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Countering purism: confronting the emergence of new varieties in a training program for community language workers

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1. Introduction

Studies of language shift and language silence have reported extensive grammatical restructuring and the emergence of new varieties as knowledge and use of a language weakens among younger members of an language community. The ensuing high levels of variation between speakers can lead to a 'language shift cycle'. The starting point for the cycle is the extensive variation which flourishes during rapid language shift. Such variation may activate puristic attitudes in speech communities among older people who wish to maintain a more conservative form of their language. These attitudes can trigger a cycle of restrictions on using the heritage language with non-fluent speakers. Decreased transmission and lack of access to a fluent speaker model lead to imperfect learning among younger speakers, which gives rise to greater variation. And so begins a cycle in which the drive for purism is itself implicated in language obsolescence.

In the linguistically diverse islands of Central Maluku in Eastern Indonesia, approximately forty-two Austronesian languages are spoken. The greatest degree of attested language endangerment in Indonesia is found in this region, yet very few of these languages have been the subject of modern linguistic analysis and grammatical description. Speaker numbers for moribund languages in Maluku are very small, and opportunities for documentation are enhanced by the presence of elderly speakers among the large population of Malukans who have lived in exile in the Dutch diaspora since 1950. In these two settings, a project is being undertaken to document four endangered Central Malukan languages and to carry out language maintenance and renewal activities.

Our challenge as linguists responding to the voiced desires of communities to maintain or renew endangered languages is to develop tools which intervene in the language shift cycle. To meet this challenge, an innovative training program for community language workers is being developed among speakers of Malukan languages and their descendents both in the homeland in eastern Indonesia and in the Dutch diaspora. This paper reports on the training model, which has as its goals the facilitation of language documentation and maintenance at the community level, and the development of an approach which promotes greater linguistic tolerance and compromise through placing a direct emphasis on issues of language change and variation.

2.   The language shift cycle

In an community in which the heritage language is endangered and rapid language shift from the minority language to a majority language is occurring, varying levels of fluency develop among remaining speakers. As knowledge and use of the heritage language diminish among younger speakers, linguists commonly observe the emergence of new varieties, and processes of grammatical restructuring which have variously been described as 'simplification', 'reduction', 'decay', or 'serious linguistic disintegration' (Dorian 1989, Evans 2001, Florey 1990, 1997, Sasse 1992, Schmidt 1985, Thomason and Kaufman 1988).

Emergent varieties in themselves are not unusual. Indeed from some theoretical perspectives they are a part of 'normal' linguistic scenarios. Within a discourse functional framework, for example, grammar is seen as always emergent (Hopper 1987, Bybee and Hopper 2001). However, in a language shift scenario this same process occurs at a greatly accelerated rate. It is the pace at which new varieties emerge, and the sheer number of varieties which may co-exist in one speech community during (particularly the later stages of) language shift which are unusual. For language maintenance practitioners, the critical point is that high levels of variation between speakers can trigger a 'language shift cycle'.

The starting point for the cycle is the extensive variation which flourishes during rapid language shift. Such variation can trigger puristic attitudes in speech communities among older people who wish to maintain a more conservative or 'pure' form of their language. These attitudes may result in restrictions on using the heritage language with non-fluent speakers. Decreased transmission and lack of access to a fluent speaker model lead to imperfect learning among younger speakers, which gives rise to greater variation. And so begins a cycle in which the drive for purism is itself implicated in the shift towards silence[1].

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[1] Throughout this paper I follow Hinton's suggestion (in Hinton and Hale 2001) that we talk about languages which are 'silent' or 'sleeping' rather than languages which are dead or moribund, to respect descendents of those language groups and to honour the hope that the languages may once more awaken and be heard.
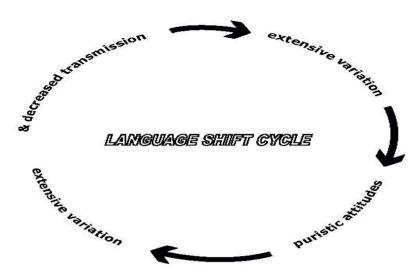
Figure 1 Language shift cycle

3.   Puristic attitudes and the roles of speakers and linguists

Puristic attitudes towards language are a feature of all speech communities – those which are experiencing language shift and those in which language use is comparatively stable. For example, Burridge (2002:2) quotes a correspondent who passionately supports retention of use of the English possessive apostrophe: "we shall have no formal structure of our language: it will become unteachable, unintelligible and, eventually, useless as an accurate means of communication". For this writer, the future of the entire English language seems to hang on retention of the possessive apostrophe. It should not surprise us then to find strong attitudes towards language variation among members of communities experiencing rapid language shift.

