Variation and change in Abui : the impact of Alor Malay on an indigenous language of Indonesia

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Indonesia is home to over 700 languages. That amounts to around 10% of the world's languages. It is only its eastern neighbor, Papua New Guinea, that has more languages (Simons & Fennig, 2018). Tucked away in a small corner in south-east Indonesia lies a small island called Alor. Whilst being modest compared to Indonesia as a whole, the linguistic diversity on Alor is substantial. This diversity is especially noteworthy considering Alor's size of around 2150km2, which is smaller than the Dutch province of Utrecht. Renting a scooter for the day and drive along Alor's northern coast and one is likely to hear up to ten mutually unintelligible, indigenous languages. Renting a dirt bike and driving to the lush interior of the island and several more can be added. The largest of them all is Abui, or *mountain language*, which occupies the mountainous central-western part of the island. With such rich diversity, how do all these various ethnic groups communicate with one another when they gather in communal spaces such as markets or universities?

For informal talk, such as when eager old ladies try to charm buyers with their giant, red smiles and freshly collected betel nut, or when university students share a cigarette during their recess, people often use Alor Malay. Alor Malay is a colloquial form of Malay spoken on Alor which resembles other colloquial varieties found in eastern Indonesia (Baird, Klamer, & Kra-

tochvíl, in prep.). For more formal talk, such as in the graduation speech given by the university principal, Indonesian is used. Indonesian is the national language of Indonesia. It is a standardized, classical form of Malay, whose name was coined only after Indonesia became independent in 1945 (Sneddon, 2003). Alor Malay and Indonesian are mutually intelligible, but there are still large differences between them across all levels of language. Nonetheless, both Alor Malay and Indonesian are completely unintelligible with respect to Abui.

Neither Alor Malay nor Indonesian are indigenous to Alor. Before any form of Malay was brought over to the island, people had to learn their neighbor's language in order to form marriage alliances and trade with one another.[1] Malay initially started appealing to the tongues of coastal dwellers of Alor several centuries ago when it offered opportunities to trade with other islanders.[2] Foreign traders, especially from the island of Sulawesi, visited the shores of Alor and used Malay to trade with coastal folk. The Chinese did the same, before eventually settling on the island, probably around the 1850s. When the Dutch expanded their colonial sphere and gained a stronghold on the island in the early 1900s, they too used Malay for colonial administration and insisted on using it to communicate with local leaders. They set up a few missionary schools and encouraged local leaders to enrol, learn Malay, and convert to Protestantism.

The more substantial influx of Malay, however, came in the second half of the 1900s, with the rise of the Indonesian nation state and efforts to achieve high school enrolment rates. In 1965, a large number of families living in mountain villages were encouraged to resettle on the northern coast and be close to schools, health facilities and the regency capital town of Kalabahi. As school enrolment grew exponentially, teachers became increasingly frustrated at the fact that many children spoke Abui at school and could not always follow what was going on in Malay, now referred to as *Indonesian*. As a result of this, teachers decided to take drastic measures, banning the use of Abui at school and pleading with Abui parents to raise

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[1]In addition, silent trading was also practiced at designated trading posts. One trader would place their goods beside a rock or tree, then walk away. Another trader would walk past and exchange the goods with their end of the bargain.

[2]The following statements concerning historical events are taken from sources such as Baron van Lynden (1851), Aritonang and Steenbrink (2008), Wellfelt (2016) as well as from my own fieldwork; see §2.2 for an elaborate discussion of these events.

their children exclusively in Indonesian, instead of Abui, so that children would come well prepared for school. Many parents quickly adopted this new parenting strategy, acknowledging that their children's education and use of Indonesian held the key to their future prospects - although strictly speaking, they began using Alor Malay instead of Indonesian. Parents did not see this as a threat to the extinction of Abui because they believed that their children would pick Abui up as they grew older anyway, since most people spoke Abui in the community - a pattern that still holds today.

Fast forward 30 years to today where most speakers below 25 use Alor Malay to converse with one another. Take *Fan Malei*, for example, a 22 year-old Abui man.[3] He was raised speaking Alor Malay with his parents and peers. However, he frequently overheard a lot Abui because older adults use it in daily conversation. As a child, he admits to having been able to understand a fair amount and respond to requests, but was often too shy to respond. In puberty, he began understanding even more and started uttering a few phrases when necessary. By the end of puberty, he discovered that more was being expected of him in the community. He increasingly found himself in the company of older men, who often conversed in Abui among themselves. Today, his Abui is fully conversational; however, he still feels like he cannot quite be as witty as some of his older peers. On top of that, he will often realize that he cannot find the appropriate Abui word or that an Alor Malay word is more suitable, so he will use that instead. Occasionally, when he does use an Abui sentence, his older peers, like his uncle for example, will tease him because his Abui sounds a bit deviant to their own. His uncle may not have a clear idea of how exactly his Abui is deviant, but he will lament his nephew's poor use of the language and his necessity to overload his speech with Alor Malay words.

Fan Malei and his uncle vary in how they speak Abui. Fan Malei is not alone; most of his peers also vary in how speak with respect to older speakers. This thesis investigates how various age-groups vary in their speech. Specifically, it focuses on three areas of grammar in which they vary comparing not just Fan Malei and his uncle, but speakers younger and older than him as well, around 66 in total. It also delves deep into why they vary. Evidently, it centres around the variable of age, which is used as a proxy for a number of historical, social, and psycholinguistic factors. What histor-

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[3]This name does not refer to a particular individual but a prototypical one instead.

ical developments have played a role in shaping the current speech community? How are children socialized in the community with respect to language and how do current attitudes towards the language affect their acquisition? What are the effects of their acquisition path on their language knowledge and use?

What is taking place in the Abui community is common across many indigenous minority communities over the world: specifically, it is experiencing gradual language shift from Abui to a majority language, in this case Alor Malay. This shift is causing the Abui language to exhibit a lot of variation. But, why is such variation interesting in the first place? All languages evolve, or rather, various features within a language innovate or change. When a feature becomes innovated, this rarely happens abruptly, but gradually instead. What this gradual process actually consists of is variation among speakers in a speech community. Thus, studying on-going or *synchronic* language variation in a language offers a window into various stages of language change (Labov, 1963, 1989; Sankoff, 2006; Meyerhoff, 2013).

Until recently, most studies on language variation were conducted on Western (urban) communities (e.g. Labov, 1966, 1972; Dorian, 1981; Kerswill, 1994, 1996). While these studies have supplied a wealth of insights and methodologies, there is much additional value to be gained in studying contact-induced variation and change in indigenous communities. Firstly, they offer unique opportunities to challenge or support existing sociolinguistic models concerning variation and change, as summarized by the following quote from Stanford and Preston (2009b, p. 4):

> When an indigenous language dies and its visible community
> vanishes, we lose invaluable opportunities to observe language
> variation and change in situations that are starkly different
> from those more commonly studied. It might be that certain
> culturally dependent types of variation or other important
> evidence about sociolinguistic principles and patterns are disappearing forever along with these cultures; it is undoubtedly
> the case that these communities can give us a deeper and more
> balanced perspective on language variation and change.

In particular, investigating speech communities with different social stratification can strengthen our understanding of which social factors in-

fluence language. For example, while socio-economic class might be a useful variable in explaining linguistic variation in the Netherlands, other variables such as clan (Stanford, 2009) or covert hierarchies (Clarke, 2009) might be more relevant in other (indigenous) communities (Stanford & Preston, 2009b). Furthermore, even a commonly studied variable such as gender might have exhibit hugely different results in various communities, highlighting its culture-specific implications (Labov, 1990; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1999; Dubois & Horvath, 1999; Stanford & Preston, 2009b).

Second, while much work in urban communities has revealed phonological and lexical variation, it may be that in smaller indigenous communities, other areas show more variation, such as syntax, morphology, and semantics (Trudgill, 2011). Literacy and language standardization, for example, have been shown to limit variation in urban environments (van Hout, 1989). In indigenous communities without as many codified, standard forms as in communities with written, standardized, prescriptive traditions, there is undoubtedly more variation present. Studying the boundaries of acceptable variation also becomes a relevant endeavor for the field (Nagy, 2009).

Third, because most indigenous minority languages are in contact with a more dominant, majority language, one can argue that contact and variation are inevitable components of research on indigenous minority languages by default (Stanford & Preston, 2009b). However, traditionally, grammars have been presenting languages as homogeneous units, choosing not to focus on either contact phenomena (Bowern, 2008) or variation (Nagy, 2009). In reality, however, there are few documented instances of no contact, or no variation. Thus, discussions on contact and variation offer a more complete account of a language.

Fourth, because many indigenous languages in a given setting are often in contact with a common majority variety, conducting cross-linguistic studies on contact with a common majority variety may further strengthen models of language contact and change. In Indonesia, many indigenous languages are in contact with a Malay-based *lingua franca* and/or Standard Indonesian (henceforth Malay Indonesian; see also p. 22) (Sneddon, 2003; Paauw, 2008). Bowden (2002, p. 115) suggests that, rather than many of the languages of eastern Indonesia disappearing, what we can expect to happen first instead is that they many of them will converge towards Malay Indonesian. This thesis is the first study of on-going variation and change on

a language of the Alor-Pantar archipelago and one of the few of its scale in possibly in all of Indonesia. It thus lays the groundwork for cross-linguistic work probing into whether other languages will experience similar contact effects and thus converge towards Malay Indonesian. This is particularly interesting given the demographics of Indonesia, and in particular in NTT, the province where Abui is spoken. Here, indigeneity is "the norm, not a separate identity" as is the case elsewhere, for example, across the Americas (Holton, 2009, p. 164). This begs the question whether similar outcomes are to be expected in different continents with varying demographics.

Fifth, in addition to offering insights on the current sociolinguistic state-of-the-art in many speech communities today as well as being able to make predictions about language change in the future, studying language variation in indigenous speech communities may also inform diachronic studies geared towards understanding the past. Studies like this provide a base from which other researchers can study diversification and language split (Rojas Berscia, 2019) as well as prehistoric contact (Ross, 2013). Of all the various types of communities today, indigenous communities offer the closest proxy from which to examine how language diversification may have taken place in the past. Thus, studying the range of (acceptable) variation in a speech community as well as examining soft and hard boundaries with neighboring communities may offer valuable insights in understanding diversification (Rojas Berscia, 2019).

In addition, Ross (2013) has suggested that in order to understand prehistoric contact between various languages in Melanesia (of which Alor is a part), we need to collect more variationist studies examining a linguistic variable across age-groups, with a tight focus on the social setting and the relevant variables that might account for this variation. Because the sociolinguistic setting of many communities may be fluid and complex, as is the case with the Abui in Takalelang, a more nuanced characterization of the bilingual situation is called for, something which is sometimes lacking in models of contact induced change (Kusters, 2008; Trudgill, 2011; Ross, 2013). This view is also echoed in Muysken (2010), who advocates for a scenario approach which involves an elaboration of the sociolinguistic setting as opposed to simply developing theories of language contact which simply say if language A and B come into contact, X happens (Muysken, 2013). Ross (2013) believes that paying close attention to age and in particular investigating the language of preadolescents and adolescents will offer a window

into incipient change. In this thesis, much attention is paid to the linguistic and sociolinguistic behavior of preadolescents and adolescents and how it compares to older groups.

Sixth, and particularly relevant for the region at hand, this thesis provides a case study of contact between a majority Austronesian language (Alor Malay) language and a minority Papuan language (Abui). Contact between Austronesian and Papuan languages has been postulated to be ongoing for over 3,000 years, with many attempts to characterize the effects of this contact on the languages of (eastern) Indonesia throughout the years (e.g. Grimes, 1991; Reesink, 2002; Himmelmann, 2005; Klamer, Reesink, and van Staden, 2008; Klamer and Ewing, 2010; Gil, 2015; Schapper, 2015; Reesink and Dunn, 2017; Fricke, 2019; Klamer, 2019). Many debates revolve around piecing together issues such as the type of bilingualism that took place, the linguistic features which were transferred, the directionality of transfer, and the time-depth of contact for changes to take place. Without written records or extensive archaeological remains, research on languages spoken today as well as contact between them may hold the key to understand the linguistic and non-linguistic past of eastern Indonesia and beyond. Studies like this current thesis offer a synchronic perspective, thus adding a new angle to the growing body of work investigating this type of contact.

Finally, the sociolinguistic study of a community in a process of shift could also have implications for language revitalization. It highlights areas of the grammar which are susceptible to change and also pinpoints which groups of speakers are most likely to instigate them. It also offers a thorough discussion on the history of events which have led to the current events, backed up by interviews with young speakers, parents, school teachers, and principals. In many of the interviews with younger speakers, they had the opportunity to reflect on their own language upbringing as well is its implications for language maintenance or loss. The research for this thesis also has also coincided with and informed efforts by a few community members who were active in their efforts to revitalize the language (see §2.4.4 for further discussion).

This chapter proceeds as follows: Section 1.2 poses the main research questions. Section 1.3 situates Abui in its geographic and demographic context. Section 1.4 presents some key introductory elements of the Abui language, discussing its classification, multilingualism and language shift, as

well as previous and current work on the language. Section 1.5 discusses some basic observations on the Abui people, specifically endonyms and exonyms, livelihood, religion, marriage, and digital media. Section 1.6 describes linguistic diversity in Indonesia as well as the spread of Indonesian. Section 1.7 offers a brief typological comparison of the two main varieties in contact: Abui and Alor Malay. Section 1.8 discusses the bulk of the theoretical background on which this thesis is situated. Section 1.9 provides an overview of the remaining chapters.

1.2　Aims and research questions

Given these considerations, this thesis sets out to answer the following question: How has Alor Malay influenced the grammar of Abui?

The first aim is to investigate variation in the speech of younger and older speakers. The second aim is to understand the disparity between speakers' active and passive knowledge of Abui. The third aim is to understand how historical factors and sociolinguistic variables have shaped the current contact scenario. These three aims strive to provide a window into incipient contact-induced change.

