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Critical ecological factors in ethnolinguistic vitality: evidence from Enggano

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Outline

- Introduction
- Ethnolinguistic vitality: an overview
- Contemporary Enggano and critical ecological factors in ethnolinguistic vitality
 - Our data and methodology
 - Main findings and discussion/analysis
- Conclusion

Introduction

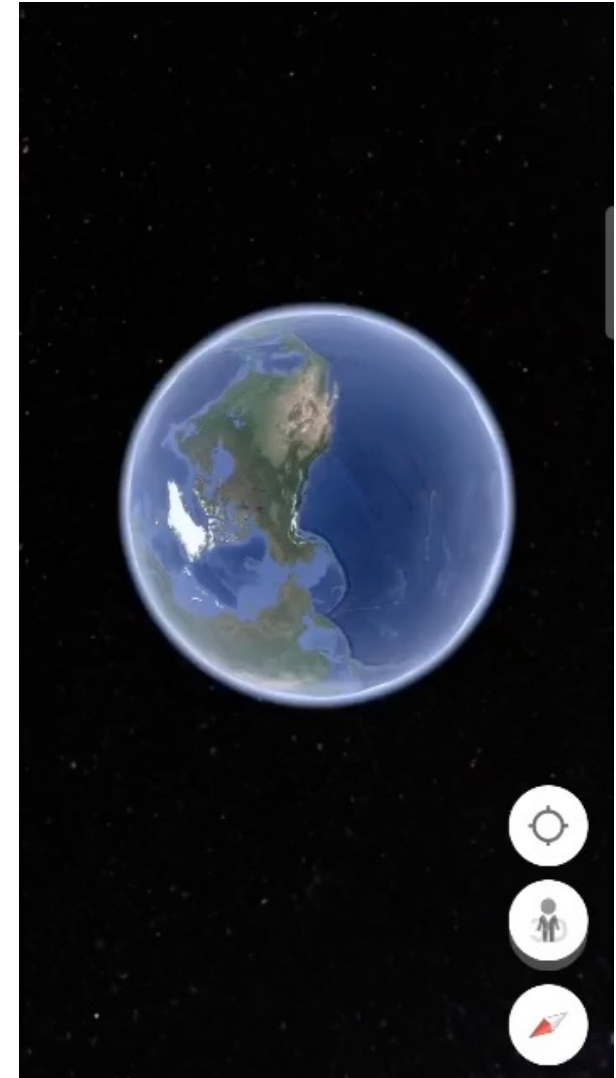
Enggano: some background

- Location

- Around 100 kms south of Sumatra
- Administratively, part of Bengkulu Province

- Population:

- **2,800** in 2015 including non-Enggano people
- **1,500** Enggano speakers
- influx of recent migrants from other parts of Indonesia



Enggano: some background

Socio-cultural-historical linguistic context

- (earlier) controversy: Austronesian (Dyen 1965; Edwards 2015) vs. non-Austronesian (Capell 1982; Blench 2014)
- Religion & traditional belief system
- Traditional social structure:
 - Matrilineal
 - Six clans: Kauno, Kaitora, Kaharuba, Kaharubi and Ka'ahua, and Ka'mai
- Social change and language contact in contemporary Enggano: language endangerment



Ethnolinguistic vitality: an overview

What is (ethno)linguistic vitality?

- Ethnolinguistic vitality is defined as the **extent to which a group is likely to behave as “a distinctive and collective entity within the intergroup setting”** ([Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor 1977:308](#)) and, therefore, the **extent to which its language is passed on to the next generations** ([Pauwels 2016:37](#)).
- Research on ethnolinguistic vitality is critical in **language endangerment** as it has **practical policy implications** (e.g., for language maintenance and revitalisation).

Measuring (ethno)linguistic vitality?

UNESCO's (2003) **scale of language endangerment**.

- **Safe (5)**: The language is **spoken by *all generations***. There is no sign of linguistic threat from any other language, and the intergenerational transmission of the language seems uninterrupted.
- **Unsafe (4)**: Most but **not all children or families of a particular community speak their language as their first language**, but it may be **restricted to specific social domains** (such as at home where children interact with their parents and grandparents)
- **Definitively endangered (3)**: The language is **no longer being learned as the mother tongue by children in the home**. The **youngest speakers are thus of the *parental generation***. At this stage, parents may still speak their language to their children, but their children do not typically respond in the language.
- **Severely endangered (2)**: The language is ***spoken only by grandparents and older generations***; while the parent generation may still *understand* the language, they typically do not speak it to their children.
- **Critically endangered (1)**: The **youngest speakers are in the *great-grandparental generation***, and the language is not used for everyday interactions. These older people often *remember* only part of the language but *do not use* it, since there may not be anyone to speak with.
- **Extinct (0)**: There is no one who can speak or remember the language.

