The Austronesian-Papuan Interface in East Nusantara

Spring 2016
LING 770 (CRN 87840)
Wednesdays 3:00-6:00, Moore 203

Instructor
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office hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 1:30-2:30 PM, or by appointment

Overview
East Nusantara—the eastern “islands between”—is a vast archipelago stretching between Sulawesi (Celebes) and New Guinea. It is a region of enormous biological, cultural, and linguistic diversity. More than 250 Austronesian and non-Austronesian (Papuan) languages are spoken here—many with features atypical of their respective language families, and many whose genetic affiliations remain problematic. Yet, the languages here share enough common typological features to motivate some to propose the region as a linguistic area (Klamer, Reesink, and van Staden 2008).

The course takes an areal approach to the East Nusantara region. That is, we define this region from the outset and then proceed to explore the linguistic significance of the region. Though we will touch on historical and typological issues, that will not be the main focus of the course. Rather, our goal will be to better understand the diversity of this region. For the purposes of this course we define East Nusantara as the Indonesian provinces of Maluku, North Maluku, and East Nusa Tenggara, as well as the “Bird’s Head” of New Guinea and the independent state of East Timor.
Through a combination of readings in grammar, typology, historical linguistics, archaeology, ethnography, and genetics, this course seeks to better understand the linguistic situation in this fascinating region.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will be able to:

• understand the linguistic geography of East Nusantara
• have a general picture of the current status of documentation of the languages of Eastern Indonesia and the available resources
• gain detailed knowledge of the structure of at least one Papuan and one Austronesian language of the region

Readings

Course readings will be made available via Laulima. Check the Resources section for the folder corresponding to the class date. Required readings will be marked with an asterisk (*). There are a few readings which give a general overview of the region, or portions of the region, and these are listed below under the schedule for January 20.

Course format and responsibilities

This is a seminar course, and lectures will be kept to a minimum. Students will be responsible for reading, presenting, and discussing articles in class. Attendance and participation is required. Unexcused absences will result in lowering of your course grade. Late assignments will be accepted only in extenuating circumstances, and only at reduced credit.

Adopt two languages

For this course you will adopt two languages which you will get to know in depth. Ideally you will choose one Papuan and one Austronesian language, though you may choose two languages from the same category provided there are from different families. Over the course of the semester you'll be comparing various aspects of the two languages, noting features shared in common and features which contrast. You will grow to know and love these languages, and you will be reporting regularly on them throughout the class.

Tentative Schedule

This schedule may be adjusted as the term progresses. Some sample reading assignments are noted below. A complete set of readings can be found on Laulima in the folder labeled with the class date.

Jan 13 – Introduction

Course overview. Introduction to the East Nusantara region, its languages, and its peoples.

Jan 20 – History and status of documentation

Survey of the existing documentation.


Jan 27 – *The languages of East Nusa Tenggara*


Feb 3 – *The languages of Maluku and the Bird’s Head*

Reesink, Ger P. 1998. The Bird’s Head as Sprachbund. Perspectives on the Bird's Head of Irian Jaya, Indonesia, ed. by J. Miedema, C. Odé and R.A.C. Dam, 603-42. Amsterdam: Rodopi.


Feb 10 - *Morphosyntactic Alignment*

Discussion of pronominal systems and person-marking. The encoding of morphosyntactic alignment (grammatical relations).


Feb 17 – *Research Reports: Morphosyntactic Alignment*

Student presentations of research reports.

Feb 24– *Serial verb constructions*


Mar 2 – Noun possession

Mar 9 – no class or possible guest lecture
Your instructor will be in Fairbanks running a workshop on digital heritage preservation. We will try to arrange a guest lecture this week. If that is not possible then you can use this week to work on your research report for next week.

Mar 16 – Research Reports: Possession
Student presentations of research reports.

Mar 23 - Spring Break
Alaskans go to Hawai‘i for Spring Break, but I’m not sure what Hawaiians do. Maybe they go to Alaska? As a former Alaskan I’ll be staying here, just so I can say that I spent my Spring Break in Hawai‘i. But no, our class will not be meeting this week.

Mar 30 – Malay in Eastern Indonesia

Apr 6 – Spatial deixis

**Apr 13 – Research Reports: Spatial deixis (or alternate topic)**

Student presentations of research reports.

**Apr 20 – Parallelism and ritual language**


**Apr 26 – Migration and human settlement**


Assignments

The final paper for this course will be a comparison of your two adopted languages. This paper will be drafted in stages, with sections of the paper due as “research reports” at regular intervals through the term. Each of these individual reports will be presented to the class. These are not intended to be formal presentations, but rather an informal sharing of your progress researching particular aspects of the languages. The written research reports will be evaluated for content, not style; don’t worry too much about formalities. At the end of the course you will compile these sections into a coherent final research paper. In contrast to the research reports, the final paper will be evaluated for both content and style.

Assignment 1 – Bibliography #1 – Jan 27

Create a bibliography of resources for one of your adopted languages. Be as comprehensive as possible. Do NOT limit yourself to resources writing in English. Include archival (unpublished) resources as appropriate. If there is little information available for your adopted language then you should include resources on related languages. Follow LSA style guide. Length: up to you. Weight: 10%.

Assignment 2 – Bibliography #2 – Feb 3

Create a bibliography of resources for the second of your adopted languages. Weight: 10%.

Assignment 3 – Research Report: morphosyntactic alignment – Feb 17

Compose a brief description of the morphosyntactic alignment system (grammatical relations) in each of your adopted languages. Provide an overview of the pronoun system, and discuss how the alignment system is encoded. Note any typologically unusual features of the alignment system. Be prepared to discuss your reports in class. For this you may want to prepare a handout or slides. Length: 750-1000 words for each language. Weight: 10% (written), 5% (oral).

Assignment 4 – Research Report: possession – Mar 16

Describe the possessive constructions in each of your adopted languages. If there is more than one way of marking possession describe how the constructions vary. Indicate if there are distinct alienable and inalienable possessive constructions. Are proper nouns handled differently than pronouns? Are obligatorily possessed nouns handled differently? Be prepared to discuss your reports in class. For this you may want to prepare a handout or slides. Length: 750-1000 words for each language. Weight: 10% (written), 5% (oral).

Assignment 5 – Research Report: spatial deixis (or alternate topic) – Apr 13

Compose a brief description of the spatial deixis system of your adopted languages. Alternatively, you may report on another topic of your choosing, but be sure to report on the same topic in each of your languages. Be prepared to discuss your reports in class. For this you may want to prepare a handout or slides. Length: 750-1000 words for each language. Weight: 10% (written), 5% (oral).
Assignment 6 – Final Paper – May 7

This paper should be a comparison of your two adopted languages. You may draw on your research reports; however, unlike the research reports this final paper should be a polished paper. Situate the languages within the larger context of East Nusantara. Indicate why you have chosen to compare the particular features you have chosen. Use LSA style sheet. Length: 5000-7000 words. Weight: 35%.

Disabilities services

Any student who feels she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is invited to contact me privately. I would be happy to work with you, and the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities) to ensure reasonable accommodations in my course. KOKUA can be reached at (808) 956-7511 or (808) 956-7612 (voice/text) in room 013 of the Queen Lili’uokalani Center for Student Services.