

# The Domain of Stress and Prominence in Kupang Malay

Regine Lai, Emily Tynan, and Yugyeong Park, Niran Khumbangly  
University of Delaware

This paper advances the research on non-standard Indonesian dialects by proposing predictable stress patterns for Kupangese. We argue for: 1) word penultimate stress; and 2) high boundary tone (H) at the end of a subject NP.

Stress in Kupangese is unique from Standard Indonesian (SI) in the following ways: 1) there is no secondary stress (c.f. Cohn, 1989); 2) there is evidence of highly limited contrastive word stress (e.g. minimal pairs: *barát* ‘heavy’ vs. *bárat* ‘western’). Disagreement remains over word stress in SI, though many argue against it. Some claim stress on the penultimate syllable unless it contains a schwa, in which case stress is on the final (Alieva, Arakin, Cohn, 1989, Ogloblin & Sirk, 1991). Tadmor (1999, 2000) argues that stress placement may vary by region. Gil argues that no word stress exists in Riau Indonesian, and that phonetic prominence results from intonational prominence (Gil, 2006). Our paper supports stress is assigned at word level in Kupangese.

We have recorded the speech of our Kupangese informant and analyzed it with Praat (2009), which allows us to examine pitch and amplitude contours offline to achieve more detailed stress pattern analyses. We found two forms of evidence for the existence of Kupangese stress patterns: 1) Pitch and amplitude, which we take to be the relevant acoustic correlates, are predictable; 2) The informant rejects forms that do not subscribe to predictable patterns. The following ordered application rules explain the data: 1) Penultimate stress, realized by penultimate high pitch and high amplitude, is assigned at word level; 2) An intonation boundary tone characterized by H assigns high pitch (not amplitude) to subject NP final syllable. These two processes result in an interaction effect in the subject NP: 1) On the ultimate syllable, pitch is raised (by boundary tone) while amplitude remains the same; 2) The penultimate syllable retains higher amplitude (by phrasal stress), though pitch is now lower than final syllable. See the following example:

- (1) [itu anjĩng]<sub>NP</sub> [suka itu nóna]<sub>VP</sub>  
that dog like that girl  
‘That dog likes that girl.’

In the subject NP, highest amplitude is on penultimate syllable ‘an’ (via word stress assignment) while highest pitch is on the final syllable ‘jing’.

However, incorporating application of word stress would make inaccurate predictions for example (2) below.

- (2) [itu anjĩng]<sub>NP</sub> [suka lû]<sub>VP</sub>  
that dog like 2sg  
‘That dog likes you.’

We found that the unusual rise-then-fall pattern on the final word ‘lu’ in (2) coincides with the domain where final lengthening is applied. These two phenomenon occur only when the utterance-final word is a monosyllabic word. Based on examples such as (2), we conclude that final-lengthening is applied before stress assignment, and word stress is assigned to the penultimate mora. We also propose that phrasal stress is assigned at the right-most prominent mora of a phrase.

To our knowledge, the current work offers the first examination of stress patterns in

Kupangese. Understanding these patterns critically advances our knowledge of this largely understudied dialect. Because of the multi-faceted nature of stress patterns, the data collected

offers wide-reaching insight into the phonetics, phonology, and syntax of Malayic languages.