

**Endangered Malay Varieties: The Malay Contact Varieties of Eastern Indonesia**  
**Scott Paauw (University of Rochester)**

The role of the Malay language historically as a trade language gave rise to a number of contact varieties of Malay in Eastern Indonesia. These varieties include some which never gained significant numbers of native speakers (Makassar Malay, Alor Malay), some which have only gained significant numbers of native speakers relatively recently (North Moluccan Malay, Papuan Malay), and five varieties which have been used as a native language by communities for hundreds of years (Ambon Malay, Manado Malay, Banda Malay, Kupang Malay and Lantaka Malay). For a long time, these varieties were stable, existing as the native tongues of their communities, and often as a regional lingua franca with speakers of other languages as well.

Today these Malay varieties exist in a complex sociolinguistic situation, competing with both Standard Indonesian as well as the colloquial varieties of Indonesian which are arising throughout the nation (and which are spoken by speakers of many native languages, not just contact varieties of Malay). In most cases, a unique sort of diglossia ensues, wherein the contact Malay varieties of Eastern Indonesia exist as Low varieties alongside colloquial Indonesian, with Standard Indonesian as the High for both. The result is that the line between the contact varieties and colloquial Indonesian becomes blurred, and the unique identity of the contact Malay varieties is being lost, leading to effective language death for these varieties, and replacement by colloquial Indonesian as the daily language of these communities. In some cases, notably in Kupang and Papua, speakers are unable to distinguish between their traditional contact varieties of Malay and colloquial Indonesian, and maintain that the two are one and the same.

This study examines the complex sociolinguistic situation which has arisen, involving contact varieties of Malay, non-Malay regional languages, colloquial Indonesian and Standard Indonesian, and the often competing roles which these varieties play, and a model is proposed for defining and analyzing this situation. The question of community identity is examined, along with the changing role of language within the community, and the prospect of long-term survival of these varieties is discussed.