The negative impact of extensive variation is evident in the literature on language shift, which is replete with stories of language purism and concerns triggered by the presence of emergent varieties in a speech community. It appears, however, that attitudes towards language variation in language shift scenarios are polarised, much as they are in more stable linguistic situations. In her early work in East Sutherland Gaelic communities, Dorian (1981:154) hoped that "self-appointed monitors of grammatical norms may become increasingly rare in dying language communities. There are anecdotes about old men who used to scold and correct today's fluent speakers, in their youth, for departing from grammatical and lexical norms. But there were no such figures left in the community by the time I reached the area, and I heard only a little mockery of aberrant lexical choices and of one aberrant morphological choice".

At that stage in her research, Dorian was optimistic that such "relaxation of internal grammatical monitoring" (ibid.) might be widespread in communities in which languages are approaching silence. In later work Dorian's optimism receded as she noted "the regularity with which puristic attitudes appear in small language communities" (1994:480) and the role such attitudes can play in threatening the success of language revitalization programs. Similar effects have also been observed by Hinton, who quotes Gordon Bussell, a learner of the northern Californian language Hupa, saying "every elder I speak to has a different way of saying some things, and they all tell me the other ways are wrong" (in Hinton and Hale 2001:15).

There are also many stories in the linguistic literature about ways in which language purism can trigger issues of language ownership and language transmission, and further impact on the vitality of a minority language. Perhaps most useful among these is Evans' paper on last speakers. Among the many complex issues which he canvasses, Evans (2001:257) reviews the "trajectory from language as the shared vehicle of everyday communication to language as restricted ritual knowledge", and cites Tamsin Donaldson's (1985) report of this phenomenon in Ngiyampaa.

Let us turn briefly to the impact which we, as linguists, may have on community perceptions of – and attitudes towards – a minority language. Descriptivism rather than prescriptivism is widely promulgated as a dogma within our profession, and we extol our neutral stance towards language change and variation. Evans (2001:259), for example, observes the interest of the sociolinguistics of variation and the value of recording data about emergent varieties. Burridge (2002:4) writes 'While linguists might argue till they're blue in the face that all constructions are equally good and that change and variation are natural and inevitable features of any thriving language – it just so happens that most of the general community don't believe this is the case. For linguists, it's a natural phenomenon, something that evolves and adapts. For many others, it's an art form, something to be cherished and preserved – understandably these people reject the *neutral stance of the linguistics profession'* [my italics].

Nonetheless, in fieldwork and documentation activities many linguists adopt practices which covertly promote prescriptivist values and undermine their purported neutral stance towards language change and variation. In language descriptions linguists by and large continue to understate or simply ignore (possibly as too difficult to manage) variation and emergent varieties. Despite our dogma, our fieldwork classes, and several decades of heated discussions provoked by Chomskyan methodologies with a focus on an 'ideal speaker/hearer', it is still the case that we commonly privilege (older male) fluent speakers in our language documentation field work – however honourable our intentions and our desire for the richest documentation[2]. Paul Hopper, in his pioneering paper on Emergent Grammar and the data on which linguists base
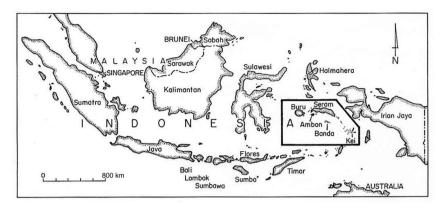
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[2] Clearly this critique cannot be applied in the field situations we encounter when a language is almost silent, in which it is simply not possible to work with a wider range of speakers.

