

FUTURE

Title

New word development in Singapore Kristang and its implications for variation

Abstract:

Kristang, or Malacca Creole Portuguese (iso 639-3:mcm), is an endangered Portuguese-Malay creole spoken by less than 2,000 people in Malaysia and Singapore, and the heritage language of the Portuguese-Eurasian community. In Singapore, a youth-led multiethnic grassroots revitalization initiative for Kristang known as Kodrah Kristang ('Awaken, Kristang') was launched in March 2016. Centered around free structured classes for adults, Kodrah has hosted more than 500 students of various ethnicities and ages over the subsequent 3 years, and has garnered significant media attention both locally and internationally.

This presentation will describe Jardinggu ('language garden'), the Kodrah Kristang lexical incubator, and its implications for variation in Kristang. Initiated in April 2017, Jardinggu takes advantage of technology and social media to provide a safe space for the community to discuss and suggest new words for Kristang in Singapore, following demand from both elders and younger new speakers participating in Kodrah. Through Jardinggu, the Kodrah community has suggested around 320 new lexemes for concepts that were previously represented by English loans. Jardinggu is systematic, democratic, open to all Kristang speakers in Singapore regardless of their participation in Kodrah, and based on elements of other contemporary lexeme generation initiatives (e.g. Kimura & Counciller 2012, Mbulungeni 2001); it also seeks to stay faithful to identified patterns in Kristang morphological development, to the language's historical borrowing of loanwords from Portuguese, Dutch, English, Cantonese, and other source languages (Baxter & De Silva 2004).

Following a sketch of Singapore Kristang, the Kodrah movement, and Jardinggu proper, I will discuss the level of community interest and participation in Jardinggu, significant practical and ideological challenges, which remain with Jardinggu (e.g. Heryanto 2008, Schiffman 2008, McLeod & O'Rourke 2015), and the sociolinguistic implications these raise for Kristang as a revitalizing variety. Considering that new word development remains controversial due to questions of authenticity and artificiality (e.g. Hornberger & King 1998, Ní Ghearáin 2011), this presentation aims to generate lively discussion among participants toward approximating a more coherent understanding of the long-term effects of such efforts, and how these might be better concretized and oriented toward their communities.

(344 words excluding citations and references)

References:

Baxter, Alan Norman & Patrick De Silva. 2004. A dictionary of Kristang (Malacca Creole Portuguese) with an English-Kristang finderlist. The Australian National University Press: Pacific Linguistics.

Heryanto, Ariel. 2007. Then there were languages: Bahasa Indonesia was one among many. In Sifree Makoni and Alastair Pennycook (eds.), *Disinventing and reconstituting languages*, 42-61. Clevedon, United Kingdom: Multilingual Matters.

Hornberger, Nancy H. & Kendall A. King. 1998. Authenticity and unification in Quechua language planning. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 11(3). 390-410.

Kimura, Larry & April Counciller. 2009. Indigenous new words creation: Perspectives from Alaska and Hawai'i. In Jon Reyhner & Louise Lockard (eds.), *Indigenous language revitalization: Encouragement, guidance and lessons learned*, 121-139. Flagstaff, Arizona: Northern Arizona University.

Madiba, Mbulungeni. 2001. Toward a model for terminology modernization in the African languages of South Africa. *Language Matters* 32(1). 53-77.

McLeod, Wilson & Bernadette O'Rourke. 2015. "New speakers" of Gaelic: Perceptions of linguistic authenticity and appropriateness. *Applied Linguistics Review* 6(2). 151-172.