

# Methodological Tensions in Linguistic Research on Minangkabau: A Critical Meta-Analysis of Paradigms, Data Practices, and Epistemological Assumptions

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates methodological patterns in contemporary linguistic research on the Minangkabau language through a critical meta-analysis of empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025. Responding to increasing methodological diversification in applied linguistics, the study aims to examine how research paradigms, data practices, and epistemological assumptions shape knowledge production in Minangkabau linguistic scholarship. Following systematic review procedures guided by PRISMA principles, twenty empirical studies were identified through structured database searches and screened using explicit inclusion criteria. The selected studies were analyzed using a methodological coding framework that mapped research paradigms, data sources, sampling practices, analytic procedures, and validation strategies. The findings reveal three recurring patterns. First, interpretivist qualitative approaches dominate the field, particularly in discourse, sociolinguistic, and cultural linguistic studies. Second, methodological reporting—especially regarding sampling procedures, validation strategies, and epistemological positioning—remains uneven across studies, limiting methodological comparability and cumulative synthesis. Third, although many studies propose educational or cultural implications, explicit evaluative frameworks are rarely incorporated. These findings highlight the need for greater methodological transparency, epistemological reflexivity, and stronger alignment between descriptive analysis and applied evaluation in regional-language research. By synthesizing methodological practices across studies, this research contributes a reflexive framework for strengthening the evidentiary rigor and applied relevance of linguistic scholarship on under-documented and regional languages within applied linguistics.

## 1. Introduction

Research on regional and minority languages has become increasingly central to contemporary applied linguistics, particularly in contexts where linguistic diversity intersects with education, identity, and language policy. Within this broader landscape, the Minangkabau language has attracted sustained scholarly attention due to its sociocultural

significance, rich oral and written traditions, and dynamic patterns of multilingual use in Indonesia (Budiono & Yanita, 2024). Over the past decade, linguistic research on Minangkabau has expanded substantially, encompassing descriptive linguistics, corpus-based analysis, discourse and semiotic studies, and applied investigations related to language learning and evaluation (Pérez-Paredes & Curry, 2024). While this growth reflects scholarly vitality, it has also generated considerable methodological heterogeneity that remains insufficiently examined at a meta-theoretical level.

The importance of this study is threefold. First, the Minangkabau linguistic domain is both culturally significant and academically productive: recent corpus initiatives and discourse-analytic work have expanded empirical resources while diversifying analytical perspectives, which creates opportunities but also inconsistencies across studies (Handoko, 2024; Yuniseffendri & Nasrullah, 2025). Second, applied linguistics and program evaluation literatures emphasize that methodological choices (sampling, instrumentation, analytic transparency) materially affect conclusions about language vitality, pedagogy, and policy — yet systematic meta-reflection across Minangkabau studies is lacking (Norris, 2016). Third, contemporary debates in applied linguistics about epistemology and methodological innovation call for explicit reflexivity about paradigms and evidence standards, especially in research that informs language education and documentation in multilingual contexts (Giorgi & Almeida, 2017; Li et al., 2023).

This study presents a critical meta-analysis of Minangkabau linguistic studies (2015–2025), examining (a) dominant research paradigms and their epistemological assumptions, (b) data practices (corpus creation, documentation, sampling, triangulation), and (c) the implications of methodological heterogeneity for theory building and program evaluation in language learning contexts. The study asks: Which paradigms dominate Minangkabau research, what methodological tensions recur, and how do these tensions affect claims about language form, use, and applied interventions?

Recent empirical and methodological work provides three interlocking strands relevant to our analysis. The first is corpus building and quantitative resources (Handoko, 2024; Pérez-Paredes & Curry, 2024). New corpus initiatives for Minangkabau supply infrastructure for frequency-based and computational analyses but also surface choices (register selection, orthography, annotation) that influence downstream findings. These projects raise epistemological questions about representativeness and the limits of corpus-derived generalizations. The second is descriptive and comparative dialect work (Rafis & Afdhal, 2021; Santuso & Sukarno, 2025). Detailed dialectal comparisons and morphosyntactic descriptions remain an important tradition—useful for typology and historical-linguistic claims—but often rest on limited sampling or uneven documentation protocols, which constrains cross-study comparability. The third is discourse, pragmatics, and semiotic approaches (Fitri et al., 2025; Yuniseffendri & Nasrullah, 2025). Studies using discourse-analytic and semiotic frameworks (e.g., proverbs, ideologies, identity talk) illuminate cultural meaning-making in Minangkabau contexts but frequently prioritize interpretive depth over reproducibility, leading to tension with positivist evaluation standards.

The fourth is language documentation and critical perspectives (Budiono & Yanita, 2024). Indonesia-wide critiques of documentation practices highlight the need to reconcile documentation's normative aims (revitalization, archival completeness) with rigorous,

transparent methodology; scholars argue for critical reflexivity about who sets research agendas and how data are curated. The fifth is methodological innovation and epistemological debate in applied linguistics (Li et al., 2023; Vuogan & Li, 2024). Broader literature on methodological innovation and meta-analytic practice in second language research foregrounds both opportunities (mixed methods, reproducibility, meta-analysis standards) and risks (publication bias, heterogeneity of effect definitions). These works provide standards and heuristics that can be adapted for regional-language meta-analyses. The sixth is program evaluation and applied outcomes (Norris, 2016). Foundational and recent program-evaluation literature underscores the import of aligning evaluation design with program theory and of making evaluation assumptions explicit — a practice rarely systemic in small-language research that nonetheless affects pedagogical recommendations. The seventh is meta-analytic and synthesis precedents in second language acquisition and applied linguistics show methodological pitfalls (e.g., heterogeneous measures, underreporting of sampling strategies) and suggest guidelines for transparent inclusion/exclusion criteria, coding protocols, and reporting standards that this study adopts (Vuogan & Li, 2024; Zhao & Aryadoust, 2025).