Three linguistic variables were selected for investigation: reflexivity in possession (Chapter 5), verb usage (Chapter 6), and reduplication (Chapter 7). For each of these three variables, the following questions are posed: (i) *How much variation exists among speakers of different age-groups?* (ii) *How is age correlated with the variation?* In addition to these questions, two additional questions are posed for the variables of reflexivity in possession and verb usage: (iii) *How is gender correlated with the variation?* (iv) *What do differences in production and comprehension tell us about speakers' knowledge of the reflexivity distinction and verbal semantics?*

## 1.3　Geographic and demographic information

Abui (ISO 639-3: abz; abui1241) is a Papuan (non-Austronesian) language spoken by 17,000 people on the island of Alor in eastern Indonesia (Klamer, 2017). Alor is situated on the eastern part of the Lesser Sunda Island chain in the greater Timor region (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Greater Timor region within South East Asia

Politically, Alor is situated on the eastern border of the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (henceforth NTT), which is governed by the provincial capital, Kupang, located on the island of Timor (see Figure 1.2). NTT houses around 4 million Indonesians, who mostly live in rural villages (Holton, 2009). Economically, NTT remains one of Indonesia's poorest and least urbanized provinces. It has a high proportion of employment in primary industry, namely agriculture, fishing, and animal husbandry (G. Jones, Nagib, Sumono, & Handayani, 1998). For the year of 2017, the district statistics office estimated that 43,900 individuals on the island of Alor (21.67% of population of Alor) were living below the poverty line (Alor, 2018).

Figure 1.2: The province of Nusa Tenggara Timur
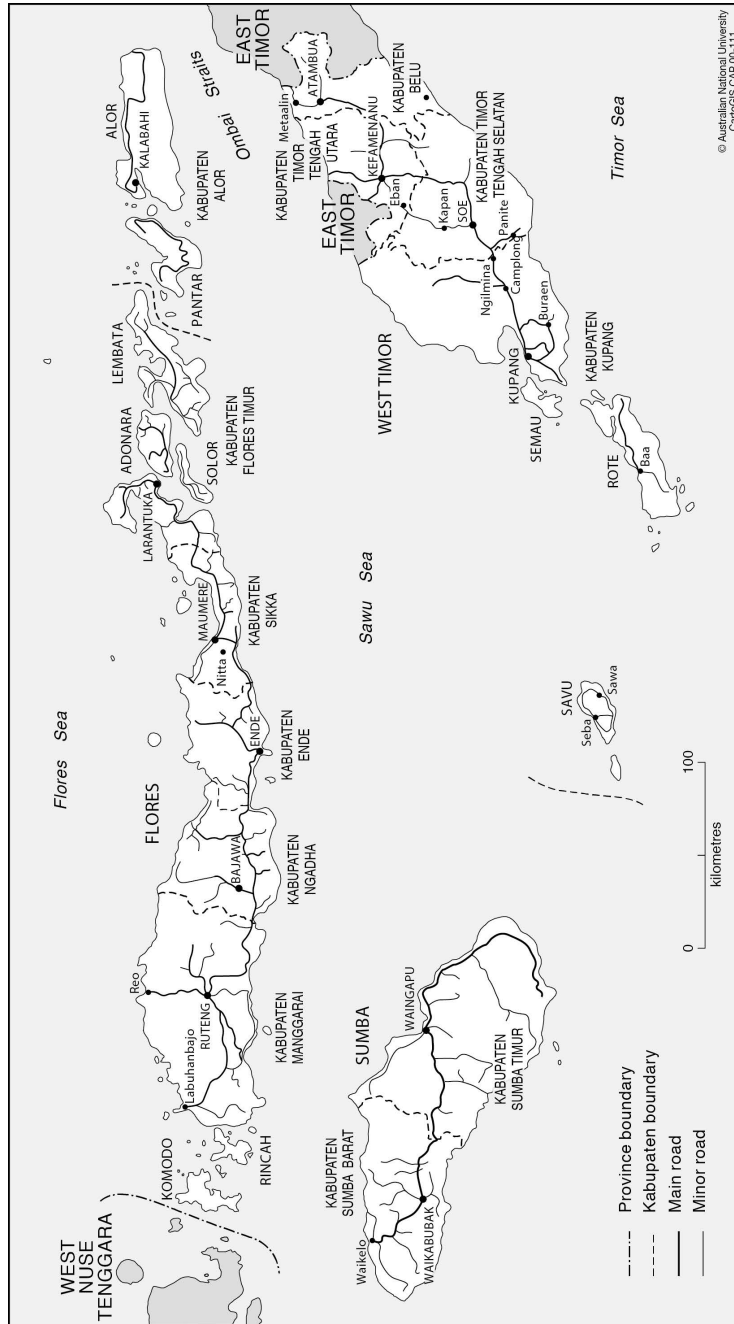
Alor is part of the Alor archipelago, which also includes the islands of Pantar as well as other small neighboring islets. Together, they form a *kabupaten* 'regency' (see Figure 1.3). The capital of the regency is the port town of Kalabahi and is governed by a *bupati* 'regent'. A census from 2013 indicates a population of 196,613,[4] almost triple the amount of 70,000 reported in the 1930s (Du Bois, 1944). According to the same census, the regency of Alor has 17 *kecamatan* 'districts' and 175 *desa* 'village clusters'.[5] Of these, Abui speakers live in five *kecamatan* 'districts': Alor Selatan with its main settlement Kelaisi, Alor Barat Daya with its main settlement Moru, Teluk Mutiara with its main settlements Welai and Fanating, and Alor Tengah Utara with its main settlements Atengmelang, Mainang, and Takalelang, and Mataru with its main settlement Kalunan (updated from Kratochvíl, 2007, pp. 1-2).

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[4]https://alorkab.bps.go.id/ accessed on 21/02/2019.

[5]A *desa* is often consists of several settlements or *kampung* 'village'. The exact borders of a *desa* are subject to fierce discussion and are thus constantly changing.

Figure 1.3: Map of Alor regency

The research for this thesis was conducted in the village of Takalelang which forms part of the *desa* 'village cluster' of Lembur Barat (see Figure 1.3). The village of Takalelang lies on the northern coast, adjacent to Alor's main roadway. It was founded in 1965 as a resettlement from former inhabitants of the *Meelang Talaama* 'Six Villages' alliance, composed of six original mountain villages, *Kaleen, Murafeng, Mahafuui, Lilafeng, Fuungafeng,* and *Takalelang* which used to be situated on the hilltops further inland (Kratochvíl, Delpada, & Perono Cacciafoco, 2016). The location of these original six villages as well as of modern-day Takalelang is shown in Figure 1.4[6] which offers a view of the area from the northern coast looking southwards.

Figure 1.4: View from Northeast of modern-day Takalelang and the *Meelang Talaama* 'Six Village' alliance (map made by František Kratochvíl).

Takalelang is named after one of these mountain villages, Takalelang, which has now been abandoned. As such, the mountain village is referred to in Malay as *Takalelang gunung* 'mountain Takakelang' referring to a period roughly before 1965, while *Takalelang pantai* 'coastal Takalelang' often refers to the current village, founded after 1965 (see §§2.2-2.3 for indepth discussion of the resettlement to the coast). The location of today's Takalelang began as a resting place surrounding the hilltop resting post of Takpala. Today, Takpala is inhabited by around 14 families and stands at the

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[6]The figure also shows other nearby villages as well as old trading places (*ailol*) which are not particularly relevant for this discussion.

highest point of Takalelang. It mostly has traditional style Abui houses and also contains the *maasang* 'altar', where the *lego-lego* dance is performed (see Figure 1.5; see also Appendix V).

Figure 1.5: Children look on as their parents perform the *lego-lego* dance

Alor has a tropical climate with two seasons: a rainy season from November until April and a dry season from May until October. The interior of the island has steep hills, ridges, and ravines, and is home to two volcanoes, Mount Koya-Koya (1765 metres) in east Alor and Mount Muna (1440 metres) in southwest Alor (Klamer, 2010).

The island contains a small airstrip in the Kabola region of the Bird's Head, opposite the islet, Sika. The Bird's Head refers to the north-western peninsula of Alor, which includes the Kabola and Alor Barat Laut regions in Figure 1.3. From here, at least in the years 2015-2018, one-hour flights operated three times per day to the provincial capital of Kupang. Additionally, ferries left several times per week to Larantuka, Kupang, and other ports in NTT. Smaller boats travelling to the neighboring Pantar, or the Pantar Straits were also common. In addition, boats leaving from eastern and southern Alor often made day trips to Timor-Leste.

Throughout written history, Alor has been referred to by several names. One of the earliest mentions of the islands by the Portuguese referred to it as *Mallua* (Pigafetta, 1525/2010). This was probably the term that one of the ethnic groups, the Kui, used to refer to the mountainous area of the island (Baron van Lynden, 1851).

The precise etymology of Alor is as of yet unclear. What is known is that the term as referring to the island as a whole comes from a small area of the island, located in the Bird's Head. This area, one part of which is known as *Alor Kecil* 'Small Alor' and the other part known as *Alor Besar* 'Big Alor', is currently inhabited by a Muslim ethnic group that speaks *Bahasa Alor* 'Alorese'.[7] This inference was already made by Baron van Lynden (1851), back in 1851 when he deduced that the name of the island comes from the 'regency' on Alor's north western corner.[8] One folk etymology suggests that the term could be derived from the word that the Alorese people use for the island itself as well as for themselves *Allurung* (Alorese: *allu* 'river', *rung* 'together'; "those living together at the river") (Klamer, 2010, p. 4).

The Abui term for Alor, is *Al*. When combined with the pluralizer, as in *Al loqu*, it may also refer to the Alorese people of the coast and to Muslims more generally. In addition, it is combined with the word *meelang* 'village' to denote the one Abui village that is predominantly Muslim, *Al meelang* (which also goes by the Arabic name of *Nurdin*). Apart from the names *Mallua* and *Alor* (or *Allor*), the island has also later been referred to as *Omba(a)i*, *Ombo*, and *Emmer*; however, it is unclear where these terms originate from (Baron van Lynden, 1851).

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[7]Alorese refers specifically to an Austronesian language spoken by a Muslim ethnic group that settled in Alor in the last six to seven centuries (Klamer, 2011). To avoid confusion, when the population of Alor (including speakers of Alorese and other languages) is mentioned it will be referred to as 'people of Alor'.

[8]*Allor is een regentschap op Allors n.w. hoek* (Baron van Lynden, 1851, p. 329).

1.4   The Abui language

1.4.1   Language classification

Abui belongs to the Timor-Alor-Pantar (TAP) family of languages, a group of ∼30 Papuan[9] languages spoken on the islands of Timor, Alor, Pantar and surrounding satellite islands. Around 25 of the languages are spoken on Alor, Pantar, and the Pantar Straits. Bunak is spoken in both West Timor (Indonesia) and Timor-Leste, while Makasae, Makalero, and Fataluku are spoken in Timor-Leste. Oirata is spoken on the small island of Kisar, further to the east of the island of Timor (see Figure 1.6).

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[9]The term *Papuan* here refers to a cluster of (presently) unrelated language phyla spoken in the vicinity of New Guinea which are demonstrably non-Austronesian (Ross, 2005).

Figure 1.6: Map of Timor-Alor-Pantar languages
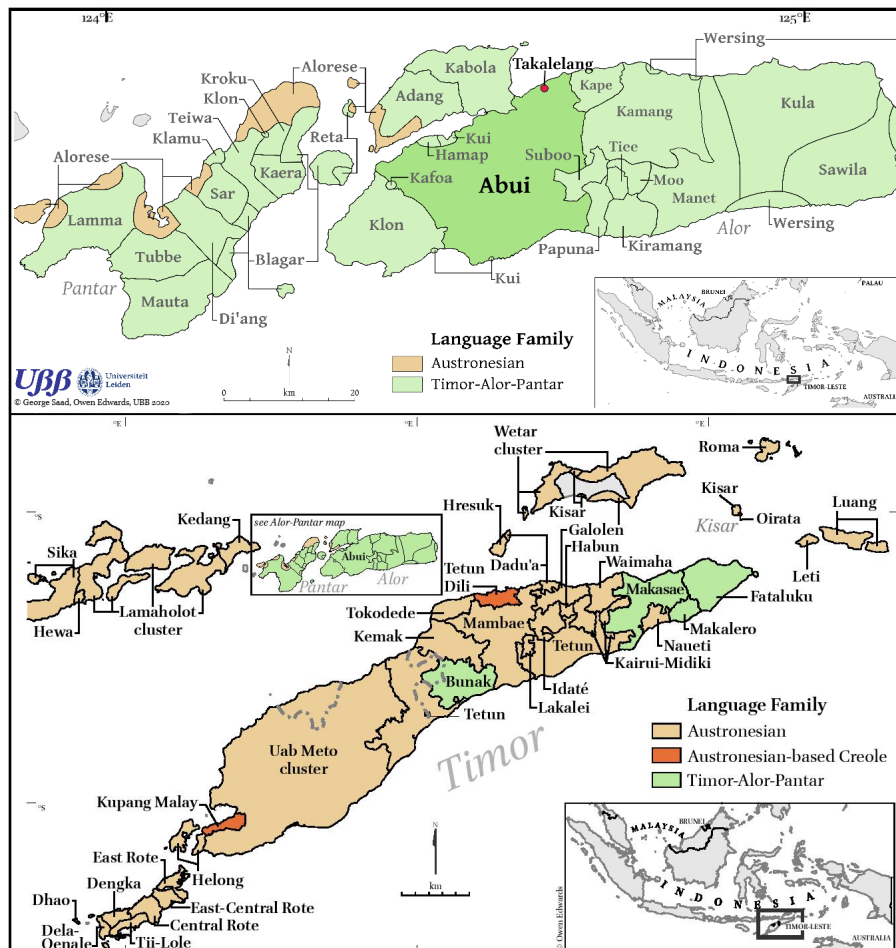
As pointed out in Klamer (2017) and Schapper (2017), there are many challenges attributed to establishing language borders. Speakers typically use the current village name to refer to their language, while some may use the ancestral village, or clan name (Klamer, 2017, p. 6). In addition, older maps of Alor typically have displayed Abui, and to a lesser extent Kamang, as occupying a large chunk of the central part of Alor, though it was admitted that it was likely that many smaller languages inhabited the region (Klamer, 2017).

