimin, 1986). Hamlets on the banks of the river do have their own uniqueness in community life. This cannot be separated from the close relationship between the clan and the river as a source of life. The river is not only a place to find clean water and bathe, but also as a means of transportation and a place for social interaction.

During the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate, the choice of hamlet location on the banks of the river became an important part in building the political and cultural unity of the clan. The political and cultural relationship established between the clan and the sultanate became a strong foundation in maintaining the identity and sustainability of the clan.

The Simbur Cahaya Law Book is a legal guideline that regulates the life of the clan community. With uniformity in the application of the law, the clan head has the trust and power to carry out political and

cultural relations with other clan members. This makes the clan a strong and unified entity in living everyday life.

In addition, close social, cultural, economic and environmental ties within the clan also strengthen relations between clan members. Solidarity and mutual cooperation are values that are upheld in the life of the clan community. With these values, clan communities can support and help each other in facing various challenges.

Hamlets on the banks of the river are not just a place to live, but also a symbol of the continuity of the clan and the relationships that exist within it. The existence of the river as a source of life provides its own color in the life of the clan community. The river becomes a place to gather, interact and share in daily life.

Thus, the selection of the location of the hamlet on the banks of the river as a clan settlement is not only based on geographical factors, but also on social, cultural values and the sustainability of the clan itself. The river is an integral part of the clan's community life, which contributes to the identity and collective strength of the clan. These clans include: Buai Rawan, Buairunjung, Buaisandang, Buai Pemuka Peliung, Buai Pemuka Bangsaraja, Madang Sukusatu, Kiti, Buai Pemaca, Bungamayang, Semendawai Sukusatu and so on (Ismail, H.M. Hatta & H.M. Arlan Ismail, 2002). The domicile areas of the Daya tribe and the Komerling tribe were included in different government administration areas. The administrative areas of the Afdeling are Muara Dua Afdeling and Baturaja Afdeling. There are 12 clans in the Muara Dua afdeling area: Buai Rawan, Buai Runjung, Buai Sandang, Aji, Ranau, Mekakau Ilir, Mekakau Ulu, Bayur, Kisam Ilir, Kisam Ulu, Kisam Tengah Sukusatu, Kisam Tengah Sukudua. The clans within the Komerling Ulu afdeling consisted of 13 clans: Pakusengkunyit, Buai Pemuka Peliung, Buai Pemuka Bangsaraja, Belitang,

Madang Sukusatu, Madang Sukudua, Kiti, Leng kayap, Buai Pemaca, Bungamayang, Semendawai Sukusatu, Semendawai Sukudua, Semendawai Sukutiga.

During the colonial era, the Muara Dua and Komering Ulu afdeling were home to the Daya and Komering tribes, and during the Indonesian independence, these two afdeling became the South Ogan Komering Ulu and East Ogan Komering Ulu districts, respectively. These tribes living along the Komering river and its tributaries have strong cultural and political relations with their relatives the Komering and Ranau tribes. The cultural relations are not only in terms of language, but also in medical science (Waluyo, Efendi Agus; Asmaliyah; Suryanto), the tradition of giving titles, the culture of houses, woven fabrics and even food culture (Idris, Muhamad; Hudaidah; Lisa Surya Andika; beny Pramana Putra, 2023). The rich cultural treasures have been preserved for hundreds of years due to geographical isolation, internal and external clan policies, communication and transportation. South Sumatra is known for its abundant natural resources. From the lowlands to the mountains, it is home to a wide variety of unique animals and plants. The Daya and Komering tribes, the two tribes that inhabit this area, have long established a close relationship with the surrounding nature.

For thousands of years, these two tribes have been learning and taking lessons from nature. They understand how important it is to maintain the balance of nature so that their lives remain sustainable. With their local wisdom, the Daya and Komering tribes are able to manage natural resources wisely.

In their daily lives, nature is not only a source of physical life, but also a source of spiritual knowledge for these tribes. They believe that nature is a place of wisdom, a place where they can learn about life, love, and the

connection between humans and the universe.

