The instatement of Bahasa Indonesia as Indonesia’s national language during the Independence movement and its corresponding development as a primary national lingua franca is widely described as a highly successful example of language planning, albeit one that may have occurred at the expense of the use of local languages. Musgrave (2014) cautions against the assumption that Indonesian is only expanding at the expense of local languages, and instead describes this as a shift from one dynamic multilingual situation to another, as use of varieties of Indonesian (including multiple registers) expands in some domains and use of different varieties of local languages expand in others. In this paper we seek to further analyze the nature of this shift by reporting on results from Kuesioner Penggunaan Bahasa Sehari-hari (— 2014), focusing here on the difference between “inner” and “outer” island locations.

Using 2010 census data to analyze language use in provinces with the ten largest non-Malayic languages, Abtahian et al. (2016a) find that speakers of Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Balinese and Sasak (defined as “inner” island) were less likely to report speaking Indonesian at home than speakers of Acehnese, Batak, Buginese, Makassarese, and Gorontolo (defined as “outer” island). While across the board, rural speakers. older speakers, and speakers of the largest languages are less likely to speak Indonesian at home, size alone doesn’t account for these results. Abtahian et al. conclude that the distinction between “inner” vs. “outer” island is also an important factor. Moreover, in comparing attitudes of speakers from Yogya, Solo, Bali, Makasar and Padang, Permanedeli, Kaswanti Purwo, and Sukamto (2016) also find differences in attitudes about the importance of local languages paralleling these findings.

The questionnaire was developed to collect detailed data from subjects from different language backgrounds, allowing cross-group comparison of the interaction of a complex set of variables, building on Himmelmann’s (2010, p. 46) observation that language shift is rarely the result of just one or two factors but rather “language endangerment results from the specific and complex constellation of a variety of such factors. . . . an endangerment scenario”. The questionnaire provides an intermediary level of inquiry, allowing collection of more data in a shorter period of time from more locations than would be possible with detailed interviews in individual communities, but also offering far more detail and insight into individual language choices than can be gained from census data. It includes questions about respondent’s background (geographic, ethnic, religious, educational and linguistic); language proficiency; language use in 34 different domains; and language background, proficiency, and use of their parents, grandparents, spouse and children (if relevant). It also includes several questions about language attitudes and use of technology. To date it has been conducted with 548 participants in 11 locales.

In this paper, we analyze batches of questionnaire data from Surabaya and Yogya, in Java (representing “inner” island) and Padang and Jambi, in Sumatra (representing “outer” island), to inform our primary question: Is there an inner vs. outer island difference with respect to language maintenance and shift in Indonesia? Within each batch we compare the language used in different domains (collapsing these domains following Abtahian et al. 2016b and Zulato et al. 2016), reported language competence in Indonesian and local languages, and three attitude questions about the importance of using English, Indonesian, and local languages. This comparison allows us to consider both intra-location and cross-location comparisons, furthering our goal of building more predictive models of the interaction of language background, language mastery, use, and attitude with potential language shift. In this way we contribute to the larger goal of a better understanding of language endangerment scenarios.
References


