

**Towards a characterization of the language spoken in Kalimantan Utara:  
Middle Indonesian, Common Indonesian or Regional Indonesian?  
Notes on morphosyntax**

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This paper has a twofold objective. From one side it intends to discuss the features of the Indonesian spoken in the Indonesian province of North Kalimantan, how to label it, (Middle Indonesian as suggested by Errington, 2014, Common Indonesian or Regional Indonesian) and from the other to discuss some methodological issues related to data collection.

Through the preliminary analysis of naturalistic recordings of the language performed in the town of Tarakan and in the village of Sekatak and some elicitations, I will provide some examples of the language.

As already pointed out (Soriente 2017), there is no common vernacular Malay language spoken in the area. The Berau Malay and the Kutai Malay spoken in the nearby Province of East Kalimantan have never spread in the wider area to become a language of communication of other language communities; rather they have remained the instrument of communication of the original Malay community itself. Like many other ethnic groups speaking their own languages such as the Kenyah, the Punan, the Bulusu', the Tidung, the Berau Malay and the Kutai Malay are just spoken within their own communities and display a number of idiosyncratic features (see Collins, 1990 and Collins, 2006). All these ethnic groups end up communicating with each other using a variety of Indonesian that is not exactly the standard version taught at school and used in the press as National Language but a non-standard variety (or even collection of varieties?) with some particular features.

Some of the features discussed here are particular pronoun forms, including the proclitics *ke-* and *ko(u)-* for the first and second singular person and *di(a)orang* for the third plural; pragmatic particles like *ba*; the negation *(n)da* and some address forms taken from Banjarese like *(a)cil* 'auntie' and *(a)jang* 'uncle' used to refer to an older woman or man with whom the speaker has a particular relationship. Occasionally a few features come from the colloquial variant spoken in the capital, and hence might be characterized as a sort of koine. One feature here is in use through the entire archipelago, the applicative suffix *-in* that alternates with a more widespread *-kan* and the multifunctional preposition *sama*.

The other issue that will be discussed in this paper is the use of an instrument like the SCOPIC images (Social Cognition Parallel Interview Corpus) of the Jackal and Crow story (San Roque et al, 2012) that, if from one side should be recognized as a neutral instrument able to produce easily comparable data among different varieties of Malay/Indonesian spoken in the Archipelago. On the other hand, this instrument has limitations because it biases in favor of quite standardized language which necessarily

conflicts with the target collection. The experience and utility of eliciting words in carrier sentences to understand prosodic features will be discussed too.

#### References

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