their descriptions, noted that "any decision I make about limiting my field of inquiry (for example in regard to the selection of texts, or the privileging of the usage of a particular ethnic, class, age, or gender group) is very likely to be a political decision, to be against someone else's interests, and therefore disputed" (1987: 141-42). In a rare critique, Ian Green, in an email to Evans, points out that "it's odd how we as linguists on the one hand observe the fabulously multilingual nature of Aboriginal society but on the other can become very purist in our fieldwork endeavours and feel compromised at the thought of working with second or subsequent language speakers of the particular variety we're interested in" (cited in Evans 2001: 256). Too often, our approach to fieldwork and choice of field consultants feeds, albeit inadvertently, into puristic attitudes towards language and thus into the language shift cycle.

Linguists who have observed that language purism does indeed stand in the path of language maintenance call for tolerance and compromise. Hinton points out that 'disagreements over which variety is the "correct" form of a language are worse than useful – they can destroy morale and short-circuit a revitalization program. 'Tolerance of variation is essential' (in Hinton and Hale 2001:15). Evans (2001:26) notes the 'demonstrated advantages of compromise over purity in assuring language maintenance', and Dorian (1994:489) calls for Cornish language revival leaders to 'concede that more than one kind of authenticity exists, and to begin the more productive work of establishing a compromise version'. But these calls for tolerance and compromise are not programmatic and the question remains: in what way/s might the goal of compromise be achieved?

As linguists responding to the voiced desires of speakers and/or communities to maintain or renew endangered languages, the challenge is complex and multifaceted. The core tasks which are commonly identified include documenting languages, production of grammars and dictionaries, and the archiving of data. However it is in our fieldwork practices and training activities within speech communities that we have an opportunity to address puristic attitudes and develop tools which intervene in the language shift cycle. A training program which aims to meet these challenges is being developed among speakers of Malukan languages and their descendents both in the homeland in eastern Indonesia and in the Dutch diaspora.

4.   Linguistic diversity and endangerment in Maluku and the Dutch diaspora

Map 1 – Indonesia showing Central Maluku

The fourteen Central Malukan islands (Map 1) in eastern Indonesia are notable for their high level of linguistic diversity. Forty-two Austronesian languages are spoken in this region. The greatest diversity is found in Seram Island with twenty-one extant languages and Ambon Island with six extant languages. Central Maluku has been subject to centuries of contact with non-indigenous peoples. Before European colonisation, Ambon and the Lease islands (Haruku, Saparua, and Nusalaut) were part of the North Malukan sultanate of Ternate – a political and trade relationship which introduced Islam to parts of Central Maluku. Ambon, Seram, and neighbouring islands were also in contact with Javanese, Malay, Arab and Chinese spice traders who took shelter in local harbours. With colonisation by the Portuguese from 1511, garrisons were stationed on Ambon and the Lease islands to break Ternate's control. The redistribution of political power resulted in Central Malukan Muslim villages aligning with Ternate and those villages which converted to Christianity aligning with the colonial authorities. Dutch colonisation from 1599 saw Christian villages provided with greater access to education and employment. Ambon Bay and the southern side of Ambon island became the centre of colonial activity and the contact experience has been most intensive for ethnolinguistic groups located in these areas, on the Lease islands, and on or near coastal Seram.

Language endangerment in Central Maluku is thus attributable to a cluster of factors: the history of long-standing contact with non-indigenous peoples, colonisation, intensive trade, and conversion to non-indigenous religions. These factors have all contributed to widespread use of the contact language Ambonese Malay in Central Maluku. Contact languages with Malay as the lexifier language have also developed in

south and north Maluku: Southwest Malukan Malay, Southeast Malukan Malay, and North Malukan (Ternaten) Malay.

It has been well-documented that languages in Christian villages in Maluku are becoming silent more rapidly than languages spoken in villages which converted to Islam (Florey 1991, 1997). In the post-colonial era, the national language, Indonesian, has impacted on the linguistic ecology through its status as the language of education, media, and government. With this background, a recent analysis of linguistic vitality among Austronesian languages (Florey forthcoming) indicates that Maluku has the highest level of language endangerment in Indonesia. Six languages are known to have become extinct in recent times, and seven of the nineteen seriously endangered languages have fewer than fifty speakers.