Recently, with some additional data having been gathered, some of

these smaller ethnolinguistic groups have begun to be included in maps (cf. Han, 2015; Schapper, 2017; Kaiping, Edwards, and Klamer, 2019. This is the case for Suboo, Tiee, Moo, and Manet(aa), which all seem to be closely related to Kamang; however, they all claim to be independent groups (Schapper, 2017). Papuna, or Fafuna as it also known, appears to be closely related to Abui, yet speakers also claim to be distinct from Abui (Delpada p.c.). All in all, it must be noted that the borders between these languages remain highly elusive and much more work is required to establish phonological and morpho-syntactic differences.[10]

Another recently labeled addition is Kape, or Kafel, located in northern central Alor, in the Lembur *kecamatan* 'district'. Previous maps show this area to be part of Abui; however, recent fieldwork by the author has confirmed this not to be the case.[11] Kape is much more closely related to Kamang than it is to Abui and is likely to be a variety of what has been labeled the Kamang cluster (cf. Schapper, 2017). It is referred to as *Kape kawai* 'Kape language' by speakers themselves and *Kafel tanga* 'Kafel language' by the Abui (see §1.5.1 for further discussion).

In addition to Timor-Alor-Pantar languages, Alor and Pantar are also home to an Austronesian language named Alorese (see Klamer, 2011 and §2.2 for brief discussion of Austronesian arrival on Alor).

That these islands are home to Papuan languages, while being so far away from New Guinea, has drawn the attention of linguists, anthropologists, and archaeologists. In the last two decades, there has been a surge in the documentation and description of the Timor-Alor-Pantar languages in addition to various attempts to classify the languages (Holton, Klamer, Kratochvíl, Robinson, and Schapper, 2012; Robinson and Holton, 2012; Holton and Robinson, 2017; Schapper, Huber, and van Engelenhoven, 2017 and references therein). The most recent classification of the Timor-Alor-Pantar family, using lexical data from a number of Timor-Alor-Pantar varieties and Bayesian phylogenetic inference (Kaiping & Klamer, Submitted), is presen-

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[10]The current map makes use of *desa* 'village cluster' information' to establish the borders of Suboo, Papuna, and Kiraman(g). The borders of Tiee, Moo, and Manet(aa) are loosely based on Schapper (2017, p. 3), *desa* information as well as information from multilingual speaker from Apui named Yulius Mantaon. The borders for Kape (Kafel) were established based on a survey and fieldwork done by the author.

[11]This would place the north eastern border of Abui at the village of Likwatang, with the neighbouring village of Lelahomi being Kape speaking.

ted in Figure 1.7. In this analysis, the East Alor subgroup forms an early split-off from the other Alor-Pantar languages.[12]Abui forms part of the Central Alor sub-group, which consists of Kafoa, Kiraman, Kui, and Klon.

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[12]Some of the languages shown on the map in Figure 1.6, such as Kroku, Di'ang, Sar, Suboo, Papuna, Tiee, Moo, Manet(aa), and Kape are not displayed in the tree in Figure 1.7 because not enough lexical data has been collected on them for them to be included in the phylogenetic study by Kaiping and Klamer (Submitted). In addition, the language displayed in Figure 1.7 as 'Western Pantar' encompasses the three varieties, Lamma, Tubbe, and Mauta in Figure 1.6 (see Holton, 2014).

Figure 1.7: Timor-Alor-Pantar language family (based on the analysis of Kaiping and Klamer (Submitted))
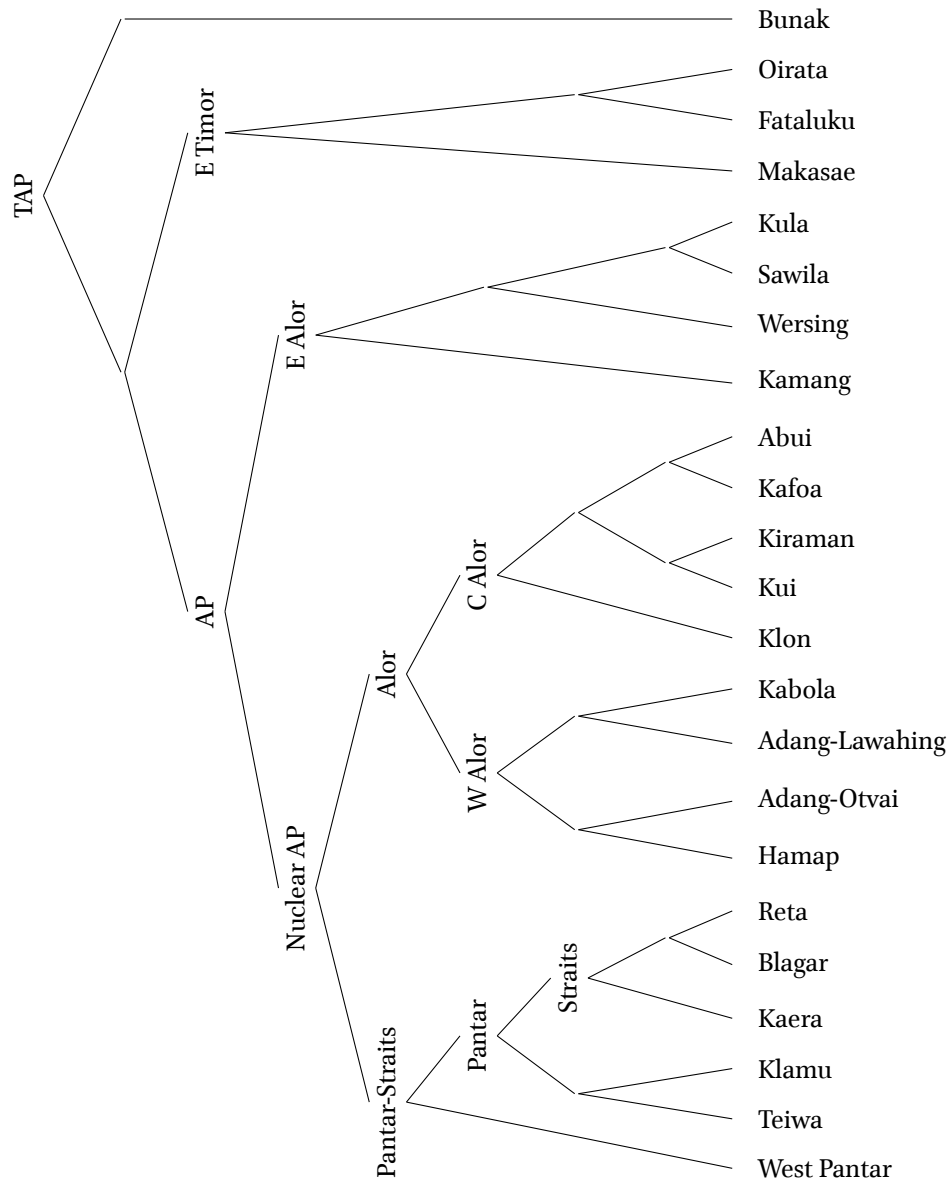
1.4.2   Multilingualism and language shift

In the Takalelang speech community, there is *triglossia* (Sneddon, 2003; Paauw, 2008. Three varieties exist today: Abui, Alor Malay, and Standard Indonesian. Abui is considered the indigenous minority language, while Alor Malay and Indonesian together function as the majority languages. The term *indigenous* denotes that the Abui people consider the land on which they live to be their own. The term *minority* is used to denote a binary sociolinguistic relationship to a larger majority language(s) (Stanford & Preston, 2009b). The two majority languages in the community, the basilectal Alor Malay and the acrolectal Indonesian, are mutually intelligible.

Alor Malay is a regional variety of Malay spoken as a *lingua franca* on Alor and Pantar.[13] It is an eastern variety of Malay (c.f. Adelaar and Prentice, 1996; Paauw, 2008) and probably descends from a mixture of other related eastern varieties such as Kupang Malay and Ambon Malay, all of which come from a trade variety of Malay (Baird et al., in prep.). This variety was initially spoken in coastal parts of Alor by Muslim traders (Baron van Lynden, 1851). It then spread further as Malay also became the language of trade by Chinese and other merchants, the language of administration and governance by Dutch colonial officers (Baird et al., in prep.), in addition to being used as the language of religion and education by Protestant missionaries and school teachers.[14] Today, Alor Malay is used in daily conversation within many Abui speech communities, especially when Abui parents address their children and when youngsters hang out and play. It is also used outside the community by adults who come into contact with speakers from other ethnic groups, such as at markets, or at the capital town of Kalabahi. While today it is many people's first language, for large periods it was spoken as a second language. As such, it calques many expressions and constructions found in Papuan languages (Baird et al., in prep. own fieldnotes).

Standard Indonesian is the national language of Indonesia. It is a descendant of the literary 'Classical Malay' used in royal courts of the Riau-Johor Sultanate which was then adopted by the Dutch as the language of schooling, Christianity, and government administration (Sneddon, 2003; Aritonang & Steenbrink, 2008). It has since undergone additional levels of

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[13]In this thesis, Malay is used interchangeably with Alor Malay.

[14]It is likely that, during this period, several different varieties of Malay were being used; see §2.2.6.

language standardization by the Indonesian state and has been taught pre-
scriptively at educational institutions ever since its introduction at primary
schools (Sneddon, 2003). Today, Indonesian is typically prevalent in four
main domains: religion, education, government-related affairs, and media.
However, it is limited in its use in daily life, as Abui and Alor Malay are often
preferred as languages of daily communication.

Alor Malay is mutually intelligible with Standard Indonesian. They are
occasionally judged metalinguistically as different varieties by some speak-
ers, but most often are lumped together as *Bahasa Indonesia* 'the Indonesian
language'. While lexically they are quite similar, they differ significantly in
their morpho-syntax (see Baird et al. (in prep.) for detailed comparison).
Furthermore, they differ in their history as well as their domains of use. Des-
pite the fact that they are often used in distinct domains, are typologically
different, and enjoy different status, in reality, the two varieties are often
used in tandem, especially at school settings and at church settings. They
function as a high and low register of one broad variety. For this reason, in
this thesis, when they are used in tandem or when the distinction is not en-
tirely relevant, they will be referred to as Malay Indonesian.[15]

Among all the villages that together make up the Abui speaking com-
munity, there is quite some variation in terms of the sociolinguistic setting.
In a number of mountain hamlets, such as Tifol Afeng, Abui is still used by
parents to raise children, while Malay Indonesian is learned at school. Com-
munities like those are considered to be home to the most vital varieties of
Abui (Kratochvíl, 2007, p. 4; own fieldnotes). However, as is the case with
many parts of Alor, many former mountain villages (such as Takalelang, Fan-
ating, and Mainang) have been relocated to the coast or valleys in the last
50-60 years (Kratochvíl, 2007, p. 4) - while retaining the same village name.
This move to the coast, which has subsequently brought inhabitants of these
newly found village closer to markets, churches, and schools, has resulted in
a gradual shift to Alor Malay as the language of raising children and daily
communication among youngsters. This means that coastal resettlement
communities, such as Takalelang, Likwatang, and Petleng are considered

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[15]The terms Malay Indonesian or Malay-Indonesian have also been used to denote
all varieties of Malay and Indonesian spoken across Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and
Brunei including Bazaar Malay varieties, such as Alor Malay (Tadmor, 2009). When used
in this thesis, Malay Indonesian refers to the broad variety used by speakers on Alor and
Pantar who mix Alor Malay and Indonesian.

to be farther down the cline in terms of shift to Alor Malay than varieties spoken in villages which remained in the mountains such as Tifol Afeng. However, even among coastal re-settlements, the situation varies, with the Abui spoken in Takalelang considered more vital than the Abui spoken in Benlelang, for example (see Figure 1.3 for map with village names).

Takalelang's current position along the coast means its inhabitants have easier access to schools, churches, the sea, the regency capital of Kalabahi, as well as to other villages. As a result, they often come into contact with other ethnic groups with whom they use Alor Malay as a *lingua franca*.[16] This resettlement has had implications for the shift to Malay. Initially, the resettling encouraged households to be within reasonable walking distance of schools and churches, two institutions that relied heavily on the use of Malay Indonesian. For instance, the primary school SD Takalelang has been located in the area of Belubul (*Fulful* in Figure 1.4) since 1949. Once schools began filling up between the 1970s and 1990s, many of the children could not speak Malay Indonesian at school. As a result, teachers banned Abui at school and children were scolded and beaten for speaking it. As a consequence of this, when these children (who themselves had suffered from such treatment) became adults and had kids of their own, they responded by raising them in Malay to prepare them for school and ensure they would not receive the same treatment.[17] This created a disparity between children who became more dominant in Malay and adults who were more dominant in Abui, resulting in *transitional bilingualism*: "certain groups primarily speak the local language and others the language of wider communication" (Grenoble, 2011, p. 33).

Initially, it was thought that children would pick up Abui from the community, especially as they grow older and are required to engage in community affairs. To some extent, this has proven to be true; however, this has also meant that as time goes on, the community is becoming increasingly more dominant in Malay and less so in Abui (see Chapter 2). Nonetheless, despite the fact that children are addressed mostly in Malay, as they reach

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[16]In addition to the Abui, Alor Malay, and Indonesian, there are a number women and men from other ethnic groups, speaking their own languages, that have moved into Takalelang. These include, but are not limited to, Bugis (Sulawesi), Manggarai (Flores), Kolana (Alor), and Alorese (Alor).

[17]These events were referred to in interviews I conducted on the history of schooling in Alor. For a synthesis of these findings, see Chapter 2.

the end of puberty, they are typically expected to be more fluent in Abui, as Abui is still the language used by adults (Kratochvíl, 2007). This often means that when people start becoming more active speakers of Abui in late adolescence/early adulthood, they use many Malay borrowings and also display a high incidence of simplification in their speech (as discussed extensively in Chapters 5, 6, 7).

In terms of multilingualism with other local languages spoken on Alor and Pantar, sometimes it is the case that certain elders who have ties with other parts of Alor, may have also acquired the language of that region, such as Adang or Kabola. Extending now beyond Takalelang and into the Abui community as a whole, there are some villages or village clusters where a local language is spoken alongside Abui. For example, in the Muslim village of Nurdin (Ab. *Al meelang*), located on the northern coast (shown in Figure 1.4), Abui men marry Alorese women. In this village, typical Austronesian activities such as weaving are commonplace and children are often raised in Alor Malay; however, some children may develop knowledge of both Abui and Alorese. In the Apui region, Kamang and Suboo are also spoken alongside Abui. Furthermore, Abui is also spoken as a language of wider communication by elder speakers of Kafoa, Hamap, (western) Kamang, Kape, and Suboo (Kratochvíl, 2007; Schapper, 2014b; Han, 2015; Delpada, 2016; Baird, 2017).

