

# A negative outlook: Towards a typology of grammatical negation in BISINDO, based on six isolects

Nick Palfreyman, University of Central Lancashire, [nickpalfreyman@cantab.net](mailto:nickpalfreyman@cantab.net)

What is now referred to as Indonesian Sign Language (*Bahasa Isyarat Indonesia*, or BISINDO) emerged in Java in the 1950s, if not before, and is now used by thousands of deaf people in urban centres across the archipelago (Palfreyman 2015). Taken as a whole, a series of recent linguistic studies of BISINDO reveal considerable variation both within and between these urban centres (Bharoto 2011, Wijaya 2011, Isma 2012, Palfreyman 2013, 2015). Meanwhile, socio-historical research points to factors that promote both convergence and divergence between isolects (Palfreyman, forthcoming).

In the domain of negation, for example, Solo BISINDO and Makassar BISINDO have a similar but not identical set of negative particles, clitics and suppletives (Palfreyman 2015).

Grammaticalisation can be observed in this domain, but there is evidence to suggest that Solo BISINDO – and particularly its *younger* signers – sometimes favours variants that are more morphologically complex (ibid).

In this paper, I present analysis based on the Corpus of Indonesian Sign Language Varieties, which has very recently been expanded to include conversational data from four more cities alongside Solo and Makassar, namely Ambon (Maluku), Padang (West Sumatra), Pontianak (West Kalimantan) and Singaraja (Bali). This provides the foundation for a nascent typology of grammatical negation in BISINDO.

While many similarities appear in negative constructions across all six BISINDO isolects in the Corpus, there are some striking differences. For example, the new data include negative particles that occur in some isolects but not in others. Remarkably, a similar particle that occurs in Ambon, Pontianak and Singaraja has local origins in each case, and the functional load of this particle also varies across each of the three cities. This is one of several examples that highlight the role of gestures used locally by hearing people as a source of variation in the form and function of BISINDO's negative particles. These examples also accentuate the need for much more research on the sign language used in these and other urban centres across Indonesia.

## References

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