Collectively, these strands reveal recurring methodological tensions: (1) representativeness vs. depth (corpus scale vs. ethnographic nuance), (2) descriptive adequacy vs. evaluative accountability (language description vs. program impact claims), and (3) epistemic pluralism vs. comparability (multiple valid paradigms that nonetheless resist meta-synthesis without careful harmonization). Although individual Minangkabau studies make valuable contributions, there is limited cross-cutting synthesis that critically examines how methodological choices shape knowledge claims and applied recommendations. This lacuna restricts both theoretical consolidation and evidence-informed language planning.

Despite the richness and growing diversity of research on the Minangkabau language, the field remains methodologically fragmented. Existing studies have generated valuable insights into phonology, discourse practices, sociolinguistic variation, and cultural meaning; however, these contributions are typically examined in isolation, with limited reflection on the methodological foundations through which such knowledge is produced. Consequently, while the empirical literature on Minangkabau continues to expand, there has been little systematic effort to evaluate how research paradigms, data practices, and epistemological assumptions shape the conclusions that scholars draw about the language and its social functions.

The absence of such meta-level reflection poses several challenges for cumulative knowledge building. First, methodological diversity across studies—ranging from descriptive linguistics and corpus-based analysis to discourse and ethnographic approaches—creates difficulties for cross-study comparison and theoretical integration. Without a systematic examination of methodological practices, it becomes difficult to determine how differences in research design, sampling strategies, and analytic procedures influence the interpretation of linguistic phenomena. Second, many studies in regional-language research make implicit applied claims related to language learning, cultural transmission, or language vitality, yet the methodological basis for these claims is rarely evaluated collectively. As a result, the evidentiary foundations supporting pedagogical or policy-oriented implications remain uneven.

A critical meta-analysis therefore becomes necessary not merely to summarize existing findings, but to examine the methodological architecture of the field itself. Unlike traditional narrative reviews that focus primarily on substantive outcomes, a meta-analytic approach enables the systematic identification and comparison of research paradigms, data sources, sampling practices, analytic procedures, and evaluative orientations across studies. By treating methodological practices as the primary unit of analysis, critical meta-analysis provides a structured framework for interrogating how knowledge about Minangkabau language and society is produced, validated, and applied.

Conducting such an analysis is particularly important in applied linguistics, where methodological choices directly shape interpretations of language use, identity, and educational relevance. Without explicit examination of these methodological foundations, the field risks producing valuable but epistemically fragmented insights that remain difficult to synthesize or translate into evidence-informed language education and policy. Accordingly, this study undertakes a critical meta-analysis of Minangkabau linguistic research published between 2015 and 2025 in order to systematically evaluate dominant research paradigms, prevailing data practices, and the epistemological assumptions underlying contemporary scholarship.

Responding to this gap, the study aims to conduct a critical meta-analysis of linguistic research on Minangkabau published between 2015 and 2025. Specifically, it seeks to (1) identify dominant research paradigms and their associated epistemological assumptions, (2) analyze prevailing data collection and analysis practices, and (3) evaluate the implications of methodological heterogeneity for theory development and language program evaluation. By systematically synthesizing and critically interrogating methodological trends, this study contributes to applied linguistics by offering a reflexive framework for conducting and evaluating research on regional languages, with particular relevance for language learning, assessment, and educational decision-making.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Paradigmatic Pluralism and Epistemological Orientations in Applied Linguistics**

Contemporary applied linguistics is characterized by pronounced paradigmatic pluralism, encompassing positivist, interpretivist, and critical traditions. Recent methodological scholarship emphasizes that each paradigm is grounded in distinct epistemological assumptions regarding the nature of language, knowledge, and evidence (Li et al., 2023; Vuogan & Li, 2024). Quantitative and corpus-based studies typically align with positivist assumptions of measurability and generalizability, whereas qualitative and discourse-oriented research prioritizes meaning-making, contextual interpretation, and participant perspectives. Critical approaches further extend inquiry to questions of ideology, power, and social inequality embedded in language practices.

Although such diversity has enriched applied linguistics, it has also generated methodological tensions, particularly when paradigms are combined without explicit epistemological justification. Recent reviews caution that methodological eclecticism may obscure incompatible assumptions and weaken the interpretability of findings (Pérez-

Paredes, 2024). This concern is especially salient for research on regional and minority languages, where methodological decisions often remain implicit and under-theorized.

## **2.2 Corpus Linguistics and Quantitative Data Practices in Regional Language Research**

Corpus linguistics has become an increasingly prominent methodological approach in the study of under-resourced languages. Recent Minangkabau corpus development initiatives demonstrate the analytical potential of digital corpora for examining lexical frequency, grammatical patterns, and discourse features (Handoko, 2024). These efforts represent an important step toward methodological modernization and reproducibility in Minangkabau linguistics.

However, methodological literature consistently emphasizes that corpora are socially constructed artifacts rather than neutral representations of language use. Decisions related to text selection, genre balance, orthography, and annotation directly shape analytical outcomes (Pérez-Paredes, 2024). In the context of Minangkabau, recent studies reveal variability in corpus design and reporting practices, which complicates cross-study comparison and limits the cumulative value of quantitative findings. Meta-analytic reviews in applied linguistics further identify inconsistent documentation of sampling frames and coding procedures as major barriers to synthesis (Vuogan & Li, 2024).

## **2.3 Descriptive and Dialectological Traditions: Depth and Its Limitations**

Descriptive linguistics and dialectology remain foundational in Minangkabau research, contributing detailed accounts of phonological, morphological, and lexical variation. Studies comparing regional dialects provide valuable insights into language change, variation, and typological classification (Raflis & Afdhal, 2021; Santuso & Sukarno, 2025). These works are particularly important for preserving linguistic diversity and informing future comparative research.

Nevertheless, recent methodological critiques note that descriptive studies frequently rely on small-scale or convenience samples and provide limited justification for participant selection (Norouzian & Bui, 2024; Raflis & Ifanka, 2025). While such studies offer depth and contextual richness, their limited transparency regarding data representativeness constrains generalizability and hinders systematic synthesis. From a meta-analytic perspective, these limitations underscore the need for clearer reporting standards and explicit methodological positioning.