Measuring (ethno)linguistic vitality?

- We interpret UNESCO's (2003) scale as the **scale of language endangerment and vitality** shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Language endangerment and vitality scale

Vitality Status		Total Score (in %)
safe	Grade 5	83.40–100
unsafe	Grade 4	66.72–83.39
definitely endangered	Grade 3	50.04–66.71
severely endangered	Grade 2	33.36–50.03
critically endangered	Grade 1	16.68–33.35
extinct	Grade 0	00.0–16.67

Essential questions regarding Enggano ethnolinguistic vitality

- 1) the investigation into the ethnolinguistic vitality of contemporary Enggano:

what is its current level of vitality?

- 2) the investigation into the dynamics of ethnolinguistic vitality and local language ecologies

What are the most critical factors affecting the level of vitality revealed in (1)? Why?

Our research: methods & data

- Qualitative data:
 - ethnographic and interview
- Questionnaire data:
 - Patterns of language practices and identity: subjective reporting
 - 26 participants across villages
 - Different age groups: elders, middle-aged adults and children
- A simple 'production test' of words from the Swadesh list

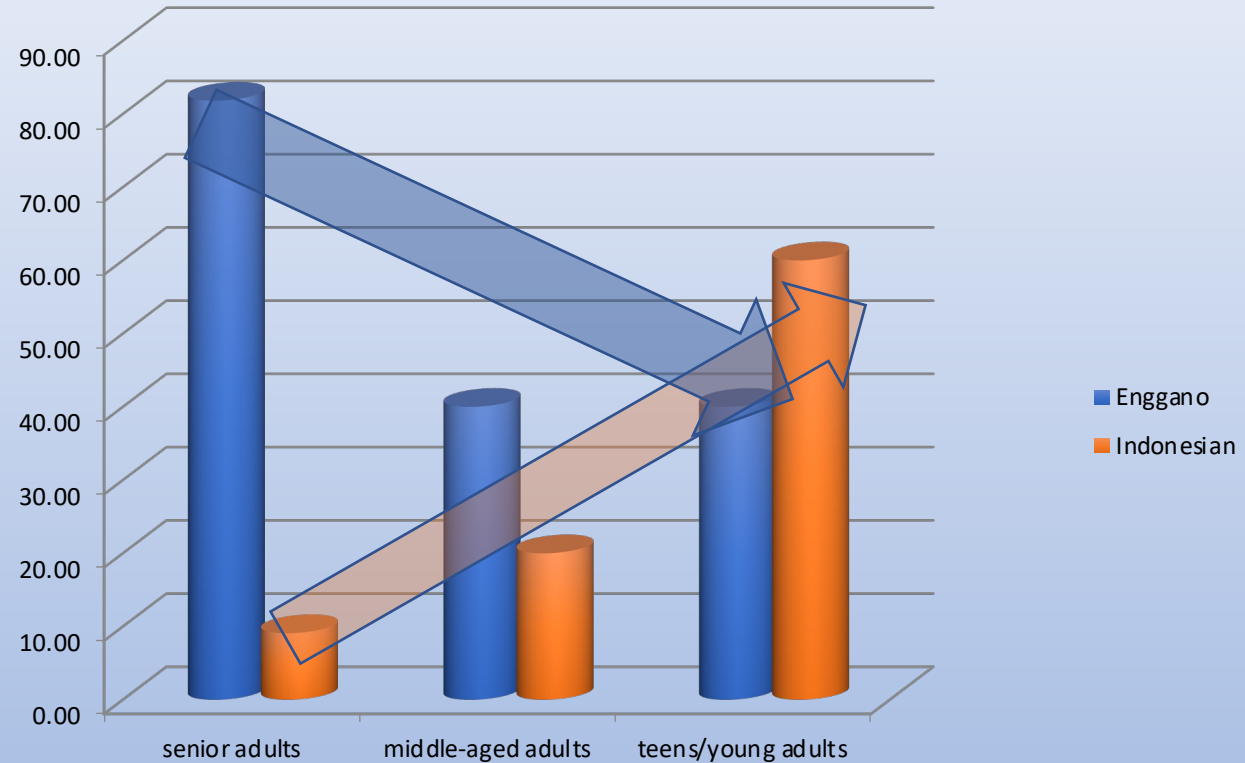
FINDINGS

Enggano shows low/weak vitality across all domains (i.e. domestic & public), showing clear problems in intergenerational transmission

