

Directionals and Spatial Deixis in the Malay Varieties of Eastern Indonesia

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In North Moluccan Malay, Ambon Malay, Larantuka Malay and Papua Malay, spatial deixis systems have developed which orient direction based upon the location of land and sea (or, in the case of Papua Malay, settlement and the interior). It is likely that these systems developed through the influence of local vernacular (Austronesian or non-Austronesian) substrate languages. In other Malay varieties spoken in the region, there is no comparable spatial deixis system.

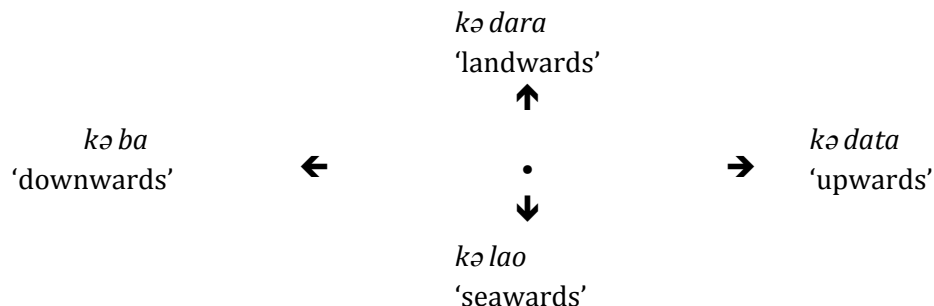
The expanded systems found in the four varieties generally involve locative formations, using the prepositions *ka~kə* 'to, toward' and *dari* 'from' plus *lao* 'sea' and *dara* 'land' or similar forms, on one axis, and the locative prepositions *ba(wa)* 'down, below, under' and *ata(s)* 'up, above, over' on another axis. These terms replace the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, west) commonly found in other Malay varieties. This example from Ambon Malay (from van Minde 1997: 173) illustrates this:

Ka lao sadiki!

to sea a.bit

‘(Put down the chair) more seawards.’

The system in Larantuka Malay can be illustrated by the following diagram, from Dietrich (1997: 103):



The actual orientation vis-à-vis primary directions such as north and south depends upon where one is in relation to the land and the sea. For speakers in Larantuka, the sea is to the east and therefore 'upwards' is north. Across the strait in the town of Wure on the island of Adonara, however, the sea is to the west and 'upwards' is south. An example from Larantuka Malay:

Mari toraN bango toraN pi kə dara, lia koraN dua puN kəboN dulu.

come 1PL get.up 1PL go to land see 2PL two POSS garden first

'Come, let's get up and let's go landwards, and see the garden of the two of you first.' (Paauw 2008: 280)

This study examines the spatial deixis system in the four Malay varieties and discusses the origins of these systems.

References

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