## **2.4 Discourse, Pragmatics, and Semiotic Approaches**

Qualitative approaches grounded in discourse analysis, pragmatics, and semiotics have significantly expanded understandings of Minangkabau language use in relation to identity, social norms, and cultural values. Research on proverbs, ritual language, gendered discourse, and symbolic meaning illustrates how linguistic forms function within broader socio-cultural systems (Handoko et al., 2024; Mulyani et al., 2024).

Despite their interpretive strength, discourse-based studies face ongoing methodological scrutiny regarding analytic transparency and reproducibility. Recent methodological discussions advocate systematic coding procedures, reflexive researcher positioning, and triangulation to enhance analytical credibility (Zulfikarni et al., 2025). The absence of shared

evaluative criteria across discourse studies presents a challenge for integrating qualitative findings into broader evidence syntheses.

## **2.5 Language Documentation, Revitalization, and Ethical Considerations**

Language documentation research introduces an additional methodological layer by integrating descriptive, archival, and revitalization-oriented objectives. Recent critical perspectives on documentation practices in Indonesia emphasize that documentation is inherently shaped by institutional agendas, funding structures, and researcher positionality (Mac & Yulia, 2025). These studies call for participatory and ethically grounded approaches that foreground community agency and long-term accessibility.

In Minangkabau research, documentation efforts have produced valuable archives of oral literature and cultural practices. However, methodological reporting related to consent procedures, metadata standards, and archival accessibility remains uneven. This variability contributes to epistemological tension between documentation's normative goals and applied linguistics' evaluative expectations.

## **2.6 Program Evaluation and Methodological Accountability**

Program evaluation literature offers important frameworks for assessing the effectiveness and validity of language-related interventions. Norris (2016) emphasizes that evaluation designs must align with program theory, data collection methods, and epistemological assumptions. Recent meta-analyses in language education reinforce the importance of transparency, reliability, and validity in evaluative research (Mulyani et al., 2024).

In Minangkabau linguistic studies, evaluative claims related to pedagogy, curriculum development, or language maintenance are often made without explicit evaluation frameworks. This absence of methodological accountability limits the applicability of research findings for policy-making and educational decision-making.

## **2.7 Meta-Analysis and Methodological Synthesis in Applied Linguistics**

Meta-analysis and systematic review have gained prominence as tools for consolidating research findings and assessing methodological quality. Recent reviews highlight persistent challenges, including heterogeneous research designs, inconsistent outcome measures, and limited reporting of methodological details (Norouzian & Bui, 2024). Scholars increasingly advocate for critical meta-analysis that foregrounds methodological practices and epistemological assumptions rather than focusing solely on effect sizes.

Such an approach is particularly appropriate for Minangkabau linguistic research, where studies span diverse paradigms and aims. By treating methodological features as the primary unit of analysis, critical meta-analysis enables reflexive evaluation of how knowledge about language is produced and legitimized.

Taken together, the reviewed literature reveals a field marked by empirical richness and methodological fragmentation. Minangkabau linguistic research has advanced through corpus development, descriptive analysis, discourse studies, and applied interventions; however, these contributions remain weakly integrated due to unresolved methodological and epistemological tensions. Existing reviews rarely address how research paradigms and data practices shape knowledge claims and applied implications.

Accordingly, there is a clear need for a comprehensive critical meta-analysis that systematically examines methodological paradigms, data practices, and epistemological assumptions in Minangkabau linguistic research. Addressing this gap is essential for strengthening theoretical coherence, enhancing evaluative rigor, and supporting evidence-informed language education and policy.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study adopts a critical meta-analysis design to examine methodological patterns in linguistic research on the Minangkabau language. Meta-analysis and systematic review approaches have become widely recognized as essential tools for synthesizing research evidence and evaluating methodological trends across a body of literature (Page et al., 2021; Martinez et al., 2025). Such approaches enable researchers to move beyond individual study findings and critically assess how research knowledge is constructed through methodological decisions and analytical frameworks.

In applied linguistics and social sciences, research synthesis methods are increasingly used to evaluate theoretical assumptions, research paradigms, and methodological practices across heterogeneous studies (Chong, 2025; Guo, 2025). These approaches emphasize transparency, systematic procedures, and explicit documentation of analytical decisions to enhance the credibility and reproducibility of research syntheses (Yang et al., 2024).

Unlike conventional meta-analyses that aggregate statistical outcomes, this study employs a critical meta-analytic approach, in which the methodological architecture of previous studies becomes the primary object of analysis. This orientation aligns with recent methodological scholarship that encourages researchers to examine not only research findings but also the epistemological and methodological assumptions underlying those findings.

#### **3.1 Literature Search and Study Identification**

The identification of studies followed systematic review procedures based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines, which provide internationally recognized standards for transparent and replicable research synthesis (Page et al., 2021). The PRISMA framework structures the study selection process into four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion.

