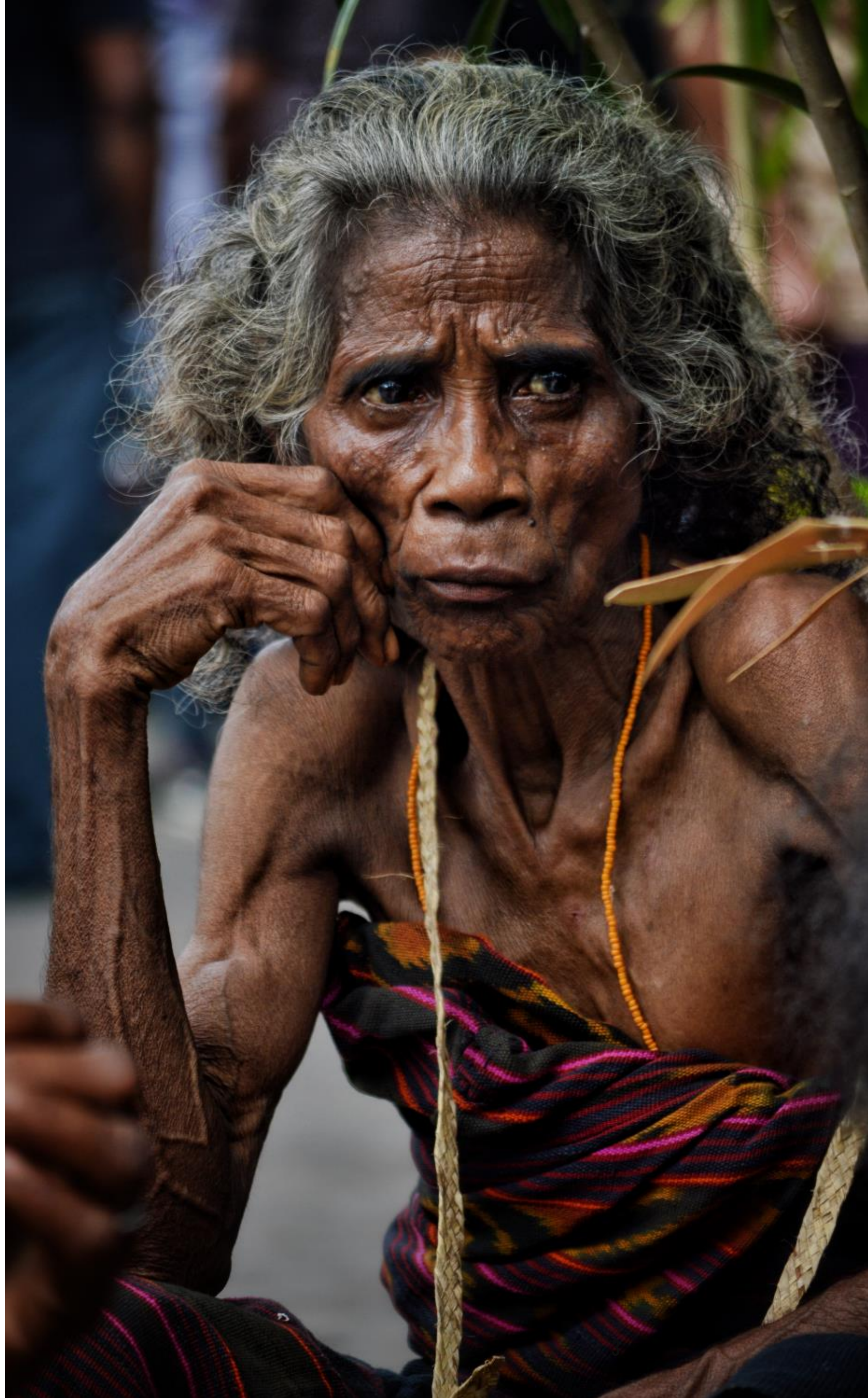
CONTACT, VARIATION, AND CHANGE IN VERB USAGE: THE CASE OF ABUI

George Saad
Leiden University

LONI | 75 YEARS OLD

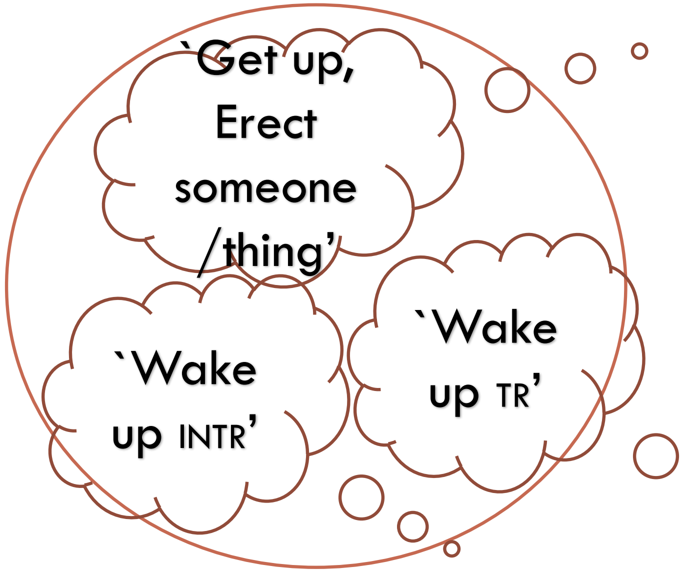


LONI | 75 YEARS OLD

`Get up, erect someone /thing’

-ruida

LONI | 75 YEARS OLD



`Get up, Erect someone /thing'

`Wake up INTR'

