

Language contact in East Nusantara

Introduction

The aim of this workshop will be to try to uncover some of the range of language contact phenomena exhibited by languages from throughout the East Nusantara region. One of my primary interests as the organiser of this session is to try to understand historical change in languages of the region more clearly. Thus, I am interested in what sorts of traces of past historical contact might have been left in contemporary languages, and also in how this might have happened.

Too much work on language contact has tended to concentrate on the linguistic effects of that contact without enough attention being paid to the sociolinguistic situations in which contact has arisen. Language contact happens in situations of bilingualism, where speakers of one language also speak another language or languages. In addition to containing questions about what historical traces of other languages might have been left in the languages you know about, I am also interested in the way people use different languages in the communities you have been involved in.

Today, of course, 'contact' with Malay is playing an important role in just about all the language communities you work in. In a few areas contact with other languages may play a role: Tetum in East Timor, and perhaps Lamaholot in Eastern Flores, for example. If we want to understand the kinds of situations that have given rise to 'language contact' in the past, it will be useful to try to get a better understanding of how bi- and multilingualism operates in different speech communities today. The first part of this questionnaire is concerned with contemporary language use, with which language(s) are typically used in which situations, and by which people. The second part is concerned with 'borrowings' and other kinds of change that may have been brought about by past language contact, or that are being brought about now by contemporary language contact.

I would like to spend a reasonable amount of the workshop time discussing the nature of grammatical borrowing in the languages we work on. Very often, 'borrowing' is treated as some kind of 'too hard basket' into which any otherwise inexplicable grammatical change is tossed without there being any real evidence for how such changes might actually have come about and how contact might be involved in them. Alice Harris and Lyle Campbell, in their book *Historical syntax in cross-linguistic perspective*, maintain that 'syntactic borrowing is perhaps the most neglected and abused area of syntactic change' (Harris and Campbell, 1995: 120). Examples of such abuse abound in the literature.

A glaring example in East Nusantara languages would be the case of the so-called 'reversed genitive'. For those who are unfamiliar with the notion, the basic idea is that in most languages from western Indonesia and the Philippines, etc. the typical order of elements in a possessive noun phrase is for the possessed entity to precede the possessor as in standard Indonesian *bapak saya* 'my father'. The same largely holds for languages of the Pacific, e.g. Maori *te mana o te ariki* [lit. 'the *mana* (spiritual strength) of the chief'] 'the chief's mana'. However, in most of the East Nusantara region, the opposite order is found. In Taba for example, we find *Banda ni wog* [Banda POSS canoe] 'Banda's canoe'. In eastern varieties of Malay we also find the reversed genitive: in Ambonese Malay, *beta punya bapak* [1sg. POSS father] 'my father', in North Moluccan Malay, *kita pe bapak* [1sg. POSS father] 'my father'. Although these orders are the most common ones in the languages referred to, often an individual language allows more than one order, cf. English 'the picture of John' vs. 'John's picture'. Maori also has both orders possible, but the possessor before possessed order only occurs with possessive pronouns, e.g. *taku waka* 'my canoe'.

Originally, the reversed genitive was treated by people such as Brandes as being diagnostic of a large subgroup of Austronesian languages (the Brandes line running between Sulawesi and Maluku, and cutting Flores in two was supposed to mark a division between two major subgroups of Austronesian). The idea that the reversed genitive is of any use for subgrouping purposes has largely been discredited in more recent commentary, and it is often suggested that the reversed genitive pattern has come about due to contact with the non-Austronesian languages also found in the region. It may well be that such contact has led to the reversed genitive being adopted in Austronesian languages of the area, but no-one has actually tried to show how this might have happened. If we could come up with a plausible mechanism for the spread of the reversed genitive, that would be a pretty exciting result!

Recent work in historical linguistics has started to address the problem of grammatical borrowing somewhat more rigorously than has been the case in the past. Harris and Campbell's book mentioned above shows that grammatical change due to contact is actually quite common. Other people such as Malcolm Ross here at the ANU have begun serious discussion of possible mechanisms for what he calls 'metatypical remodelling', or the process whereby one language remodels itself grammatically on another. Ross suggests that what first occurs in metatypic remodelling is the transference of typical discourse patterns from one language to another. Many of the indigenous languages from East Nusantara that are currently in contact with Malay, for example, typically had few indigenous means available to explicitly mark the conjoining of clauses, and particularly of subordinate clauses.

In Taba, for example, traditional discourse appears to have worked with largely paratactic sequences of clauses stuck next to each other and little overt conjunction. When what was described in one clause was meant to be seen as referring to the cause of something referred to in another clause, the clause expressing the cause was expressed first, and the clause referring to the result was expressed second. The meaning of 'causation' was simply left to be inferred pragmatically. Today, however, overt subordinating conjunctions that express the notion of causation explicitly have been borrowed from Malay. First, *dadi* 'so' < Malay 'jadi' was borrowed. This allows the overt expression of cause, but its use still requires iconic ordering of the clauses involved, with cause preceding result. More recently, the subordinating conjunction *karna* and *sabab* 'because' have been borrowed. With these forms Taba has also borrowed the ability to use a discourse pattern which is characteristic of Malay, but not previously of Taba: the ability to use non-iconic ordering of clauses whereby result precedes cause. One of the most interesting results we might be able to get from this workshop is some kind of implicational scale for how conjunctions and other grammatical function words such as prepositions get borrowed into the languages of East Nusantara. For example, do certain kinds of function words need to be found in a language before other ones can be borrowed?

