

The phrasal alternation in the Pondok Tinggi dialect of Kerinci across generations

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This paper aims at depicting the results of the language contact in a sub Malay variety spoken in Sumatra, called *Pondok Tinggi* (hence, PT). It is one of the 700 odd regional languages of Indonesia. In PT, there is a particularly complex language contact situation. PT, the sub Malay variety, is in contact with other Malay varieties namely, Bahasa Indonesia, Minangkabau and other neighboring dialects in Kerinci regency. These varieties which are in contact with PT have influenced PT in certain ways.

The focus here will be on a unique grammatical phenomenon that allows us to measure the degree of the language change which is caused partly by the language contact situation in PT. This striking phenomenon called *phrasal alternation*, whereby nearly all lexical items have two distinct forms of which their final syllables differ in shape. These two forms are termed as *absolute* and *oblique* by Steinhauer and Usman (1978) in their description of the neighboring dialect of Sungai Penuh.

The phrasal alternation is still actively used by the PT speakers. However, I argue that the phrasal alternation does not have the same distribution as it used to have. An experiment was conducted to elicit the absolute and the oblique form in order to investigate how the distribution of the phrasal alternation has developed in the last two generations.

The results show that the language contact does indeed induce language change. Bahasa Indonesia is a miracle for it succeeded in spreading across the whole of Indonesia. Although there is no native speaker of Bahasa Indonesia, this language is spoken by 80%-90% of Indonesians. This research clearly demonstrates the dark story behind the bright shining Bahasa Indonesia for behind its success, it causes a dramatic pressure on the local languages.