10 Unique Features of Kupang-Malay Language: A Language Spoken in Kupang – NTT Indonesia

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Abstract: Every language in this world has uniqueness and particular features to become its identity. Kupang – Malay as one of the languages which is dominantly spoken by people in Kupang Municipality has its own unique features. This writing has attempted to trace and identify the 10 unique linguistic features of this language in order to show the richness and different varieties of languages in Indonesia, which are considered as the inheritance of Austronesian traits and grouped as the family of Austronesian languages. This writing has revealed 10 unique features of Kupang–Malay language which is spoken by people in Kupang Municipality (Kota Kupang) of East Nusa Tenggara Province (Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur). The data has been taken from written forms (local newspaper, Short Message Service, and various social media) and oral form (daily conversations). There are many particular features of Kupang–Malay language that make it unique and easy to identify, looking from the domains of morphology, phonology, syntax, and sociolinguistics. They are then classified into 10 under the classifications of (1) idiomatic expression, (2) prefix ba-, (3) prefix ta-, (4) reduplication, (5) word changing, omitting, and/or modifying, (6) loanwords, (7) clipping, (8) pronouns, (9) possessive (10) The use of particles ko, na, ma, tuh, and hang as complicated grammatical rules. This finding is not static as language itself changes over time. New people from new places with recent innovation can bring the changes to the language, especially on the vocabulary level. However, the basic patterns of this language will not be easily changed because they have become the particular identity of this language.

1 INTRODUCTION

Language as important tool for communication is a part of culture. It is a typical characteristic or feature of a nation, region, and/or tribe. A language exists and can be used by its users because there has been an agreement about the rules, regulations and meanings among them (Owen, 1996). In Indonesia, we speak Bahasa Indonesia as our national identity which belongs to our culture. Local people of Kupang use the local language in daily communication to show our local identity, that is, Kupang–Malay.

Kupang Municipality (Kota Kupang) is the capital city of East Nusa Tenggara Province (Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur), one of the provinces in Indonesia. Like Jakarta people of the capital city of Indonesia that are increasingly exposed to a multicultural society but still have local features of identity to communicate (i.e. Betawi language), people in Kupang, despite their multiculturalism, also have their own local language to be used in their daily communication, called Kupang–Malay.

Kupang–Malay language itself is not totally different from Bahasa Indonesia. Generally, most of the words used is from Bahasa Indonesia, but it has particular features to show its linguistic entity as the local language of people in Kupang. How people in Kupang, Manado, Ambon, and Papua speak their languages is almost the same, but people can tell which one is which by listening to the accents, intonation and several particular features. Based on Wardhaugh's (2010) argument, it can be assumed that the way these languages are spoken and

transformed can be called the process of creolization which is the process of transforming from pidging language to creol. The similarity of transformation process might occur because all these languages belong to the group of Austronesia. However, this writing will not discuss the similarities and differences of Austronesian languages, but it will pinpoint and discuss further the features of a local language spoken by people in Kupang, called Kupang–Malay language (Bahasa Kupang).

2 THE 10 UNIQUE FEATURES OF KUPANG-MALAY LANGUAGE

Kupang–Malay language is considered as one of the local languages in the eastern part of Indonesia. It is spoken in East Nusa Tenggara Province, especially, in several districts in Timor Island, they are; Kupang District, TTS District, TTU District, Belu District, and Malaka District. Despite the similarities in most aspect of the language, each region has several unique features that show where exactly they come from.

This writing will focus on the unique features found in Kupang – Malay language spoken by people in Kupang Municipality. There is much uniqueness found in this language that will be classified into 10 major classifications as follows:

2.1 Idiomatic Expression

As previously mentioned that language is not static but dynamic, especially on the level of vocabulary. Kupang-Malay language has stocks of unique vocabulary, in the forms of idiomatic expressions (slangs, phrases, figurative languages, idioms, etc.) which have changed over time. Several of the expressions can be seen below:

- *Kaki kereta*

Kaki is feet and kareta is kereta in Bahasa Indonesia which is translated as train in English. Therefore, the expression can be translated as feet of train that refers to the wheels of train. *Kaki kareta* is used to address to those who like to hang around. Old people used to use the expression of *tapaleuk* that has similar in meaning to *kaki kareta*.

