

# **'Mouth' and related terms in your dictionary**

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## ABSTRACT

The mouth is an important and versatile organ of the body. The aim of this paper is to guide dictionary compilers working in the Indonesian context when investigating terms associated with the mouth, including its subparts and diseases, as well as actions typically performed with the mouth.

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## VERSION HISTORY

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# ‘Mouth’ and related terms in your dictionary

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*Senyum adalah bahasa dunia.*  
A smile is universal language.

So, you have the words for ‘lips,’ ‘mouth,’ ‘tongue,’ and ‘teeth.’ What else is there to record in your dictionary? Even though I’ve put lots of effort over several years into two indigenous language dictionaries of Sulawesi, I’ve belatedly come to realize that there were still many gaps in my coverage of even basic terms for parts of the mouth and related terms. Here is a guide to take you deeper.

## 1 Parts of the mouth

When asking for the term for ‘lip,’ be alert that some languages identify an external area of the mouth, which can be called the ‘labial circle’ in English, or *mulut bagian luar* in Indonesian. Correspondingly, the lips may be regarded as the edge of this area, compare for example the following terms from Kulisusu (southeastern Sulawesi):

*huu* ‘labial circle, external mouth area’  
*wulu huu* ‘moustache,’ literally ‘hair (*wulu*) of the labial circle (*huu*)’  
*wiwi huu* ‘lips,’ literally ‘edge (*wiwi*) of the labial circle (*huu*)’

While investigating the lips, also check to see if there is a term for the corners of the mouth, technically one’s ‘labial commissures’ (Indonesian *pojok mulut*). Some languages even have a name for the lines or folds that extend outward, often dropping, from the corner of the mouth (*garis-garis pada pojok mulut*). In English these folds are colloquially called marionette lines or puppet lines. Also check whether there is a separate term for the short, vertical depression which extends from the nose to the upper lip. The technical English name for this small cleft is the ‘philtrum’ or the ‘infranasal depression.’ In Indonesian it can be referred to as *lekukan antara hidung dan bibir atas*. In Uma (Central Sulawesi), for example, the term for this depression is *halu’ wiwi*, literally ‘river of the lips’ (Michael Martens 2010:pers.comm.)

In addition to ‘moustache,’ Indonesian *kumis*, which grows above the upper lip, some languages may also have a special term for the tuft of beard which grows centered below the lower lip and above the chin, called the attilio. When shaped and allowed to grow, in English it can also be called a ‘mouche,’ a ‘smig,’ or (after the style was popularized by jazz musicians) a ‘soul patch.’ In the Indonesian context I have come across two terms for this

tuft of hair: *anfaqah* (borrowed from Arabic), and *takujeng* (blended from *tidak (tak) kumis tidak (tak) jenggot*).

In the animal sphere, probe whether there are separate terms for ‘snout’ (*moncong*, *mulut yg panjang atau memanjang*), for example the snout of a dog or pig, as well as terms for ‘beaks’ and ‘bills’ of birds (Indonesian generic *paruh*, though a wide bill such as of a duck or goose can be called a *sudu*). Are there yet other terms for the ‘mouth’ of a snake? Of a turtle? Of a fish, or certain fish species? Of squid and octopi? Be creative. You could also ask about terms for the ‘mouths’ of inanimate objects such as bottles and rivers, the muzzle of a gun, etc.

Inside the mouth cavity (*rongga mulut*, *mulut bagian dalam*),<sup>1</sup> the most notable features are, of course, the ‘tongue’ *lidah* and the ‘teeth’ *gigi*. But also probe for terms for ‘gums’ *gusi*, *daging tempat gigi tumbuh* and for ‘palate’ *langit-langit mulut*. If necessary the latter can be further divided into the forward ‘hard palate’ (*langit-langit keras*) with its alveolar ridge (*alvéolus*) behind the upper front teeth, and the rear ‘soft palate’ or ‘velum’ (*langit-langit lunak*). At the back of the mouth hangs the uvula, the *anak lidah* or *anak tekak*. To the sides are the tonsils, *amandel*. Past the tonsils and the uvula can be seen the back of one’s throat, which is technically the wall of one’s pharynx (*farinks* or *faring*). In Indonesian, the soft area in the back of the mouth, including both the pharynx and the velum, is one’s *tekak*. Giving structure to the entire mouth area are the jaws, *rahang*, which can be divided into the upper jaw or maxilla (*rahang atas*) and the lower jaw or mandible (*rahang bawah*)—though usually *tulang rahang* ‘jawbone’ is understood to refer only to the mandible.