Although speaker numbers for endangered languages in Maluku are very small, some speakers also remain among the Malukans resident in the Netherlands. In 1950, many Malukans were unwilling to join the newly-formed Republic of Indonesia and some 12,500 Malukan soldiers and their families accepted an opportunity to demobilise in the Netherlands. The vast majority continue to live in exile, resulting in a population of more than 50,000 Dutch Malukans. Recent research indicates that there may be speakers of as many as ten Central Malukan languages in the diaspora (Florey and van Engelenhoven 2001). In this setting, Melaju Sini – a Malay-based contact language which shows extensive influence from Dutch – has developed among second- and third-generation migrants.

5.   **Language documentation project**

It is within this framework of high linguistic diversity, serious endangerment, and poor documentation, that several research projects focused on the languages indigenous to Central Maluku have been instigated. This work commenced with Florey's research on the Alune language of Seram Island (e.g. Florey 2001a, 2001b), and continued in a project undertaken in the Dutch diaspora by Florey and van Engelenhoven to document several languages of Central and South Maluku (Florey 2002, van Engelenhoven 2002, Florey and van Engelenhoven 2001). Current research by Florey, Ewing, Litamahuputty and Musgrave focuses on the documentation of four previously undescribed Central Malukan languages. With very small speaker numbers, data are being recorded in ethnolinguistic communities in both the homeland and in the Dutch diaspora for

- Amahai, Soahuku, Ruta, Makariki (Seram Island)

- Haruku (Haruku Island)

- Allang, Wakasihu (Ambon Island)

- Tulehu, Tial, Tengah-tengah, Liang, Waai (Ambon Island)

The four Austronesian languages under study are areally and genetically related. All are subgrouped within Proto-East Central Maluku in the Proto-Piru Bay branch of Nunusaku (Collins 1983).
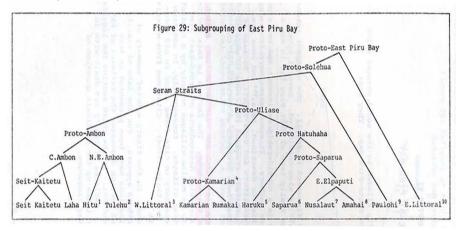

Figure 2 Subgrouping of Proto-East Piru Bay (Collins 1983: 100)

As Figures 2 and 3 indicate, Amahai, Haruku and Tulehu (as Collins names these three languages) are subgrouped within East Piru Bay, while Allang is a West Piru Bay language. All four languages are undergoing language shift in these very different social and linguistic settings. In the homeland, the Central Malukan languages are genetically related to the Austronesian languages of wider communication with which they are in contact – Ambonese Malay, which has existed in the region for at least five centuries, and Indonesian, the national language. In the Netherlands, Central Malukan languages are in primary contact with an Indo-European language (Dutch) and with two Austronesian contact languages – Ambonese Malay and Melaju Sini.
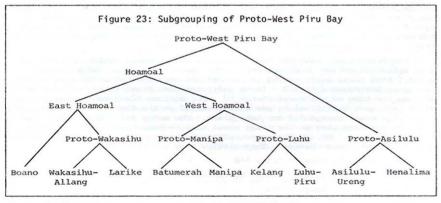

Figure 3 Subgrouping of Proto-West Piru Bay (Collins 1983: 69)

6. Developing a training philosophy

Language maintenance practitioners – speakers, community members and professionals – have increasingly recognised that the most successful models for language maintenance are those in which professional expertise is integrated within language maintenance strategies which are driven by motivated members of the speech community. Models which have become well-known through the past two decades include activities in the network of Aboriginal Language Centres in Australia (McConvell and Hudson 1984, Sharp and Thieberger 1992, Thieberger 1995), and the Master-Apprentice scheme established by Hinton for indigenous Californian languages (Hinton 1994, 2002, Hinton and Hale 2001). These models share a goal of empowerment through strategies which facilitate ownership and control of language activities at a local level.