- *Mulu beludak*

Mulu is from mulut in Bahasa Indonesia which is translated as mouth, and beludak is a group of venomous snakes called, familia viperidae. In this expression, mulu beludak refers to people who like to say bad things about others and hurt them verbally. Their mouths are as poisonous as those venomous snakes, that is why, this expression uses the word beludak. This expression used to be used by our parents or grandparents, but nowadays, we seldom use this kind of expression. The new expression to change this one is mulu piso. Mulu is mouth and piso is pisau in Bahasa Indonesia and knife in English. So mulu piso literary means knife mouth. In this expression, it has exactly similar meaning to mulu beludak.

Both expressions can also refer to people who cannot keep secrets or easily share others' secrets.

- *Makan puji*

Makan is a verb which means to eat and puji is actually a noun from Bahasa Indonesia, pujian or compliment. So, literary, makan puji is to eat the compliment. This expression refers to people who like to take compliment and expect respect and admiration from others.

2.2 Prefix ba-

The second unique feature of Kupang – Malay language is the use of prefix ba- to be used as reciprocal pronouns. Below is a table to distinguish between prefix ber- and prefix and suffix ber- -an in Bahasa Indonesia and prefix ba- in Kupang – Malay which have similar meaning.

Table 1: Prefix ber- and prefix and suffix ber- -an in Bahasa Indonesia and prefix ba- in Kupang–Malay: Similarity

Root		Bahasa Indonesia		Kupang-Malay	Meaning
Bahasa Indonesia	Kupang-Malay	Prefix *ber-*	Prefix and suffix *ber- -an*	Prefix *ba-*	
Cium	ciom	-	*Ber*cium -a*n*	*ba*ciom	to kiss each other
Dekat	deka	-	*Ber*dekat a*n*	*ba*deka	To be close to eac

					other
Peluk	pelok	-	*Ber*peluk-*an*	*ba*pelok	to hug each other
Sentuh	sonto	-	*Ber*sentuh*an*	*ba*sonto	to touch
Lihat	liat		-	*ba*liat	to look at each other

Basically, words with prefix and suffix ber- -an in Bahasa Indonesia have similar meaning to those in Kupang - Malay with prefix ba-, which is the short form of baku or in Bahasa it means saling to show the reciprocal pronouns. However, it can be seen from the table that there are several exceptions, such as, the roots with vocal u are changed to o: cium to ciom, and some consonants, especially the last letters are omitted in Kupang – Malay language. For example: sentuh becomes sonto. Another exception is, not all roots can be added with prefix and suffix ber- -an in Bahasa Indonesia but can be added by prefix ba- in Kupang Malay. The example is the word lihat in Bahasa or liat in Kupang – Malay. The word can't become berliatan because it does not have any meaning in Bahasa. But it can become baliat in Kupang – Malay which means to look at one another.

Another use of prefix ba- in Kupang – Malay which do not always refer to reciprocal pronouns are: bagosip (refers to gossiping activity done by at least two people), balari (run here and there), baangka (to take someone's belongings), baekor (to keep on following someone), bakuda (to move here and there or hyper-active), baribut (to make noisy), and so on.

2.3 Prefix ta-

Like prefix ba- discussed earlier, prefix ta- is Kupang – Malay is unique as well. Its function is more or less like prefix ter- and prefix and suffix ber- -an in Bahasa Indonesia. However, because of its uniqueness, not all roots added by prefix ¬ter- is meaningful in Bahasa. Below is the table to show the clear examples:

Table 2: Prefix –ter and the examples

Root	Bahasa Indonesia	Kupang-Malay	Meaning

Bahasa Indonesia	Kupang-Malay	Prefix *ter-*	Prefix and suffix *ber- -an*	Prefix *ba-*	
Buka	buka	*terb uka*	-	*ta*bu ka	open
Kejut	-	*Ter*-kej ut	-	*ta*kuj u	Surprise d
kaget	kaget	-	-	*ta*ka gget	Surprise d
Hambur	ham bur	-	*ber*h mbur*a n*	*(b)ta* ham bur	messy or untidy
Sibuk	sibuk	-	-	*ta*sib uk	busy

It can be seen clearly from the table that not all roots can be added with prefix and suffix in Bahasa, for example no tersibuk or bersibukan in Bahasa Indonesia. Tasibuk in Kupang – Malay refers to those who keep or make themselves busy.