- Indonesian is invading the domestic domain

Patterns of language use in the domestic setting

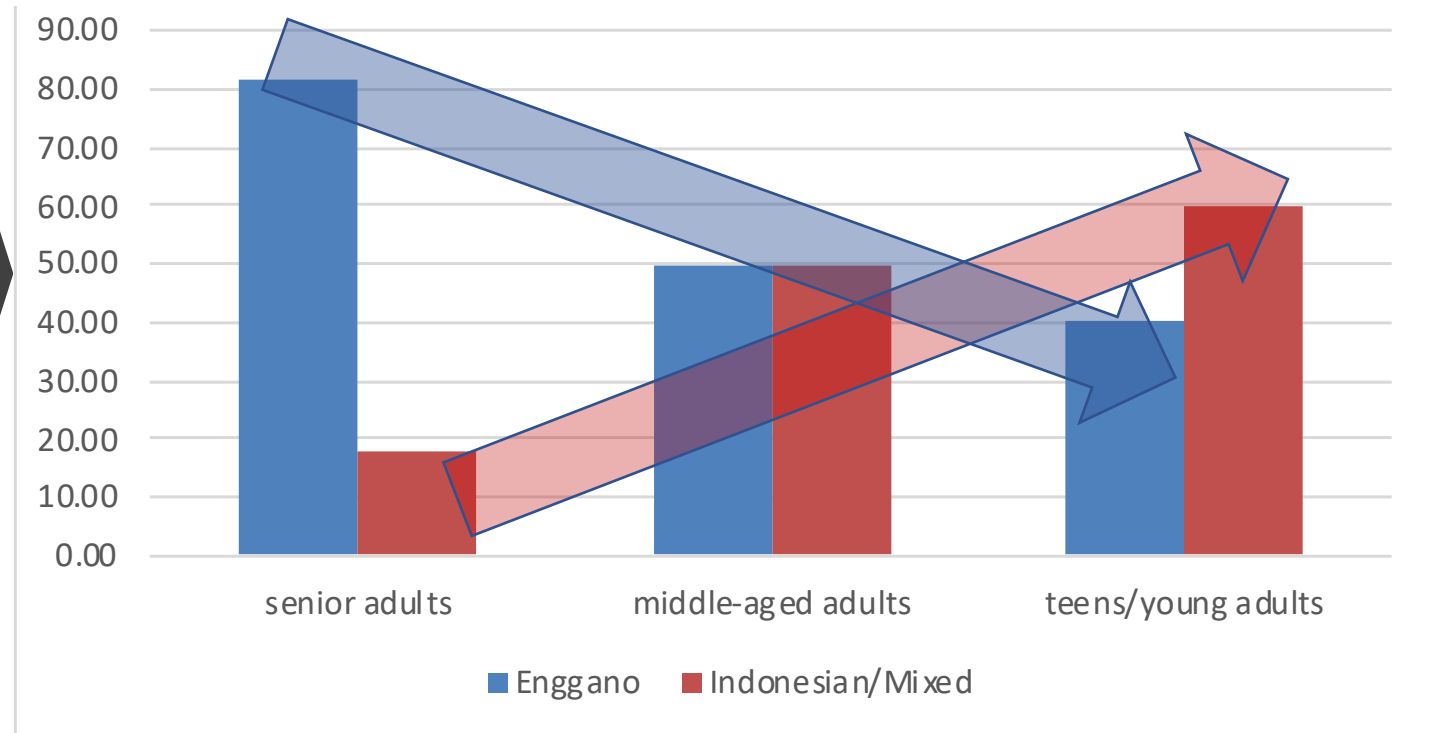
What language do you use when speaking with your sibling?



- Indonesian is invading the domestic domain

What language do/did you use when speaking with your parents?

