Fig. 9. KUPANG: Late at night, residents congregate at the edge of the main street near the mouth of their kampung. From this vantage they can sip tea, exchange jibes, and both monitor the comings and goings of their fellows while mingling themselves.

August 2009: photo by S. Chris Brown

IN SEARCH OF MIDDLE INDONESIAN: LINGUISTIC DYNAMICS IN A PROVINCIAL TOWN

Joseph Errington

Middle Indonesian cities like Kupang, capital of the province of East Nusa Tenggara, present a kind of linguistic puzzle.¹ There, as elsewhere in Indonesia, the Indonesian language (*bahasa Indonesia*) has uncontested primacy within a far-reaching network of state institutions, a rapidly developing political economy, the mass media and an urban consumerist culture. In these and other ways Indonesian serves and symbolizes the integrationist dynamic that has driven Kupang's growth from the time it became a provincial capital in the late 1950s up to the present. Its present population of about 350,000 testifies to Kupang's attractive power for members of the province's many ethnic groups, particularly younger people who see it as a point of access, through new avenues of geographic and social mobility, into a burgeoning Indonesian middle class. Yet fluent, standard Indonesian is not much heard in Kupang.

Even educated, middle-class people there commonly converse about sophisticated matters and in formal situations in a local dialect of Malay known as *ba(ha)sa Kupang* ('Kupang language' or 'Kupangese') or *bahasa Melayu Kupang*, 'Kupang Malay'. Structural similarities between Indonesian and Kupang Malay allow them to be classified as dialects of a single language, but they are sufficiently different so that Kupang Malay is far from fully intelligible to anyone who knows only standard Indonesian. So, after two generations of modernization have made the national language increasingly important throughout the country, including Middle Indonesian cities like Kupang, Indonesian's inroads into everyday urban life seem surprisingly shallow. Kupang Malay continues to be spoken as the distinctly native language of 220,000 people in the city and its

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surrounds, and is the non-native vernacular for tens of thousands of others (Jacob and B. Grimes 2006:510).

It also seems puzzling that at the same time as Kupang Malay has proven to be such a durable urban idiom, it is ignored and often despised not only by some of its speakers, but also by many teachers and government officials, who have a tendency to look down on it as a stigmatized language (see Jacob and B. Grimes 2006:1). Though differences between these two dialects of Malay are clear, both in their forms and social values, people are not always able to 'tell you which language or register [Indonesian or Kupang Malay] they are using' (C. Grimes and Jacob 2008).

These are puzzles I frame here as aspects of a broader dynamic of sociolinguistic contact in Kupang described from three related angles. Most obviously and concretely, 'contact' occurs between Indonesian and Kupang Malay when people 'mix' them in talk. I draw on recordings and transcriptions of casual conversation in Kupang to foreground two such contact phenomena that speak to these larger questions. This requires that I first provide the social background for two broader kinds of contact. One involves a biographical approach, considering the ways that Indonesian and Kupang Malay figure into the social trajectories of different kinds of speakers, who acquire them in different ways. From this point of view, 'contact' between the two languages is considered with an eye to the ways people learn and come to value each from different positions in the region's integrationist dynamic. The middle of this chapter suggests that distinct social trajectories and language attitudes can be broadly attributed to speakers I describe as 'natives' and 'newcomers' to Kupang.

This biographical contrast, in turn, needs to be preceded by an even broader sketch of the historical contexts, national and urban, in which Indonesian and Kupang Malay developed before coming into increasing contact with each other. This account is crude, but suffices to show how these structurally similar dialects of Malay have come to be regarded as categorically distinct although their elements are commonly used together. It is important here that, although Kupang may seem a marginal or unusual scene of language contact, sociolinguistic dynamics there have parallels in other Middle Indonesian towns. With an eye to this possibility I first sketch Indonesian's rise as a national language without native speakers, and Kupang Malay's status as a native language without an ethnic group.

The Indonesian Success Story, Reconsidered

Ideological and institutional issues have always been clearly bound up with Indonesian's status as the nation's standard language, widely referred to as *bahasa Indonesia yang baik dan benar* (literally, 'good and true Indonesian'). They are also obvious because Indonesian does not have a native speaking community. Nowhere in Indonesia, including Kupang, is there a location where people claim standard Indonesian as a 'first', 'mother' or 'native' language, and this issue has recurred in discussions of Indonesian political culture for fifty years. But it has not been considered a factor that shapes the ways Indonesian is learned and used by native speakers of hundreds of ethnic languages. In effect, then, questions about Indonesian's place in local communities can help develop a finer-grained understanding not just of the national language, but of the nation whose language it is (cf. Van der Putten 2010).

To develop such a focus on Kupang and its region, I call Indonesian a language that is spoken 'un-natively', rather than 'non-natively', to block habits of thought that are misleading in this context. 'Non-native' characterizes something contrastively, presupposing a dimension of difference between entities that lack or possess 'nativeness'. To describe English usage as 'non-native' is thus to contrast it with usage that is 'native'. But there is no universally recognized reference point for 'native' Indonesian usage, which makes any such comparison invalid. Describing it instead as a language spoken 'un-natively' blocks a tacit and invalid assumption about the ways Indonesian is learned and evaluated.