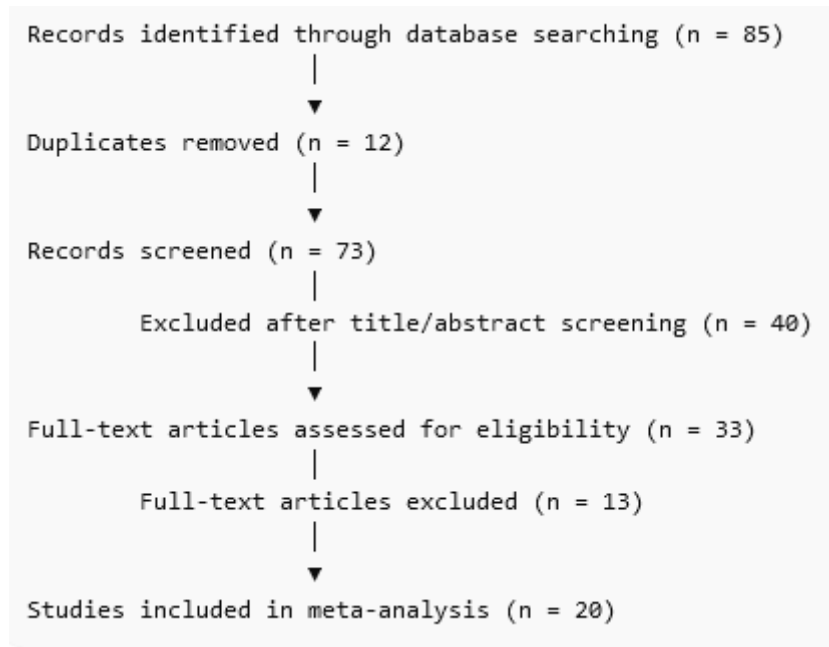
The literature search was conducted across multiple academic databases and publication platforms relevant to applied linguistics and regional-language research. These included peer-reviewed journal databases, national accredited publication platforms, and institutional repositories frequently used in Indonesian linguistic scholarship. Searches were conducted using combinations of keywords related to the research focus, including Minangkabau language, Minangkabau linguistics, Minangkabau discourse, Minangkabau sociolinguistics, Minangkabau dialect, and Minangkabau corpus.

Boolean operators such as AND and OR were used to combine search terms and broaden the retrieval of relevant studies. The search process initially identified X records, which were subsequently screened according to predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Duplicate records were removed before the screening stage. Titles and abstracts were then reviewed to assess relevance to the study’s research objectives. Full-text articles that met the eligibility criteria were examined to determine their suitability for inclusion in the meta-analysis. Following this process, a final dataset of 20 empirical studies was selected for in-depth methodological analysis.

The systematic application of PRISMA procedures ensures transparency in the study selection process and enhances the methodological reliability of research synthesis in applied linguistics.

**Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of Study Selection**



**Table 1. Literature Search Strategy**

Database / Source	Keywords Used	Time Range	Results
Google Scholar	"Minangkabau language" OR "Minangkabau linguistics"	2015–2025	42
SINTA-indexed journals	"Minangkabau discourse", "Minangkabau sociolinguistics"	2015–2025	18
DOAJ	"Minangkabau dialect", "Minangkabau corpus"	2015–2025	10
Institutional repositories	"Minangkabau linguistic study"	2015–2025	15

Total records identified: 85
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This table 1 shows search transparency, which reviewers expect in systematic reviews.

### 3.2 Study Selection

In meta-analytic research, the unit of analysis typically consists of published empirical studies rather than individual participants. Systematic research synthesis therefore involves identifying, screening, and selecting relevant studies using explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria (Page et al., 2021; De Cassai et al., 2025).

The population of this study consists of empirical linguistic research investigating the Minangkabau language or Minangkabau-speaking communities. The temporal scope was restricted to studies published between 2015 and 2025, a period marked by substantial methodological diversification in applied linguistics research, including corpus-based analysis, discourse-oriented inquiry, and sociolinguistic evaluation.

Study identification followed systematic review principles widely recommended in research synthesis methodology (Page et al., 2021; Cheungpasitporn et al., 2025). These guidelines emphasize structured search procedures, transparent screening processes, and explicit documentation of inclusion criteria to minimize selection bias and ensure methodological rigor.

Studies were identified through searches of peer-reviewed academic journals, accredited national publication databases, and institutional repositories relevant to linguistic research in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. To ensure analytical relevance, studies were included only if they met the following criteria: (1) The study examined Minangkabau linguistic data or language use; (2) The study reported empirical research using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approaches; (3) The study provided sufficient methodological description for coding and analysis; (4) The study was published in a peer-reviewed or academically recognized outlet.

Studies were excluded if they consisted of purely theoretical essays, descriptive commentaries without empirical data, or duplicate reports based on the same dataset. The application of explicit inclusion criteria follows best practices in systematic review methodology designed to enhance transparency and replicability in evidence synthesis (Hennessy et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2025).

Following the screening process, a final dataset of 20 empirical studies was selected for analysis. In qualitative meta-analytic research, sample sizes 20 studies are generally considered appropriate for in-depth methodological comparison and thematic synthesis.

### 3.3 Research Instruments

The primary research instrument used in this study was a methodological coding framework designed to systematically extract and categorize methodological characteristics from the selected studies. Coding frameworks are widely used in research synthesis to ensure consistent analysis across heterogeneous datasets and to enable cross-study comparison of methodological features (Chong, 2025; Guo, 2025).

The development of the coding framework was informed by methodological literature in systematic review methodology, applied linguistics research design, and program evaluation and evidence synthesis. Following established practices in research synthesis, the coding framework was developed iteratively to capture key dimensions of methodological practice across the included studies (De Cassai et al., 2025). The framework included several interrelated dimensions: (1) Research paradigm and epistemological orientation; (2) Research design and methodological approach; (3) Type and source of linguistic data; (4) Sampling and data collection procedures; (5) Analytic techniques and interpretive strategies; (6) Validation procedures and evaluative claims.

Such multi-dimensional coding frameworks allow researchers to systematically identify patterns of methodological convergence and divergence across studies while maintaining sensitivity to disciplinary variation. Each study was read multiple times to ensure accurate extraction of methodological information. Where methodological descriptions were incomplete or ambiguous, interpretive decisions were documented to maintain analytical transparency.

### **3.4 Coding Reliability and Analytical Trustworthiness**

To enhance analytical reliability and transparency, procedures were implemented to ensure consistency in the application of the methodological coding framework. In research synthesis and qualitative meta-analysis, coding reliability is essential to ensure that methodological interpretations are applied systematically across studies.

Each selected study was independently coded according to the predefined framework dimensions, including research paradigm, data source, sampling strategy, analytical procedures, and evaluative claims. To minimize interpretive bias, the coding process involved iterative reading and cross-checking of extracted methodological information.

A subset of the studies was re-coded after an interval to assess the stability of coding decisions. The comparison between the initial and second coding cycles indicated a high level of consistency in the classification of methodological features.