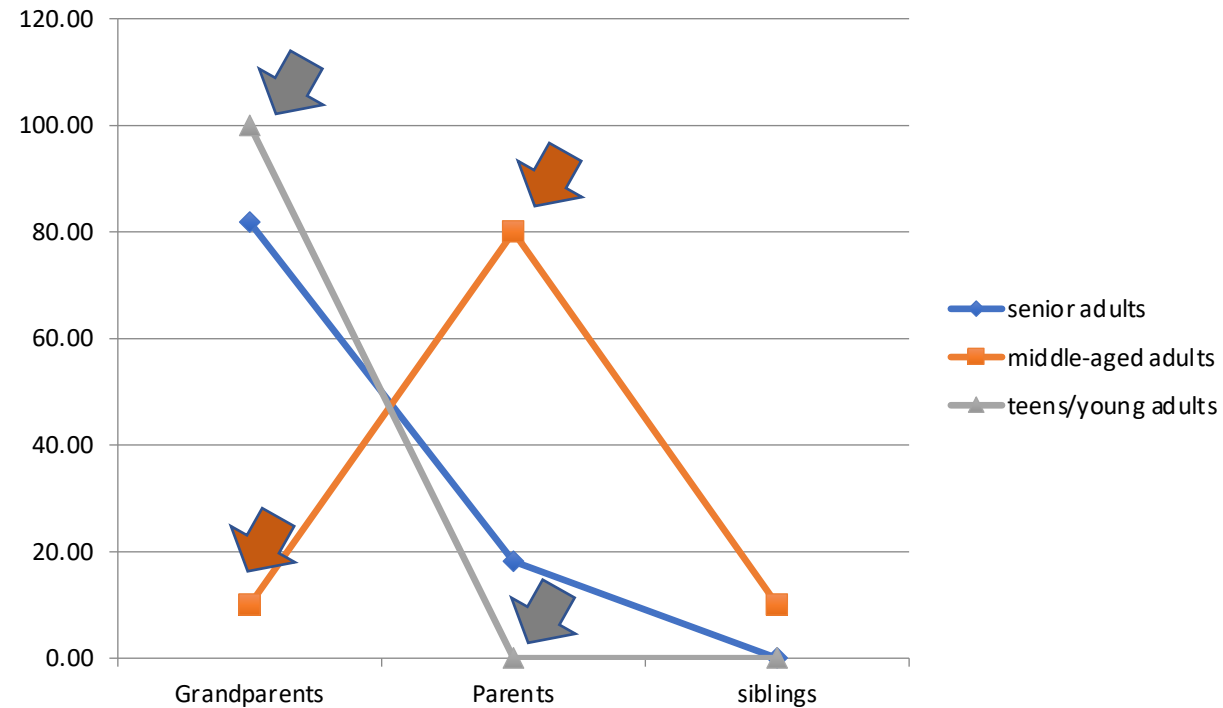
Patterns of language use in the domestic setting



- Children currently learn Enggano from their grandparents rather than their parents

Language acquisition in the domestic setting

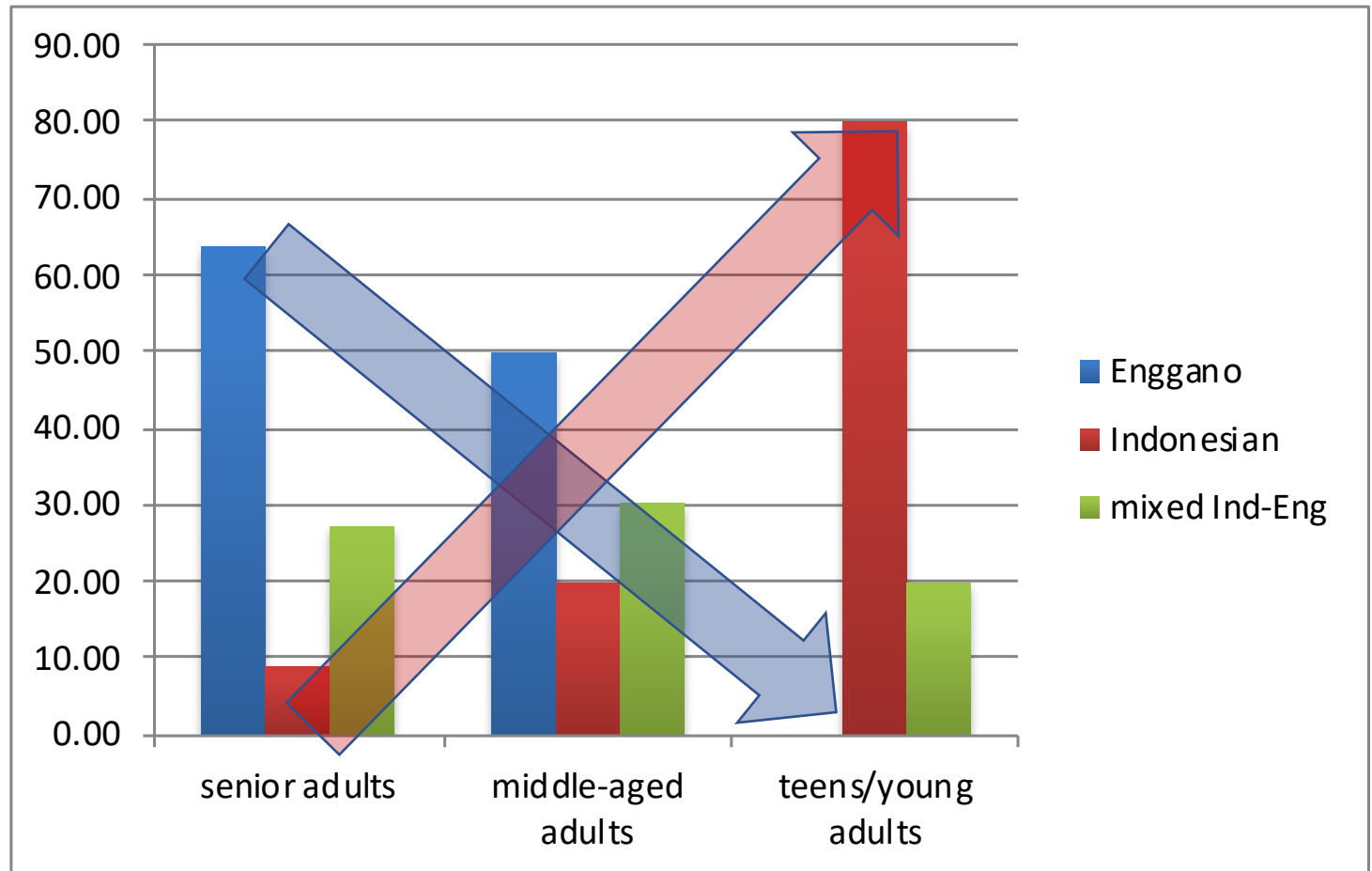
From whom did you learn Enggano?