The Daya and Komering tribes also have strong relationships with their fellow humans and God. They believe that maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature also impacts the relationship between fellow humans and with the Creator. In this way, they are able to live in peace and blessings.

The local wisdom possessed by the Daya and Ranau tribes is not only beneficial for themselves, but also for generations to come. They teach the values of life inherited from their ancestors, values that teach about gratitude, simplicity, and courage to protect nature.

By preserving nature and applying local wisdom values, the Daya and Ranau tribes have set a good example for all of us. They teach us that humans and nature must coexist in harmony, respecting and taking care of each other.

In the effort to develop tourism in South OKU, South Sumatra is not only rich in biodiversity, but also rich in local wisdom that we should emulate. The following cultural heritage is still preserved in South OKU.

**Ngalobasi**/tradition of traditional medicine of the Ranau and Daya clans was widely utilized by the villagers before modern medical science was widely known. The role of the dukun/battra is very important due to his extensive knowledge of medicinal plants and his ability to master mantras and Qur'anic verses. Traditional medicine (lobas) is known as "Obat Ungga'an" or village medicine. It is concocted and made by a dukun/battra who received medicinal knowledge from his parents or from dreams that they call revelations. Mantra (Jampi) cannot be given to just anyone (Disurya, Ramanata; Muhamad Idris; Aswadi Jaya; Eva dina Chairunnisa, 2021). Traditional medicines used are plants that come from the forests and gardens around them. The types of plants that

are still widely found are usually taken directly from the forest but for types that are starting to be difficult to find, they began to plant them in their gardens in yards, rubber gardens and shrubs. Commonly used plants include pandanus, cinnamon, bay leaves, mangosteen/manggis, bamboo shoots, areca nut, ginger, senduduk, coconut and so on. Various diseases are treated with herbs, mantras and Qur'anic verses such as: sawan (luwangan bangkai) high blood pressure, blood sugar, gout, jaundice and so on. This alternative medicine tradition is still used even though modern medicine has been widely recognized by the Daya and Komering tribes (Waluyo, Efendi Agus; Asmaliyah; Suryanto).

**Adok/Jajulu** The tradition of giving titles in the Ranau clan and Daya clan culture is part of the cycle ceremony Daya and Ranau human life. Giving titles is very important because according to tradition, the name used for married men and women in everyday life is no longer their small name but the title given when married. The title in Daya tribal culture is called adok and jajulu? in Ranau tribal culture itself is attached as a form of respect or as a sign that the community is recognized in the community (Ismail, H.M. Hatta & H.M. Arlan Ismail, 2002).

The tradition of giving titles in Daya and Ranau communities is indeed an important part of cultural heritage that must be maintained and preserved. For them, a title is not just a rank or status, but also a symbol of honor and family identity. Therefore, this tradition is carried out with full seriousness and adherence to the customs that have existed since the time of the ancestors.

In the Daya and Ranau communities, marriage is a very sacred and important matter. Therefore, the awarding of titles to married couples is a form of appreciation for their loyalty and commitment to their tribal culture and traditions. It is also a way of strengthening relationships between families

and maintaining the continuity of customs that have existed for centuries.

However, although these traditions are carried out with great trust and confidence, it is undeniable that times are changing and the demands of modernity are increasing. This poses a dilemma for the younger generation of Daya and Ranau clans, whether they should stick to the old traditions or go with the flow of the times.

Along with the development of technology and globalization, traditional values are often neglected and forgotten. However, it is important for the younger generation of Daya and Komering clans to still appreciate and maintain the existing cultural heritage. By understanding the meaning and message contained in the title-giving tradition, they can maintain the integrity and sustainability of their culture.