Such iterative verification procedures are widely recommended in qualitative meta-analysis to strengthen analytical credibility and ensure that interpretations accurately reflect the methodological characteristics of the analyzed studies.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis followed a three-stage research synthesis process, commonly recommended in systematic review and meta-analytic methodology (Page et al., 2021; Martinez et al., 2025).

#### **A. Descriptive Mapping of Methodological Features**

The first stage involved constructing a descriptive overview of methodological characteristics across the dataset. Descriptive mapping is a common analytical step in research synthesis that enables researchers to identify patterns in research paradigms, data sources, and analytical strategies across studies.

In this stage, methodological features coded in the framework were systematically tabulated to generate a comparative overview of methodological tendencies within Minangkabau linguistic research.

### **B. Comparative Thematic Analysis**

The second stage involved comparative thematic analysis to identify methodological similarities and differences across studies. Comparative synthesis techniques are frequently used in qualitative meta-analysis to identify recurring methodological patterns and conceptual tensions across heterogeneous research designs. This stage focused on identifying recurring methodological tensions, including: (1) analytical depth vs representativeness; (2) descriptive analysis vs evaluative claims; (3) qualitative interpretation vs methodological transparency.

### **C. Critical Meta-Analytic Synthesis**

The final stage consisted of a critical synthesis of methodological patterns, integrating insights from the descriptive and comparative analyses. Critical synthesis approaches extend conventional systematic review methods by examining the epistemological assumptions underlying research practices and knowledge production. This stage therefore examined how methodological choices across studies influence: (1) the scope of linguistic claims; (2) the interpretive validity of findings; (3) the applied implications for language education and policy.

Throughout the analytic process, methodological reflexivity was maintained to ensure coherence between the coding framework, analytical interpretations, and the study's overarching research objectives. Such reflexivity is widely recommended in research synthesis to enhance analytical rigor and transparency.

By narratively and systematically examining methodological paradigms, data practices, and epistemological assumptions, this methodology positions the study as a meta-methodological contribution to applied linguistics. It offers a transferable analytical framework for evaluating linguistic research on regional and under-documented languages, thereby extending the scope of meta-analysis beyond outcome aggregation to the critical examination of knowledge production itself.

## **4. Findings**

This section presents the findings of the critical meta-analysis based on the systematic examination of 20 empirical studies on Minangkabau linguistic research published between 2015 and 2025. The findings are organized according to three analytic layers: (1) distribution of research paradigms and designs, (2) data practices and analytic procedures, and (3) epistemological and evaluative patterns. The results are reported descriptively to summarize methodological patterns and tensions evident across the dataset.

To provide a transparent analytical foundation for the meta-analysis, the selected studies were systematically organized into an integrated mapping table that summarizes key methodological characteristics across the dataset. The construction of this table followed a structured analytical logic designed to facilitate cross-study comparison and to support the subsequent thematic analysis of methodological patterns. Specifically, each study was

categorized according to four analytical dimensions derived from the methodological coding framework described in the research methodology section: (1) study focus and linguistic domain, (2) research paradigm and methodological orientation, (3) data sources and analytical procedures, and (4) methodological implications relevant to the meta-analysis.

The ordering of studies in the table does not reflect chronological publication sequence but rather follows a conceptual grouping based on dominant research paradigms and methodological approaches. Studies employing structural, comparative, and descriptive linguistic methodologies are presented first, followed by corpus-based and quantitative approaches, and subsequently by discourse-oriented, sociolinguistic, and interpretivist studies. This ordering strategy was adopted to highlight the methodological diversity within Minangkabau linguistic research and to make visible the transitions between different epistemological traditions within the field.

Organizing the studies according to methodological orientation allows readers to more clearly observe recurring patterns in research design, data practices, and analytical procedures across related approaches. In addition, this structure supports the comparative meta-analytic objective of the study by enabling systematic examination of how different paradigmatic traditions contribute to the production of linguistic knowledge about Minangkabau. The final column of the table therefore does not simply summarize study findings but identifies the methodological relevance of each study for the meta-analysis, indicating how particular research practices illustrate broader methodological tendencies or tensions within the literature.

Through this structured compilation, the table functions as an analytical bridge between the literature review and the subsequent results analysis. Rather than serving merely as a descriptive summary of previous studies, it provides the empirical foundation for identifying methodological patterns, epistemological positioning, and recurring tensions that are examined in the following sections.

**Table 2. Integrated Mapping of 20 Linguistic Studies on Minangkabau: Paradigms, Data Practices, and Methodological Implications**

Author & Year	Study Focus and Linguistic Domain	Research Paradigm & Methodology	Data Sources and Analytical Procedures	Key Findings of the Study	Methodological Relevance to the Meta-Analysis
Santuso & Sukarno (2025)	Contrastive reduplication analysis	Qualitative contrastive linguistics	Document-based structural analysis	Morphological variation across languages	Descriptive paradigm with limited transparency
Handoko (2024)	Minangkabau corpus development	Corpus linguistics	Multimodal corpus annotation	Enables data-driven research	Signals methodological shift toward digital data practices
Handoko et al. (2024)	Environmental proverbs (cultural linguistics)	Interpretivist cultural linguistics	Proverbs corpus	Cultural cognition and ecological meaning	Deep interpretation but low reproducibility