Indonesian is increasingly dominant in **non-domestic informal domains**

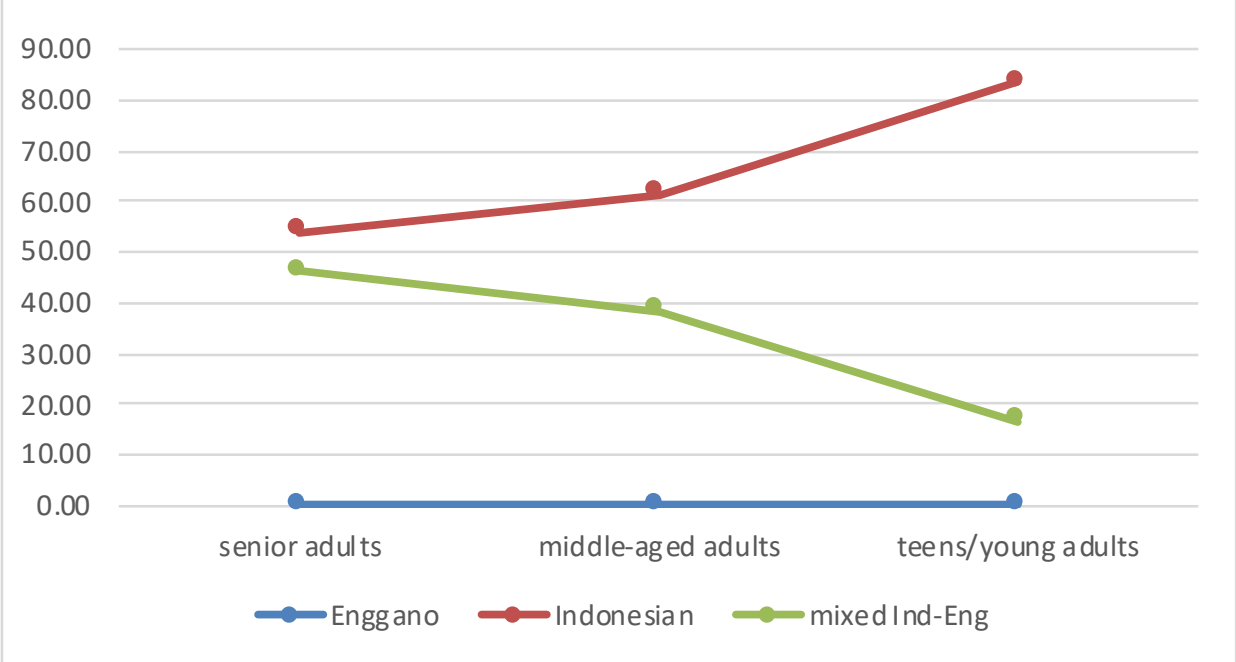
In-group communication:

What language do you use when *speaking with Enggano friends*?