Most languages cannot be described in historically specific terms, but Indonesian can. Its proximate origins can be traced to the literate variety of Malay established for the administrative needs of the Dutch empire in the late nineteenth century.² This *dienstmaleisch*, or 'service Malay', served official communicative purposes across lines of language difference between regions, ethnic groups and colonial classes. As an institutionally defined *lingua franca*, service Malay was an un-native language. But thanks to its un-nativeness it could be taken over by an anticolonial, pan-ethnic nationalist movement that gave it new political purposes and prominence by baptizing it Indonesian (*bahasa Indonesia*) in 1928. They were able to pirate the regime's language partly because no group, Dutch

² For more on different aspects of this complex situation see Hoffman 1973 and 1979, Maier 1993, and references cited there.

or otherwise, had prior, 'inalienable' claims to it as a native language. So, too, Indonesian's uses and values have been shaped by the national project it has served and symbolized.

Recently, under the New Order, Indonesian's lack of native/ethnic associations transparently linked it to the state's self-legitimizing project of national development. Because Indonesian served to propagate a nationalist ideology, and was used in state institutions, it helped to naturalize the New Order's efforts to extend its power of oversight across Indonesian territory. The propagation of Indonesian was a state project, designed in Jakarta and extended outward to the peripheries, that served 'integralistic' efforts to overcome 'incessant and divisive polycentrism' (Elson 2008:248). Through a state-fostered network of educational institutions in Middle Indonesian cities like Kupang, it could be taught as an ethnically neutral instrument that assimilated those who learned it 'to the larger national identity...expressed only within its homogenising contours' (Elson 2008:253).

Fifty years after it began, the success of the national language development programme seems quite clear. Already in 1990, according to the national census, 83% (131 million) of Indonesia's population (157 million) already knew Indonesian (*bisa berbahasa Indonesia*).³ Results about knowledge of Indonesian from the 2010 census were not available at the time of this writing, but will surely indicate that an even greater proportion of Indonesians – regardless of their gender, occupation, locale and ethnicity – count as Indonesian speakers. But this statistical evidence of increasing linguistic sameness – knowledge of the language's prescribed forms and meanings – provides no insight into situated particularities, that is, how Indonesian's forms figure in everyday talk and vary across communities whose members speak other languages natively. Indonesian's un-nativeness has shaped the ways it has spread at least because there are no self-evidently native, authoritative exemplars who can serve as reference points for evaluating how it is acquired and used.

Speech in any language has features that necessarily go unspecified in its written representations: the way sounds are articulated, patterns of accent and stress, intonation and vowel length, grammatical elements, stylistic variation, and so on. Learning a language from, or in proximity with, native-speaking models helps bridge such 'gaps' between codified rules, usually set out in prescriptive texts, and actual speech. But in the

³ These figures are reported in Sneddon 2003. Statistical evidence for a more critical view of the project can be found in Montolalu and Suryadinata 2007.

case of Indonesian, the absence of embodied examples makes 'Indonesian' a kind of rubric for a range of registers or styles that are shaped by users' native habits of speech (Ewing 2005). 'Interference' or 'transfer' effects that result from native knowledge of another language can be ubiquitous and persistent, particularly in the absence of Indonesian native-speaking exemplars.

From a social and political point of view, heterogeneity in Indonesian as a spoken language is more tolerable than lack of agreement in values and functions ascribed to it as the national language (*bahasa nasional*). Partly because of its un-nativeness, the New Order could assert Indonesian's primacy over the country's ethnic languages without asserting the primacy of one linguistic group over others. This was done by establishing Indonesian's superordinate relation not to languages of ethnic groups, but of regions, that is, *bahasa daerah*.⁴ As a 2007 report by the governmental language development office (Pusat Bahasa) puts it, for instance, 'national language politics' (*politik bahasa nasional*) requires that 'the Indonesian people should locate *bahasa Indonesia*, *bahasa daerah* and *bahasa asing* ('foreign languages') in their respective positions, each in accordance with its place and function, as determined by national politics'.⁵

Leaving aside the issue of foreign languages here, this statement prescribes a hierarchy between languages analogous to others described as diglossic. Diglossia is a term used to describe hierarchical relations between languages in a society, 'high' and 'low', whose values, 'positions' or 'functions' are hierarchical and complementary. Structural properties of a 'high' language tend to be less variable than those of a 'low' language. A 'high' language is also closely associated with institutions of literacy, and is acquired not as a native language but only by participation in those institutions. Its prestige is rooted in contexts of use associated with elevated and formal issues, including 'one to many' genres of public speech and writing. 'Low' languages, on the other hand, are those acquired natively from early childhood, in day-to-day interaction in the home and neighbourhood as the idiom of everyday life.

The report quoted above speaks to Indonesia's linguistic diversity by presupposing, without explicitly stating, that languages are bound to regions (*daerah*) by speakers who form groups that are primordially

⁴ Further discussion with regard to Indonesia's largest ethnic language, Javanese, is in Quinn 2010.

⁵ 'Seharusnya, bangsa Indonesia menempatkan bahasa Indonesia, bahasa daerah, dan bahasa asing pada posisinya masing-masing sesuai dengan kedudukan dan fungsinya sebagaimana dinyatakan dalam politik nasional.'

'native' to their respective territories. Notions of primordial bonds between people, land and language are common parts of nationalist ideologies, but in Indonesia they serve instead to fix differences between indefinitely many 'low' native ethnic languages and a unitary 'high' un-native national language. This is an important point here because Kupang, as I show next, has no place in this overarching view.