Thamrin & Gani (2021)	Language choice in markets	Mixed-methods sociolinguistics	Surveys, observation, interviews	Identity and setting shape language use	Methodological heterogeneity across studies
Thamrin & Gani (2025)	Language vitality survey	Evaluative sociolinguistics	Sociolinguistic survey	Declining transmission patterns	Rare evaluative orientation in field
Narhan (2022)	Comparative historical linguistics (Aceh–Minang)	Positivist comparative	Lexicostatistics	Genealogical relationships	Structural paradigm contrasts interpretivism
Wahyudi et al. (2024)	Phonological variation (ethnic Chinese speakers)	Descriptive phonology	Interviews and observation	Contact-induced sound change	Micro-descriptive trend without epistemological reflection
Akmal et al. (2023)	Proto-Austronesian relations	Diachronic comparative	Corpus + interviews	Lexical kinship evidence	Shows diachronic paradigm diversity
Mukramah et al. (2022)	Linguistic kinship Acehnese–Minangkabau–Javanese	Quantitative lexicostatistics	Word lists and recordings	Kinship percentage classification	Example of positivist methodology
Fitri et al. (2025)	Social semiotics of Kato Nan Ampek	SFL discourse analysis	Verbal interaction texts	Language encodes ideology	Interpretive depth vs replicability tension
Aurlani & Idaman (2025)	Basarang ritual language functions	Ethnography of communication	Ritual discourse observation	Language legitimizes social norms	Anthropolinguistic paradigm expands discourse focus
Aditiawarman et al. (2025)	Creole Minangkabau language (Chinese speakers)	Mixed-methods contact linguistics	1,101 linguistic data points	Systematic phonological adaptation	Hybrid paradigm combining structural and sociocultural analysis
Marta & Cahyani (2019)	Koto Alam dialect phonology	Qualitative descriptive phonology	Oral vocabulary elicitation	Dialect variation due to geography	Strong descriptive tradition with limited methodological reporting
Revita et al. (2025)	Pre-request speech acts pragmatics	Pragmatic qualitative analysis	Naturally occurring conversations	Indirectness and politeness strategies	Supports dominance of interpretivist discourse studies
Handoko et al. (2025)	Oral traditions and disaster prediction corpus	Corpus-driven cultural linguistics	50 kaba texts corpus	Language encodes ecological knowledge	Example of cultural epistemology embedded in data practices
Aditiawarman	Creole Tiong Pa	Distributional	Structural	Phoneme	Structural micro-

(2021)	phonological formation	phonology	linguistic analysis	deletion and change patterns	analysis lacking explicit epistemology
Suprayetno & Rusyfa (2020)	Lexical change in Minangkabau	Qualitative descriptive lexicology	Literary texts + interviews	Derivation, borrowing, coinage	Illustrates diachronic lexical innovation research
Ahmadi et al. (2024)	Sociolinguistics in digital era	Literature-based sociolinguistics	Secondary data content analysis	Digital media reshapes identity	Raises issues of data transparency and methodological rigor
Lubis et al. (2024)	Corpus-based conjunction analysis	Corpus-syntactic study	Frequency and colligation analysis	"karena" more frequent than "sebab"	Expands quantitative corpus methodology
Farhan et al. (2024)	Political billboard persuasive language	Linguistic landscape & pragmatics	200 billboard texts	Persuasive discourse strategies	Applied discourse research linking language and politics

As illustrated in Table 2, the body of Minangkabau linguistic research is characterized by substantial methodological heterogeneity, encompassing interpretivist discourse studies, descriptive linguistic analyses, corpus-based investigations, and sociolinguistic evaluations. While this diversity reflects the intellectual richness of the field, the comparative mapping also reveals recurring structural patterns that inform the subsequent analysis. In particular, the table highlights three interrelated tendencies: the predominance of qualitative interpretivist approaches, the uneven reporting of data practices and validation procedures, and the limited articulation of explicit epistemological positioning. These observations provide an empirical basis for the thematic analysis presented in the following sections, where methodological tensions are examined in relation to paradigmatic pluralism, evidentiary rigor, and evaluative accountability.

#### 4.1. Distribution of Research Paradigms and Research Designs

Analysis of the sampled studies indicates substantial diversity in research paradigms and methodological orientations. As shown in Table 2, interpretivist qualitative approaches constitute the largest proportion of Minangkabau linguistic research, followed by positivist quantitative approaches and mixed-methods designs.

**Table 3. Distribution of Research Paradigms (N = 20)**

Research Paradigm	Number of Studies	Percentage
Interpretivist / Qualitative	9	45%
Positivist / Quantitative	6	30%
Mixed / Hybrid	4	20%
Critical	1	5%

Total	20	100%
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With regard to research design, discourse-oriented and semiotic analyses were the most frequently employed approaches (40%), followed by descriptive or dialectological studies (25%), corpus-based analyses (20%), and applied or evaluative studies (15%). No study explicitly combined all three dimensions of description, interpretation, and evaluation within a single coherent design.

These distributions indicate that Minangkabau linguistic research is predominantly qualitative and interpretive in orientation, with comparatively fewer studies adopting explicitly evaluative or critical methodological frameworks.

#### 4.2. Data Types, Sources, and Sampling Practices

The analysis further examined the types of linguistic data, data sources, and sampling practices employed across the studies. Table 3 summarizes the dominant data characteristics identified in the dataset.

**Table 4. Data Types and Sampling Practices**

Category	Dominant Pattern	Number of Studies
Data Type	Spoken discourse / oral texts	11
	Written texts (proverbs, manuscripts, corpora)	7
	Multimodal data	2
Data Source	Naturally occurring	12
	Elicited	5
	Archival	3
Sampling Strategy (reported)	Explicit	6
	Implicit	8
	Not specified	6

Most studies relied on spoken or oral data, particularly in discourse and ethnographic research, while written and corpus-based data were less prevalent. Although naturally occurring data dominated the dataset, fewer than one-third of the studies provided an explicit description of their sampling strategies. In six studies, sampling procedures were not reported at all, limiting transparency regarding representativeness and data scope.

These findings indicate variability and inconsistency in how data sources and sampling practices are documented across Minangkabau linguistic research.

### 4.3 Analytic Procedures and Validation Strategies

The examination of analytic procedures revealed clear differences between qualitative and quantitative studies. Qualitative studies predominantly employed thematic, discourse, or semiotic analysis, while quantitative studies relied on frequency counts, descriptive statistics, or basic inferential techniques. However, validation and reliability procedures were unevenly reported.