Another use of the prefix ta- in Kupang – Malay is in the following examples: tatidor (to sleep), tadalam (to refer to something that goes inward, like a plastic ball that we press or it can also mean to go deeper, like the hole on the ground), tampias (to bounch), talele (not tidy, it has the same meaning as tahambur), etc.

2.4 Reduplication

Reduplication has its own uniqueness in Kupang – Malay language. Based in its types and functions uttered by Kauffman (2015), many reduplications exist in Kupang – Malay use the type of full reduplication. However, they are not always used to form plurals. Several examples can be seen here to be clear:

   a. Lu jangan *datang-datang* terus.

    Do n't kee p o n co mi n g.

It is a full reduplication which refers to a continued activity.

   b. Mari kitong ba*kusu-kusu* do.

    Let 's sa y th in gs i n wh isp er (and so no b o d y else can listen to us).

Kusu-kusu means whisper. It's similar to kusuk-kasak as a type of ablaut reduplication which means similar to kusu-kusu in this example:

Dong dua ada *kusuk-kasak* di belakang.
<u>Both of them are talking (in whisper and it's not clear what they're talking about) at the back</u>.

Although these two reduplications have different types (*kusu-kusu* is full reduplication and *kusuk-kasak* is ablaut reduplication, but they both are used as reciprocity (they do those activities to one another).

c. Lu jangan ke *gila-gila* e.
<u>Do n't a ct cr az il y or d o n't d o cr az y t hi n gs</u>.

This is a full reduplication which is used to express similarity.

d. Itu anak su ke *nyong-nyong* / *nona-nona* e.
<u>That boy / girl (has grown up fast) looks like a man / a woman</u>.

These two are full reduplications which are not used to show plurality but similarity. That boy is like a man and that girl is like a woman.

e. Itu anjing gong-gong tiap malam.
<u>That dog barks everynight</u>.

This type of reduplication is onomatopoeia which is used to imitate animals and sounds in nature. In this case, it imitates the sounds of dogs.

2.5 Word Changing, Omitting, and / or Modifying

There have been some deletions in the front, back or middle parts of several words in Kupang–Malay as has been previously discussed in clipping. Other examples of this phenomenon are:

1. The redundancy of *sang* and *deng*

Table 3: Examples of the redundancy: *Sang* and *Deng*

Kupang-Malay		Bahasa Indonesia	English
Original-Form	Modified-Form		
Kasih tau *sama* dia nanti *beta pigi* katumu dia	*Kas* tau *sang* dia nanti *be pi* katumu dia	Kasih tahu dia nanti saya pergi bertemu dia	Tell him/her that I will come to meet/see him/her
Kasian *dengan* lu *do*	Kasian *deng* lu *do*	Kasihan kamu	Poor you

Sang and *deng* is each shortened and modified from the words *sama* and *dengan* which are actually redundancy in both sentences because without the words the sentences have already had complete meanings.

2. The changing and/or modifying of words

Table 4: Examples of *Changing and Modifying Words*

Kupang-Malay		Bahasa Indonesia	English
Original-Form	Modified-Form		
Dia ada badiri manghadap laut	Dia ada badiri mangada laut	Dia sedang berdiri menghadap ke laut	S/he is standing and facing the sea
Itu orang suka tidor matono	It orang suka tidor matono	Orang itu suka tidur telungkup	That man likes to sleep on his stomach

In the first example, *ada* functions as a progressive indicator which shows that the activity is happening at the real time. It is like the word *sedang* in Bahasa Indonesia and to be + -ing in English. *Menghadap* is changed to *mangada* and this phenomenon often occurs in this language (the changing of the vocals and the deletion of consonant at the end of the words).