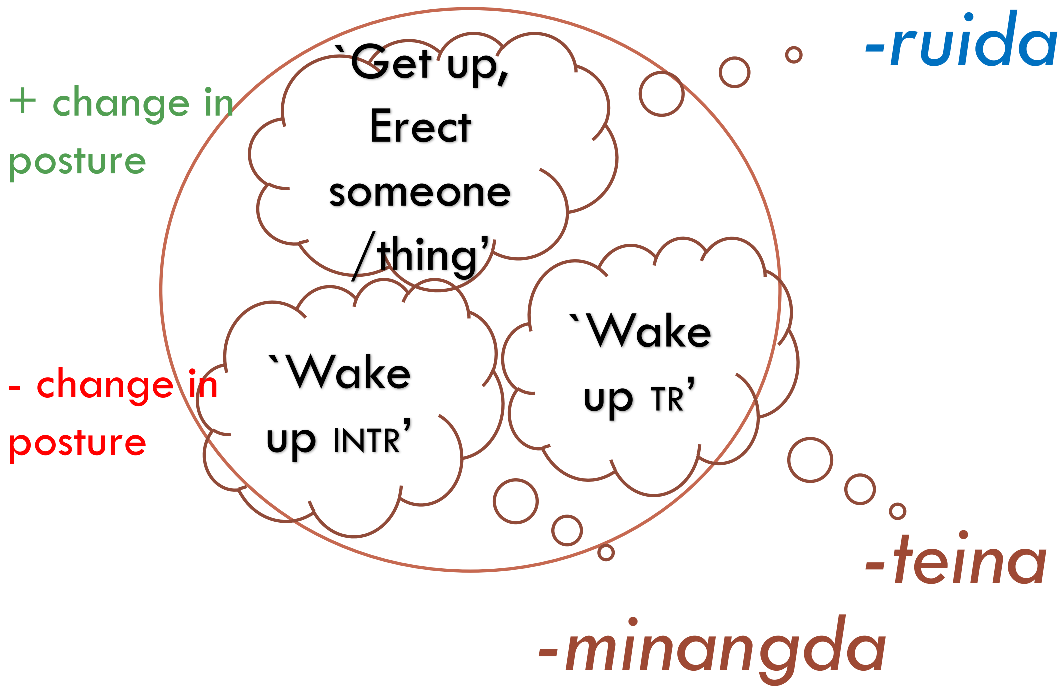
`Wake up TR'

-ruida

-teina

-minangda

LONI | 75 YEARS OLD



+ change in posture

- change in posture

`Get up, Erect someone /thing'

`Wake up INTR'

`Wake up TR'

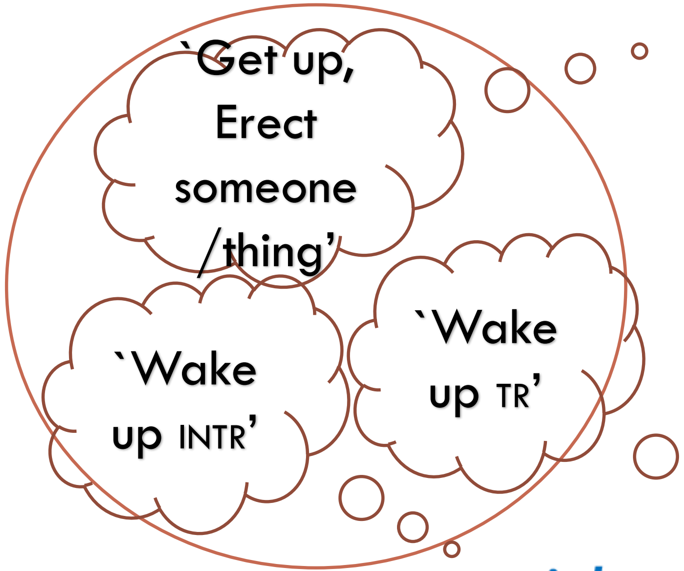
-ruida

-teina

-minangda

ELA | 9 YEARS OLD

ELA | 9 YEARS OLD



`Get up, Erect someone /thing'

`Wake up INTR'

`Wake up TR'

-ruida

-ruida

-ruida

ELA | 9 YEARS OLD

`Get up'

-ruida

-ruida

-ruida, -ruida

WHY?

-ruida

-teina, -minangda

9 year old
Grew up speaking Alor Malay

CONTACT WITH ALOR MALAY

75 year old
Grew up speaking Abui

9 year old
Grew up speaking Alor Malay

14 year old
.
17 year old
.
21 year old
.
25 year old
.
27 year old
.
30 year old
.
35 year old

?

?

?

?

75 year old
Grew up speaking Abui

HOW MUCH VARIATION EXISTS IN THE COMMUNITY IN THE USE OF VERBS?

WHAT CAN THIS SYNCHRONIC VARIATION TELL US ABOUT INCIPIENT CHANGE?

COMING UP…

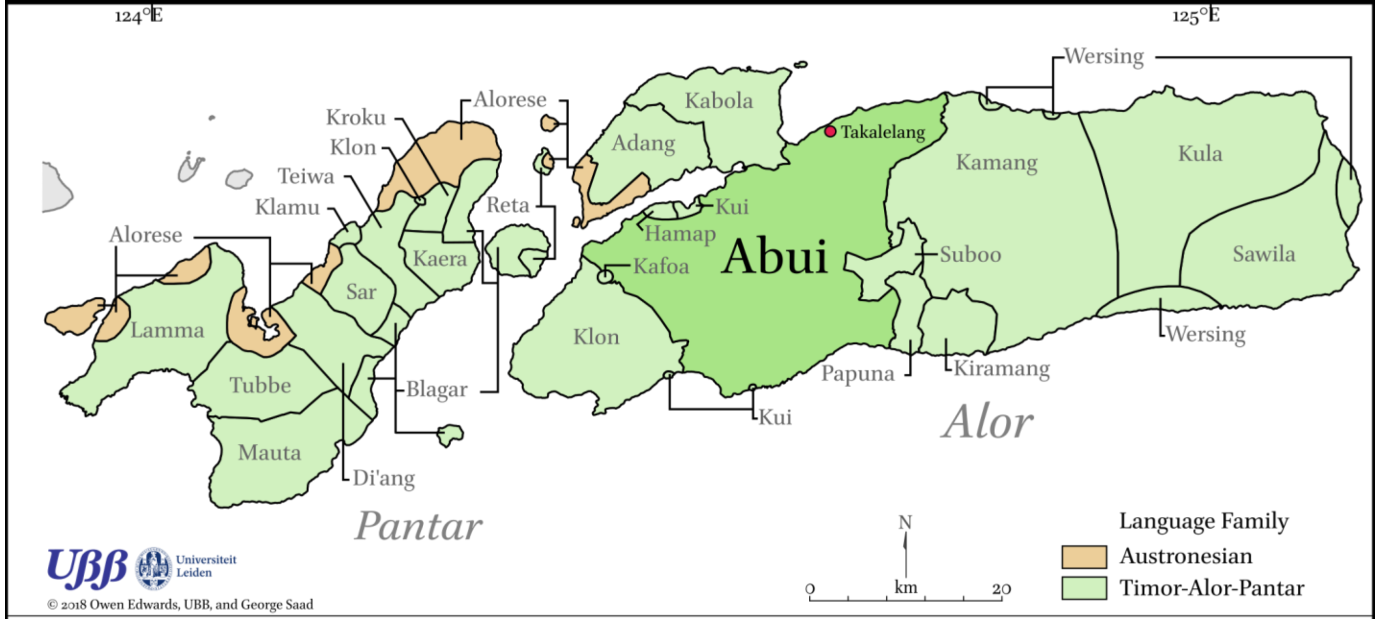
- Speech community
- Use of verbs in Abui and Alor Malay
- Present study & results