Developing a strategy which empowers stakeholders can be challenging for speakers, communities, linguists and other professionals. In the Netherlands, the past decade has witnessed a strong revival of interest in ethnolinguistic identity and *bahasa tanah* (indigenous languages) among second- and third-generation Malukans. Aspirations range from wanting to learn about Malukan languages in general, hoping to incorporate some words into speech as markers of identity, writing songs, poetry and literature in *bahasa tanah*, and, in some cases, becoming speakers of ancestral languages. Elderly first generation Dutch Malukans have been encouraged by this interest and wish to share their residual knowledge of *bahasa tanah*. However, their descendents and other community members have been uncertain about how to learn and/or teach the languages, and frustrated by a lack of materials. These perceived obstacles have hindered them in instituting language programs.

In response to publicity about the first stages of their project, Florey and van Engelenhoven met many requests to document languages, provide dictionaries and grammars, and teach Dutch Malukans their own ancestral languages. This will be a familiar scenario to many fieldwork linguists, and the challenge of trying to balance a desire to respond to community needs with the tasks of documentation, analysis and writing can seem daunting. In June 2001, Florey and Litamahuputty ran the workshop *Bahasa Tanah Maluku Tengah* (Indigenous languages of Central Maluku), and in September 2001 van Engelenhoven ran *Bahasa Tanah Maluku Tenggara* (Indigenous languages of South Maluku). The workshops were held at the Moluks Historisch Museum Sedjarah Maluku (MHM), Utrecht, a centre for Malukan history and culture which provides a range of programs for the Malukan community in the Netherlands[3]. The approach taken in the first *bahasa tanah* workshops aimed to

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[3] Alongside the exhibitions which are held at the Museum, the MHM houses an educational branch (*Pusat Edukasi Maluku; Landelijk Steunpunt Educatie Molukkers*) which prepares curriculum materials for educational programs throughout the Netherlands. It is a centre for media activity including the radio program *Suara Maluku* (the Voice of Maluku) and the news journal *Marinjo*. Public lectures concerning

- demystify linguistics and linguistic fieldwork,

- empower individuals and/or communities to undertake language documentation and revitalisation or maintenance at a grassroots level,

- counter the perceived need for the involvement of professionals in all language activities.

It was beyond our resources to be able to offer workshops in a large number of *bahasa tanah*. In the workshop *Bahasa Tanah Maluku Tengah*, three language groups were offered to the fifty participants – Haruku, Koako[4], and Allang – which provided a broad regional coverage. Participation in each group was open to descendents of other ethnolinguistic communities, and to members of the wider Dutch community. Vital to our task and the choice of languages was the presence of elderly speakers who could act as language teachers[5]. Each group was facilitated by a linguist.

In planning the first *bahasa tanah* workshops, the linguists were aware of grammatical restructuring and variation in the speech of the language teachers who had lived away from their homeland speech communities for up to fifty years. With their varying levels of fluency, we were concerned about difficulties (and potential loss of face) which speakers might confront in trying to respond to questions about variation which were likely to arise in workshop elicitation sessions, particularly in regard to possessive constructions and the directional system. All materials were carefully prepared and rehearsed with speakers in the weeks preceding the workshops to try to diminish levels of variation.

Hinton (in Hinton and Hale 2001:15) has confronted similar issues in her practice, and suggests that a "decision must be made as to which variety of a language will be taught in second-language programs. ...[I]t would be deeply confusing to try to teach all these variations, even if the staff knew them". And indeed, our initial strategy met the short-term goals of reducing variation, decreasing classroom confusion, and addressing the language teachers' potential discomfort. However, we were cognizant that, in concealing the presence of language change and variation, we were taking a covertly prescriptivist approach. As Hinton (ibid.) has also pointed out, the choice of one variety can disenfranchise some speakers. If participants were indeed to become language workers in their own communities, it was apparent that they were going to encounter variation and needed tools to deal with it. In preparing the second series of

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many aspects of Malukan culture are held at the Museum, which also has a publishing branch which produces a wide range of books and papers.

