Current Status of Language Documentation in the Alor-Pantar Archipelago

František KRATOCHVÍL
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

The last decade saw a surge in linguistic research in the Alor-Pantar Archipelago, a hitherto little explored area. We will first briefly sketch the research that preceded it. In the first half of the 20th century, the most notable research was carried out by Cora Du Bois, an American anthropologist who studies extensively the Abui community of Central Alor. Du Bois was accompanied by Martha M. Nicolspeyer, a Dutch sociologist, who focused on the social structure of the Abui. Both researchers concluded that culture and society of the Alorese were distinct from the neighboring island (Nicolspeyer 1940, Du Bois 1944).

In addition to the Holle lists, collected by the Dutch colonial administration, and published by W. A. L. Stokhof in 1975, it was established already before WWII that the languages and cultures found in the Alor-Pantar Archipelago are Papuan (non-Austronesian).


In the late 1990's, Mark Donohue has studies the languages of East Alor, most notably Kula (referred to as Tanglapui) (Donohue 1997, 2008). Similarly, Doug Marmion and Asako Shiohara surveyed the coastal Kui (Shiohara p.c.). In 2001, the so far only professional linguist native to the Archipelago, John Haan, completed his dissertation - a descriptive grammar of Adang and opened a productive decade for the Alor-Pantar research (Haan 2001).


The joint effort resulted in grammatical descriptions, typological and historical papers, and a number of dictionaries and story books (Holton and Koly 2008; Klamer forthcoming-a; Kratochvíl and Delpada 2008a, 2008b).

The paper will present the main findings made in the last decade, covering the diachronic perspective, typology, morphosyntax, pragmatics, language vitality, endangerment and maintenance. Some attention will be also given to the ongoing research of indigenous oral tradition of history, law, agricultural cycle, and resource management.
**Selected Bibliography**


Nicolspeyer, Martha Margaretha. 1940. De sociale structur van een Aloeresche bevolkingsgroep. Rijswijk: Kramers.


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