The main division of the teeth are between the molars—*geraham* or *gigi geraham*—and the incisors—*gigi manis*, *gigi kacip*, *gigi pengiris*, or *gigi seri*. (The term *gigi seri*—from Latin *incidere* ‘for biting’—appears to have the widest application, being used of the front teeth of humans as well as other mammals.) Children and adults also have four canine teeth (also called cuspids), *gigi asu*, *gigi anjing* or *gigi taring*. Counting from the center, canines are the third tooth back on either side, top and bottom. (In English, the upper canines, but not the lower ones, are also called ‘eyeteeth.’) In an adult, behind each canine are two more teeth technically called ‘premolars’ or ‘bicuspid’ in English. If there is a need to distinguish, premolars can be called *gigi geraham kecil* (or *gigi geraham depan*), and molars *gigi geraham besar* (or *gigi geraham belakang*).

The first four teeth (two upper, two lower) that a baby gets are called its *gigi sulung*. Correspondingly, the last four molars which an adult gets, one’s wisdom teeth, are called one’s *gigi bungsu* (or *gigi geraham bungsu*). Milk teeth or baby teeth are *gigi susu* (or *gigi desidus*), while adult or permanent teeth can be called *gigi dewasa*, *gigi sejati*, *gigi kekal*, *gigi benar*, or *gigi tetap*. Artificial teeth and dentures are *gigi palsu*, *gigi buatan* or

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<sup>1</sup> Technically, the inside of the mouth can be further divided into the ‘oral vestibule,’ the area between the cheeks/lips and gums/teeth—you can run the tip of your tongue around in this area—and the ‘oral cavity proper,’ that is, the area between (inside) the teeth and bounded in back by the pharynx.

*gigi tiruan*. The expression *gigi geligi* means ‘all one’s teeth.’ When a person or animal bites something, the action may leave toothmarks / bite marks, *jejas gigit*.

Visualizing a prototypical tooth, its major parts are: (a) the cusp(s), any point or peaklike projection on the chewing surface of the tooth (*ujung gigi, titik gigi*); (b) the crown, that is, the visible part of the tooth (*puncak gigi, mahkota gigi, corona gigi*) (a false crown is also called a *jakét gigi* or *sarung gigi* in Indonesian); (c) the neck, the narrowed part where the tooth meets the gum line (*léhér gigi*); and (d) the root(s) of the tooth (*akar gigi*).



There may also be particular names or expressions for teeth which are notable in one way or another. For example:

crowded, overlapping teeth = *gigi berjejal, bergigi tak beraturan*  
 small teeth neatly arranged = *gigi tikus*  
 large front teeth = *gigi kampak, gigi kapak*  
 bucktoothed, having protruding upper front teeth = *gigi tonggos, gigi seri yg mencuat / mengajur ke depan*  
 having a (deep / severe) overbite = *gigi tonggos, gigi rahang atas jauh lebih maju dibandingkan gigi rahang bawah*  
 snaggletoothed, having a tooth which juts out or is not in alignment with the others = *suatu gigi yg tdk rata dng yg lain*  
 harelippped, having a harelip / cleft palate = *bibir sumbing*  
 gap-toothed, having a gap or space (diastema) between the teeth = *gigi renggang*  
 missing a tooth = *celah gigi*  
 toothless = *ompong*  
 snow-white teeth = *gigi semara danta*  
 yellowed teeth = *gigi kuning*  
 a blackened or discolored tooth = *gigi sayap kumbang*  
 plaque or tartar on the teeth = *karang gigi*  
 a cracked, chipped or broken tooth = *gigi patah, gigi pecah, gigi sumbing*  
 a loose tooth = *gigi yg goyah, gigi yg longgar*  
 a tooth which has fallen out = *gigi tanggal, gigi copot*  
 lose a tooth = *terkeluar gigi*  
 cut a new tooth = *keluar gigi baru, tumbuh gigi baru*

Check also for traditions concerning what to do with a baby tooth after it has fallen out. In the Uma area of Central Sulawesi, an upper baby tooth is thrown under the house, while a lower baby tooth is thrown on the roof ‘for the mice to use’; the latter custom is also found among the Javanese (Michael Martens 2008:pers.comm.). In some locales, dreaming that one has lost a tooth (*bermimpi gigi tanggal*) is regarded as a sign of impending death in the family or other misfortune.