SPEECH COMMUNITY

ABUI

- Timor-Alor-Pantar (non-Austronesian) family
- 17,000 speakers
- In contact with Alor Malay (Austronesian; lingua franca)

Kratochvíl (2007), Holton et al (2014)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Kafoa
Abui
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Language Family
Austronesian
Timor-Alor-Pantar
UBB Universiteit Leiden
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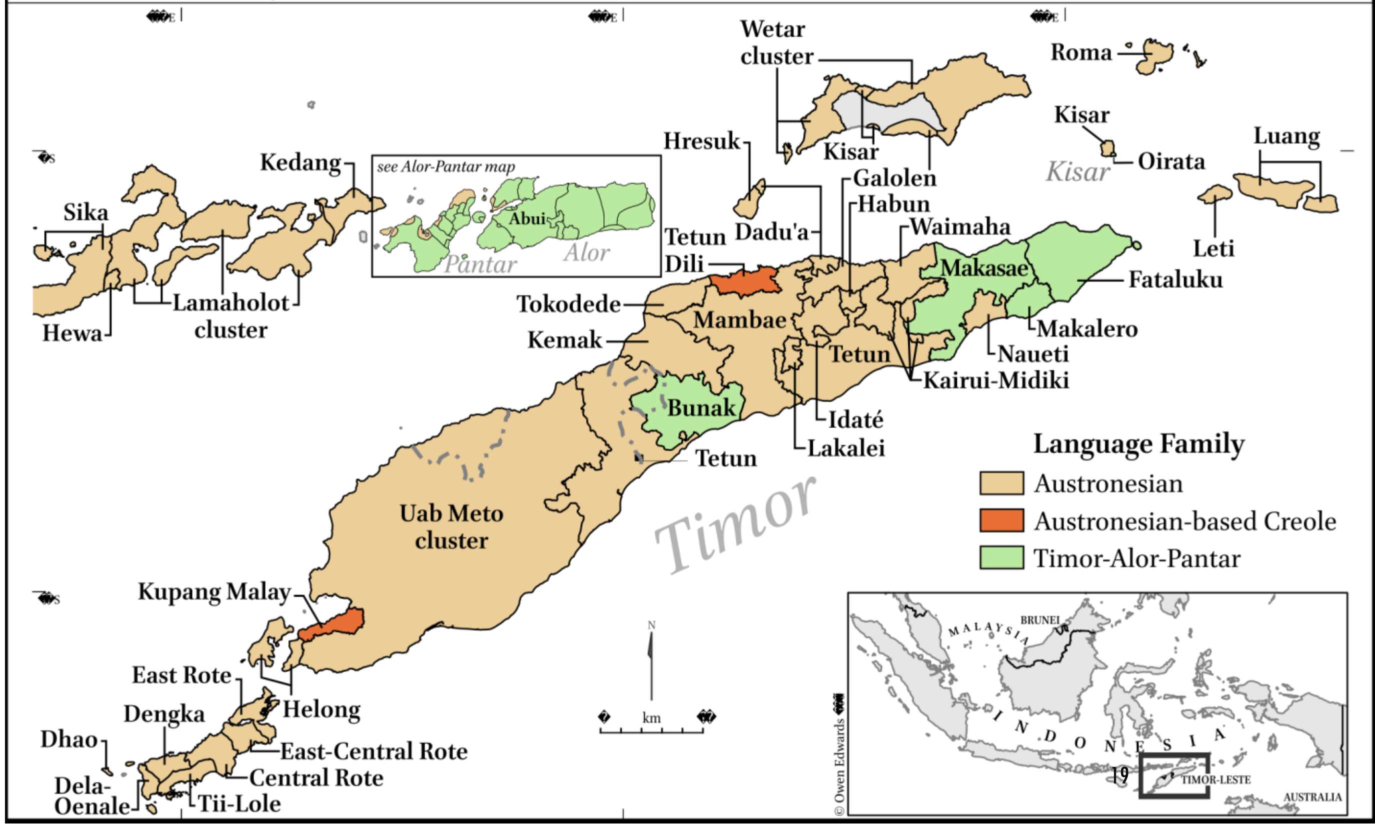
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Kisar
Hresuk
Kisar
Oirata
Luang
Kedang
see Alor-Pantar map
Abui
Alor
Pantar
Galolen
Habun
Kisar
Sika
Waimaha
Leti
Tetun Dili
Dadu'a
Makasae
Fataluku
Lamaholot cluster
Hewa
Tokodede
Mambae
Makalero
Kemak
Tetun
Naueti
Kairui-Midiki
Bunak
Idaté
Lakalei
Tetun
Language Family
Austronesian
Austronesian-based Creole
Timor-Alor-Pantar
Uab Meto cluster
Timor
Kupang Malay
East Rote
Helong
Dengka
Dhao
East-Central Rote
Central Rote
Dela-Oenale
Tii-Lole
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MALAYSIA
BRUNEI
INDONESIA
TIMOR-LESTE
AUSTRALIA
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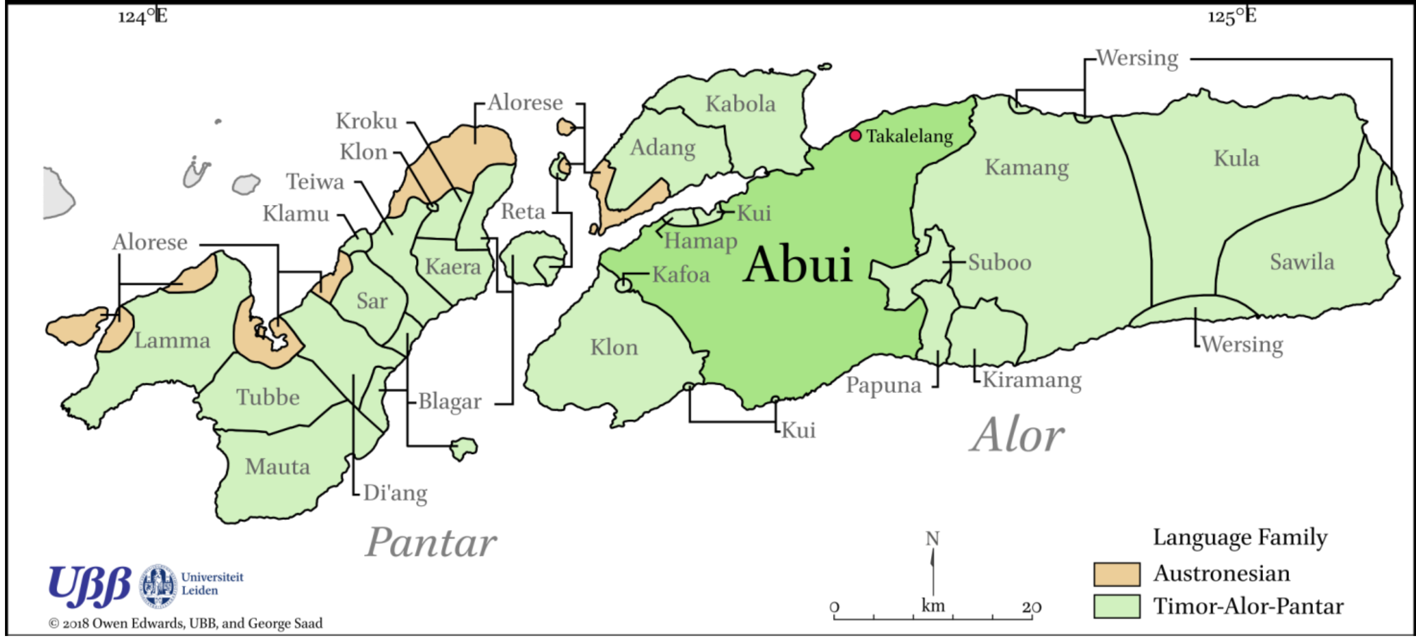
SPEECH COMMUNITY