1.4.3   Previous and current work on Abui

The Abui language and people are among the best studied in the Alor archipelago. Colonial officers, anthropologists, linguists, and ethnobotanists, have all published materials on the Abui language and people. In addition, over the last few years, with a rise in tertiary education, a number of bachelor's and master's theses by Abui students themselves have been produced.

A number of colonial reports on Alor, conducted by Dutch colonial government officials (e.g. *residenten* 'residents', *controleurs* 'controllers, district officers', and *posthouders* 'postholders'), were published between 1851 and 1944 (e.g. Baron van Lynden, 1851; Anonymous, 1914; Nieuwenkamp, 1922, 1925; Le Roux, 1929; van Gaalen, 1945, cf. Hägerdal, 2010, 2011). These include information on languages spoken, demographics, terrain, clothing of the local population, political events, relations among *raja*s 'kings', and nomenclature of the various ethnic groups (amongst other topics). The earliest

piece of Abui linguistic data comes from Nieuwenkamp (1925, p. 146) when he lists the numerals 1 to 10 (see also §1.5.1). In the 1930s, the renowned psychoanalyst and anthropologist, Cora Du Bois, professor at Columbia University, conducted several years of research in the Atengmelang village, and produced a monograph, entitled 'The People of Alor: A social-psychological study of an East Indian Island' (Du Bois, 1944). In addition, Martha Nicolspeyer, from Leiden University, went on fieldwork with Du Bois and subsequently wrote her PhD dissertation on the social structure of the Abui, where she also included some annotated texts and an Abui-Dutch word list (Nicolspeyer, 1940). The first grammatical sketch of Abui, though rudimentary, was written by Stokhof (1975), who like Du Bois and Nicolspeyer before him, focused on the Atengmelang variety. Stokhof annotated a text, collected by DuBois herself and worked with an Abui speaker from Welai to annotate it (p. 115) - the Atengmelang and Welai varieties differ significantly. He also provided information on where Abui is spoken, and described some basic structural features of the language.

Since 2003, the linguist František Kratochvíl has been conducting research in the Takalelang village. This has resulted in a surge of description and documentation of the Takalelang variety. This includes a full-fledged grammar (Kratochvíl, 2007) as well as publications dealing with the complex semantic alignment system (Kratochvíl, 2011b, 2014a), generic verbs (Klamer & Kratochvíl, 2010), amongst other morphosyntactic topics. In addition, Kratochvíl collaborated with numerous other scholars and language documentation experts. Klamer and Kratochvíl (2018) is a diachronic study on the evolution of differential object marking in Alor-Pantar languages. A study on the Abui landscape, including the etymology of place names co-indexed between oral traditions and real space was reported in Kratochvíl, Delpada, and Perono Cacciafoco (2016). Kratochvíl has collaborated closely with the Abui linguist, Benidiktus Delpada, and together they have produced work on grammatical topics (Kratochvíl & Delpada, 2015) as well as an Abui-Indonesian-English dictionary that has gone through several editions (e.g. Kratochvíl and Delpada, 2008, 2014). Delpada also produced a BA thesis dealing with emotion predicates (Delpada, 2012), and an MA thesis tackling the complex topic of tonal phonology in Abui (Delpada, 2016). Lanma (2019) wrote a BA thesis on language maintenance at and the introduction of Abui at primary school level (discussed in more detail in §2.4.4).

A number of linguists at the Nanyang Technological University of Singa-

pore have worked collectively on detailing Abui myths, as well as picking out mythical toponyms, locating them, and working out their etymology (e.g. Perono Cacciafoco, Cavallaro, and Kratochvíl, 2015; Perono Cacciafoco and Cavallaro, 2017, 2018). Furthermore, Delpada and Kratochvíl have collaborated with a number of students from the Nanyang Technological University to produce illustrated story books and a documentary on the Mon-Mot-Mon tale (see Kratochvíl, Delpada, Siao, et al., 2016). In addition, Chan Wan Ting has written a BA thesis on the conceptualization of disease in Abui (Chan, 2016) as well as an MA thesis on the conceptualization of health in Abui (Chan, 2019). A.M. Blake has worked on the ethnobotany within several Abui dialects (e.g. Blake, 2018). To date, several linguists have collected word lists of a number of dialects, making Abui one of the best described in terms of dialectal variation (see Kaiping et al., 2019). In addition, there are ongoing efforts to use computational methods on the Abui corpus collected by Kratochvíl to improve our understanding of verb classes and their pronominal prefixes (e.g. Zamaraeva, Kratochvíl, Bender, Xia, and Howell, 2017). Finally, the historian and anthropologist, Emilie Wellfelt has worked extensively on the historyscape of Alor - which includes the Abui (Wellfelt, 2011, 2016).

1.5   The Abui people

This section presents a few notes on contemporary topics pertaining to the Abui people such as their endonyms and exonyms, livelihood, religion, marriage, and digital media. Apart from the information on endonyms and exonyms, the observations presented here stem mostly from the author's fieldwork.

1.5.1   Endonyms and exonyms

The term *Abui* refers to the "collection of hills and the entire interior of the island [of Alor]" (Kratochvíl, Delpada, & Perono Cacciafoco, 2016). It was used to differentiate the inland folk with coastal folk, a dichotomy that has been present for centuries (Baron van Lynden, 1851; Anonymous, 1914; Du Bois, 1944; Kratochvíl, 2007; Wellfelt, 2016). It specifically refers to *gunung besar* (Id.) 'large mountain' located at the heart of the Abui territory, in contrast to *gunung kecil* (Id.) 'small mountain' located in the Bird's Head of Alor. Today,

the Abui people in the village of Takalelang refer to themselves as *Abui loqu* 'mountain folk'.[18]

Du Bois (1944) explains that, when she began her fieldwork in the 1930s, the language spoken in Atengmelang had no given name to it. She thus chose to label the language *Abui* as the term was already in use as an endonym to differentiate the people of Atengmelang from coastal peoples. In the Abui language, the term must be used in combination with the word for 'language'. The Takalelang variety uses *Abui tanga* 'Abui language/speech/word'. However, there is considerable regional, dialectical variation in the word for 'language/speech/word' in the Abui dialects. The north western Petleng-Welai-Mola dialect chain uses *Abui laral*, while the Southern Mataru (from the village of Ulaga) dialects use *Abui lak*.

Apart from the language name *Abui*, Ethnologue lists *Barue, Barawahing, Namatalaki* as alternative names (Simons & Fennig, 2018), probably based on Stokhof (1975) and Grimes, Therik, Grimes, and Jacob (1997). It is unclear where the term *Barue* is derived from exactly, but it could be related to *Barawahing*. *Barawahing* is a derogatory exonym, allegedly meaning 'black, smelly, and smoky' (Grimes et al., 1997). Gomang (1993, p. 134) suggests that the term was used by the Alorese to denote inland, mountain people who are 'out-groups to the Alorese'. The term *Barawahing* appears throughout the last two centuries to refer to what is likely to have been Abui-speaking people by colonial sources. This is not surprising, given that the Dutch were in close contact with the coastal Alorese. For example, when discussing the names of the ethnicities of the kingdoms of Mataru and Batulolong, two Abui speaking territories on the southern coastline, an unnamed colonial officer mentions that the mountain folk of these areas probably belong to the *Barawahieng* tribe as they at least speak the same language (Anonymous, 1914, p. 76).[19] Van Gaalen also mentions the term *Barawahing* to refer to the people of Limbur-Welai and Mataru, who we know to be Abui speaking. Nieuwenkamp (1925) gives a few notes on the Barawahing language, which all but confirm it to be Abui.[20]

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[18]*Abui loqu* is composed of the name of the ethnic group plus the plural word *loqu*. Other varieties of Abui use a different plural word: Petleng uses *loki* (Saad, 2019a), while Ulaga uses *djiei* (Saad, 2019c).

[19]"De bergbevolking van Mataroe en Batoelolong behoort waarschijnlijk ook tot den stam Barawahieng; zij spreekt ten minste dezelfde taal."

[20]Using Dutch spelling conventions, Nieuwenkamp (1925, p. 146) lists the numerals

Although no longer the case, in the 1930s, *Barawahing* was also the name of the district where Atengmelang was located (Du Bois, 1944, p. 17). Today, many speakers from Takalelang are unaware of this term.[21] In 1945, Van Gaalen mentions that coastal folk (not specifying which coastal folk) referred to the Abui as *orang Bani* 'the Bani people' in Malay. As for the term *Namatalaki*, *Namata* is a term some Abui people use for the entire island of Alor (Wellfelt, 2016, p. 174). It was also the term given to inland people, sometimes with derogatory undertones, and other times with a neutral connotation of being a farmer (Wellfelt, 2016, pp. 143-4). Based on lexical evidence from some Abui dialects, it is highly probable that *laki* means ' language/speech/word'.[22] In addition to these terms, Kamang speakers refer to the Abui as *Makedai*∼*Makerai*. However, it is unclear what this term means.

At a reported number of 17,000 speakers, the Abui constitute the largest ethnolinguistic group on the islands of Alor and Pantar. As is common in many parts of Indonesia, speech varieties as well as people are often referred to with the name of their village. Sometimes this form of nomenclature may also heighten differences across Abui villages. Rather than being one large homogeneous group, some Abui villages still hold animosity towards one another. This sometimes means resistance and minor rejection of a pan-Abui identity. Certain tensions between highland Abui folk and coastal Abui folk are not unheard of today, with notions of modernity being self-assigned by coastal folk and primitiveness labeled onto highland folk. However, there are some commonalities that go beyond mutual intelligibility. This includes a shared perception about the place of origin being the village of Ateng Afeng, located near the village of Padang Alang in the South Alor district (Wellfelt, 2016, p. 142).

Having said that, it is also unclear to what extent ethnic self-denomination and linguistic self-denomination align and whether the figure of 17,000 overstates the actual number of language users. As pointed

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from 'one to ten' *noekoe - oki - soea - boeti - deti - telama - detioki - detisoea - detiboeti - karmoekoe* (it is possible that the author made a spelling mistake, writing *karmoekoe* instead of *karnoekoe*.

[21]However, Reta speakers, on the island of Pura, still use *Varavahing* as a derogatory term to refer to 'an unskilled person, originally of Abui origin' (Jeroen Willemsen p.c.). It is almost certain that this term was borrowed from Alorese.

[22]Compare Kamang (Nailang) *lak* (fieldnotes), Kui *lak* (Windschuttel & Shiohara, 2017, p. 111), and Fataluku *luku* (Kaiping et al., 2019).

out in §1.4.1, a number of smaller ethnolinguistic groups which have been lumped as part of the Abui cluster are actually separate groups/languages. Kape, which occupies the northern *desa*s of the Lembur *kecamatan*, Luba and Lembur Timur, is not mutually intelligible with Abui and is more closely related to Kamang (see Figure 1.6). However, one of the reasons this group might have been lumped together with Abui in all the previous maps (e.g. Kratochvíl, 2007, p. xv, Schapper, 2017, p. 3, and Klamer, 2017, p. 7) is that speakers of Kape often claim to be part of the Abui ethnicity, using the terms *Kape kawai* 'Kape language' and even *Abui kawai* 'Abui language' interchangeably to refer to their language. In addition, many elder Kape speakers also speak Abui proper, which they refer to as *Makadai kawai* 'Makadai language'. The Abui typically do not consider them as part of the same ethnolinguistic group, referring to them as *Kafel loqu* 'Kafel people' and acknowledging their linguistic relatedness to Kamang.[23]

1.5.2   Livelihood

Most Abui people are farmers, with their main staples consisting of corn, cassava, and rice. In the more mountainous villages, hunting and gathering is also practiced (Kratochvíl, 2007). Since many villages have moved down to the coast, they experience less favorable farming conditions, so that they rely less on their own produce and more on purchases from the local market. Typical purchases include betel nut, cigarettes, sugar, coffee, noodles, rice, fruits, vegetables, and toiletries. Mountain folk typically grow betel vine, betel nut, tobacco, mango, chili, coconuts, cloves, cocoa, cashew nuts, candle nuts, and vanilla (Kratochvíl, 2007, p. 3). Many of these products are sold by women at main market hubs, such as Apui, Mebung, and Kadelang.

    In addition, many coastal Abui people now also practice fishing. They often sell their catch at designated stands along the northern roadway, while some villagers sell their catch by driving around on motorbikes. Furthermore, it is common for children to search for shells and crustaceans along the shorelines. Another increasingly common enterprise is small shop businesses. Some families own small kiosks in and around villages selling goods such as cigarettes, soap, sweets, soft drinks, and other packaged goods.

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[23]This area of Alor is known to be volatile, with inter-village wars often resulting in the frequent rearranging of *desa* borders.

Loans from village community banking schemes are commonly given out to people starting small shop businesses.

Other professions include school teachers across various parts of Alor. A common occupation for men is motorcycle taxi chauffeur or *tukang ojek* (Id.). In addition, some Abui people also work as civil servants. Other professions include security guards, gas station employees, garage workers, and construction workers. When construction or agricultural work needs to be done within the village, villagers are summoned to assist in the labor. They are typically reimbursed a small fee in addition to being offered a meal.

Abui people in the village of Takalelang also receive income through tourism. Often, tourists come to visit the *kampung tradisional* 'traditional village' of Takpala (a hamlet located on the hilltops of the Takalelang village complex). They typically pay a fee to wear Abui attire, involving a buffalo hide shield and a bow and arrow, and if the group is large enough, watch the *lego-lego* dance (in which individual participants receive a small fee). In addition, there is a small marketplace near the *maasang*, the 'altar around which the *lego-lego* dance is performed'. Here, villagers lay out their cloths, jewelry, and other forms of handicraft which they attempt to sell to tourists. The increase in tourism is also encouraging some youngsters to pursue jobs as tour guides, but so far, it is mostly members from other ethnic groups that occupy these few positions.