**Table 5. Analytic and Validation Practices**

Analytic Feature	Number of Studies
Qualitative coding described	9
Quantitative/statistical analysis	6
Mixed analytic procedures	4
Triangulation reported	5
Inter-coder reliability reported	2
Validity/reliability discussion	4

Only five studies reported some form of triangulation, and just two explicitly addressed inter-coder reliability. Less than one-quarter of the studies included a dedicated discussion of validity or reliability. These patterns suggest that analytic rigor and transparency vary considerably, particularly in qualitative research designs.

### 4.4 Epistemological Positioning and Evaluative Claims

Analysis of epistemological positioning focused on whether studies explicitly articulated their theoretical or epistemological stance and whether there was alignment between research questions, methods, and claims. Of the 20 studies analyzed:

- 4 studies (20%) explicitly stated an epistemological or theoretical positioning.
- 11 studies (55%) implied an epistemological stance through methodological choices without explicit articulation.
- 5 studies (25%) provided no identifiable epistemological positioning.

In addition, 7 studies (35%) made applied or evaluative claims related to language learning, cultural transmission, or educational relevance. However, only 2 of these studies employed a clearly defined evaluative framework or indicators. The remaining studies presented applied implications without methodological mechanisms for evaluation.

This pattern indicates a recurring disjunction between analytical claims and evaluative support within the literature.

Overall, the findings reveal several recurring methodological patterns across Minangkabau linguistic research:

1. A predominance of interpretivist qualitative paradigms with limited explicit epistemological articulation.
2. Substantial variation in data practices and inconsistent reporting of sampling and validation procedures.
3. Limited integration of evaluative frameworks, even in studies making applied or pedagogical claims.

These findings provide an empirical basis for examining methodological tensions and their implications, which are addressed in the subsequent Discussion section.

## **5. Discussion**

The findings of this critical meta-analysis reveal that contemporary linguistic research on the Minangkabau language demonstrates a high degree of methodological diversity, yet this diversity coexists with recurring issues related to epistemological clarity, methodological transparency, and the integration of evaluative frameworks. The predominance of interpretivist qualitative approaches identified in the results reflects a broader disciplinary shift within applied linguistics toward socially situated understandings of language. Over the past two decades, applied linguistics research has increasingly emphasized language as a form of social practice embedded within cultural, ideological, and institutional contexts, rather than merely a structural system of grammar and vocabulary. Recent methodological discussions in applied linguistics highlight that discourse-oriented and ethnographic approaches have become particularly influential in studies examining identity construction, cultural meaning-making, and community-based language practices. This trend is reflected in methodological innovations and debates that encourage researchers to examine language through socially embedded frameworks while maintaining analytical rigor and transparency. Li et al. (2023) argued that methodological innovation in applied linguistics involves not only the introduction of new techniques but also the expansion of theoretical perspectives that allow researchers to examine language as a dynamic social phenomenon. For example, discussions of methodological innovation emphasize the need for research approaches that capture the complexity of language practices in multilingual communities while simultaneously ensuring methodological accountability and analytical coherence.

Within this broader disciplinary context, the dominance of interpretivist paradigms observed in the Minangkabau linguistic literature appears consistent with global developments in sociolinguistics and discourse studies. Research on culturally embedded linguistic practices often prioritizes qualitative interpretation and contextualized meaning rather than statistical generalization. This methodological preference reflects the recognition that linguistic forms frequently function as carriers of cultural knowledge, social norms, and ideological values that cannot easily be captured through purely quantitative analysis. Studies of ritual language, proverbs, oral traditions, and everyday interaction have demonstrated that qualitative approaches are particularly effective for uncovering the sociocultural meanings embedded in linguistic practices. The present meta-analysis therefore supports earlier observations that research on minority and regional languages tends to rely heavily on interpretive methods in order to capture the complexity of culturally

situated communication. At the same time, however, the findings also reveal that many studies adopt interpretive methodologies without explicitly articulating the epistemological assumptions underlying those approaches. This pattern reflects a broader concern raised in methodological meta-research, where scholars have observed that research paradigms are frequently implied through methodological choices rather than explicitly discussed. Vuogan & Li (2023) in methodological practices in second language research has demonstrated that meta-analyses and research syntheses often identify inconsistencies between the theoretical positioning of studies and the methodological procedures they employ.

The absence of explicit epistemological positioning identified in many of the analyzed studies therefore represents an important methodological issue within Minangkabau linguistic research. Epistemological transparency is widely considered a key component of research quality because it clarifies the assumptions guiding methodological decisions and interpretive claims. Plonsky (2024) argued that methodological rigor should be understood as a multidimensional concept encompassing transparency, coherence between research questions and analytical procedures, and ethical responsibility toward the communities whose language practices are being studied. In this framework, high-quality research is expected to demonstrate methodological transparency, explicit theoretical positioning, and clear documentation of analytical procedures. The current findings suggest that while many studies provide rich descriptive insights into Minangkabau linguistic practices, the underlying epistemological frameworks guiding those analyses are often implicit rather than explicitly articulated. This lack of explicit theoretical positioning may contribute to difficulties in comparing findings across studies or synthesizing research outcomes within a broader theoretical framework. Similar concerns have been raised in meta-analytic reviews of second language acquisition research, which have shown that inconsistent reporting of methodological and theoretical assumptions can hinder cumulative knowledge development within the field.

Another important finding concerns the types of linguistic data used across the studies included in the meta-analysis. The predominance of naturally occurring spoken discourse and culturally embedded textual materials reflects a strong emphasis on ecological validity within Minangkabau linguistic research. In sociolinguistic and ethnographic research traditions, naturally occurring data are often considered essential for capturing authentic language practices within real-life communicative settings. Such data allow researchers to observe how linguistic forms function within the social interactions, cultural rituals, and community practices that give them meaning. Studies examining oral traditions, ritual discourse, and conversational interaction in Minangkabau communities frequently rely on field observations, recordings of naturally occurring speech, and textual analysis of cultural narratives. These methodological choices are consistent with broader trends in applied linguistics that prioritize contextualized analysis of language use in multilingual and multicultural settings. At the same time, however, the meta-analysis reveals substantial variation in how researchers describe the processes through which these data are collected and selected. In several cases, sampling strategies were either only briefly mentioned or not explicitly reported at all.