Kupang Malay: Emerging Koiné?

One reason Kupang Malay is 'ignored and despised' is that it lacks the sort of 'region' or ethnic group presupposed by the dominant ideology of 'national language politics', discussed above. In this way it resembles urban vernaculars in other provincial towns, and is worth considering with an eye to Kupang's sociolinguistic development over the course of sustained colonial encounter.

A variety of Malay was spoken from the time that the Dutch built a factory on Kupang Bay in 1653 among members of a heteroglot group (Dutch, Chinese, Buginese, Javanese, Malays, and others). Typological and comparative data have led Scott Paauw (2008) to conclude that in this way Kupang Malay is one of several eastern Indonesia varieties that originated in what he calls Eastern Indonesia Trade Malay, a contact variety that can ultimately be traced back to the ethnic Malay homeland of southwestern Borneo.

As a kind of lingua franca, Kupang's Malay vernacular expanded in use across lines of ethnolinguistic difference, particularly in the sorts of contexts suggested by one of its common names: 'market Malay' (*bahasa Melayu pasar*). Children born in Kupang had this lingua franca as a template or model for patterns of speech that they assimilated for use as a distinctly local, native Malay. However, usage varied depending on whether speakers acquired it along with other languages, or among people who spoke it as a second language along with interference or transfer effects from their native languages. Among those growing up and acquiring it in communities of migrants from regions of inland Timor or neighbouring islands (Rotenese, Sabunese, Alorese, Solorese, and others), Kupang Malay was spoken in ways reflecting their social background. In this respect their usage would have resembled that of older, less educated speakers in Kupang today, whose accents and other features of usage indirectly mark their ethnic background. Kupang's ethnically plural character was indirectly reproduced in a range of Malay varieties which were distinctive not just of the town, but of its various ethnic enclaves.

A comparison of the speech of older Kupang natives and younger people suggests patterns of change in Kupang Malay usage that have occurred over the same period that new social dynamics shaped the city and region. In the 1970s the New Order's integralistic project began to transform Kupang into an increasingly important node in a national network of state institutions, media, transportation and commercial infrastructure. Over this period Kupang became an attractive destination for younger people seeking higher education and middle-class occupations, especially in the civil-service system (see Wenty Marina Minza's contribution to the present volume). So, institutions of the nation-state are reshaping the city at the same time that they elevate Indonesian's visibility and importance as the 'high' language in a local diglossic situation: it is the language of official concerns, the civil service and advanced education, but also of the mass media and consumerist lifestyles identified with a pan-Indonesian middle class. Young newcomers from inland Timor and neighbouring islands, including those mentioned above, arrive as products of primary and secondary schools with competence in the national language.

Yet, everyday life in the city demands facility in 'low' Kupang Malay as well. This is the common idiom of young people who grow up in Kupang; they acquire it natively, as a matter of practice, and commonly use it together with Indonesian. Our research suggests that they do this in situations which, under a normative diglossic profile, would be restricted to the national language. In elementary schools, for instance, teachers explain material in Kupang Malay to make younger students feel less awkward and unfamiliar; in secondary schools teachers may use more Indonesian, but they do not reprimand students who habitually discuss lessons or answer questions in Kupang Malay, instead of 'correct' Indonesian. In universities students speak Kupang Malay with each other and with the teachers, who intersperse their lectures in Indonesian with jokes or anecdotes in Kupang Malay. At this level, too, it is a matter of pedagogical practice to permit Kupang Malay to be used to answer questions and participate in class discussion.

Our research shows that governmental offices present a similar situation. Kupang Malay is commonly used for conversation centred on official business, sometimes to the virtual exclusion of entirely standard Indonesian. Civil servants use Kupang Malay as commonly with each other as with those seeking their services; no clear line can be drawn between their habits of speech at work, on the street or in the home and neighbourhood. Children learn to speak Kupang Malay as easily with their parents and teachers as with each other; patients use it with a doctor

as readily as with a friend; a bus driver will use it with his boss as readily as with a passenger; and so on.

Put briefly, then, social dynamics have brought Kupang's vernacular Malay into contact with standard Indonesian in a broadening range of contexts and among an expanding, increasingly diverse group of people. At the same time, Kupang Malay is closely enough bound up with the urban environment that facility in its use is taken to be emblematic of membership in the urban community. As one young newcomer observed (using standard, written Indonesian) in a post to the Kupang Malay Facebook page:

What stands out in social life is the language used. For young people, the language spoken in Kupang is more prestigious; it's as if they [that is, newcomers] feel obliged by the social situation to quickly learn Kupang language so as not to become estranged from their peers.⁶ (J.B.)

Newcomers need to learn Kupang Malay in order to engage new contexts, new topics and, more generally, to meet expectations shared in their new peer groups. Another young newcomer to Kupang elaborated on the previous comment as follows:

What we can be proud of is that no standard rule exists to protest when Kupang Malay is pronounced with different regional accents. Rather, speakers themselves will try to fit in with their speech partners or environment where they live.⁷ (G.T.)

G.T. notes that Kupang's vernacular lacks 'standard rules' like Indonesian's, but that newcomers nonetheless acquire a sense of how they should learn to speak it if they want to fit in. This young observer recognizes, like them, that a stigma will attach to them if they speak too much Indonesian, or if their speech shows too much interference from their native languages. They learn this, despite the absence of 'standard rules', partly through strategies their more fluent peers can use to evaluate and 'correct' them in day-to-day interaction.