[4] In the Netherlands, language speaker and language maintenance practitioner Mr. Dede Tamaela called his language Bahasa Koako, which is the name of a cape in the region of the four villages in which the language is spoken. This name was chosen in preference to Amahai (commonly used in the linguistic literature) because it does not elevate the status of any one village above others. This name is controversial among some second- and third-generation Dutch Malukans, and it is not recognised in Seram.

[5] Mr Daan Saija, Mr Marten Saija, Mr Robert Akihary and Mr Lukas Akihary taught *Bahasa Haruku*; Mr Dirk (Dede) Tamaela taught *Bahasa Koako*; and Mr Job Patty taught *Bahasa Allang*.

bahasa tanah workshops in 2003, the current team of linguists therefore decided to focus directly on cross-linguistic comparisons and language variation and attempt to develop a method which might tackle issues of purism. The research team added a fourth component to the philosophy which underpins training activities:

- confront the issue of language variation and change in order to address puristic attitudes and intervene in the language shift cycle.

7. Training community language workers

The four-point philosophy outlined above informs the goals and exercises which were developed into a series of three workshops focused on the languages of Central Maluku. The workshops were held in September 2003 at the Moluks Historisch Museum in the Netherlands. They were designed to build knowledge and skills incrementally so that people who completed all three workshops would be trained community language workers who could set up and run their own language activities.

Participation in Workshops Level 1 and Level 2 were, as in 2001, offered in three language groups – Koako, Haruku, and Allang[6]. At Level 3, participants joined together to work in one cross-linguistic group. Workshops at all three levels were again open to descendents of other ethnolinguistic communities, and to members of the wider Dutch community.

Workshop Level 1

The goals at Level 1 *Getting to know bahasa tanah* were that participants would:

- become familiar with one specific *bahasa tanah*

- learn to ask about words and sentences from a language speaker in the community

- learn to use these simple words and sentences

- practice making new sentences

- begin thinking about the grammar of *bahasa tanah*

- enjoy using *bahasa tanah* creatively

From the perspective of the linguists/facilitators, the materials were planned for two audiences. Language learning outcomes were developed for those people who had identified learning to speak *bahasa tanah* as their primary goal – whether to use it communicatively or to be able to draw symbolically on a simple lexicon as a marker of

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[6] Sadly, Mr Dede Tamaela, the remaining Koako speaker in the Netherlands, had passed away shortly after the 2001 workshop. Members of this community were keen to continue their study of *bahasa tanah,* and Florey agreed to teach the Koako group.

identity. Outcomes included acquiring a small lexicon for everyday topics, some fundamental grammatical principles, and basic techniques in language learning from elders in the community.

A further set of outcomes was developed for the second audience, which comprised people who planned to complete all three workshops and become community language workers. For this group, the materials were prepared to allow us to introduce orthography issues, teach elicitation skills, provide some introductory methods in linguistic analysis, and demonstrate how a small lexicon can be used creatively in language lessons.

The workshop was structured in five sessions, using materials prepared in Dutch and Melaju Sini. Sessions 1 and 2 addressed the language learning outcomes, instructed students in elicitation techniques and raised orthography issues. Session 3 introduced methods in linguistic analysis, focusing on a number of syntactic constructions (transitive and intransitive verbs, aspect, interrogatives, negation, adjectives, numerals). In Session 4, participants began to use the language they had learned more creatively and communicatively. Working in groups of three or four people, the students wrote songs in *bahasa tanah* which they performed for the whole group in Session 5.

Workshop Level 2

The goals at Level 2 *Developing community programs for bahasa tanah* were that participants would:

- extend familiarity with one specific *bahasa tanah*

- learn some of the techniques which linguists use to collect and analyse language data

- use these techniques to discover more words and grammatical structures from a language speaker in the community: developing sentences and stories for elicitation

- look in more depth at some specific grammatical structures: systems of kinship, possession and counting

- develop a writing system for *bahasa tanah*

- plan lessons for community language programs

- enjoy using *bahasa tanah* creatively

This workshop was aimed at participants who were training to become community language workers. It was again structured in five sessions, using materials prepared in Dutch and Melaju Sini. Workshop materials were developed around a short story and an associated kinship diagram about one character, Meri, and her family. The features in the story allowed us to focus through the day on kinship, possession, and counting

systems. Session 1 extended students' skills in elicitation techniques as they elicited the story. This was also the first session in which students were directed towards orthography issues. Each language group was instructed to develop an orthography and to discuss among themselves the reasons for choosing their orthography.