A caveat: While 'language contact' and 'borrowing' are often used interchangeably in discussions of historical change, it is best to make a distinction between the two. Changes in a language can be triggered by contact although no real 'borrowing' occurs. For example, what was a minor construction type in Language A might be extended and used more generally to conform with a pattern found in Language B. Although this change may have come about due to contact, we cannot say that Language A has borrowed anything from Language B. Of course, although it is useful to make a clear theoretical distinction between contact and borrowing, we will not always be able to tell whether or not a new pattern in a language has been borrowed or brought about by contact in some other way. But we should try to distinguish the different kinds of situations as well as we can.

I have no firm proposals for what might emerge as a result of this workshop yet, but a collection of papers on language contact in East Nusatenggara is a possibility. We will leave some time at the end of the session for discussing such possible outcomes.

This questionnaire may look intimidatingly long. In spite of its length, I hope that it should not take too long for you to fill it in. Don't feel obliged to answer everything completely before the workshop. It would be nice if you could try to give reasonably comprehensive answers to the more straightforward questions, and just give some thought to the more open ended ones before you come to the workshop so that you will be able to participate in discussion.

Some specific aims for the workshop

As the organiser of the workshop, I would like to devote a fair proportion of the time available to discussing two questions which are of the most interest to me. If we could get a better understanding of these problems in the course of the workshop, I feel that the workshop will have been a success. The questions are:

- Can we find a plausible mechanism for the spread of the reversed genitive?
- Can we find an implicational scale for how conjunctions and other grammatical function words get borrowed into the languages of East Nusantara?

The Questionnaire:

I. The present situation

A. General Overview

1. Which language is this questionnaire on?
2. Roughly how many speakers are there?
3. Where do these people live? Please try to be fairly comprehensive with this answer. Basic guides such as the Ethnologue give reasonable information on numbers of speakers in the traditional homes of languages, but little is said about how many speakers of *bahasa tanah* (as the central Moluccans call indigenous languages) there are in regional towns and elsewhere.
4. What degree of multilingualism is there amongst speakers of the language? Roughly what percentage of speakers are also competent in local Malay? In Bahasa Indonesia? In Tetum Praca? In other languages? Can you identify any differences in the multilingual capabilities of different groups of people, e.g. men vs women, town dwellers vs village dwellers, etc.
5. How regularly does contact take place between speakers of the language who live in villages and those who live in town? How often is there public transport between village and town? How long does it take to get there?
6. Do people typically marry others who speak the same language? Is linguistic endogamy more typical of village inhabitants than of town inhabitants? If someone with a different native language moves into a village where the language is spoken, do they typically learn the local language and use it with others or do they use a lingua franca?

7. What is the religious affiliation of the people who speak the language? If more than one please indicate rough percentages.

B. Language use:

All of these questions refer to language use in the area you would think of as the traditional home of the language. In the case of *bahasa tana*, that would mean the village, but if you are talking about a lingua franca, they probably apply to how the languages are used in town.

Below you will find a list of different basic situations in which people will be speaking to each other. For each of these situations, please say what language is most typically used. In some situations more than one language might be used. If this is the case, please try to indicate rough proportions for the use of each language, and say something about what might lead people to pick one language over another.

1. In the home?
2. Between adult women when working together.
3. Between adult men when working together.
4. Between children when playing together.
5. When buying something at a local *kios*.
6. In a classroom, between teacher and student?
7. Outside school, between teacher and student?
8. Informally, between *kepala desah* or other government representative and another local adults.
9. At public meeting, between *kepala desah* or other government representative and another local adults.
10. At a public ceremony such as a wedding, in formal speech?
11. At a public ceremony such as a wedding, informally, between guests?
12. In church, or at a mosque?
13. What language do adults typically address young children in when giving them orders?

C. Code mixing:

In any of the situations just outlined in section B, you may also find that people switch between different languages, using a mixture of them in the course of even a single utterance. Can you discern any general principles underlying switches from one language to another?

II. Past linguistic contact:

A. Contact languages

1. What languages appear to have been used as contact languages in your region in the past?
2. Do you know anything about how many people may have been bilingual in the lingua franca of the past?
3. What kind of evidence is there for the past use of any lingua franca? Is there evidence of borrowing? Are there historical records? Are there other kinds of evidence?

B. Lexical borrowing

Here is a list of languages which may have contributed loan words to the language you are reporting on in the past. If you are aware of any loans from any of these languages, can you give an example, and say something about the rough number of loans from each language. Can you also say something about the semantic domains most commonly involved with loans from each language?