⁶ J.B.: 'Yang menonjol dalam kehidupan sosial adalah bahasa yang digunakan. Bagi kalangan muda, bahasa yang digunakan di Kupang lebih berprestise, sehingga mereka seakan dipaksa oleh situasi sosial untuk harus cepat berbahasa Kupang agar tidak menjadi asing di antara teman-temannya.' <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=104204402968840>, last accessed 7 August 2012.

⁷ G.T.: 'Yang patut dibanggakan adalah tidak ada suatu aturan baku untuk memprotes ketika bahasa Kupang dilafalkan dengan aksen daerah masing-masing. Malah penutur itu sendiri akan berusaha menyesuaikan diri dengan lawan bicara atau lingkungan di mana ia tinggal. (Facebook page Bahasa Kupang).

For instance, a newcomer from Manggarai, in the western part of the island of Flores, may inadvertently let an element of his or her native language slip into his or her Kupang Malay, for instance, the discourse particle *ka*.⁸ This habit of speech shows that they have not yet fully habituated to the city. It suggests a lack of urban smarts and sounds, in a single Indonesian word, *kampungan*, 'bumpkinish'. Soon after using that particle, though, someone more fluent in Kupang Malay might speak to them while deploying it as well, informally and perhaps jokingly throwing the dysfluency into relief. Strategic echoing of interference phenomena – intonation and stress patterns, articulations of particular speech sounds, lexical choices – can indirectly instruct less fluent speakers as to how to 'improve' their language, despite the absence of 'standard rules'.

Such interactional techniques presuppose and convey a diffuse, normative sense of what Kupang Malay sounds like, and they may be contributing to decreasing heterogeneity in the way it is spoken, at least among young speakers. Though we were not able to gather cross-generational data to fully document this process, young people's opinions of use indirectly suggest that they are participating in a progressive levelling of ethnic variation in Kupang Malay usage. Convergence between formerly distinct varieties of Kupang Malay would be analogous to processes observed elsewhere that result in a 'reduction of inter-systemic variation by a gradual abandonment of local dialect features in favor of more regional or standard ones' (Røyneland 2010:261). This 'bottom up' process could be giving rise to a koiné, that is, a relatively uniform dialect emerging from contact between several dialects which it progressively displaces. And if younger people are at the 'leading edge' of such a dynamic, they would be helping to develop a kind of Kupang Malay that is an idiom of 'innovative urban insularity', similar to others described in very different situations (Taeldeman 2005:269).

Homogeneous or not, Kupang Malay continues to count as 'bad Indonesian' for those who judge it by diglossic norms as being 'separate and unequal'. Certainly, they can find grounds for complaining about the ways young speakers 'mix' elements of Kupang Malay and Indonesian, many of them difficult to categorize on structural grounds. This 'mixed talk' is ubiquitous, fluent and communicatively effective in context, but is not uniformly valued or categorized by its users or critics:

⁸ *Ka* marks the truth or salience of a preceding expression. For instance, in their response to the question: 'Does the top scorer get an award?' a speaker replies 'Dapat *ka* pasti'. This can be translated colloquially as 'Of course'. Word by word it translates as 'GET' *ka* 'CERTAINLY'.

Many speakers mix Indonesian and Kupang Malay, and can't always tell you which language or register they are using. Some of these, including many university students in Kupang, think they are targeting formal Indonesian, but do it imperfectly and are often scorned by those who control Indonesian better. (C. Grimes and Jacob 2008.)

Part of the current puzzle in Kupang, then, is not just the divergence between widely accepted norms and practices, but also between different perceptions of norms and practices, particularly among younger, educated people. To understand how distinctions between the two languages are blurred, conceptually and practically, I next sketch two ways that competence in each is acquired by newcomers and natives in Kupang.

Social Trajectories and Language Attitudes

I noted above that young people born and raised in Kupang are comfortable using Kupang Malay in contexts in which, by official standards, Indonesian would be normative. Those who enroll in Kupang's universities and other tertiary educational institutions are joined there by newcomers from surrounding regions who also acquired Indonesian as an object and medium of education. But their native 'regional' or ethnic languages, much more structurally distinct from Indonesian, are also more socially distinct as 'low' or 'informal' varieties relative to prestigious, prescribed Indonesian.

Newcomers facing the practical challenge of acquiring the city's idiom, then, feel more sharply than their native peers the disjunction between Indonesian and Kupang Malay. Each language has links to different parts of their lives, and so produces a stronger sense of contrast between them. For the same reason, newcomers to Kupang can experience tension between two attitudes to Kupang Malay – as urban idiom and 'bad usage' – when they take habits of vernacular speech acquired in Kupang back home. The resulting tension sometimes surfaces in casual conversation, like that transcribed and translated in Table 1.⁹

⁹ This is drawn from 42 audio recordings of spontaneous conversations of between 15 and 45 minutes in length. These were transcribed into an electronic database consisting of 55,000 records, each a short utterance or phrase.

Table 1: Prescriptivism in Alor.

