

THE USE OF SUPERLATIVE IN KUPANG MALAY

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Abstract

In this paper, I describe superlative constructions used in Kupang Malay (*Ethnologue*/ISO code mkn), a Malay-based creole spoken around the western end of Timor Island in eastern Indonesia. Superlative of an adjective or adverb is the greatest form of adjective or adverb which indicates that something has some feature to a greater degree than anything it is being compared to in a given context. Some of the superlatives being used in Kupang Malay are very vivid and creative, however, it can also be exaggerating. Besides using ‘*paling*’ and ‘*talalu*’ as common superlatives, ‘*mati*’ and ‘*mati pung*’ are also used. Kupang Malay speakers do express superlative with idiomatic superlative. Idiomatic superlative is a superlative form that is in some way lexicalized and are of a fixed phrases or expressions.

Examples of superlatives in Kupang Malay:

1. Dari samua-samua, beta su yang **paling** barani.
from all 1S EMPH which most brave
‘I am the bravest among others’
2. Awii! Lia do, te ada nyong ganteng **mati!**
EXCLAM look first that exist guy handsome dead
‘Wow! Have a look, the most handsome guy is here!’
3. Nona su cinta **mati** pung, ko su lari iko nyong.
girl have love dead POSS that have run follow boy
‘The girl loved the boy dearly that she followed and lived with him’

Examples of Kupang Malay idiomatic superlative:

4. Batarea **ukur gargantang** ‘shout at top of voice’
5. Tua **ganggók** ‘ancient, very old’
6. Itam **marege** ‘jet black’

Keywords: *superlative, idiomatic superlative, Kupang Malay*