Takalelang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Language Family
Austronesian
Timor-Alor-Pantar
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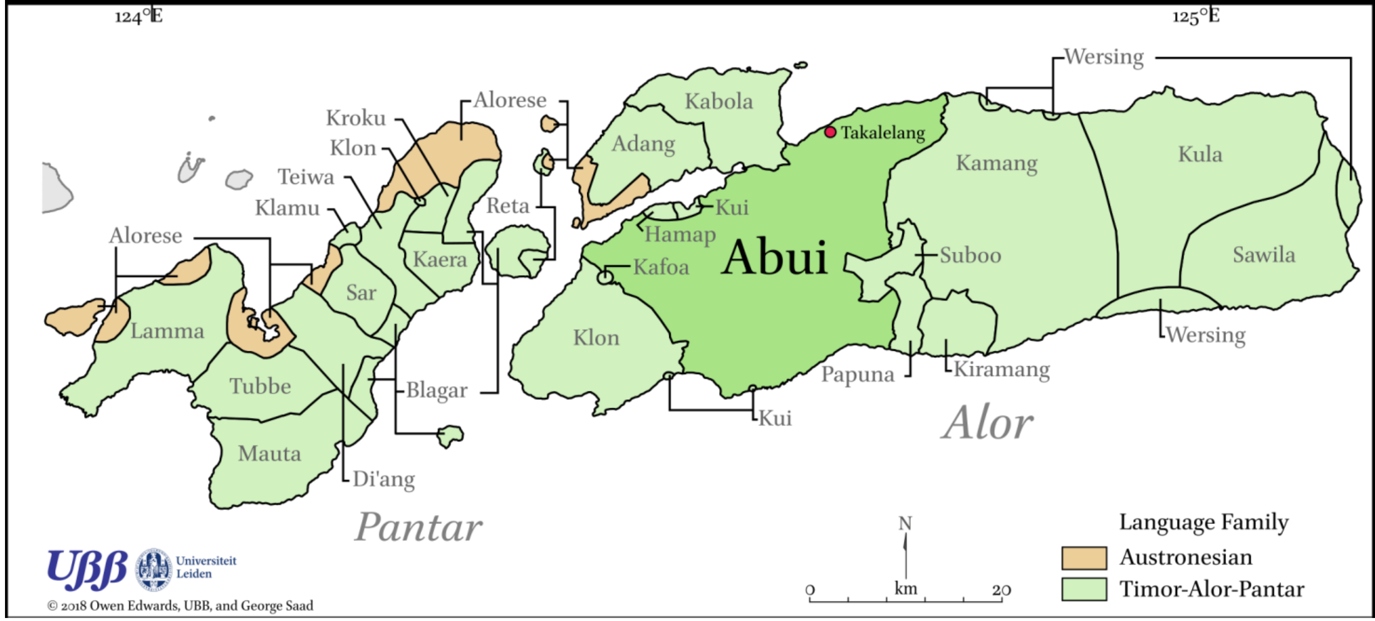
- 50-60 years contact with Alor Malay
- Language shift to Alor Malay