I: Saturday I'm going home.	I: Hari Sabtu be su pulang.
L: Going home to Alor? Don't go, I'll be alone here.	L: Su pulang Alor, ado jang dulu pulang ko, nanti kita sendiri saja di sini ni.
I: I'm going. Last night Mama phoned, told me to come home.	I: Pulang la. Tadi malam Mama tua dong telpon suruh pulang.
L: When I get off, when the ship docks, I get off and have to flick my tongue...	L: Pas mau turun ini, pas kapal sandar di pelabuhan tu, turun harus kuti lida ooo
I: What for?	I: O supaya apa?
L: So I don't use 'beta sonde,' no 'sonde.' When I get to Alor it has to be 'saya.' <i>Saya</i> am going to the market, <i>Saya</i> am going shopping... no, later you let that language sneak in...sometimes they tell me, the first time, one time 'don't bring <i>lu, pung sonde</i> here, we don't need that <i>lu</i> and sonde here, no.'	L: Supaya jang omong logat 'beta sonde' ko sonde ee ko tida. Sampe di Alor tu harus 'saya.' 'Saya mau pi pasar, saya mau pi belanja... tida nanti terahir omong su kecolongan bahasa ... kadang-kadang bilang ini pertama satu kali 'sonde ma, hmm pikol-pikol <i>lu</i> pung sonde datang sini, orang sonde butuh <i>lu</i> pung sonde di sini tidak'
R: Kefa folks are like that too, ' <i>saya, tidak</i> .'	R: orang Kefa dong ju begitu 'saya, tidak'
beta: Kupang Malay first-person pronoun saya: standard Indonesian first-person pronoun	lu: Kupang Malay second-person pronoun
sonde: Kupang Malay 'no, not' tidak: standard Indonesian 'no, not'	Alor: neighbouring island Kefa: city on Timor

These young women had come to Kupang from nearby Alor two years earlier to study at one of the city's universities. When Ina tells Lia (neither a real name) that her mother has summoned her home, the conversation turns to a linguistic problem they all face. Lia complains, and her friends commiserate, that she can't suppress habits of speech she has acquired in Kupang, even by 'flicking her tongue' with a finger to try to get Kupang Malay out of her mouth. Still, she fails to avoid common Kupang Malay words – using *beta* ('I, me') and *sonde* ('no, not') instead of standard Indonesian *saya* and *tidak* – and becomes a target for criticism and complaints. Much as she dislikes being lectured about 'bringing that *sonde*' back with her from Kupang, she has trouble keeping the urban vernacular from 'sneaking in'.

Whether family and acquaintances back home aim simply to correct her speech, or to warn her against putting on airs, they invoke Indonesian's normative forms and place in the community, over and against the nearby city's vernacular. Recountings of personal experience like these throw into relief a challenge faced by newcomers to Kupang, who must not only learn to adapt to new ways of urban life, but also to internalize a new set of attitudes to standard Indonesian relative to Kupang Malay. In the city, as a matter of practice, the two varieties can generally serve to complement each other, but back home they are categorically distinct, 'good' and 'bad' language. Even if this difference only occasionally emerges overtly, as in the conversation cited above, it reflects a slippage between evaluative stances that also can be seen to shape views of the two languages we elicited during our research.

To study language use and attitudes, we elicited responses to a range of statements and questions using questionnaires. These were completed in the course of interviews with 30 respondents who were, like their interviewers, fairly young and educated. Most of each interview was devoted to gathering a range of information about respondents' and family members' social backgrounds, linguistic competences and reports on habits of language use in a range of situation types. Based on the autobiographical information they provided, I group and discuss some of their responses here as being provided by Kupang natives (a total of 17) or newcomers (13).

Of interest here are responses to two other questions posed towards the end of these interviews. The first, translated at the head of column 2 in Table 2, was one of five presented for respondents to evaluate by saying whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each. Of interest here is the statement 'Young people in this city can

Table 2: Responses to two queries.

Social Background	# agreeing that 'Young people in this city generally speak good Indonesian.'	# answering 'yes' to 'Do you ever feel awkward speaking Indonesian?'	# agreeing with query 1 AND answering 'yes' to query 2
Native (n=17)	9 (52%)	13 (76%)	7 (41%)
Newcomer (n=13)	7 (53%)	5 (38%)	3 (23%)

generally speak Indonesian well'.¹⁰ For brevity's sake I collapse their responses into the categories 'agree' and 'disagree'.¹¹ On this matter, as the Table shows, opinions were divided. A little later in the interview they were asked, among other open-ended questions, 'Do/have you ever felt awkward speaking Indonesian?' Column 3 tabulates the gist of their answers as 'yes' or 'no'. In fact some people responded at length, as illustrated by a few that are edited and translated in Table 3.

Responses to this second question correlate with respondents' social backgrounds. Most newcomers indicated that they never felt awkward speaking Indonesian, in effect claiming to avoid 'mixing' Kupang Malay with it when formal occasions demand it. Most of their native peers, on the other hand, acknowledged that they were unable to do this even in situations they recognized as presupposing standard Indonesian. This discrepancy can be mapped onto the differences between the social biographies of members of the two groups, sketched above.

Column 3 of Table 2 indicates the number and proportion of each group, natives and newcomers, who responded 'yes' to both queries. On the face of things these responses seem inconsistent, unless respondents were consciously excluding themselves from the social group they were asked to evaluate in query 1, 'young people in Kupang'. Given that this is unlikely, it seems that they indirectly contradicted themselves by later acknowledging their own occasional lack of fluency in Indonesian. It also seems unlikely that, for some reason, newcomers are better observers of linguistic life in Kupang than are their native peers.

