

## Coming of Age: diagnosing contact-induced change in Abui-Malay Bilinguals

Recently, there has been a call to document outcomes of language contact along with the sociolinguistic situations that caused them (Ross 2013). This paper presents a case study of contact-induced variation among three generations of Abui-Malay bilinguals, living in the coastal village of Takalelang, Alor. By comparing the Abui speech of three generations, each of whom is defined by sociolinguistic data, this study sheds light on the intricate processes of contact-induced change as they unravel before us. The goals of this talk are to a) identify the areas of Abui grammar most sensitive to contact and b) use sociolinguistic data to explain the variation (found in those areas) between and within the three age-groups.

Abui is a Papuan language spoken by 16,000 people on the island of Alor (Kratochvil 2007). It is one of hundreds of indigenous languages in Indonesia affected by a shift to the local Malay variety and the national language Indonesian, especially in the last few decades (e.g. Arka 2013). The role of distinct age-groups, in particular with respect to adolescents, has been touted as being crucial in this process. (Aitchison 2003; Kerswill 1996). While children are brought up in local Malay and possess passive knowledge of Abui, by the time they reach mid/late adolescence, speakers are expected to be competent in Abui. At this point, however, much of their Abui has already been affected by a lack of early acquisition, creating a scenario where the language remains relatively vital, yet possesses traces of their L1, Malay. By testing children up to the age of 15, we observe areas of their Abui grammar that they struggle with most, simply by having passive knowledge of the language. By then testing speakers between ages 16-29, we observe what happens to their grammar during the phase of 'switching back' to using Abui. Adults (aged 30+), who speak Abui as their L1, are used as a benchmark. The outcomes of language contact diagnosed are: 1) the loss of the third person reflexive possessive and 2) the simplification in *semantic alignment and lexical semantics* systems. These are areas that differ remarkably across the two languages and their prominence points to Malay metatypy. Therefore, among the youngest group tested (9-16 years), we observe a misuse of the pronominal prefixes exhibiting semantic alignment. Semantic factors such as volitionality, specificity, and animacy, all shown to be key factors in the Abui alignment system (Kratochvil 2007), are not being accounted for. Semantic transfer also seems to be an area sensitive to L2 acquisition, with many L2 speakers of Abui neutralizing certain lexical semantic distinctions. This points to the calquing of Malay words, which are often also generic and underspecified. Taken together, this talk documents a detailed case-study of contact-induced language transmission, pinpointing areas sensitive to age and potentially informing the fields of socio-historical linguistics, L2 acquisition, and language complexity.

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