In the animal sphere, particularly large, long or sharp teeth may carry a separate name, such as with the English terms ‘fang’ and ‘tusk.’ As indicated in the following chart, however, English and Indonesian speakers divide semantic space differently.

of snake	of dog	of pig	of elephant
fang		tusk	
taring			gading

Also don't forget the 'gum pad' or 'dental pad' (technically pulvinus dentalis, Indonesian unknown) which replaces the missing upper incisors and canines of cattle and other bovids; or the 'egg tooth,' *gigi telur*, of chickens (not to mention other birds and reptiles), which is used to break through the shell and later falls off (in some species reabsorbed).

## 2 Diseases of the mouth

The following are five diseases of the mouth. The first-mentioned diseases are common. As for the last, I've never seen a case of scurvy in my life. It appears that the primary reference of the Indonesian term *seriawan* (the spelling *sariawan* is also encountered) is to canker sores, but it is sometimes applied more generally to other kinds of ulcers inside the mouth. Some even apply *seriawan* to thrush (see below)—though others regard this as patently incorrect (see Yayasan Spirita 2006, 2008a, 2008b). Because of this potential ambiguity, you should further define the term *seriawan* should you choose to use it in your dictionary.

oral ulcer = *ulkus mulut, tukak mulut, lesi (luka) pd mulut, seriawan*

Oral ulcer is a general term for any open sore inside the mouth or on or near the lips. Some types of oral ulcers are painful, others are not. Causes can be various, including physical trauma, infection, and cancer. Two commonly encountered types of oral ulcers are cold sores and canker sores.

(a) cold sore, fever blister, oral herpes, labial herpes = *hérpes mulut, hérpes bibir*  
Cold sores (fever blisters) are a subtype of oral ulcer which form at the corners of the mouth, on the lips, and/or in the labial circle (and tend to reappear in places of previous outbreaks). Cold sores usually run their course within a two-week period, passing through a tingling stage, a blistering stage (cluster of tiny blisters), a weeping stage, and a crusting stage. Caused by the *Herpes simplex* virus.

(b) canker sores, recurrent aphthous stomatitis (RAS) = *afté, seriawan biasa*  
Canker sores are shallow, painful ulcers with whitish centers and red margins, which occur inside the mouth. Canker sore outbreaks tend to be chronic and recurrent (though diminishing as a person ages), and often involve multiple sores at a time. The cause of canker sores is unknown, though a common misconception in the West is that they are caused by a *Herpes* virus. In Indonesia it is commonly believed that canker sores can be cured by taking vitamin C, a notion which perhaps has its origin in the equally mistaken belief that canker sores are an early symptom of scurvy (see below).

oral thrush, candidiasis of the mouth<sup>2</sup> = *guam, kandidiasis mulut, seriawan(?)*

A fungal infection (mycosis) caused by yeast of genus *Candida*, occurring mostly in infants and young children. It is characterized by whitish patches on the tongue and/or elsewhere in the oral cavity or pharynx. There may also be redness and swelling.

dental cavity, tooth decay = *sakit gigi*

A dental caries starts out as a small chalky area (where the enamel has been demineralized), and if left untreated can progress to large brown cavitations.

gingivitis, inflammation of the gums = *radang gusi, gusi yg radang dan sakit*

Caused by irritant chemicals and toxins produced by bacteria in plaque and tartar (*karang gigi*).

scurvy = *gusi yg berdarah, penyakit skurvi*

Caused by deficiency in vitamin C, scurvy results in spongy, bleeding gums and bleeding from all mucus membranes, and eventually—if left untreated—to tooth loss, suppurating wounds and death.