- Highlights:
  - 1965: resettlement to coast
  - Abui banned at school
  - 1985-onwards: Parents forced to raise children in Malay
  - `Children will learn Abui anyway as they grow older’

SPEECH COMMUNITY

Takalelang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Outcome:

- Imperfect learning, language attrition
- *Transitional bilingualism* (Grenoble 2011)
- Age: linked to level of bilingualism, used as a proxy for dominance

AGE AS A SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIABLE

"Age and ageing are experienced both individually and as part of a cohort of people who share an experience of history and/or a life stage."

- History: Children born before ~1975: **Abui L1** (**age: >40**)
  Children born after ~1980: **Malay L1** (**age: <35**)

1985:
Parents forced to raise children in Malay

Eckert (2017:151)

AGE AS A SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIABLE

"Age and ageing are experienced both individually and as part of a cohort of people who share an experience of history and/or a life stage."

- History: Children born before ~1975 (age 40+): Abui L1
  Children born after ~1980 (age <35): Malay L1

1985:
Parents forced to raise children in Malay

- Life-stage: Speakers are not stable in their language use

Eckert (2017:151)

AGE AS A SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIABLE

"Age and ageing are experienced both individually and as part of a cohort of people who share an experience of history and/or a life stage."

- History: Children born before ~1975 (age 40+): Abui L1
  Children born after ~1980 (age <35): Malay L1

1985:
Parents forced to raise children in Malay

- Life-stage: Children: Malay
  Adults: Abui

Life-stage 1:
Young adulthood (age: ~17)

Life-stage 2:
Adulthood (age: ~25)

Eckert (2017:151)

(PRE-)ADOLESCENTS

9-16 YEARS OLD

ALOR MALAY L1

YOUNG ADULTS

17-25 YEARS OLD

ALOR MALAY L1

EVERCOSS
Brasil

ADULTS

26-34 YEARS OLD

ALOR MALAY L1

ELDERS

40+ YEARS OLD

ABUI L1

RECAP: LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND SOCIALIZATION

Abui Children: Raised in Alor Malay

As adults, they must speak Abui

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

For years, Malay was spoken as a second language

Nowadays it is the L1 of many different ethnic groups

Displacing many local languages as L1: Underdescribed, yet widespread in Indonesia (Bowden 2002, Baird 2017, Williams 2017) and Melanesia (e.g. Schokkin 2017)

AP: “Many adults still use the local languages regularly, but switching to the lingua franca, Malay/Indonesian, is common particularly in addressing children; some but not all children acquire the local language, but often only passively, and prefer to use the lingua franca with their peers.

Kafoa: “a strong preference for parents to speak to children in Malay. Children would just 'pick up' their mother tongue as they grew up.”

Kula “Most children have a passive knowledge of Kula, understanding simple instructions, but regularly responding in Malay. Nearly all young adults know the language well enough to interact with elders and sometimes use Kula among themselves.”

WHAT IMPACT WILL THIS IMPERFECT LEARNING HAVE ON ABUI?

VERB USE IN ABUI & ALOR MALAY

VERB USE IN ABUI AND MALAY

	Abui **Narrow system**	**Alor Malay** **Broad system**
Visual perception	-*wahai* ‘look at’ -*ien* ‘see’	*lihat* ‘look at, see’
Falling	*hayeei* ‘fall from above’ *-quoil-* ‘fall over’	*jatu* ‘fall from above, fall over’
Change of state	*-rui-* ‘get up’ *-minang-* ‘wake up’	*bangun* ‘get up, wake up’

VERB USE IN ABUI AND MALAY

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VERB USE IN ABUI AND MALAY

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Visual perception	-*wahai* ‘look at’ -*ien* ‘see’	*lihat* ‘look at, see’
Falling	*hayeei* ‘fall from above’ -*quoil*- ‘fall over’	*jatu* ‘fall from above, fall over’
Change of state	-*ruida* ‘get up’ -*teina*/-*minangda* ‘wake up TR/INTR’	*(kasi) bangun* ‘get up, wake up’

TWO SYSTEMS IN CONTACT

Russian vs English

English vs Arabic

Yiddish vs. English

Turkish vs Dutch

Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008), Gathercole and Moawad (2008), Weinreich (1953), Backus et al (2011)

GENERALIZATION

Generalization, also referred to as widening, extension, and broadening, is a commonly attested semantic change where the range of meanings of a word expands to a wider array of related contexts

Simplification

(Blank 1999, Traugott 2001)

VERB USE IN ABUI AND MALAY

	Abui **Narrow system**	**Alor Malay** **Broad system**
Visual perception	-*wahai* 'look at' -*ien* 'see'	*lihat* 'look at, see'
Falling	*hayeei* 'fall from above' -*quoil*- 'fall over'	*jatu* 'fall from above, fall over'
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VERB USE IN ABUI AND MALAY

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VERB USE IN ABUI AND MALAY

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VERB USE IN ABUI AND MALAY

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Falling	*hayeei* 'fall from above' *hayeei* 'fall over'	*jatu* 'fall from above, fall over'
Change of state	-*ruida* 'get up' -*ruida* 'wake up'	*bangun* 'get up, wake up'

GENERALIZATION

	Abui **Broad system**	**Alor Malay** **Broad system**
Visual perception	-*wahai* 'look at, see'	*lihat* 'look at, see'
Falling	*hayeei* 'fall from above, fall over'	*jatu* 'fall from above, fall over'
Change of state	-*ruida* 'get up, wake up'	*bangun* 'get up, wake up'

TO WHAT EXTENT DO AGE GROUPS GENERALIZE ONE VERB?