Session 2 continued to build skills in linguistic analysis, concentrating in particular on analysis of the possessive phrases in the elicitation story. Students were encouraged to look beyond the lexemes to begin to analyse the features of the possessive system. The kinship terms formed a basis for introducing taxonomies and semantic analysis, which was extended cross-linguistically through comparison with kinship systems in Malay and Dutch.

In Session 2, participants also began to create their own elicitation materials to complete a pronoun paradigm. The focus on elicitation techniques continued in Session 3, in which students worked in small groups to develop elicitation questions focused on counting systems. Participants prepared their first language lesson during this session.

In the last two sessions of the day, students were again encouraged to use the language they had learned more creatively. They again wrote and performed songs or short skits in *bahasa tanah*.

Workshop Level 3

The goals at Level 3 Learning about language change were that participants would:

- gain a broader understanding of the languages of Central Maluku and their place in the Austronesian language family

- learn more about developing orthographies

- gain an understanding of linguistic diversity and the process of language change both in the Netherlands and in Maluku

- learn to work with variation in language data

- gain a deeper awareness of grammatical complexities of Malukan languages

- apply knowledge of linguistic issues in materials development and production

- understand the issues involved in dictionary-making and begin to compile a dictionary

- plan future language activities

The materials used at Levels 1 and 2 were designed to build towards a focus on language variation and change at Level 3. As noted earlier, at this level, participants were not placed in different language groups. Rather, each work group contained students who had studied Allang, Haruku or Koako in the earlier workshops, thus providing an opportunity for cross-linguistic comparisons.

Workshop materials were developed around an elicitation story for Malukan languages. The story was first created as an elicitation tool by Florey and van Engelenhoven. It was written in Ambonese Malay around a theme which is culturally appropriate in the Indonesian homeland setting – that of a family going to their garden/farmlet for the day. This simple 450 word story elicits a lexicon of approximately 100 words, making the recall of lexemes less onerous for elderly speakers. Versions of the story have been recorded to date in the four languages which are the current focus of documentation activities in Maluku and in the Dutch diaspora: Allang, Haruku, Koako, and Tulehu. Three versions of the story (Allang, Haruku, Koako) were included in a workshop booklet, each presented trilingually in *bahasa tanah*, Melaju Sini, and Dutch. These materials facilitated cross-linguistic analysis. Some sessions also drew on Florey's Alune data, which provided a 'neutral' means of discussing language change issues.

Session 1 convened in plenary with the linguists/facilitators speaking about the place of Malukan languages in the Austronesian language family, language and dialect, and linguistic diversity. These topics aimed to address the folk belief which persists in the diaspora that indigenous Malukan languages are essentially the same with just some lexical differences. A set of six sentences from the garden story were used to compare lexemes and the construction of questions and negatives cross-linguistically. Participants gained an overview of linguistic diversity and an understanding that there are both similarities and differences between their languages.

Session 2 focused on orthographies and literature production. In Workshop Level 2, students had developed an orthography in their language group. In this Level 3 session, the orthographies were examined cross-linguistically. Participants then considered the development of orthographies from the perspective of potential user groups – speakers of Dutch and Melaju Sini in the Netherlands, and speakers of Indonesian in the homeland. The booklet of garden stories provided a basis for thinking about literature production and target audiences.

The topics of language change and variation were introduced in workshop exercises in Session 3. Students moved back into their language groups to compile a database of possessive constructions. All variants for each person were analysed with particular attention to the inalienable/alienable contrast which is found in many Malukan languages. Through this process of discovery, an awareness developed of the extent of variation in speech communities. Participants explored issues of variation further through the following instructions and focus questions.