### 3 Actions performed with the mouth

The following is a partial list of what could be called ‘mouth actions’—things people do with their mouths. These actions are listed as a means of priming your respondents’ pumps, so to speak, and make no claim to completeness. Of course, as lexicographers we are particularly interested in discovering those actions which are distinct lexical items (viz. words or ‘phrasal lexemes’) in the language. Also pay attention to feelings, moods, or meanings which may be expressed through some of these actions.

eat = *makan*

eat hastily or greedily = *makan terburu-buru, makan dng lahap*

cram one’s mouth full = *menyumbatkan ke dalam mulut*

eat up everything = *makan semuanya tanpa berada sisa*

feast sumptuously = *berpesta pora*

eat only a little = *makan porsi yg kecil*

eat daintily, eat with small bites = *makan porsinya sedikit demi sedikit*

eat without using hands, eat with one’s face (as infant, animals) = *makan tanpa memakai tangan (spt bayi, héwan)*

eat grass, graze (as cow, goat, etc.) = *mengangon (spt sapi, kambing, dsb)*

snack around, not eat a definite meal = *makan makanan ringan saja*

eat a snack = *makan sarapan, makan penganan*

eat provisions prepared for a journey = *makan bekal*

drink = *minum*

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<sup>2</sup> In older times also called ‘sprue’ (from Dutch *spruw* ‘thrush mouth ulcers’), but today the term sprue is better applied to certain intestinal ailments.

sip = *menyesap, meminum sedikit-sedikit*  
 slurp = *menghirup*  
 swallow = *menelan*<sup>3</sup>  
 gulp down (something) = *meneguk(i) (sesuatu)*  
 gulp (from nervousness) = *meneguk ludah, menelan ludah (krn merasa gugup)*  
 swallow (s.th.) whole, swallow without chewing = *menelan (sesuatu) bulat-bulat*  
 suck on, suck up = *mengisap, menghisap*  
 suck the liquid out of s.th. and spit out the remainders (as sugarcane) = *menyepah, mengunyah sesuatu untuk mengambil sarinya kemudian membuang ampasnya*  
 suckle, suck at the breast = *menyusu, menéték*  
 suck one's thumb = *menghisap ibu jari*  
 touch or feel with the mouth (as infant) = *menyentuh dng mulut (spt bayi)*  
 bite = *menggigit*  
 snap, snap at (as dog) = *menggertak, menggertaki*  
 strike at, bite (as snake) = *mematuk (spt ular)*  
 peck, peck at, peck up (as chicken) = *mematuk, memaruh, mencucuk (spt ayam)*  
 dabble (as duck) (dip down and strain food with the bill) = *menyudu (spt itik)*  
 bite one's cheek / lip / tongue (accidentally) = *pipi / bibir / lidah tergigit*  
 bite or suck one's lower lip (e.g. with worry or concentration) = *menggigit bibir bawah, mengisap bibir bawah*  
 bite one's knuckle (e.g. with worry) = *menggigit buku jari (krn merasa cemas)*  
 bite down on, hold (something) between the teeth = *menahan (sesuatu) di antara gigi*  
 hold (something) in the mouth = *menahan (sesuatu) di dalam mulut*  
 roll around in the mouth (as candy) = *mengulum (gula-gula dsb) di dalam mulut*  
 carry in the mouth = *menggondol, menggonggong*  
 bite to the bone = *menggigit sampai ke tulang*  
 bite off, bite through = *menggigit potong, menggigit hingga putus*  
 rip, tear off with the teeth = *merabak, merobék dng gigi*  
 (peel) open with the teeth = *membuka dng gigi*  
 munch on, nibble at, gnaw on = *mengerumit, mengunggis, mengerip, mengerikiti*  
 gnaw up, gnaw something all over = *menggerogot*  
 chew, masticate = *mengunyah, memamah*  
 chew noisily with the mouth open, smack the lips = *mengecap, berdecap-decap*  
 chew betel nut = *makan pinang*  
 chew the cud = *memamah biak*  
 bite one's nails, chew one's fingernails = *menggigit kuku*  
 gum, masticate (as toothless person) = *memamah tanpa gigi*  
 wipe one's mouth (e.g. after eating) = *membersihkan mulut, menyeka mulut (sesudah makan)*  
 pick the teeth = *menusuk gigi, membersihkan gigi dng tusuk gigi, menyingkirkan sisa-sisa makanan dr gigi*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Some languages may have separate lexemes for swallowing liquids versus swallowing solids.