METHODOLOGY: SURREY STIMULI

(PRE-)ADOLESCENTS
9-16 YEARS OLD
19 PARTICIPANTS

YOUNG ADULTS
17-25 YEARS OLD
19 PARTICIPANTS

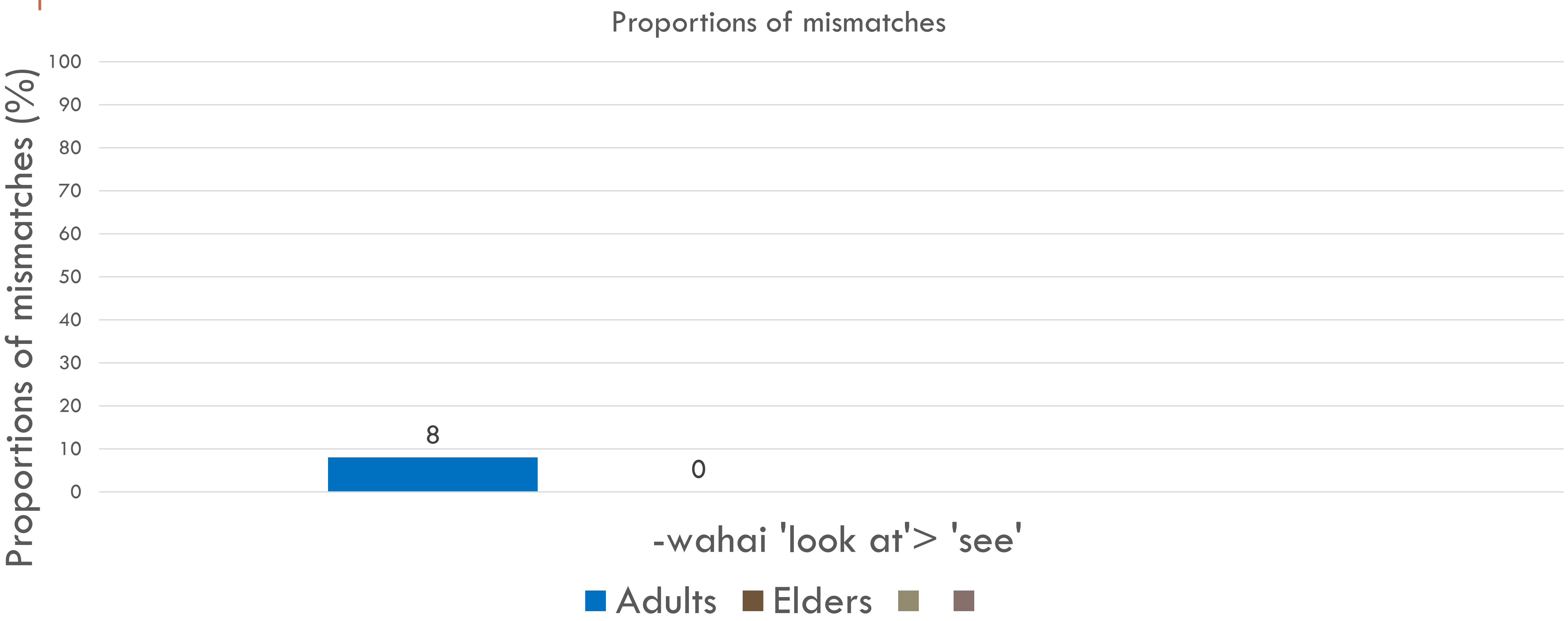
EVERCOSS
Brasil

ADULTS
26-34 YEARS OLD
19 PARTICIPANTS

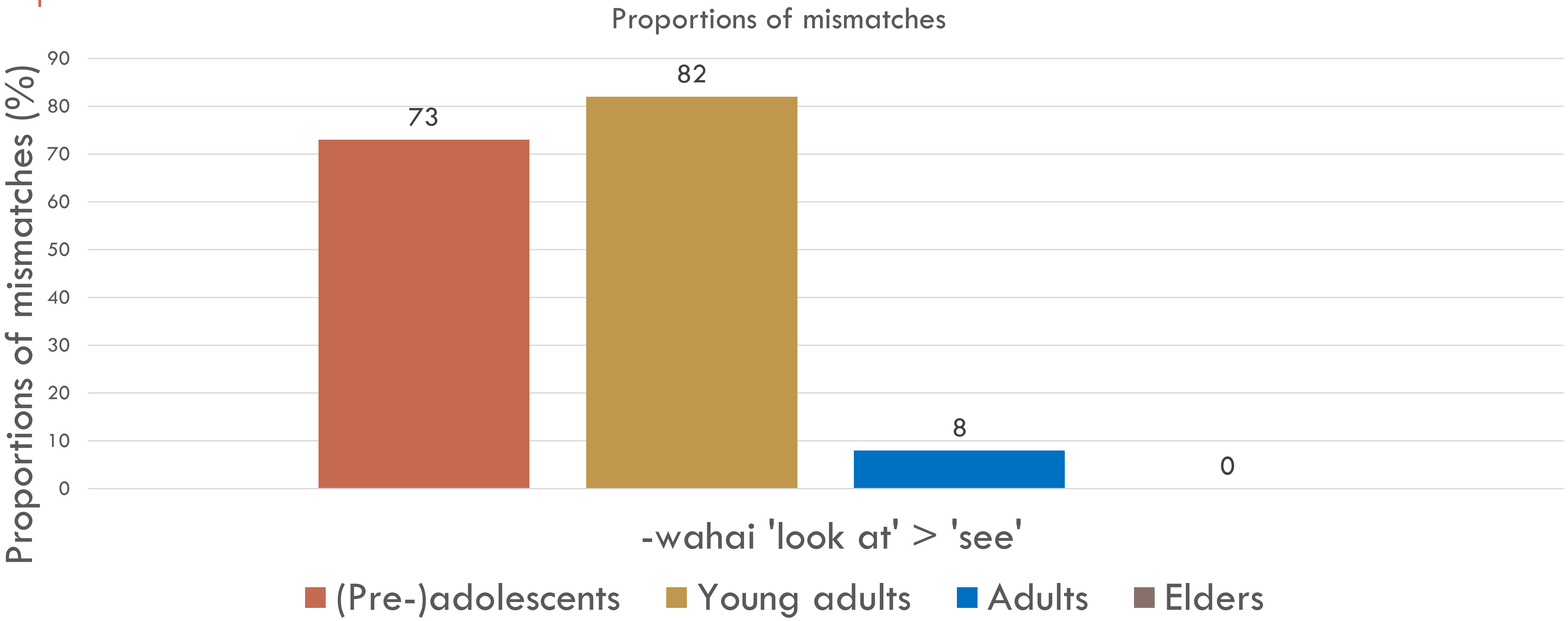