Local Malay

Ternatan / Tidoran

Tetum Praça

Lamaholot

Other local lingua franca?

Spanish

Portuguese

Dutch

English

Arabic

Any other languages?

C. Calquing:

Calquing occurs when idiomatic expressions from one language are translated directly into another. For example, the French term *gratte-ciel* (lit. 'scrape sky') is a calque of English 'skyscraper' meaning 'very tall building'. Some Taba speakers have been heard using the phrase *palo mot* (lit. 'half dead') which is a calque on the Malay phrase 'setengah mati'.

Are you aware of any calques in the language which have been derived from terms in any of the languages listed above? Are you aware of calques derived from other languages? If you know of any, please give an example from each language which has provided such a model.

D. Phonological contact

Please provide a list of the phonemes in the language you are discussing, and, if you can, indicate which of these phonemes are inherited from a proto-language and which of them have come into the language through borrowing. From which languages have the non-inherited phonemes been borrowed? Do you have a sense of how 'nativised' these borrowed phonemes are?

Phonotactics: to what degree have borrowed words been adapted to indigenous phonotactic constraints? For example, have consonant clusters that would not be allowed in indigenous words been retained in borrowings or have strategies such as vowel epenthesis or cluster reduction been used to 'nativise' the words?

Do older loans show stronger adaptation to the norms of the borrowing language than do younger ones?

E. Borrowed conjunctions:

Can you give a comprehensive listing of the conjunctions now used in the language you are discussing, and which you know to have been borrowed. Can you indicate their meaning and whether they have a subordinating or a coordinating function? Does the borrowing language also have an indigenous form with a similar meaning to the borrowed form? If so, can you discern any reason for why the introduced form might have been borrowed?

F. Borrowed adpositions:

Can you give a comprehensive listing of adpositions that may have been borrowed into the language? What is the function of the borrowed adposition? How (if at all) would this function be fulfilled without using the adposition?

G. Other borrowed grammatical function words:

Are there any examples of other words that have a grammatical function and which have been borrowed? (Possible examples might include such things as an existential verb, classifiers, comparative markers, etc.) How would the functions of any such forms be expressed if the borrowed forms were not available?

H. Constructional borrowing?

Can you think of any particular grammatical constructions which have been borrowed, even if the forms involved might be indigenous? It will probably not be possible to give a comprehensive answer to this question if there are a large number of them. In many cases it will not be clear if a construction has been borrowed or if it is indigenous. Possible examples here might include things such as serial verb constructions, comparative constructions, methods of negation, etc.

I. Syntax and word order:

Are there any word order patterns occurring in the language which are clearly the result of borrowing from another language? How can you tell that they are borrowed, or at least the result of contact in some way?

J. The so-called 'reverse genitive':

It may be the case that the so-called reverse genitive has come into East Nusantara Austronesian languages as a result of contact. (See the introduction for more discussion of the 'reversed genitive'.) However, this might well have been the kind of contact which did not involve strict borrowing, but the adoption of a previously marked pattern for expressing possession as the unmarked one. It would thus be interesting to know something about the range of patterns found in individual languages today.

What is the normal unmarked order for possessive noun phrases in the language?

Are other orders possible?

Are there strict grammatical conditions for the use of one order in preference to another? e.g. does the language that you are writing about, like Maori, make a distinction between possessive pronouns and other kinds of possessors? Does the language use one pattern with alienably possessed nouns and another for inalienably possessed ones? Is something else relevant?

If there are not strict grammatical conditions for the choice, do you have any sense of the discourse conditions which predispose a speaker to use one construction over another?

Is there anything else that you feel may be significant that has not been addressed in the above questions?

K. Borrowing of morphology:

Although clear cases of morphological borrowing have been attested in the literature, it does seem to be comparatively rare. In most (but not all) cases where morphological borrowing has taken place it seems to have occurred as a result of a language having borrowed a vast number of words containing the same morpheme. Morphemes themselves are rarely borrowed except in the words that contain them. A number of such borrowings from French are found in English, e.g. the *-ette* in 'kitchenette' is only available to be used in English because forms such as *cigarette*, *statuette*, *vignette*, etc. were borrowed in their entirety from French. The now productive use of the suffix *-asi* (< Dutch 'atie') in modern Indonesian forms such as *reformasi* presumably has its origin in a similar process. Although there are attested examples of directly borrowed clitics and affixes these appear to be much rarer.

Has there been any morphological borrowing at all that you are aware of?

If there has been any morphological borrowing into the language, can you tell if the morpheme has been directly borrowed, or has it been borrowed as part of a stock of independently borrowed words?

III. Other matters:

Is there anything else about language contact in the language you know about which you consider significant and which has not been addressed in any of the questions above? If you can think of anything significant to write about here that you feel may be worth asking other workshop participants to comment on, please also feel free to get in contact with me at john.bowden@anu.edu.au so that I can ask other participants to provide answers to such questions before the workshop takes place.