<sup>4</sup> Also explore terms for toothpick (*tusuk / pencungkil gigi*) and for food stuck between the teeth (*sisa-sisa makanan yg terselip antara gigi*).

brush the teeth = *menyikat gigi*  
 gargle, rinse the mouth = *berkumur, membasuh mulut*  
 swish water around in the mouth = *menggerak-gerakkan air dalam mulut*  
 hold water in the mouth = *menyimpan air dalam mulut*  
 spit water out of the mouth = *menyemburkan air dr mulut*  
 salivate = *keluar ludah, keluar air liur*  
 salivate, relish (over food) = *berseléra, menimbulkan seléra (tt masakan)*  
 salivate profusely from nausea = *keluar ludah banyak krn merasa muak*  
 vomit = *memuntahkan*  
 drool (have saliva dribbling out) = *menétés air ludah, menétés air liur*  
 foam, froth at the mouth = *berbusa pd tepi bibir, berbusa mulut*  
 spit, expel saliva = *meludah, berludah, mengeluarkan ludah / air liur*  
 expel spittle from betel nut quid = *berludah dr memakan pinang*<sup>5</sup>  
 spit between the upper teeth and tongue with lip drawn upward = *meludah antara lidah dan gigi depan sambil mencibir bibir atas*  
 spew, expel forcefully from the mouth = *memuntahkan*  
 clear one's throat, expectorate = *membelahak*  
 spit out (something) = *meludahkan (sesuatu)*  
 taste (food) = *mencicipi*  
 protrude the tongue, stick out one's tongue = *menjulurkan lidah, mengulur lidah*  
 lap = *meminum dng lidah*  
 lick = *menjilat*  
 lick one's lips, moisten the lips = *menjilat bibir, membasahi bibir*  
 pucker, purse the lips = *mengerut(kan) bibir*  
 make a kissing sound = *mencucup, membuat bunyi 'cup' dng bibir*  
 kiss = *mencium*  
 buss on or near the cheek, kiss by touching cheeks (as greeting) = *mencium pipi, mengecup pipi*  
 kiss on the mouth = *mencium mulut, berkecupan*  
 kiss passionately = *saling mengulum bibir, kulum-mengulum bibir dan lidah*  
 bill and coo, rub beaks together (as birds) = *sulang-menyulang (spt burung)*  
 peck each other (as birds) = *bercucukan*  
 click the tongue, go 'tisk' = *berdecak-decak, membuat bunyi 'cek' dng mulut*  
 have one's teeth set on edge = *(merasa) ngilu*  
 have a shooting pain in one's tooth = *gigi linu*  
 have a lingering taste in the mouth, have an aftertaste = *menekak*<sup>6</sup>  
 dry-throated, thirsty = *tekak kering, tekak haus*  
 dry-mouthed, cotton-mouthed (e.g. from anxiety) = *mulut kering (krn merasa khawatir)*  
 hiccup = *bersedu*<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Also check whether there is a local word for 'cuspidor, spittoon' (*peludahan, tempolong*).

<sup>6</sup> Also *menekak manis* 'have a sweet aftertaste,' *menekak pahit* 'have a bitter aftertaste,' etc.

<sup>7</sup> Also explore cultural ways of ridding someone of hiccups.