ELDERS
40+ YEARS OLD
9 PARTICIPANTS

RESULTS

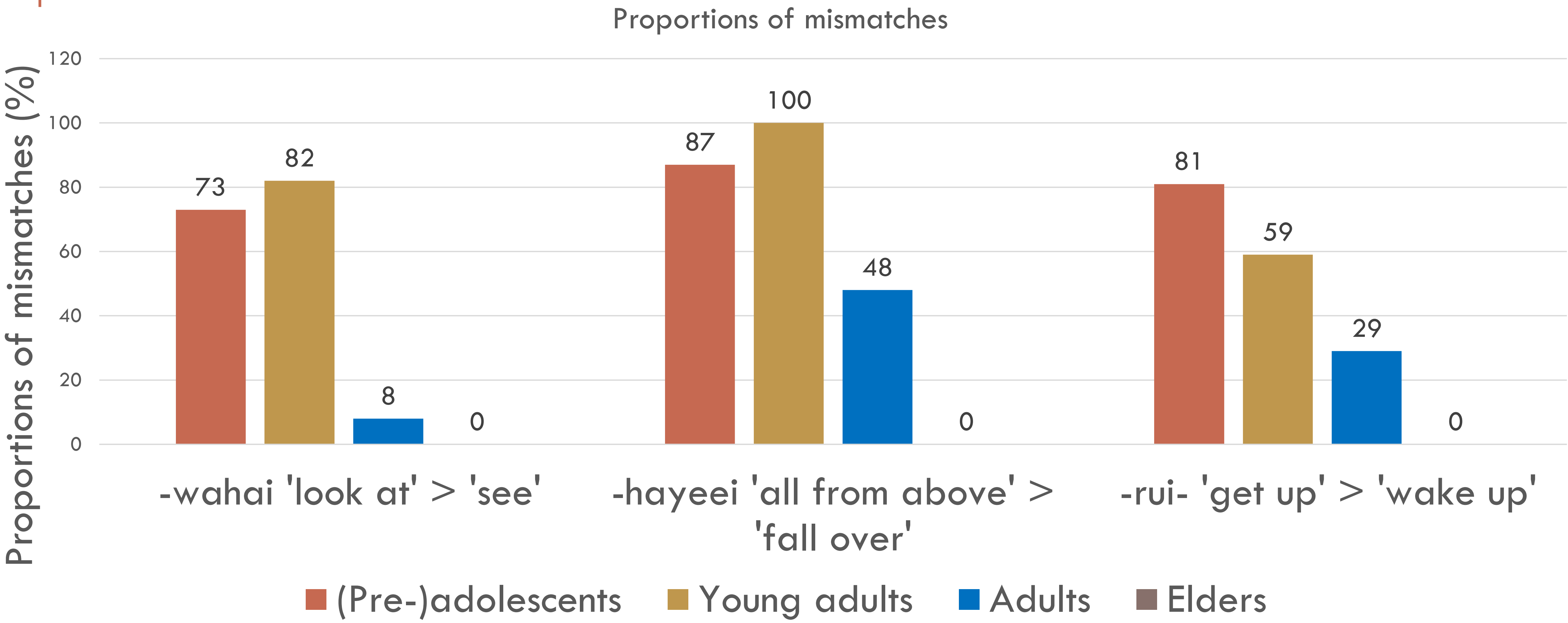
RESULTS


Proportions of mismatches
Proportions of mismatches (%)
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
8
0
-wahai 'look at'> 'see'
Adults
Elders