We have been exploring Bahasa tanah as linguists and you have learned more about variation in possessive structures. Remember that members of your community often don't have the linguistic training and understanding of variation that you now have. With this in mind, discuss the following questions in your group:

- if you are running a community language workshop, what form(s) of the possessive do you want to teach? Why? What will you tell community participants about variation?

- if you are producing stories, newspapers, or other literature in bahasa tanah, what possessive forms will you use? Why?

- should the forms you use in workshops and literature be the same in the Netherlands and in Maluku?

In Session 4, study turned to dictionary compilation. Dictionaries are commonly one of the first tools which community members themselves try to build, and also a tool which communities often request from linguists. Dictionaries compiled by untrained people are notoriously problematic, and often are little more than wordlists. On the other hand, it can take years for linguists to produce a dictionary, which raises community frustration. We aimed to mediate a response to this issue by discussing key issues and giving participants tools to produce a working dictionary which could be used in community language learning and teaching. The garden stories were useful in demonstrating the compilation of dictionaries or wordlists from connected text, with example sentences for each entry.

The final workshop session was devoted to discussing future language activities. The work groups brainstormed ideas such as:

- language learning classes

- language awareness classes (building general knowledge about Malukan languages)

- production of resources (e.g. making a dictionary)

- song-writing

- ceremonies or ritual speech

- publishing (e.g. novels, newspapers)

- making recordings of language speakers

Participants considered the personnel who might be needed for different activities, and were given the following focus questions:

- what can we do by ourselves?

- do we need a language speaker/teacher? Where can we find one?

- do we need a linguist? What tasks might a linguist help us with? Where can we find one?

- what other people can help us learn more about our language and culture? For example:

other people in our community who may not be language speakers, but who might have travelled back to Maluku, etc.

other academics who have worked in Maluku (anthropologists, etc.)

people in the wider Dutch community

- do we want to include people from other *bahasa tanah* communities?

This session had been planned to address point 3 in our training philosophy – to counter the perceived need for the involvement of professionals in all language activities. It was exciting to see the range of activities which participants created for which they saw that they did not need professional assistance.

It was also exciting to observe the sociopolitical boundaries between ethnolinguistic groups begin to break down in this session. Throughout fifty years of living in the Dutch diaspora, many Malukan speakers and their descendents have maintained a strong link to their own village of origin. Activities commonly take place within *kumpulan* – 'gathering' groups which are organised around village-level communities. This practice highlights sociopolitical differences between ethnolinguistic groups, in apparent conflict with the folk belief that indigenous Malukan languages are essentially the same. In the final session, as the participants who completed all three workshops discussed and planned future language activities, they began to see the larger cross-linguistic group as a broader base to support language maintenance activities. Confronting language variation and change appears to have taken a very positive direction in challenging a long-standing belief system and establishing a more informed and secure sociolinguistic identity based on an understanding that ancestral languages are related yet different. We are hopeful that a higher level of linguistic tolerance is developing from this approach.

8. Conclusion

For the linguists, a further positive outcome from the workshop series was witnessing the partnerships which grew between the various language maintenance practitioners – speakers of heritage languages, their descendents, other community members, and professionals. This outcome highlights the two-way benefit of training programs such as these. Participants left with the tools to work independently or in teams, with or without professional support. The linguists had built stronger relationships which will support our documentation and revitalisation activities. Through the period in which the workshops were run, a number of participants brought in invaluable language resources – recordings of songs in bahasa tanah, videos of traditional ceremonies in the homeland, and contact details in the homeland and the diaspora for speakers of other languages.

Where does this leave us for the future? In our fieldwork practice, particularly in the documentation of endangered languages, it seems that greater tolerance and

compromise might be reached if linguists play a greater role in educating and training communities about language variation – to create awareness about the issues, and about change and variation as the norm in every speech community. The results from training workshops in the Dutch diaspora are critical for similar activities which will soon commence in the Indonesian homeland. In the impoverished setting after the civil war which was fought in Maluku from 1998-2002, assistance from Malukans in the Netherlands will be crucial. We are hopeful that the workshop training may lead to the development of resource materials which can be used in both settings.

9.   References

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10. Acknowledgements