burp, belch = *beserdawa*  
 cough = *batuk*  
 yawn = *menguap*  
 breathe = *bernafas*  
 inhale = *menarik nafas*  
 exhale = *mengeluarkan nafas*  
 wheeze = *berbunyi menciut-ciut*  
 gasp for breath = *mengagut-agut, mengap-mengap*  
 choke = *mencekik*  
 slack-jawed, slack-mouthed, with one's mouth hanging open = *mulut celangap*  
 gape = *menganga*  
 open the mouth wide = *membuka mulut lebar-lebar*  
 cover one's mouth with the hand = *menutup mulut dng tangan*  
 put a finger to one's lips, touch one's lip = *menyentuh mulut (menggunakan jari)*  
 grin = *meringis, menyeringai*  
 smile = *bersenyum, tersenyum*  
 return a smile, smile back = *membalas senyuman, tersenyum balik*  
 smile wide with teeth showing = *tersenyum lebar kelihatan gigi*  
 easily smiling, quick to smile = *cepat tersenyum*  
 sincere, honest smile = *senyum ramah, senyum tulus*<sup>8</sup>  
 winsome, captivating smile = *senyum menawan*  
 pleased smile, smile of pleasure = *senyum kenikmatan, senyum bahagia*  
 contented, satisfied smile, smile of satisfaction = *senyum puas*  
 smug, self-satisfied smile, gloating smile = *senyum krn puas dng diri sendiri*  
 proud smile = *senyum kebanggaan*  
 lustful smile = *senyum berahi*  
 wicked smile, evil grin = *senyum jahat*  
 polite smile, formal smile = *senyum basa-basi*  
 embarrassed smile = *senyum malu-malu, senyum simpul*  
 slight smile, faint smile = *senyum berguris-guris / terguris, senyum di bibir saja*  
 growing smile = *senyum mengembang*  
 fleeting smile = *senyum tersipu-sipu*  
 sad smile = *senyum muram*  
 perplexed smile = *senyum bingung*  
 pained smile = *senyum kepedihan*  
 smile despite difficulties, paste a smile on one's face = *mengulum senyum*  
 force a smile = *tersenyum sumbing*  
 repress a smile = *menekan senyum*  
 shut one's mouth tight = *mengatupkan mulut, mengetam mulut, mengetam bibir*  
 tight-lipped, close-lipped, close-mouthed = *mulut bertutup, mulut mengatup*  
 protrude or extend one's lower lip (e.g. to point) = *menonjolkan bibir bawah*  
 (*misalnya, untuk menunjukkan sesuatu*)

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<sup>8</sup> Also *mengguratkan senyum ramah / muram / dsb* 'give a sincere / sad / etc. smile.'

pout (e.g. with disappointment or disgust) = *bibir monyong*, *mulut manyun*,  
*memanyunkan bibir*  
 frown = *memberungut*, *membengkokkan bibir*, *bermuka masam*  
 grimace (from pain) = *bergeringsing muka* (*krn kesakitan*)  
 screw up one's face (frown the brow, wrinkle the nose and purse the lips)  
 = *mengerutkan muka*<sup>9</sup>  
 curl one's upper lip = *mencibir bibir atas*  
 tremble (of the lips) = *bibir menggigil*  
 chatter (of the teeth) (from cold) = *gigit menggigil* (*krn dingin*)  
 snarl, growl (as dog) = *menggeram*  
 bare one's teeth (or fangs) = *menunjukkan gigi*  
 grind, gnash the teeth = *mengertakkan gigi*  
 clench one's jaw, clench one's teeth = *mengatupkan gigi*, *ketam* (*gigi*)  
 draw air inward through one's clenched teeth = *menarik nafas antara gigi*  
*yg mengatup*  
 speak out of the side of one's mouth = *berbicara dng sebelah bibir saja*

Somewhat arbitrarily, I end the list here, although 'speaking out of the side of one's mouth' could, of course, easily lead into various articulations such as mumbling, whispering, speaking with a rasp, talking with one's mouth full, etc.—not to mention all the varieties of human laughter, plus animal articulations such as barking, grunting, cackling, crowing, hissing, lowing, bleating, etc.

#### 4 The mouth and metonymy

Michael Martens reports:

I found that in Uma the term for 'mouth' (*nganga*) is used more when speaking about food, whereas the word for 'lips' (*wiwi*) is used more when speaking about speech. Tongue is not used as a metonymy for either. So, for example, in Matthew 15:18 (NIV: "But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man unclean") it is more idiomatic in Uma to say "evil words that appear from our heart and are uttered on our lips..." Or Luke 6:45 (NIV: "...For out of the overflow of the heart his mouth speaks") is expressed in Uma "...For what is the contents of our heart, that also is what is uttered on our lips." (Martens 2008:pers.comm.)

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<sup>9</sup> Note also *mengerutkan dahi* 'frown one's brow,' *mengerutkan hidung* 'wrinkle one's nose.'

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In addition to numerous Google searches as a check on Indonesian definitions, the following is a partial list of resources consulted while compiling information presented in this article.

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