Figure 1.8: Villagers in Takpala place *tafaa* 'kettledrums' on the *maasang* 'altar' as they prepare for a *lego-lego* dance ceremony for tourists

Because the province of NTT is one of the poorest in all of Indonesia and economic opportunities are sparse in Alor, it is common for Abui people to go abroad in search of work (in AM., this is referred to as *pi merantau*). There are Abui migrant communities in Jakarta, Batam, Bali, Kalimantan, Rote, and Kupang. Common professions include policemen, security guards, teachers, *ojek* drivers, to name but a few. It is also common for Abui women to work as domestic servants, typically in Bali. The growing communities in these areas attract more young people from Alor in search of work or better education.

Nowadays it is becoming increasingly common for youngsters to pursue a bachelor's education (*S1*) either in Kalabahi or in Kupang. Teacher training, Biology, and Theology are commonly pursued majors. In addition, a small group of inhabitants from Takalelang have studied English Language and Literature or Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Those that study in Kupang typically live in dorms with other Abui students and frequently visit more permanent Abui households, where they often speak Abui. Kupang is a popular destination for ambitious young women and men

in search of a good education. There are enough family ties, both at university and in the city itself to accommodate female students. Once they graduate, unless they find a spouse who lives in Kupang, they typically move back to Takalelang and make a living there as well as search for a spouse.

Students pursuing a bachelor's education have often also been exposed to workshops and courses aimed at language documentation in the province of NTT. This, coupled with increased attention by researchers from Leiden, Hawai'i, Singapore, and elsewhere, has also meant that a small number of (young) adults also earn a living assisting researchers in their own research as well as playing active roles in the documentation of their language and culture.

In sum, the last few decades have seen a decrease in the proportion of farmers in the community and an increase in the number of people moving away for work. Many of the current professions require the use of Alor Malay and/or Indonesian, such as selling at markets or holding government positions; however, involvement in tourism and research are encouraging the use of Alor Malay, Indonesian, and Abui.

1.5.3   Religion

Today, most of the Abui population is Protestant, having converted between 1920 and 1960 (Wellfelt, 2016; Delpada, 2016). However, a handful of Muslim and Catholic villages exist as well. Nurdin is a fully Muslim village, with its own mosque. Here, Muslim Abui men often marry Muslim Alorese women.

Takalelang is one of the few predominantly Catholic villages found on Alor, having converted to Catholicism in 1979.[24] Today, the practice of Catholicism is visible and prominent in everyday life with many social gatherings revolving around the faith. Catholic holidays are celebrated by the entire community and a large number of people go to Church on Sundays. The pastor often hails from Timor or Flores and carries out the mass in Standard Indonesian. The Catholic community of Takalelang is organized according to *kelompok* (Id.) 'groups'. These groups often rotate responsibilities such as church singing and the organization of activities. Typically, it is common for *kelompok* to come together several days before the church sermon to practice singing. Afterwards, it is common to have a Sunday feast with

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[24]The spread of Protestantism in Alor is discussed further in Chapter 2.

prominent members of the community. Perhaps uncharacteristically, after a Sunday sermon, communal activities such as construction or agricultural work are organized. During Catholic holidays, it is common for the *kelompok* to each organize their own feasts. These feasts involve lots of food and alcoholic drink, typically reserved for males. Pigs, chickens, and goats are often slaughtered and grilled. Loud music is played by big speakers and youngsters along with male elders often sing and dance until the early hours.

Despite the salience of these religions, pre-Abrahamic beliefs are still practiced to this day, often by elders. A prominent feature of these beliefs is contact with *nala kaang* 'good beings' (Delpada, 2016). Many biblical stories have been internalized and blended in with Abui oral narratives. For example, the female ancestor Tilaakar has often been linked to the figure of the virgin Mary, while Tilaakar's sons, Alomalei and Karmalei, have often been associated with Cain and Abel (Delpada, 2016). In addition, there exists a modern day myth about how *Lamoling*, the original being of worship, became malevolent and was then replaced by *Lahatala*, a representation of the Christian (and Islamic) 'god of light' (Perono Cacciafoco et al., 2015; Kratochvíl, Delpada, & Perono Cacciafoco, 2016). The switch to Catholicism is also linked to the preservation of the spirit house of Takalelang *Kanuworwati* (see Delpada, 2016 for more details).

Furthermore, it is common for people to have a *nama nasrani* (Id.) 'Christian name' and *nama kampung* (Id.) 'village name'. People's Christian names often feature prominent biblical figures and are used at schools, at the expense of the 'village name' (see Kratochvíl, 2007, p. 134 for more information on naming practices).

1.5.4   Marriage

Marriage is considered an important milestone in an Abui person's life. Someone's status within the community rises and this is also marked by a change in terms of address. Once a person has gotten married, they are referred to as *kalieta* which roughly translates to 'adult/elder'. They are then addressed using Abui terms of address reserved for parents, such as *maama* 'father' and *niya* 'mother' or Malay terms *bapa* 'father' and *mama* 'mother' (see §2.4.2 for more information on the socialization processes involved in the various life-stages in preparation for marriage).

Today, marriage in Christian villages combines Christian rituals as well

as traditional norms found on Alor of bride-price negotiations. In the past, arranged marriages were common as was polygamy, provided the man had enough wealth to pay the appropriate bride-price. Today, it is common for men and women to meet through social events, message each other by use of digital media, enter a relationship and then begin the process of bride-price negotiation. While meeting partners and dating has changed drastically, the negotiation process itself has remained similar [EG.65M.AG].[25]

Typically, once a man and woman are in a relationship and are considering marriage, they inform their parents. Shortly afterwards, it is customary for the male's kin to initiate the bride-price negotiation by approaching the female's kin with betel nut. The male's kin will also consult an *orang tua adat* (Id.) 'an elder from his clan that specializes in ritualized marriage'. The Abui name for this elder is *fing kaang* 'Clan eldest one' or *kalieta kaang* 'Clan elder'; however, typically the Kabola term *tang wala* is used for reasons presently unclear. Another expression to describe the role of this elder is *ama (tan)tamang takia*, literally translated as 'person in the middle who runs back and forth'. Once this initial step has been undertaken and the female's kin agrees, the negotiations may be adjourned to another day.

Once the negotiations have been resumed, several elders take to the *meja adat* (Id.) 'negotiation table'. Typically only married elders who speak the Abui ritual language and are from the appropriate clan may be seated. Being married and knowing the ritual language are crucial prerequisites, signifying the vital role marriage as well as language plays in marriage negotiation [EG.65M.AG]. On the negotiation table, it will be discussed what the bride-price must be - many of the types of payment and their names have remained the same since Du Bois (1944). Typically, a *tafaa* (Ab.) *moko* (Id.) 'bronze kettledrum' and *fuokung* (Ab.) *gong* (Id.) 'gong' must be offered (a payment known in Abui as *kafuk*); see Figure 1.8. Pigs may also be offered (a payment known as *paheh*) and/or free gifts of corn, cassava, and rice (known as *punghe*) (Du Bois, 1944). In addition, cloths and household goods such as plates, cutlery, and pots may be offered.

The whole negotiation process may take several weeks and occasionally even months. During this period, after several rounds of negotiation, it is possible for the woman to move into her new husband's house. Typic-

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[25]This code refers to a recording in the author's corpus where this topic is discussed. See §3.6 for more information on the naming of recordings.

ally, at this point the bride-price payment has not been paid off and sometimes it may be several decades until it is. At any moment when negotiations are going well, the bride and groom can choose to legitimize their marriage by hosting a church ceremony. After the church ceremony, the bride and groom are officially wed; however, negotiations and payment for bride-price may persist well into their later years. The terms of the payment may be updated years into the marriage, and this often allows the woman to use this as leverage against the man's infidelity in the marriage (Du Bois, 1944, p. 186).

1.5.5 Digital media

Today, digital media is playing an increasingly prominent role in communication, self-identity, and recreation, especially among young people. Despite the lack of electricity in some parts of Takalelang, most adults and youngsters have mobile phones, and many youngsters are connected to the internet. Already in the four year span of my fieldwork, from 2015 to 2018, there was a huge surge in the amount of smartphones. As is common in Indonesia, Facebook plays a very important role in communication as well as self-identity. While Abui is rarely ever written down on paper, it is frequently used in texting as well as chatting through Messenger, and creating posts on Facebook. Several groups on social media dedicated to the learning and revitalization of Abui also exist and are actively used. Having said that, digital media exposes people further to Standard Indonesian, and it is common for Abui speakers to use Indonesian when creating status updates relating to religion, government matters, or even emotional outbursts.

The combination of increased tourism in Takalelang and digital media has also meant a soar in exposure of the village to other parts of Indonesia as well as the world. Indonesian tourists, mainly from Jakarta and Kupang, often pose for photos in the village, wearing traditional attire, and then upload those photos on Facebook and Instagram. In addition, the village has received some attention from media outlets shooting brief news reports as well as film crews filming documentaries on the Abui people.

As mentioned in §1.5.4, phones and social media have also changed courting rituals. Whereas before, arranged marriages and courting during ceremonial dances were commonplace, nowadays, parents complain that their children use phones to woo one another [eg.65m.ag].

1.6 Linguistic diversity in Indonesia and the spread of Indonesian

According to Ethnologue, Indonesia is home to 707 living languages, of which 701 are indigenous, while 6 are non-indigenous (Simons & Fennig, 2018). The majority of languages in Indonesia belong to the Austronesian language family. However, numerous Papuan (non-Austronesian) language families are also found, namely in the Timor-Alor-Pantar region, Halmahera, and West Papua (see Figure 1.9).

Figure 1.9: The language families of Indonesia and Timor-Leste
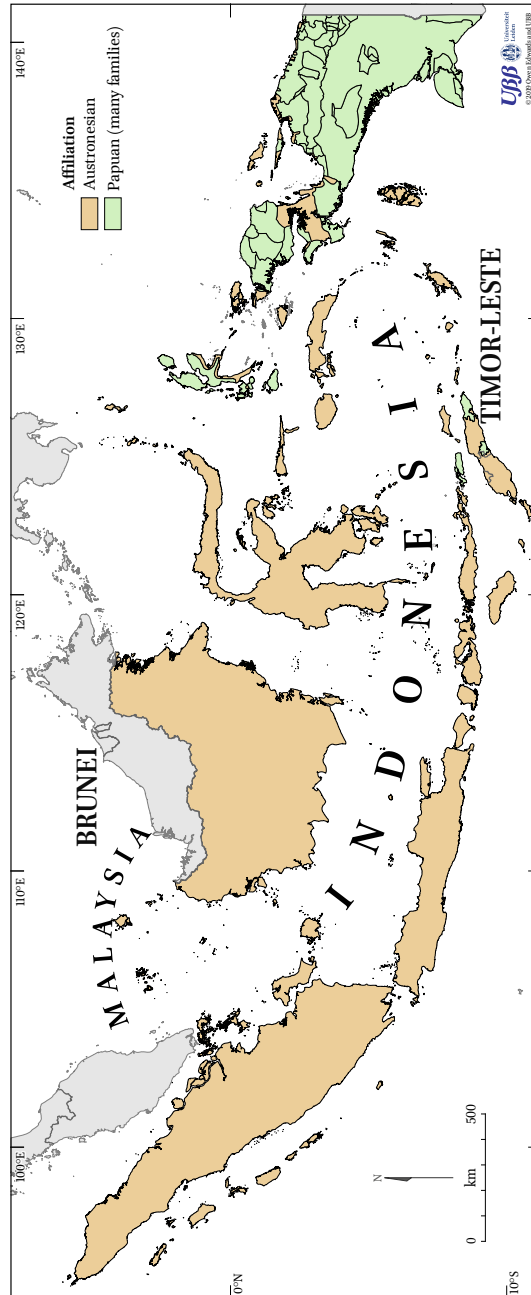
The province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), where Abui is spoken, and the country of Timor-Leste are home to at least 90 languages as shown in Figure 1.10. This is a conservative count which treats the Manggarai, East Sumba, and Meto clusters as one language; splitting them up leads to a count of around 120 languages ('Languages of Nusa Tenggara Timur and Timor-Leste', 2018). Around thirty of these languages are Papuan, while the rest are Austronesian. Linguistic evidence, both lexical and typological, reveals deep language contact between these two language phyla (e.g. Schapper, 2015; Klamer, 2017; Schapper, 2017).