The limited reporting of sampling procedures represents a methodological challenge that has been widely discussed in the literature on research synthesis and meta-analysis. Systematic reviews are designed to integrate findings across multiple studies in order to

identify patterns of evidence and evaluate the methodological quality of existing research. In order for such syntheses to be meaningful, individual studies must provide sufficient methodological detail to allow researchers to assess how data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Chalmers & Koryakina (2024) emphasize that transparent reporting of search strategies, sampling criteria, and analytical procedures is essential for ensuring replicability and minimizing bias in research synthesis. When primary studies provide limited methodological detail, it becomes difficult to evaluate the reliability of their findings or to compare them systematically with other studies. The present meta-analysis suggests that while Minangkabau linguistic research has generated valuable empirical insights, greater attention to methodological transparency would enhance the field's capacity for cumulative knowledge building.

The analysis of analytical procedures and validation strategies further highlights significant variation in methodological rigor across the studies examined. Many qualitative studies relied on discourse analysis, thematic interpretation, or ethnographic observation as their primary analytical methods. These approaches are widely recognized as powerful tools for examining the social and cultural dimensions of language use. However, only a small number of studies reported formal validation procedures such as triangulation, inter-coder reliability, or systematic coding protocols. In the broader field of applied linguistics, researchers have increasingly emphasized the importance of transparent analytical procedures and clearly documented coding frameworks in qualitative research. Recent methodological discussions note that the credibility of qualitative findings depends not only on interpretive insight but also on the systematic documentation of how interpretations are derived from data. Scholars have therefore called for greater methodological reflexivity and clearer reporting standards in qualitative linguistic research, including explicit descriptions of coding procedures, validation strategies, and researcher positionality. The limited reporting of such procedures in the Minangkabau literature suggests that analytical credibility is sometimes assumed rather than systematically demonstrated.

In addition to methodological transparency, another key issue highlighted by the findings concerns the relationship between descriptive linguistic research and applied educational claims. A substantial number of the studies included in the meta-analysis proposed implications for language education, cultural preservation, or language revitalization. These claims are particularly significant in the context of regional-language research, where scholars often aim to contribute to the maintenance and transmission of linguistic heritage. However, the analysis revealed that only a small proportion of these studies employed explicit evaluation frameworks to assess the effectiveness of proposed educational or policy interventions. This disconnect between descriptive research and applied implications has been identified as a recurring challenge within applied linguistics. Program evaluation theory emphasizes that claims about educational outcomes should be supported by systematic evidence demonstrating how specific interventions influence language learning, language use, or language attitudes within a given context. Without such evaluative frameworks, applied recommendations may remain speculative rather than empirically grounded.

From a broader methodological perspective, the findings of this study illustrate the value of critical meta-analysis as a tool for examining the epistemological and methodological foundations of a research field. Meta-analysis and systematic research synthesis allow

scholars to move beyond individual studies and evaluate how knowledge is produced across a body of literature. In second language research and applied linguistics, meta-analysis has become an increasingly important method for synthesizing empirical findings and identifying methodological patterns across studies. Plonsky & Oswald (2015) have noted that research synthesis can reveal underlying trends in research design, data practices, and analytical approaches that may not be visible when examining individual studies in isolation. By treating methodological practices as the primary unit of analysis, the present study contributes to this tradition of meta-research and provides new insights into the methodological architecture of Minangkabau linguistic scholarship.

Taken together, the findings of this meta-analysis highlight both the strengths and the limitations of contemporary Minangkabau linguistic research. On the one hand, the field demonstrates considerable intellectual vitality, with researchers employing a wide range of methodological approaches to investigate linguistic variation, discourse practices, cultural narratives, and sociolinguistic dynamics. This diversity reflects the interdisciplinary character of applied linguistics and its capacity to integrate perspectives from anthropology, sociology, discourse analysis, and educational research. On the other hand, the analysis also reveals structural methodological challenges that may limit the cumulative development of knowledge within the field. These challenges include implicit epistemological positioning, inconsistent reporting of methodological procedures, and limited integration of evaluative frameworks in studies making applied claims. Addressing these issues will require greater methodological reflexivity, clearer reporting standards, and stronger connections between descriptive linguistic research and applied evaluation frameworks. By highlighting these methodological patterns, the present study provides a foundation for future research aimed at strengthening the theoretical coherence, methodological transparency, and applied relevance of Minangkabau linguistic studies within the broader field of applied linguistics.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study has examined methodological patterns in contemporary linguistic research on the Minangkabau language through a critical meta-analysis of empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025. The analysis demonstrates that while Minangkabau linguistic scholarship reflects considerable methodological diversity, the field is characterized by several recurring structural tendencies. In particular, interpretivist qualitative approaches remain predominant, while explicit articulation of epistemological positioning, transparent reporting of sampling procedures, and systematic validation practices are less consistently documented. These patterns highlight the importance of methodological reflexivity in regional-language research, where analytical richness and cultural sensitivity must be balanced with transparency and methodological rigor.

The findings suggest that strengthening the methodological foundations of Minangkabau linguistic research requires greater attention to epistemological clarity, systematic documentation of data practices, and clearer alignment between analytical claims and applied implications. Such improvements would not only enhance the comparability of studies but also increase the potential for cumulative knowledge development within the field. Moreover, the integration of evaluation-oriented frameworks may help bridge the gap

between descriptive linguistic analysis and the applied goals of language education, cultural preservation, and language policy.

By focusing on methodological practices rather than solely on substantive findings, this study contributes to ongoing discussions about research synthesis and methodological accountability in applied linguistics. The meta-analytic framework developed in this research provides a basis for future studies seeking to critically examine how linguistic knowledge about regional languages is produced, validated, and applied. In this way, the study underscores the broader importance of methodological transparency and epistemological reflexivity for advancing sustainable and impactful research in applied linguistics.

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