The title-giving tradition in Daya and Ranau communities is not just a mere formality, but also a reflection of family values, loyalty, and honor. Through understanding and appreciation of this tradition, the younger generation of Daya clan and Ranau clan can continue to enrich and strengthen their cultural identity, so that the heritage of their ancestors remains sustainable and well preserved. (Elita, 2021)

*Adok/jajulu?* is given through customary deliberation in advance and agreed upon with the family and traditional head in the hamlet/clan. *Adok/jajulu?* may only be announced by customary institutions/hamlet leaders/clans. *Adok/jajulu?* is given with poetic strings of words as well as the beating of gongs. After the ceremony of *adok/jajulu?* It is forbidden for others to call the little nickname of the bride and groom except his own parents. Both tribes have almost the same form and procedure in giving *adok/jajulu?*. (Elita, 2021)

*Wa'wah-wa'wah/Wa'wah wah*

*Wayah-wayah/Wəwayahan* comes from the word *wayah* which means to express will. This dialogue takes place between the party who expresses the will and the desired party. *Wayah-wayah/Wəwayahan* is part of the pre-wedding ceremony. The language used is the old Komerling language or indigenous language. The peculiarity of the *Wayah-wayah/Wəwayahan* tradition is the politeness of language in expressing the word designator person (self) called *Nyak*, in *Wayah-wayah/Wəwayahan* using *Səkəndua* (I am in fine Komerling). In traditional culture there is a belief that when a baby is born into the world accompanied by his twin brother (tembuni / ari-ari). It is believed that tembuni/ari-ari has its own spirit, so tembuni/ari-ari in traditional culture is highly respected. *Səkəndua* is a form of self-respect and recognition of the full human identity. The word *Səkəndua* is still used as a form of manifestation of honor in Daya and Ranau culture in South OKU, South Sumatra. Your second person pointer in Indonesian pronounced with the word *Niku* used in custom is *Gusti Pohngun* or *Gusti Pun* or *Pusəkam*. The word *wrestling* is commonly used for older people or is used with the addition of *pohngun*. The word *pohngun* comes from the word *pu-nghulun* which means lord "servant" *hulun* is often pronounced "Hun" then *pohngun* which means "Your Excellency Lord Servant". The word *also* comes from the word *Pu +n* which means "tuan hamba" (Ismail, H.M. Hatta & H.M. Arlan Ismail, 2002).

### ***Wayap? or Muwayap?***

*Wayap? or Muwayap?* is oral literature that is still preserved in South OKU Regency, South Sumatra. *Wayap? or Muwayap?* is a type of rhyme that is sung and accompanied by music and dance. This oral literature is performed during customary official occasions, weddings, parties receiving guests of honor. When *Wayap? or Muwayap?* is performed, the guest of honor or tourists who

are near the audience can participate in dancing with the dancers. This oral literature reflects that the people of Southern OKU always maintain unity, mutual assistance, and love each other. The cohesiveness of dancers in following the beat of music and rhymes full of advice and joy reflects that the people of Southern OKU are always careful in acting.

Based on the results of the research above, the historical relationship of the Komerling language with the development of tourism in the South Oku region can be seen from how the cultural heritage and local traditions are still maintained today. The Komerling language is a symbol of local identity and is an important part of the cultural heritage that needs to be preserved and promoted in the regional tourism industry. Tourists visiting South Oku can learn more about the local history and culture through interaction with locals who still use the Komerling dialect in everyday life.

Meanwhile, the socio-cultural aspects of the Komerling language can also be a special attraction for tourists who want to experience a different experience in South Oku. Get to know more closely with local culture, such as customs, traditional music, dance, and typical culinary, will provide a memorable experience for visitors. Regional tourism actors need to pay attention to the importance of promoting uniqueness socio-culture of the Komerling language in order to be able to attracting more tourists to come and spend time in South Oku. On the political side, it is important for the South Oku local government to pay close attention to the impact of tourism development on local people who speak the Komerling language. Protection of local culture and identity should be a priority in every decision related to tourism development and promotion. The active involvement of the community in the decision-making process must also be



strengthened so that tourism development can run sustainably and pay attention to the interests and welfare of all parties.

### Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, it can be concluded that the historical, socio-cultural, and political relations of the Komering language play a role in the tourism development strategy of the South Oku region. The Komering dialect is not only a means of communication, but also a representation of identity and cultural diversity that must be maintained and promoted in an effort to build sustainable and competitive tourism destinations. By paying attention to these factors, it is hoped that tourism in South Oku can continue to grow and provide optimal benefits for the local community and increase attractiveness for tourists who visit.

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