Figure 1.10: Map of languages of NTT and Timor-Leste
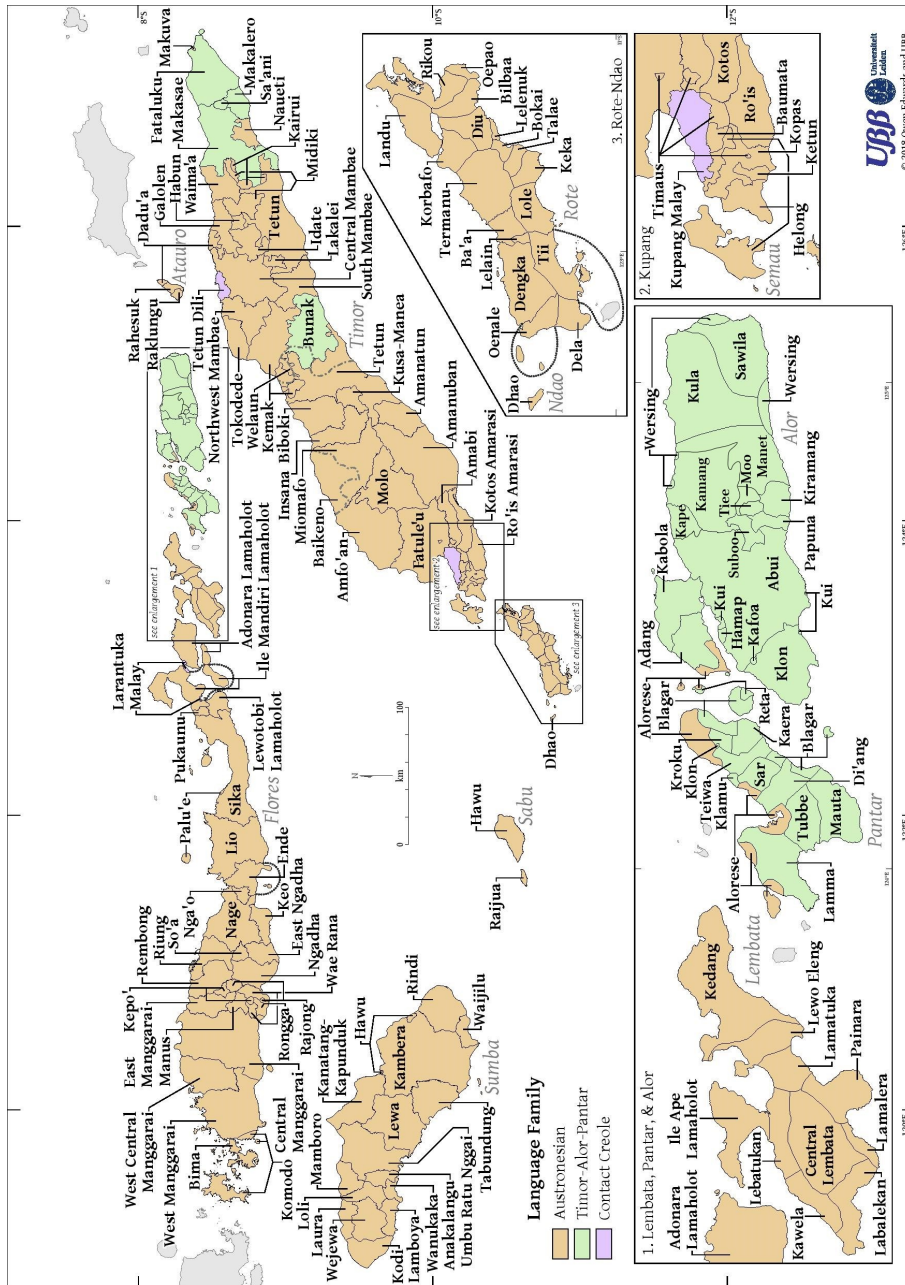
Unlike other parts of the world such as the Americas where indigenous populations form a marginal part of the whole population, in Indonesia and in NTT in particular, most of the population is indigenous. Thus, indigeneity in NTT is 'the norm, not a separate identity' (Holton, 2009, p. 164). However, despite this, it is a common trend all over Indonesia, although more prominently in eastern Indonesia, that many indigenous languages are under threat from Indonesian and other dominant regional languages (Sneddon, 2003; Arka, 2013). Other dominant regional languages include ethnic vernaculars, such as Manggarai in western Flores, or Banjarese in South, Central, and East Kalimantan (Sneddon, 2003; Arka, 2013). Other regional varieties include former trade varieties of Malay such as Papuan Malay in (coastal) West Papua, Kupang Malay in West Timor, or Alor Malay in Alor (see Adelaar and Prentice, 1996; Paauw, 2008; Kluge, 2014; Baird et al., in prep.). For the most part, these Malay varieties are somewhat mutually intelligible with Standard Indonesian. In addition to these, there often also exists a colloquial form of Indonesian, especially in cities and big towns, or any multi-ethnic spaces (Gil, 2001; Sneddon, 2003; Paauw, 2008).

In his seminal book, Foley (1986, p. 41) makes the claim that 'the sociolinguistic interaction between Malay and the vernacular languages in the rural areas [of Papua] has not yet been researched, but this would be a project well worth undertaking in the near future'. Since then, there have been some efforts to document this interaction in a select few speech communities in Papua (e.g. van den Heuvel, 2007). Due to the huge expansion of Malay Indonesian in most parts of Indonesia, this claim also holds in other regions as well.

For places such as Flores and West Papua, Arka (2013) remarks that there is little resistance to the influx of the Indonesian language. He attributes this to people's perception that Indonesian provides tangible access to socioeconomic advantages and the threat it poses to local languages is not always immediately obvious to people. Arka's interviews with youngsters in Flores reveal a negative attitude towards their local language. Baird (2002) notes that many more urbanized Keo communities in Central Flores are seeing a rise in monolingualism in Malay Indonesian. She discusses this as being a trend of the mid-1980s (p. 16). In the larger context, she correlates age with proficiency in Indonesian, suggesting younger speakers are more fluent than middle-aged women, who speak market Indonesian, with strong interference from Keo. In central Maluku too, Ambon Malay, the domin-

ant *lingua franca*, has also displaced many local languages (Bowden, 2002; Sneddon, 2003). There are countless examples of this shift to Malay Indonesian to be found all over the archipelago from Biak in West Papua (van den Heuvel, 2007) to Lampung in West Sumatra (Walker, 1976; Sneddon, 2003).

On Alor and Pantar, language shift to Alor Malay is taking place at a rapid rate (Schapper, 2014a; Klamer, 2017; Schapper, 2017). Much of this is related to strict government policies regarding schooling, including the banning of local languages, as well as the need to move away from the home village in order to get secondary education (Klamer, 2017).

The role of schooling in the language shift scenario and the language socialization process taking place in the Takalelang speech community (elaborated upon in depth in §2.3 & §2.4.2) is argued to be characteristic of many other scenarios across the Alor archipelago, and even across Indonesia. For example, within Alor, Baird (2017) claims that Kafoa children are spoken to exclusively in Alor Malay by their parents, but "once they reach school age, and start attending communal gatherings they have extensive exposure to Kafoa and soon become proficient in it [as well as other local languages]" (p. 57). Almost identically to the Abui situation, Kafoa adults suggest that their "children would just pick up their mother tongue as they grow up."

As for Kula, Williams (2017, p. 187) makes a similar claim suggesting that, "children are most frequently spoken to in Malay. Most children have a passive knowledge of Kula, understanding simple instructions, but regularly responding in Malay." He adds that "nearly all young adults know the language well enough to interact with elders and sometimes use Kula among themselves". For Kui, the situation appears to be more grim, especially because the language has only 833 speakers (Katubi, 2011 cited in Windschuttel and Shiohara, 2017). Windschuttel and Shiohara (2017) suggest that the community is in a clear state of shift, where children in some villages know a substantial amount of vocabulary but lack the ability to confidently use more complex grammatical structures, often calqueing Indonesian structures. The authors remain silent on whether children become more proficient as they become older, in ways reported for Abui, Kafoa, and Kui. Similar shifting scenarios have been reported for Teiwa, Sawila, and Klon (Baird et al., in prep.).

Despite these observations, it does appear that there is variability in terms of how far the various languages of Alor and Pantar are in terms of shift, with many inland communities still preserving their language. Fur-

thermore, this delayed acquisition process of the local language, where speakers only become fluent in (young) adulthood is also proposed to be significantly under-represented in the literature on language shift and language contact, especially considering how widespread the process seems to be.

Finally, it must be pointed out that not all indigenous languages in Indonesia are under threat from Indonesian. Some large languages (typically spoken in western Indonesia), such as Javanese and Sundanese, for example, are highly vital and even taught at university level (Sneddon, 2003). Officially, there is legislation promoting local languages in Indonesia. In practice, this support is minimal. As a matter of fact, as discussed in §2.3, legislation mandating schools to promote Indonesian at the expense of local languages has played a huge role in the decline of Abui. At the same time, efforts are well underway to introduce Abui at the Takalelang primary school (see §2.4.4).

1.7   A typological comparison of Abui and Alor Malay

In this section, a brief comparison of the main typological features of Abui and Alor Malay are given.[26] The goals of this section are twofold: The first is to sketch a general typological profile of the two varieties from a comparative perspective such that the reader may acquire a general sense of the languages based on relevant areal features and so that it is clear how similar or different the languages are (§§1.7.1-1.7.3).[27] The second is to introduce the topics which are elaborated upon in detail in this thesis, namely possession, verb usage and semantics, and reduplication in addition to related sub-features (§1.7.4).

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[26]A sketch grammar of Abui is also provided in Chapter 4. For a more elaborate grammatical description of Abui, readers are referred to Kratochvíl (2007). For a sketch grammar of Alor Malay, readers are referred to Baird et al. (in prep.).

[27]For a brief comparison between Alor Malay and Standard Indonesian, readers are referred to Baird et al. (in prep.) and Sneddon, Adelaar, Djenar, and Ewing (2012).

1.7.1   Abui

Abui exhibits a number of typical Papuan features such as APV word order[28]
and agglutinating morphological structure (Kratochvíl, 2007). In terms of its
verbal morphology, four types of patterns can be found. Prefixes may index
S or P arguments (see §4.6). Stem alternation, suffixes, and reduplication
all mark aspect. In particular, Abui uses both stem alternation and suffixes
to mark the perfective and imperfective (see §4.7.2), while reduplication
may be used to mark intensity and iterativity (see §7.3). A number of serial
verb constructions (SVC) are commonly used, such as causative SVCs and
directional SVCs (see §4.8). Furthermore, the verbal negation particle, *naha*,
occurs post-verbally.

In terms of nominal morphology, only possession may be marked on the
noun. In particular, a possessed noun obligatorily receives a prefix. Abui also
contains an alienability distinction in possession, another typically Papuan
feature found in the languages of eastern Indonesia (Klamer, 2004) (see
§4.4). The word order of a possessive phrase and the possessive reflexivity
distinction are discussed in §1.7.4. Abui does not mark gender or number
morphologically. There are two pluralizer words, *loqu* and *we* which may be
used to mark distinct types of plurality (see §4.4.3).

Abui also encodes a clusivity distinction in first person plural, a typ-
ically Austronesian feature (Klamer, 2004) (see Table 4.11). Furthermore,
demonstratives typically follow the head noun. When they modify a noun,
they may encode distance as well as speaker/interlocutor perspective (see
§4.4.5). In addition, they may modify a clause, appearing clause finally,
where they may be used for clause chaining, while also marking evidenti-
ality or stance (Kratochvíl, 2017).

1.7.2   Alor Malay

Alor Malay is considered a 'contact variety of Malay' (Baird et al., in prep.)
and shares a number of typological features with eastern varieties of Malay
(see Adelaar and Prentice, 1996 and Paauw, 2008). Contact varieties of
Malay show innovations with respect to other varieties of Malay (Paauw,

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[28]The labels A and P are used to denote the most agentlike argument of a transitive
clause, while P denotes the most patientlike argument of a transitive clause, following Com-
rie (1989), Haspelmath (2011).

2008). Furthermore, within Alor, it is not completely homogeneous, often reflecting substrate features from the local language of the community that speaks it. In this thesis, the variety spoken by Abui speakers is investigated.

Alor Malay typically uses AVP word order and is highly isolating. If it has any morphology, this is usually fossilized in words such as *melayani* 'to serve', *berdiri* 'to stand (up)', *kungjungi* 'to visit', *sampekan* 'to convey', and *terantuk* 'to trip'. However, quite often, the verb stem appears on its own. Serial verb constructions are commonly found in Alor Malay, especially directional SVCs, such as *bawa datang* 'bring (lit. bring come)' and causative SVCs, such as *kasi jatu* 'drop (lit. give fall)'. In addition, tense and aspect are not marked morphologically. Instead temporal and aspectual adverbs are used. Furthermore, like many varieties of Malay, it uses full reduplication to mark a whole range of notions, such as intensity, iterativity, and casualness (see §7.4 for more examples). Furthermore, the verbal negation marker *tida* occurs pre-verbally as in *dia tida omong* 'he does not speak'.

On the noun, full reduplication is also used and is the only morphological process on the noun. It marks plurality, collectivity, and diversity (see also §7.4). Alor Malay may combine reduplication with a plural word *do(ra)ng* to mark plurality. Like many Austronesian languages, there is no alienability distinction in possession. In principle, Alor Malay has a clusivity distinction in its pronoun system (*kami* 'we (EXCL)' versus *kita* 'we (INCL)'); however, oftentimes this distinction is not adhered to strictly, with many speakers overgeneralizing *kita* 'we (INCL)' to 'we (EXCL)' contexts as well. The word order of a possessive construction is: possessor possessed.

Demonstratives typically precede their head noun, as in *itu laptop* 'that laptop'. In addition, a reduced form of the demonstrative may sometimes be added post-nominally to add focus, as in *itu laptop tu* 'THAT laptop'. Finally, in ways similar to Abui, reduced forms of demonstratives may also be used clause-finally; however, their precise function is still not well understood.

1.7.3   Summary of differences between Abui and Alor Malay

The general typological differences are summarized in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: General typological differences between Abui and Alor Malay

	Abui	Alor Malay
Word order	APV	AVP
Morphological profile	Relatively agglutinating	Highly isolating
Verbal morphology	Pronominal prefixes indexing S, P. Aspect marking suffixes and reduplication	Fossilized verbal morphology, bare stem. Reduplication
Serial verb constructions	✓	✓
Aspect marking	Stem alternation, suffixation, reduplication, adverbs	Reduplication, adverbs
Verbal negation	Post-verbal	Pre-verbal
Nominal morphology	Possession	Reduplication
Plural marking	Plural word	Plural word & reduplication
Alienability distinction	✓	✗
Clusivity distinction	✓	✓
Order of possessive construction	Possessor possessed	Possessor possessed
Demonstrative word order	N DEM	[DEM N] (DEM)
Clause final demonstratives	✓	✓

1.7.4   Features investigated in this thesis

While there are many typological topics which may show sensitivity to contact, the three selected for investigation in this thesis include: reflexivity in

possessive marking (Chapter 5), verb usage and semantics (Chapter 6), and reduplication (Chapter 7).

There are two main motives for the choice of these three variables. Firstly, as discussed in §5.3.2.1, these variables were not selected *a priori*. Instead, a corpus that could display variable grammatical patterns across age-groups was collected. Only after data processing did it become clear that these three variables showed a particularly high amount of variation among age-groups and warranted further investigation (see §8.4 for discussion on other variables). They were also found in enough utterances to conduct comparative analysis. Secondly, they provide a good balance of features with regards to complexity. Reflexivity in possessive marking and verbal semantics are more complex in Abui, while reduplication is less complex. This allows for the testing of transfer (see §1.8.3).

Concerning reflexivity in possessive marking, Abui can morphologically distinguish in the third person between P arguments which are possessed by the A argument (He pulled his [own] friend) versus P arguments which are possessed by an argument outside the clause (He pulled his [someone else's] friend). Alor Malay does not distinguish between reflexive or non-reflexive third person possessives.