The second example shows the shortening of article *itu* (that) becomes it and also *ini* (this) to in. *Tidur* in Bahasa Indonesia is changed to tidor (to sleep), and *telungkup* is totally changed to *matono* (on one's stomach).

2.6 Loanwords

There are many loanwords used in Kupang–Malay language. Some of them are used as the original ones, which has been categorized as the ones do not undergo any modification at all (Peperkamp, 2004) others have been through word formation process or have undergo different transformations (Peperkamp, 2004), so they are adopted to be adapted (Odlin, 1989). Few examples are provided here:

a. Banco is from Portuguese which means chair. It has been changed to become bangku in Kupang–Malay language.

b. Passear is also from Portuguese which means cruise or excursion which has then adopted and adapted as pasiar in Kupang – Malay language.

c. Sapato is from Portuguese which means shoes. In Kupang – Malay language, it has been used as sapatu.

d. Achteruit is a Dutch word which means to go backward. It has been through the process of word formation and changed to become antret in Kupang – Malay.

e. Horloge is a Dutch word for watch, and it has been changed to arloji in Kupang – Malay.

f. Klaar is another one of Dutch which means done or finish and it is used in Kupang – Malay language as kelar.

g. Koor is choir and adopted and used without any changes.

h. Oom means uncle is used without any changes.

i. Oma means grandma is used without any changes.

j. Opa means grandpa is used without any changes.

2.7 Clipping

Linguistically, clipping is the process of word formation by reducing the parts of a word (Marchand, 1969). It can also be said as the process of shortening a word. This phenomenon has been found in many words in Kupang – Malay language. Arnold (1986) has divided clipping into 4 main types, they are, initial clipping, final clipping, medial clipping, and complex clipping. Below is the table of clipping or shortening in Kupang – Malay:

No dot should be included after the subsection title number.

Table 5: Clipping or shortening in Kupang-Malay.

Original Words	The Short Form	Type of Clipping	Meaning
Sonde *Dia sonde datang*	son *Dia son datang*	final clipping	He is not coming.
Saja *Lu diam saja*	sa *Lu diam sa*	final clipping	You just keep quiet
Beta *Dia beta pung kunyadu*	be *Dia be pung kunyadu*	final clipping	s/he is my sister/brother in-law

kunyadu *Dia beta pung kunyadu*	nyadu *Dia be pung nyadu*	Initial clipping	s/he is my sister/brother in-law
Pergi *Beta pergi sekolah tiap hari*	Pi *Be pi sekolah tiap hari*	Medial clipping	I go to school everyday
Jangan + Lagi *Jangan datang lagi*	Jang + lai *Jang datang lai*	Final clipping Medial clipping	Don't come again
Siapa *Lu siapa?*	Sapa *Lu sapa?*	Medial clipping	Who are you?
Dorang *Dorang sudah datag?*	Dong *Dong su datan?*	Medial clipping Final clipping	Have they come?

It can be seen from the table that the most dominant type of clipping used in Kupang-Malay language is final clipping. People like to shorten the words by omitting the last parts. More examples are: juga becomes ju (also), kasih becomes kas (to give), dengan becomes deng (with), musti becomes mus (must), jangan becomes jang (no), etc.

2.8 Pronouns

Generally, Bahasa Indonesia only recognizes subject pronouns because there will be no changing in the object pronouns. The similar rule applies to Kupang – Malay language. Here is a table of pronouns in Kupang – Malay:

Table 5: Clipping or shortening in Kupang-Malay.

Kupang – Malay Language	Bahasa Indonesia	English
Beta / Be	Saya/Kamu	I
Lu	Kamu/Kau	You (singular)
Bososng	Kalian	You (plural)
Katong/Botong	Kami	We
Dong	Mereka	They
Dia	Dia	S/He
Ini/Itu	Itu/Ini	It

The pronouns in Kupang – Malay is quite different from those in Bahasa Indonesia, except for the third person singular (she and he). They are more or less similar to the pronouns used in the language

spoken in Ambon. There is no particular term for subject pronoun of it, and some people just translate it with article this or that.