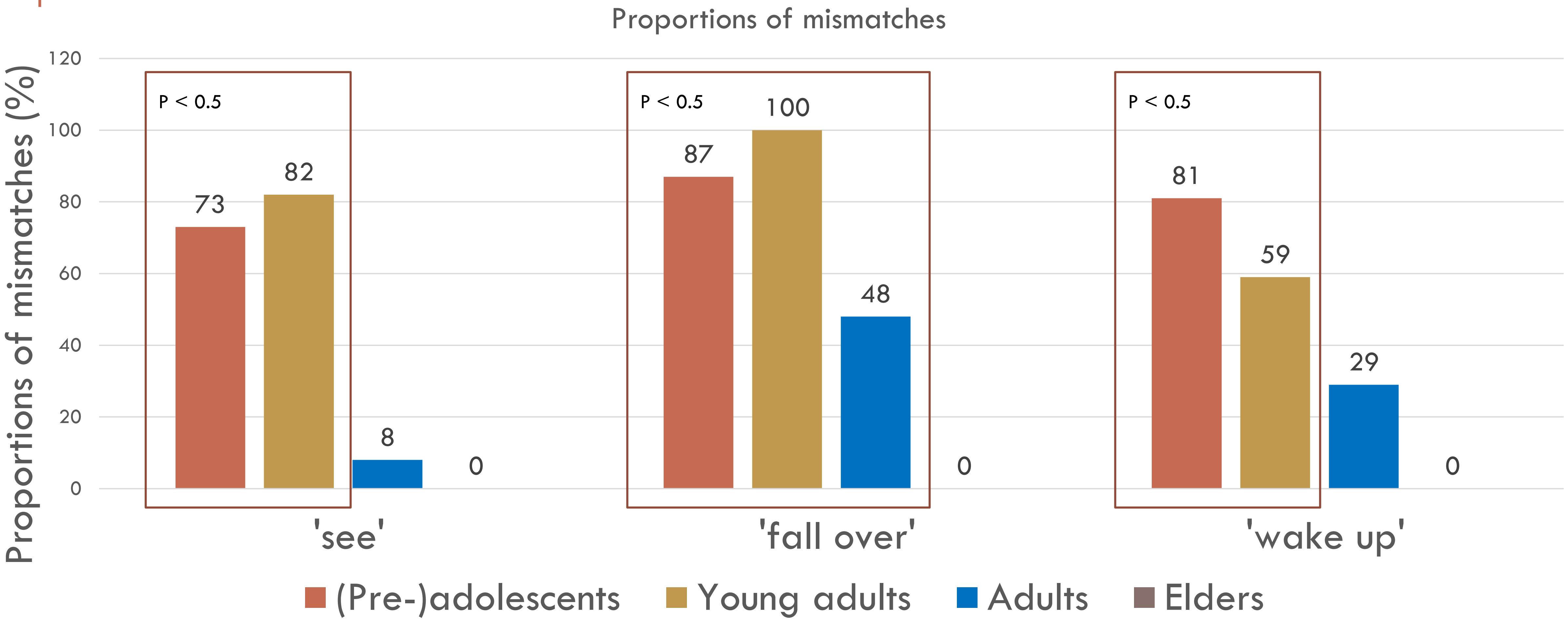
RESULTS


Proportions of mismatches
Proportions of mismatches (%)
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
73
82
8
0
-wahai 'look at' > 'see'
(Pre-)adolescents
Young adults
Adults
Elders

RESULTS


Proportions of mismatches
Proportions of mismatches (%)
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
73
82
8
0
87
100
48
0
81
59
29
0
-wahai 'look at' > 'see'
-hayeei 'all from above' > 'fall over'
-rui- 'get up' > 'wake up'
(Pre-)adolescents
Young adults
Adults
Elders

RESULTS


Proportions of mismatches
Proportions of mismatches (%)
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
P < 0.5
73
82
8
0
'see'
P < 0.5
87
100
48
0
'fall over'
P < 0.5
81
59
29
0
'wake up'
(Pre-)adolescents
Young adults
Adults
Elders

SUMMARY

(PRE-)ADOLESCENTS
9-16
ALOR MALAY L1

YOUNG ADULTS
17-25
ALOR MALAY L1

EVERCOSS
Brasil

Generalize in all 3 domains

SUMMARY

Generalize all 3 verbs

(PRE-)ADOLESCENTS
9-16
ALOR MALAY L1

Life-stage 1:
Young adulthood (age: ~17)

Did not decrease generalization

YOUNG ADULTS
17-25
ALOR MALAY L1

EVERCOSS
Brasil

SUMMARY

(PRE-)ADOLESCENTS
9-16
ALOR MALAY L1

YOUNG ADULTS
17-25
ALOR MALAY L1

ADULTS
26-34
ALOR MALAY L1

Generalize

-*hayeei* > ‘fall over’

Generalize

-*hayeei* > ‘fall over’

SUMMARY

(PRE-)ADOLESCENTS
9-16
ALOR MALAY L1

YOUNG ADULTS
17-25
ALOR MALAY L1

Life-stage 2:
Adulthood (age: ~25)

Some impact on generalization

ADULTS
26-34
ALOR MALAY L1

WHAT CAN THIS SYNCHRONIC VARIATION TELL US ABOUT CHANGE?

VARIATION LEAD TO CHANGE?

-*hayeei*	>	‘fall over’	Very likely to change

Apparent time construct (Labov 1961)

-*wahai*	>	‘see’	Likely to change
-*rui*-	>	‘wake up’	Likely to change

CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Age: history and life-stage important for study of variation

Socialization process common throughout Indonesia

(Pre-)adolescents and young adults generalize all three verbs, adults generalize the verb *hayeei* to ‘fall over’

Lack of early use of Abui causing simplification

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RUMI KAANG

HISTORY AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE

-onwards:

Age as a sociolinguistic variable: “Age and ageing are experienced both individually and as part of a cohort of people who share an experience of history and/or a life stage.”

- History:

9 year old
Grew up speak
Alor Malay

1985:
Parents forced to raise children in Malay

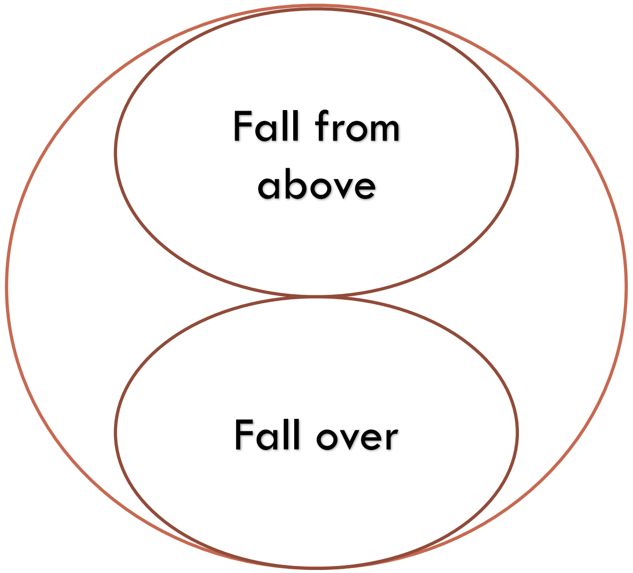
75 year old
Grew up speaking
Abui

- Life-stage

Eckert (2017:151)

WHICH LEXICAL SEMANTIC FACTORS PLAY A ROLE IN GENERALIZATION?

60 YEARS OLD | FEMALE



Fall from above

Fall over

Hayeei

Fall from above

Daquoili

WHICH LEXICAL SEMANTIC FACTORS PLAY A ROLE IN GENERALIZATION?