Concerning verb usage and semantics, in this thesis, I focus on differences in how Abui and Alor Malay encode the events of *visual perception*, *falling*, and *change of state* (see §6.3). For each event domain, Abui uses at least two verbs to encode a particular distinction, while Alor Malay uses one verb generically. For example, Abui makes a distinction between (-)*wahai* 'look at [+CONTROL]' and -*ien* 'see [− CONTROL]', while Alor Malay uses *lihat* 'visually perceive'.

With regards to reduplication, it is found in both Abui and Alor Malay; however, its distribution across word classes, as well as its form and function is different. In Abui, reduplication is more limited in scope, compared to Alor Malay. It has more restrictions regarding which word classes and which words can be reduplicated. In addition, it has certain morphological restrictions governing which part of the word may be reduplicated. In Alor Malay, reduplication is much more productive and involves total reduplication. The features are summarized in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Typological features between Abui and Alor Malay addressed in this thesis

	Abui	Alor Malay
Reflexive possessive distinction	✓	✗
Verb usage and semantics in certain domains	Typically highly specific	Typically vague
Reduplication	Verbs, adjectives, question words	Nouns, verbs, adjectives, question words

1.8 Theoretical background

This section situates the Abui contact scenario within the broader context of variation and change in indigenous minority communities and introduces the fundamental themes that form the basis for the remaining chapters of this thesis. First, §1.8.1 unpacks the components of this specific scenario, elaborating on the relevant sociolinguistic processes. Next, §1.8.2 discusses sociolinguistic variables of age and gender and how they are taken as proxies for language dominance in predicting language variation. Section 1.8.3 describes the outcome of simplification, attributing it to two causes: transfer and incomplete acquisition. Section 1.8.4 describes the three domains of grammar in Abui which are subject to change due to both imperfect learning and transfer, namely inflectional morphology, verb choice, and reduplication. Finally, §1.8.5 elaborates on the importance of complementing production data with comprehension data in understanding variation and change.

1.8.1 Scenarios of contact: Indigenous minority communities and heritage language communities

There are many different types of scenarios that involve language contact. As such, it is necessary that we provide in-depth descriptions of the speech community when discussing outcomes of contact. As Lüpke (2016, p. 45)

puts it, "since cultural conventions and culturally motivated profiles of communities and individuals emerge as crucial for types and intensity of multilingual interaction, detailed ethnographic studies need to inform research on language contact and multilingualism." The Abui scenario can be characterized as an indigenous minority community in contact with, and in a state of gradual shift to, a majority language. As pointed out in §1.4.2 & §1.6, the contact scenario in Takalelang resembles that of other indigenous minority communities in Alor and in Indonesia as well as beyond. In addition, to a lesser extent, the Abui case also resembles that of heritage language communities (e.g. Backus, Seza Doğruöz, and Heine, 2011; Moro, 2016). The relevant components discussed here are a) level of bilingualism, b) processes of socialization and acquisition, and c) time-depth.

Similar to what is found in Takalelang, in many communities across the globe, indigenous minority languages are in a gradual state of shift to a majority language. Abui is considered an indigenous language because it is the language spoken by the Abui people of Alor, who have been living and cultivating the region they currently live on for many generations (see §1.5.1 for more information). The varieties of Alor Malay and Indonesian, which are often lumped together as *Bahasa Indonesia* 'the Indonesian language' are considered the language(s) of the majority group because they are the languages that are spoken by the politically more powerful group of people and provide access to socio-economic growth in Indonesia.

Language shift is an end stage whereby the indigenous language is given up completely by the community, which then only speak the majority language. While there are documented instances where shift is abrupt, shift is generally more gradual, stretched across several generations. This gradual state of shift is commonly referred to as *language attrition*: it is characterized by incomplete acquisition (Grenoble, 2011). Language attrition typically involves *transitional bilingualism*: 'as the speaker population is in the process of shift, certain groups primarily speak the local language and others the language of wider communication' (Grenoble, 2011, p. 33).[29] It is typically older speakers who continue to speak the indigenous language, while younger speakers shift to speaking the majority language (Austin &

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[29]In this sense, Grenoble's definition of language attrition differs from definitions given in the bilingualism literature, such as Schmid (2011, p. 11) which typically refer to attrition on the individual as opposed to community level as 'the total or partial forgetting of a language by a healthy speaker'.

Sallabank, 2011). This also leads to unbalanced bilingualism where younger speakers are more dominant in the majority language than in the minority language.

Among the Abui, speakers above 40 are Abui dominant, while speakers below ∼35 are typically Alor Malay dominant (see 2.4.2). This also gives rise to various types of speakers, such as fluent speakers (full acquisition), and semi-speakers (partial acquisition) (Dorian, 1981; Grinevald & Bert, 2011). Strictly speaking, speakers above 40 have acquired Abui since birth and are thus fully-fledged fluent speakers. Speakers below 35 did not have the same acquisition path because many of them acquired Alor Malay first and only became active speakers of Abui during or after adolescence.

In this gradual state of shift, or language attrition, a language is negatively stigmatized (Thomason, 2001) and may become increasingly endangered. Endangerment is a continuous notion and is typically assessed using several criteria, such as intergenerational transmission and absolute number of speakers (UNESCO, 2003) (see §2.4.4 for an assessment of Abui's level of endangerment). This means that the indigenous language might be acquired incompletely by one generation and that that generation may in turn pass it on to another generation, which will then learn it imperfectly. As such, it is important to pay close attention to the language acquisition and socialization path. As mentioned in §1.4.2, nowadays, it is common for many children of indigenous languages of Indonesia, and especially Alor, to go through a delayed process of language acquisition. The fact that they only become active speakers of the language in late adolescence or early adulthood suggests that their native language is more akin to an L2 and will show effects of delayed acquisition.

However, endangerment may not necessarily lead to language death - the language may also be maintained or revitalized. Here, it is important to pay close attention to the domains of use of the language (see §2.4.1). In the Abui case, Abui is still used among adults in matters of daily life and especially more formal matters such as bride-price negotiation and community gatherings. Furthermore, as discussed in §2.4.4, there is a significant movement to introduce the language at primary school level that may see increased usage of the language by younger speakers and thus also a larger degree of acquisition. This has been enhanced by workshops organized by linguists and traction being generated by social media by Abui speakers calling for increased use of the language.

Finally, apart from indigenous communities in a state of shift and attrition, another relatable bilingual scenario is found in heritage language communities. Speakers of a heritage language are defined as 'individuals who grew up in a household where the language spoken is not the dominant language of the larger national society' (Moro, 2016, p. 4). Typically, these individuals are unbalanced bilinguals, meaning that they are more dominant in the majority language than they are in their home language (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007). There are some key similarities and differences between the Abui community and heritage communities. In terms of similarities, the main similarity is that in both instances, speakers are unbalanced bilinguals who experience incomplete acquisition of their heritage language: Older speakers are more fluent in the heritage language than younger speakers. Thus, by definition, they are also more dominant in the majority language of wider communication. In addition, time depth of contact may also be considered a common feature. For example, it is also possible to find heritage communities that have been in contact with a majority language for a similar amount of time as Abui has been in contact with Malay, 50-60 years (e.g Tukish-Dutch bilinguals in the Netherlands Backus et al., 2011).

There are, however, two key differences. Firstly, their acquisition paths differ. Typically, in heritage language communities, a child is first exposed to the heritage language before schooling and then experiences a shift in dominance as they enter school, where they become more dominant in the majority language later on in life (Polinsky, 2008). In the Abui scenario, this is the opposite. Abui children are first exposed mostly to Alor Malay before and during school; however, the older they get, the more they are also exposed to Abui-speaking adults who begin expecting them to be fluent in the language. Another difference is that a heritage language community is usually a migrant community, while an indigenous minority language community is endogenous to the region it resides.

Typically, in heritage studies, a heritage variety is compared to a baseline homeland variety, for example Ambon Malay as spoken in Ambon and Ambon Malay spoken in the Netherlands and in contact with Dutch (Moro, 2016). In the Abui scenario, it is less feasible to have such a setup and include a baseline homeland variety because most varieties of Abui are in some contact with Alor Malay.[30] Instead, the speech of Abui L1 speakers,

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[30]However, as mentioned in §1.4.2, some varieties are more vital than the Takalelang

typically speakers above age 40 is compared to the speech of Alor Malay L1 speakers, typically below the age of 35. Throughout this thesis, insights are drawn from other indigenous minority communities as well as heritage language communities.

1.8.2 Language dominance

This section discusses the empirical decision to use age and gender as proxies for language dominance. Dominance is a key concept especially in communities where individuals have different levels of bilingualism. Silva-Corvalán and Treffers-Daller (2016, p. 4) define a dominant language as "[a language] in which a bilingual has attained an overall higher level of proficiency at a given age, and/or the language that s/he uses more frequently, and across a wider range of domains". They label proficiency as a "component of dominance", defining it as the "advancement in the knowledge of a specific aspect of language" (Silva-Corvalán & Treffers-Daller, 2016, p. 4).

In bilingual communities, only a few speakers might be true *balanced bilinguals*, meaning that their "mastery of two languages is roughly equivalent" (W. Li, 2000, p. 6). Most speakers are *unbalanced bilinguals* or *dominant bilinguals*, suggesting that they have "greater proficiency in one of [their] languages and use it significantly more than the other language(s)" (W. Li, 2000, p. 6).

Typically, proficiency and dominance are operationalized using questionnaires, self-ratings, transcripts of spontaneous speech, and tests. However, all of these measuring techniques have been criticized for not offering sufficient validity and for being too simplistic to capture the complexity of language (see Treffers-Daller, 2016, p. 264). It has been claimed, for example, that self-ratings may under-report a speaker's proficiency, while some may over-report (Grenoble, 2011, p. 28). For the research in this thesis, although self-ratings of speakers' language proficiency were collected, this data was not systematically analyzed. While self-ratings give a general idea of how confident speakers were in their ability, it was decided that, instead, age would be used as a proxy for dominance. Age has the advantage that it incorporates a certain history of language use, mitigated by historical developments in community language strategies, as well including specific life-

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variety.

stages. This is argued to capture the fluid nature of dominance (see §2.4.2.1).

There was a broad characterization made in §1.8.1 about speakers above 40 being Abui-dominant while speakers below ∼35 being Alor Malay-dominant. This first suggests an obvious two-way categorization based on age and language dominance. Furthermore, there are different levels of un-balanced bilingualism. In this respect, one can also speak of speakers above 40 being Abui L1 speakers. To a large extent, most of them are also Alor Malay L2 speakers, because they learned Alor Malay aged 7 or higher. For the group of Alor Malay-dominant speakers, most speakers learned Alor Malay before Abui (see also §3.4). Alor Malay is thus their L1 and Abui their L2. However, some speakers also claim to be balanced bilinguals, having learned both languages simultenously.

In addition, within the Malay-dominant group of speakers below 35, age is broadly correlated with dominance. Thus, there are incremental differences such that a (pre)adolescent, aged 14, for example, will claim to be less dominant in Abui than a (young) adult, aged 24, for example [CV.14F.AL]. Much of this is related to language socialization and life-stages: children are typically addressed in Malay and interact more with Malay-speaking peers, while (young) adults interact more with older Abui-speaking adults and elders (see §2.4.2).

However, as has been pointed out previously by Meisel (2007), the concept of dominance is not without flaws and is in any case not a fixed notion for an individual. It is a fleeting term, that evolves with the age and life-span of individual and is highly subject to input. This could not be more applicable to the Abui scenario where there are clear behavior changes throughout the life-span with regards to language choice.

To a lesser extent, gender is also a factor accounting for dominance. This is argued to be due to social factors as opposed to biological ones. Gender may account for differences in social networks and thus language use and exposure. As elaborated upon further in §2.4.2.2, females, especially (pre)adolescent females, tend to be more Abui-dominant than their male peers. This is mainly due to the observation that young males are afforded more play time with peers away from the hamlet, while young females spend more time with adults, tending to domestic chores. This implies that younger females are more exposed to Abui than males.

Finally, a closing caveat concerning sociolinguistic variables is in place. While age and gender are argued to play an important role in explaining

much of the variation in indigenous minority communities in general and among the Abui in particular, it must be stressed that these variables be treated differently for every community in question. Gender can have very different implications on language under different social circumstances. In addition, as Stanford and Preston (2009b) and Palosaari and Campbell (2011) point out, meaningful variables in other settings, such as socioeconomic class and education level in urban settings, may not be as relevant for explaining variation in indigenous minority languages. Instead, it may be that a host of other variables are more relevant. In the Abui context, for example, it seems as though a person's affiliation with religious and educational institutions as well as whether they have resided with their grandparents could be linked to someone's language dominance as well. However, these variables were not investigated systematically as a) there was some missing data and b) they fell outside the scope of the thesis.

1.8.3 Simplification: Transfer vs. incomplete acquisition

A common outcome of languages which are in a state of language shift and attrition as well as of heritage language communities is simplification (e.g. O'Shannessy, 2011; Palosaari and Campbell, 2011; Moro, 2016). Simplification is generally used as a cover term for phenomena such as "loss, or reduction, regularization of paradigms, and preference for certain types of structures" (Moro, 2016, p. 27). Simplification is also linked to transparency which is defined here as a tendency to "to maintain a one-to-one mapping between underlying semantic structures and surface forms, with the goal of making messages easily retrievable of listeners" (Slobin, 1977, p. 186). Often it is the non-transparent features that are harder to acquire, and thus more vulnerable to loss or reduction (Villerius, 2019, p. 15).

Typically, two causes for the outcome of simplification have been proposed: transfer and incomplete acquisition. Transfer, also referred to as cross-linguistic influence, is defined as "the influence of a person's knowledge of one language on that person's knowledge or use of another influence" (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008, p. 1). Transfer is clear and obvious to see when a recipient language *gains* a particular feature that it did not have before contact. This can refer to transfer of matter (a form), transfer of pattern (a structure) (Sakel, 2007), and sometimes even to both. For example, Imbabura Quechua has borrowed the Spanish relativizer *que* 'that' and conjunc-

tions *si* 'if' and *purki* 'because'. In addition, when speakers use these Spanish forms, they also use Spanish-modelled subordinate clauses instead of former nominalized constructions (Gómez-Rendón, 2007). Thus, Spanish has transferred both matter and pattern into Imbabura Quechua. However, transfer is less easy to diagnose when a language loses or reduces a feature, i.e. experiences simplification.