¹⁰ The original: 'Kaum muda di kota ini pada umumnya bisa berbahasa Indonesia dengan baik.'

¹¹ Two natives and two newcomers chose 'strongly disagree' to respond to this query.

Table 3: Selected translations of responses to open-ended query 'Do you ever feel awkward speaking Indonesian?'

Male, 21, college student:	'I always feel awkward speaking Indonesian in formal situations, for example in front of class. I feel embarrassed but I anticipate by taking a long breath before starting to talk.'
Male, 25, college graduate:	'When interviewing for work. Because I don't use formal Indonesian often I feel awkward. I'm usually careful speaking. To overcome the awkwardness I usually prepare first. Sometimes I guess what questions are going to be asked, and then practise answering them in good Indonesian.'
Male, 22, college graduate:	'When I'm in meetings, giving speeches or lectures at the office, or instructions to subordinates.'
Female, 22, college student:	'Interviewing for work. Sometimes I try to break the ice with a joke. If they answer in standard Indonesian I'll answer in Indonesian. But sometimes I also use Kupang language.'
Female, 22, college student:	'In class, because every day I use Kupang language. Aside from that, if I speak with friends in Indonesian, I feel awkward.'

It is more plausible to interpret these responses as evidence of the broad ambiguity or slippage between two senses of *bahasa Indonesia*, as noted above. Query 1 foregrounded Indonesian as a linguistic competence shared within a segment of Kupang society, one the respondent belongs to. As such, it is easily construed as a question about differences in linguistic knowledge across segments of the city's population: those who are young, versus those who are not. In this context 'Indonesian' refers to everyday speech in which elements of Indonesian are used, perhaps with elements of Kupang Malay. Query 2, on the other hand, drew respondents' attention to consequences of their own failures to demonstrate competence in Indonesian in particular contexts. Rare or common, such occurrences obtrude strongly enough that speakers can recall and report them.

Those who provided affirmative answers to both queries appear to slip between these two perspectives or evaluative stances. Natives do this more than newcomers, who identify Indonesian both as part of Kupang's urban idiom, but also as a codified language that they have mastered, and

that is separate from Kupang's vernacular. This is an ambiguity that can be seen as grounded in two senses of Indonesian as a social modality: the language of 'modern', urban people on one hand, and of citizens of the nation on the other.

These views, in turn, are asymmetrically related, along with the metrics they involve for evaluating different kinds of speech. Indonesian's place in the fabric of city life is a practical fact, and people internalize it as such when they assimilate into urban interactional networks. Indonesian's distinctness as a superordinate code is associated with the nation-state that indirectly backs its prescribed norms. Thanks to its covert grounding in interactional practice, the first of these stances can endure without becoming apparent for those whose answers to the two queries discussed here appear 'inconsistent'.

Two Ways of Mixing Language

Given this brief sketch of attitudes to both languages, I briefly consider the 'microlevel' of contact between Indonesian and Kupang Malay. The goal is to present socially salient patterns of 'mixed usage' which show elements of the two languages excluding, co-occurring, and shaping each other. This kind of bilingual usage often includes so-called interference or transfer phenomena, which are effects of native habits of speech on use of a non-native language. (One example is the use of the Manggaraian discourse particle in Kupang Malay mentioned in footnote 8.) Contact phenomena can occur in patterns of pronunciation, grammar, and word choice. They can also vary from speaker to speaker, and context to context.

I sketch here two kinds of 'mixed use' that require little structural description. Both are suggestive of broader interactional dynamics within the setting sketched above. Each involves Kupang Malay elements in talk that is otherwise heavily or entirely Indonesian. To show how this pattern might allow for a distinct interactional style, I offer a few examples of people speaking from a 'middle' position, that is, blurring what otherwise count as lines of difference between their statuses as educated Indonesians and as co-members of a local community.

1) *Where 'a Kupang Accent' Matters*

Accent, taken to refer to distinctive articulations of speech sounds, covers a range of interference phenomena that commonly index speakers' social

backgrounds. But Indonesian's and Kupang Malay's sound systems are quite similar, and it is plausible to expect that contact between them would lead to a levelling of differences between them. If it turned out that speakers were pronouncing words of Indonesian provenance so as to resemble similarly patterned Kupang Malay words – speaking with a ‘Kupang accent’ – that could be taken as evidence of the local idiom's durability and speakers' unspoken loyalty to that vernacular. Conversely, if ‘native’ Kupang Malay words were to be pronounced in a manner that fitted distinctly Indonesian sound patterns, that would indicate that in this respect at least the vernacular is being ‘Indonesianized’ among at least some speakers. Younger, educated people are important participants in such dynamics, because they presumably represent a ‘leading edge’ of contact-induced change and model usage others may emulate.

Drawing examples from our database of recordings and transcriptions of spontaneous speech, I focus here on just a few items that do not fit either convergence scenario exactly. Consider in this regard commonly used cognates in Indonesian and Kupang Malay listed in Table 4. Indonesian members of these pairs are pronounced with closed final syllables – ending with the consonants *p* or *t* or a glottal stop (transcribed here as *k*) – whereas their Kupang Malay counterparts have open final syllables and end with a vowel. Numbers of instances of use of each pronunciation that occurred in the speech we recorded and transcribed are indicated in parentheses.