2.9 Possesive

There is no particular terms for possessive (either possessive pronouns or possessive adjectives) in Kupang Malay. The word punya in Bahasa or pung in Kupang Malay that is always used as the indicator of possessiveness. Here are the examples of possessive:

Bahasa Indonesia: *Ini buku saya*
Kupang – Malay: *Ini be pung buku*
English: This is my book (possessive adjective)
Bahasa Indonesia: *Buku ini milik saya*
Kupang – Malay: *Ini buku be pung*
English: This book is mine (possessive pronoun)

The similar pattern applies to all pronouns.

2.10 The Use of Particles ko, na, ma, tuh, and hang as Complicated Grammatical Rules

The linguistic rules in Kupang – Malay language cannot be categorized as the violations of grammatical rules but rather a combination of rules that creates new complicated grammatical rules. As the native speakers, we do know when and how to use these particle words but it is not easy to explain in linguistics way what exactly they are. They are discourse markers which do not have any lexical meanings but are included in grammatical categories.

Several examples will be given to make easier to understand when and how each of them is used:

1. Ko

Ko sapa suruh lu datang?
Siapa suruh kamu datang? Who asked you to come?

Akurang *ko* lu manangis? Mengapa kamu menangis Why are you crying?

Dong panggil andia *ko* be datang
Karena mereka panggil maka saya dating
They called me that's why I'm coming

In the examples, whether ko is put in the beginning or the middle of the sentences, it has no clear translation in Bahasa Indonesia and English. But if we look at each context, then we will find out that the use of ko in those three sentences is mainly to emphasize the utterance.

2. Na

Be marah ko lu main datang terus *na*
Saya marah karena kamu dating terus- menerus
I get cranky because you keep coming back here

Ko beta *na*
Semua karena saya (positive work)
You know, it's all because of me (I've done good work)

Su abis *na* mari kitong pulang su Kalau sudah selesai mari kita pulang If everything's done, let's go home

Similar to ko discussed eearlier, it's not easy to find the exact meaning of *na* in these examples. It has no particular function in those sentences but to strengthen the meaning of each sentence.

3. Ma

Ko beta *na*
Be lapar jadi be makan su *ma*
Saya lapar karena itu saya langsung makan
I was hungry, that's why, I ate directly

Dia datang kemarin *ma* be son ada di rumah Dia datang kemarin tapi saya tidak ada di rumah
He came yesterday but I wasn't home

Lu pulang *ma* nanti kalo lu pung guru tanya be bilang apa?
Kamu boleh pulang tapi kalau guru kamu bertanya apa yang akan saya jawab?
You can go home but what would I say if your teacher asked?

It is quite easier to identify the meaning of ma from those examples. In the first example, it means do things directly, without any delay (Be lapar jadi be makan su ma). The second and third examples have similar meaning, that is but.

4. Tuh

Lu *tuh* yang mulai duluan Memang kamu yang mulai duluan It was you who started first

Lu pung kantor yang mana *tuh*? Kantor kamu yang sebelah mana? Which one is your office?

Itu laki-laki *tuh* yang be cerita lu
Laki-laki itu yang saya ceritakan kepada kamu
That is the man I told you about

Basically tuh refers to itu but in daily use the meaning can be adapted with the context.

5. Hang

Hang is used as question tag to check information or to ask other people's agreement. Here are the examples:

Lu su makan pagi hang?
Kamu sudah makan pagi bukan?
You had your breakfast, didn't you?

Lu tau dia pung alamat hang? Kamu tahu alamatnya bukan?
You know her address, don't you?

3 CONCLUSIONS

From the discussion above it can be seen that Kupang–Malay language is unique by its particular features as the result of word formation processes. There are several similarities and differences in features between this language and others which is not surprising. The similarities might occur because these languages belong to the family of Austronesia, and the differences exist because each language has its uniqueness to become its identity.

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