Another possible source of simplification is incomplete acquisition of the L2. As a result of incomplete acquisition, speakers may opt for more transparent features. This predicts that "L2 surface features structures will tend to mark each significant underlying meaning element explicitly, irrespective of the of the facts of the L1" (Seuren & Wekker, 1986, p. 62). There are documented instances where simplification takes place as a result of incomplete acquisition where it is quite clear that no transfer from the L1 has taken place. One example is the overgeneralization of overt pronouns in L2 Italian in contexts where L1 Italian speakers would have used a null pronoun (Sorace & Filiaci, 2006; Sorace, 2011). Here, it did not matter whether the learner's L1 had pro-drop (Spanish) or not (English), as both sets of L2 learners of Italian still overgeneralized overt pronouns. In other words, despite the fact that both Spanish and Italian would have favored a null pronoun in a given context, Spanish learners of Italian still used overt pronouns. This clearly points to general learner difficulties rather than transfer from the L1. Changes involving simplification due to incomplete acquisition, in the absence of transfer have also been labeled indirect influence (Grenoble, 2000). On the community level, they are more a part of the language attrition process than direct transfer; however, contact is still responsible for these changes in that it has led to the attrition.

Some researchers have shown that simplification often occurs as a product of both transfer and incomplete acquisition. They have done this by comparing the simplification of a category in one language by different sets of L1 speakers, for example, by comparing the use of L2 English prepositions by L1 Finnish speakers and by L1 Swedish speakers (Jarvis & Odlin, 2000). They found that both types of speakers exhibited simplification, but that the simplification was governed by transfer from their respective L1. For example, Finns overgeneralized the use of the English preposition *in*, a form of simplification, to contexts typically requiring *on*, *at* or *to*. This was done presumably consistent with the structure of Finnish. Swedish learners, on the other hand, did not overgeneralize *in* in this way because Swedish *i*

functions in a similar way to English.

However, quite often, depending on the typological comparison between the languages and the studies available, it is impossible to tease transfer and incomplete acquisition apart. The studies above have tried to disentangle them by comparing at least two different sets of L1 speakers, e.g. Finnish L1 speakers vs. Swedish L1 speakers learning English. However, not all studies have the means to do so and many simply investigate one set of of L1 speakers. Where only one type of L1 background is investigated, it is often assumed that *both* incomplete acquisition and transfer are responsible for simplification. For example, the Siberian language Evenki is reducing and reanalyzing its case system due to contact with Russian. Russian has around half the number of cases as Evenki; so the reduction of cases could be seen as convergence towards the Russian system, i.e transfer from Russian. At the same time, case systems are known to become reduced in situations of imperfect incomplete acquisition; therefore, the simplification taking place is argued to be a case of both transfer and incomplete acquisition (Grenoble, 2000).

In this thesis, I take a similar position in assuming that the most likely explanation for simplification involves both transfer and incomplete acquisition acting together to enhance the process of simplification (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008; Palosaari & Campbell, 2011). Without a comparison of other L1 speakers, it is impossible to tease them apart.

Transfer as well as incomplete acquisition are argued to be both responsible for the results in Chapter 5 on the reflexive possessive and Chapter 6 on verb usage and semantics. In Chapter 7 on reduplication it is likely that transfer is playing a more prominent and direct role than incomplete acquisition. These three domains are discussed in the next section in more detail.

1.8.4 Three areas of investigation

In a state of language attrition, several broad patterns of change are typically observed. Marked features (those which are less frequent) may be replaced by unmarked, more frequent features or alternatively be used more frequently. Obligatory rules may become optional, and morphological and syntactic patterns may be reduced (Campbell & Muntzel, 1989; O'Shannessy, 2011). In this thesis, the simplification of inflectional morpho-

logy, the overgeneralization of verbs, and the transfer of reduplication patterns are discussed as illustrations of these processes.

Inflectional morphology is an area that is highly prone to being simplified, reduced, or lost altogether in contact (Prévost & White, 2000a, 2000b; Palosaari & Campbell, 2011). For example, American speakers of Finnish whose dominant language is English fail to mark case and number agreement on adjectives (Palosaari & Campbell, 2011). One prominent hypothesis in the field of inflectional simplification is the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH). The MSIH suggests that oftentimes, L2 learners have underlying knowledge of a given inflectional category or feature but that, in online production, they have trouble mapping the abstract feature to the morphological form (Lardiere, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Prévost & White, 2000a, 2000b).

The inflectional morphology category under investigation in this thesis is the reflexive possessive prefix in Abui (see §1.7). The category of the reflexive possessive itself has been shown to be very sensitive to contact. Specifically, it has been shown to pose problems for L2 learners that speak L1s which do not have the reflexivity distinction in possession such as French and German learners of Norwegian, for example (Tingsell, Källström, and Lindberg, 2011; Fabricius-Hansen, Helland, and Pitz, 2017; Helland, 2017). From a processing perspective, distinguishing between a reflexive and non-reflexive possessive involves several levels. It first involves attributing possession to a noun, establishing that the possessor is third person, then determining whether the possessor is bound locally or non-locally and then selecting the appropriate morpheme. Abui has this distinction, while Alor Malay lacks it. Therefore, this is an area expected to show sensitivity to contact among young speakers, who are dominant in Alor Malay.

Another area investigated in this thesis is lexical semantics determining verb usage. It is typically the case that languages do not have one-for-one translation equivalents. Sometimes a language may use a broad system to describe a given event (relatively underspecified), while another may use a narrow system (relatively overspecified) (Gathercole & Moawad, 2010). This essentially means that one language may have multiple verbs with varying distinctions to describe various sub-events which in one language would only be described using one verb. For example, in the domain of visual perception in Abui and Alor Malay, Abui distinguishes between two verbs, -*wahai* 'look at' and -*ien*- 'see', while Alor Malay uses one verb *lihat* 'look at,

see'. It has been shown in many different types of contact scenarios that speakers whose dominant language uses a broad system will overgeneralize one verb when learning a target language (L2) that has a narrow system (Pavlenko and Driagina, 2008; Ameel, Malt, Storms, and Van Assche, 2009; Gathercole and Moawad, 2010). It is thus expected that when young speakers engage in these event domains in Abui, they overgeneralize one verb at the expense of the other on the conceptual model of Alor Malay. Typically, the most frequently used verb is expected to be overgeneralized.

Reduplication is another area which is discussed in this thesis as being prone to contact; however, despite much work on reduplication as a typological feature, less work has actually been done looking at reduplication from a contact perspective (Evans, 2009). The few studies that have investigated reduplication from a contact perspective show some interesting commonalities: Many of the recipient languages were influenced by a Malay-based *lingua franca* donor language in similar ways and many of the recipient languages already had reduplication in their system, prior to contact, but converged their systems to match those of the Malay-based *lingua franca* (e.g. Ansaldo and Matthews, 2004; Wee and Lim, 2004; Evans, 2009; Yanti and Raimy, 2010).

For example, both Macanese and Singaporean English reduplication patterns have been shown to be influenced by Malay (as well as Sinitic). This is especially so in nominal reduplication to mark plurality as well as in verbal reduplication to mark casualness or continuity (Ansaldo & Matthews, 2004; Wee & Lim, 2004). In addition, this has also been described for Alor-Pantar languages in contact with Alor Malay, such as nominal reduplication to mark plurality in Kafoa (Baird, 2017, p. 67) and verbal reduplication to mark casualness in Reta (Willemsen, to appear).

Thus, because the reduplication system in Alor Malay is more complex in some ways than the Abui system, examining variation in reduplication marking in Abui allows us to investigate whether transfer is taking place from Alor Malay into Abui, as shown in the studies above.

It must be pointed out that such phenomena are not per se unique to situations of intermediate language shift or attrition; these changes are also attested in other contact scenarios, as well as language-internally. However; what is unique about scenarios similar to the Abui-Alor Malay one is that these changes take place very rapidly (O'Shannessy, 2011; Palosaari & Campbell, 2011; Matsumoto, 2015).

1.8.5   Production and comprehension data

In order to have a more complete grasp of the variation and change taking place in Abui, comprehension data must complement production data. First, it allows us to obtain a more accurate understanding of how much knowledge speakers actually possess, which is generally useful in contact studies. Second, it allows us to test a prominent hypothesis regarding inflectional morphology: the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (Lardiere, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Prévost and White, 2000a, 2000b; introduced in §1.8.4). Third, it is particularly relevant for this specific speech community where children only become active speakers of Abui in (post)adolescence in order to evaluate differences among groups and understand the variation more clearly.

Combining comprehension data with production allows for a more complete understanding of a speaker's competence as production alone may not always be enough to determine a speaker's knowledge of a given linguistic category. It is well known that, while speakers may struggle with certain features in production, this is not necessarily the case in comprehension (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). Comprehension data thus offers a window into how far a change is entrenched in the minds of speaker (Onar Valk, 2015). If comprehension data matches production data, then this may be used to strengthen claims that a given innovation is underway. However, if there is a mismatch as there often is, with speakers performing better in comprehension, this could suggest that speakers still possess knowledge of a given category rule, but struggle to instantiate it during production.

As such, comprehension data may also be used for testing the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (introduced in §1.8.4). Typically, the MSIH is tested by examining how a category manifests itself in various grammatical environments (Lardiere, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Prévost & White, 2000a, 2000b), such as Dutch gender manifesting itself in various word classes (e.g. demonstratives, relativizers, adjectives). Examining the speech of individuals producing this category in all its various environments allows us to investigate whether speakers retain knowledge of this category. However, for a feature like the reflexive possessive, which only occurs in one environment, the only way to test whether speakers may still have knowledge of the category but suffer processing problems during production is to collect comprehension data.

Furthermore, it is argued here that comprehension data is particularly relevant in the Abui speech in order to understand the effects of the acquisition process on passive speakers' knowledge. Abui children are exposed to Abui from birth, but only become active speakers during or after adolescence; their parents all claim that they can understand most of the language, but only start responding in it once they have reached or completed puberty (see §2.4.2). Therefore, it is interesting to compare discrepancies in production and comprehension data among speakers who do not actively speak the language (i.e. (pre)adolescents) with speakers who speak it more (i.e. the rest). In other words, how much knowledge do speakers acquire by being passive listeners up until (post)adolescence? It can also shed light on whether some groups are more prone to produce a certain form due to a lack of knowledge or due to sociolinguistic reasons, such as picking a more novel form. For example, if it is found that two groups have similar results in comprehension but different results in production, one can conclude that while they have similar knowledge, their behavior differs. This could shed light further on explaining certain types of behavior: is the variation explained more by not having acquired the right knowledge or by having acquired it but choosing to select a novel form for other reasons?

In the research for this thesis, production data is primarily collected in the form of conversational recordings (§3.5.1) and the Surrey Stimuli video elicitation set (see Fedden, Brown, Kratochvíl, Robinson, and Schapper (2014); §3.5.2.1). Comprehension data is collected using a forced-choice task (§3.5.2.2).

1.9 Organization of the thesis

The thesis proceeds as follows: Chapter 2 *The contact scenario: History and sociolinguistic profile* devotes some attention to the sociolinguistic and socio-historical aspects of the speech community under investigation. The main motivation for including a chapter like this is to satisfy several calls in the literature to have a comprehensive picture of the sociolinguistic forces at play during the complex scenario of language contact and change (cf. Stanford and Preston, 2009a; Ross, 2013). A brief history of the last millennium is provided offering a general historical background, as well as highlighting key developments which favored the rise of Malay on Alor. This is followed

by a description of the rise of schooling, which also played an important role in the shift to Malay. Then, the current sociolinguistic scenario is sketched out, with a focus on the language socialization process as well as age and gender, two key sociolinguistic variables.

Chapter 3 *Methodology* discusses the methodology used in the research reported in this thesis. In particular, it describes the two broad types of data used: sociolinguistic and ethnographic interview data, on the one hand, as well as linguistic data on the other. In addition, it discusses the speaker sample that participated in the research for this study, focusing on how speakers were split up into four age-cohorts: (pre)adolescents, young adults, adults, elders.

Chapter 4 *A sketch grammar of Abui* familiarizes the reader with the grammar of Abui. The main topics include basic clausal syntax, the noun phrase, the verb phrase, pronouns, pronominal prefixes, and basic clausal operations. While much descriptive work has been done on Abui, including a full-fledged grammar, this chapter gives a basic backbone from which the more specific topics, which will receive more particular attention in later chapters, will be understood. Examples from my own fieldwork are used, in addition to material from previous literature and the Kratochvíl corpus (see §3.7).

Chapter 5 *Variation and change in reflexive possessive marking* is the first of three case studies of language variation and change. It investigates the topic of the third person reflexive possessive from a variationist perspective, showing how (pre)adolescents, and in particular male (pre)adolescents, are losing the distinction. By doing so, this chapter shows how they are simplifying the possessive system.

Chapter 6 *Variation and change in verb usage* is the second of the case studies of language variation and change. It focuses on the verbal semantics of three event types which lack direct translation equivalents in each language: verbs of visual perception, verbs of falling, and verbs of change of state. To express each of these event types, Abui uses at least two distinct verbs (which mark subtle differences), while Alor Malay uses one generic verb only. What is found here is that in all three of these domains, (pre)adolescents and young adults generally tend to overgeneralize one of the verbs at the expense of the other. Some of these tendencies are even observed in adults.

Chapter 7 *Variation and change in reduplication* is the third of the case

studies of language variation and change. It tackles variation from a more qualitative approach, dissecting instances of pattern and matter transfer from Alor Malay to Abui in the domain of reduplication. What is found here is that (pre)adolescents and young adults generally use reduplication in Abui in ways which are similar to reduplication in Alor Malay, thereby borrowing the 'pattern' from Alor Malay. In addition, they often also insert reduplicated phrases from Alor Malay, thereby borrowing 'matter' as well.

Chapter 8 *Concluding remarks* revisits the research questions, summarizes the main findings of this thesis, integrates them in a general discussion, and offers directions for further research.