Except for *baik/bae* (‘good’), the greater frequency of Indonesian pronunciations suggests that younger peoples’ habits of pronunciation are being extended from Indonesian to Kupang Malay, since many tokens of the former pronunciation appear in otherwise heavily Kupang Malay speech. This could be taken as an indirect effect of widespread borrowing of Indonesian lexical items into otherwise Kupang Malay usage. These borrowings are routinely pronounced in the Indonesian

Table 4: Pronunciations of some cognates (# tokens in parentheses).

Gloss	Indonesian	Kupang Malay
‘good’	baik (42)	bae (71)
‘many, much’	banyak (47)	banya (20)
‘main, basic’	pokok (30)	poko (9)
‘see’	lihat (56)	lia (38)
‘closed’	tutup (7)	tutu (0)

manner: the words *politik*, ‘politics’, and or *sifat*, ‘attitude’, for instance, are not pronounced with ‘a Kupang accent’ (that is, *politi* or *sifa*). In this way a sound pattern that is introduced into otherwise Kupang Malay speech through borrowings can generalize to Kupang Malay cognates like these.¹²

But a small number of cognates do not seem to fit this trend, and in our recordings are commonly pronounced with ‘a Kupang accent’. These are the kin terms listed in Table 5. Standard Indonesian *bapak*, *kakak* and *anak* are pronounced with a final glottal stop, while their Kupang Malay cognates – *bapa*, *kaka* and *ana* – end with open syllables (and have slightly lengthened first syllables). That these latter terms seem to share a resistance to Indonesianization goes together with their distinctively expressive meanings in interaction. They serve to mark or presuppose something about the relation between the person who utters them and the person addressed with them. In Kupang, as elsewhere in Indonesia, concerns for politeness often lead speakers to avoid using second-person pronouns to non-intimate or superior persons. For that reason, kin terms or titles are common alternatives, sometimes combined with a form of his or her proper name. Used to speak of a third person, they can similarly mark the speaker’s respect or feeling of distance from that person.

These Kupang Malay kin terms occur even in usage that is otherwise heavily or entirely Indonesian, as illustrated with two instances from our recorded data:

Table 5: Pronunciations of some cognate kin terms (# tokens in parentheses).

Gloss		Indonesian	Kupang Malay
‘father’	full form	bapak (1)	bapa (215)
	short form	pak (92)	pa (232)
‘elder sibling’	full form	kakak (6)	kaka (194)
	short form	kak (8)	ka (440)
‘child’	full form	anak (180)	ana (426)
	short form	nak (25)	na (13)

¹² Thomason and Kaufman (1988) discuss other examples of change leading from structurally ‘shallow’ patterns of lexical borrowing to ‘deeper’ patterns of structural change. It is plausible to conjecture that even if Kupang Malay is not displaced by Indonesian, some of its features will be reshaped by it.

- 1. *Mo dengar cerita bapa tentang proses dan tahapan pemilihan umum tingkat propinsi sekarang ini.*
(I) want to hear your (bapa's) story about the process and the steps in the general provincial election at present.
- 2. *Apalagi khususnya masih di Kupang ini kaka boleh omong seperti itu.*
All the more, especially in Kupang you (kaka) can still talk like that.

These same speakers regularly pronounce words of Indonesian provenance (like *tingkat*, in example 1) in the Indonesian manner, with final closed syllables.

From the point of view of sound structure, these seem to be anomalous ‘contact’ phenomena that can’t count as either ‘interference’ or ‘borrowings’ from native Kupang Malay in Indonesian usage (unless one chooses to regard them as having different ‘meanings’ from their Indonesian equivalents). Instead, it seems more plausible to say that these terms constitute a functionally distinct class whose elements modulate the interactional feel of talk which may otherwise be in Indonesian. ‘Mixed’ usage like that in examples 1 and 2 is unlikely to be the primary target for complaints about widespread inability to speak good Indonesian, but it is important as a point of assimilation of the national language into interactionally enacted senses of local community.

2) *Personal Pronouns, Personal Relations*

Another kind of mixed use follows a similar but clearer pattern. Listed in Table 6 are Indonesian and Kupang Malay personal pronouns, along with numbers indicating how often they appear in our collection of recordings and transcriptions.

Personal pronouns serve social functions like the kin terms discussed above because they affirm and modify face-to-face relations between the persons interactionally engaged in their use, as speakers and addressees. But unlike those kin terms, Kupang Malay and Indonesian pronouns have sound shapes that are quite different. Pronouns of Indonesian provenance

Table 6: Personal pronouns (# tokens in parentheses).

Gloss	Indonesian	Kupang Malay
1st singular	saya (29)	beta (470), be (271)
1st plural inclusive	kita (49)	kotong (183)
1st plural exclusive	kami (0)	botong (50)
2nd person	kamu (1)	lu (218)

figure very rarely in the usage we recorded, and Kupang Malay terms predominate even in heavily or entirely Indonesian talk (see Table 7). Most interesting of these is the last. The speaker ‘quotes’ a judge who is making a legal decision known, and portrays that judge as having addressed his own interlocutor with distinctly Kupang Malay *lu*, not Indonesian *saya*.

From a structure-centred point of view, such ‘mixing’ of Kupang Malay personal pronouns into Indonesian may be more obvious than kin term pronunciations, but they serve parallel interactional functions. From a social point of view, they can be seen as allowing habits of interaction among younger, educated people to expand as they participate in the broader geosocial shift sketched above. One can use Kupang Malay personal pronouns or kin terms in Indonesian without necessarily demonstrating incompetence in the national language; rather, this use reflects on that language’s ambiguous uses and meanings in Kupang society. This kind of mixing helps speakers to neutralize norms that dictate a forced choice between ‘separate and unequal’ languages, and allows them to deal with each other as middle-class Indonesians and, at the same time, as co-members of a local, but non-ethnic, community.

In Search of Middle Indonesian

Historical, structural and biographical factors help make the language situation in Kupang seem less puzzling, because they bring to the fore issues of perception and practice, not just norms and competences. Examined through the lens of a ‘national language politics’ – from a translocal,

Table 7: Kupang personal pronouns in Indonesian conversation.

Bukan ilmu akuntansi yang *beta* terapkan di hidup
It’s not accounting that I do for a living.

Sebenarnya bukan seperti yang *kotong* buat-buat sekarang.
Actually it’s not like that, what we’re doing now.

Sesuai dengan daerah yang *botong* menyanyi
According to the region where we’re singing.

Hakim putus ‘oh ini KPU salah *lu* yang benar’ ya silakan.
(If) the judge decides ‘Oh, the regulations are wrong, you’re right,’ then go ahead.

national perspective, as it were – usage in Kupang appears structurally *interstitial* between separate and unequal language systems. This prescriptive attitude to Indonesian and Kupang Malay surfaces in the city and regions alike. From a more situated, interactional point of view, mixed use of the two languages serves to create a way of talking that is socially *intermediary*. It allows speakers to enact middle-class identities grounded in both the city and the nation. Using the label ‘Middle Indonesian’ helps to move beyond norm-based framings of the two languages, and to see ‘mixed use’ as emergent and mediating in an integrationist dynamic.

My strategy for bringing subjective attitudes to the fore has been to link speakers’ answers to queries about language with their social trajectories. From this point of view, newcomers can be seen as those who, after moving to the city, recognized practical limits on the ‘separate and unequal’ view. To become ‘Kupang people’ they acquired a distinct attitude and associated habits of language use that are common among people in the city more generally.

This sketch of Kupang Malay’s relation to Indonesian is worth comparing, finally, to that between another non-standard dialect of Malay and standard Indonesian in another urban setting: what is now commonly called Jakartanese (*bahasa Jakarta*). Jakartanese, like Kupang Malay, has native and non-native speakers, but no strong ethnic association; it, too, was once officially stigmatized, as is Kupang Malay now, though it has also become increasingly uniform through a process of koinéization (Wouk 1991). Especially since the end of the New Order, Jakartanese is viewed less and less as bad Indonesian, and more as standard Indonesian’s colloquial complement in everyday Jakarta life.

This development was in fact tacitly acknowledged in the 1980s by Anton Moeliono, at the time regarded as the dean of Indonesian language development. Noting that standard Indonesian has no colloquial variety, he suggested that Jakartanese might come to play this role not just in the city, but in the country at large. Dede Oetomo, who cites his remark, suggests also that this development was already in process at that time (1996:200). In fact, Jakartanese is now recognized all over Indonesia as emblematic of modern urban Indonesia; youth in many other cities, including Kupang, have made elements of Jakartanese part of their own distinctive argots.¹³ But Kupang’s youth language is also distinct from the much more widely known Jakartanese.

¹³ Space does not allow for discussion here of Kupang’s version of so-called *bahasa gaul*, or comparison with other varieties that have been described in Jakarta or Yogyakarta.

If developments in Kupang in fact parallel those in Jakarta, Kupang Malay, far from being marginalized, might in the future become more widely recognized and valued in the province. Though I have only anecdotal support for this suggestion, younger peoples' comments to members of our research team strongly suggest that Kupang Malay is in fact becoming more widely known elsewhere in NTT. Several young newcomers suggested that older people are those most prone to complain about Kupang Malay as 'bad Indonesian' when it is used in their home regions; they are also less directly invested in the modern city, and more sensitive to its influences, for better or worse, on ways of life in their own communities. When younger educated speakers like Lia and Ina return home as exemplars of urban sophistication, their Kupang Malay (and ways of mixing it with Indonesian) may be emulated by others. In this respect Kupang Malay's non-ethnic character would promote its social value as a regional language. Just as un-nativeness helps Indonesian serve as a language across ethnic groups in the nation, mixed usage and unethnic Kupang Malay may become the language and emblem of a new provincial identity.

This reading of Kupang's language puzzle places it within the broader process of geosocial integration and class formation in Indonesia at large. But it would be hazardous to generalize this sketch too broadly to analogous sociolinguistic processes in other Middle Indonesian cities. These other sociolinguistic situations differ with respect to the languages (and kinds of Malay) Indonesian is coming into contact with. The kinds of Malay spoken among ethnic Malays living in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, for instance, figure into a very different ethnopolitical dynamics. And where Indonesian is in contact with other urban Malay vernaculars, like that of Ternate in North Maluku Utara, broader ethnopolitical differences affect use of both. Whether patterns of language variation and change like that in Kupang are emerging elsewhere is an empirical question, but in every Middle Indonesian city, language change intimately mediates geopolitical dynamics that are shaping an emerging middle class.