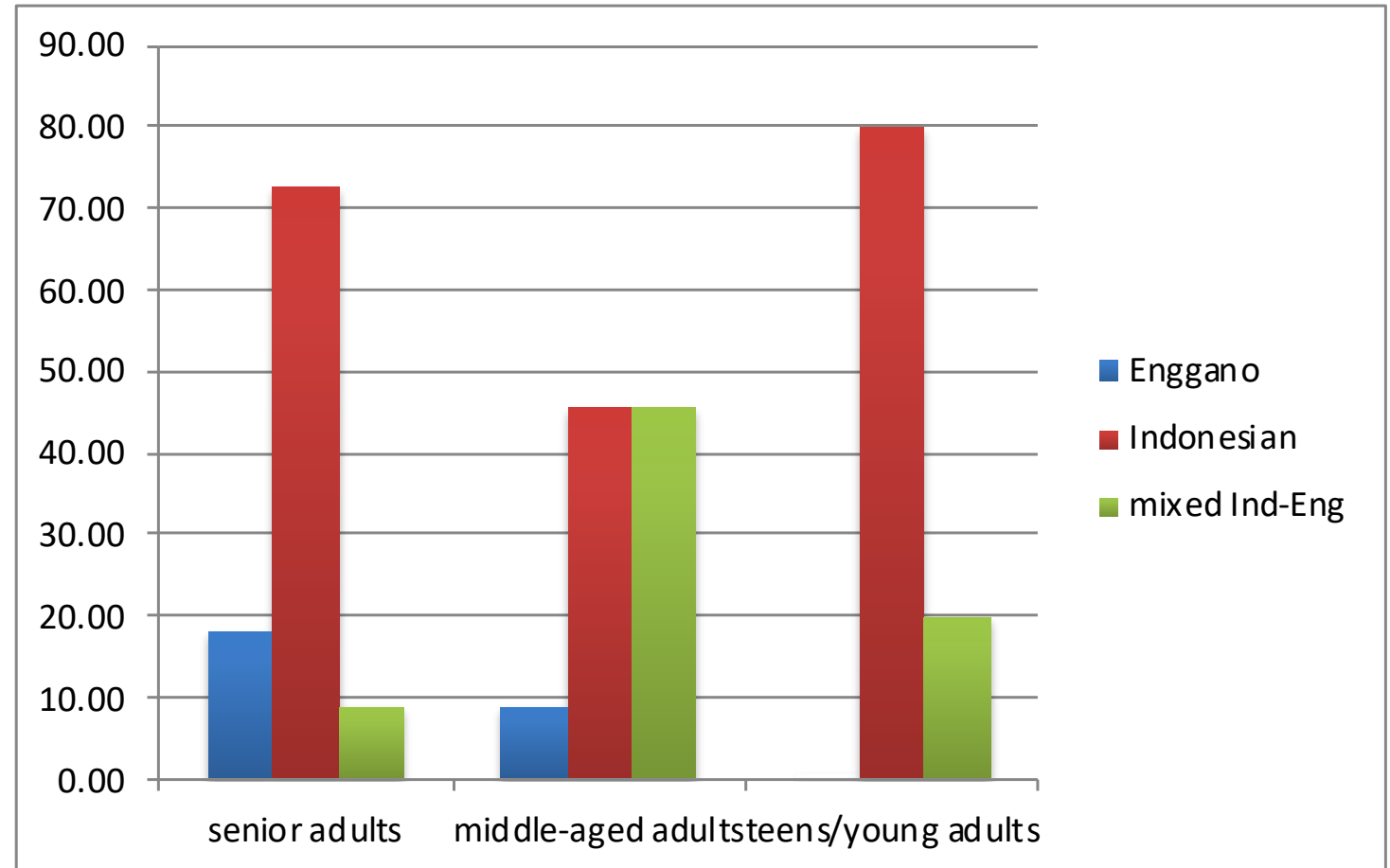
What language do you use when *speaking with non-Enggano friends?*

Out-group
informal
communication



Indonesian is the language in **the formal/official setting**

What language do you use in offices when talking about **official matters with the village/district officials who are Enggano people?**



Fluency and confidence for heathy intergenerational transmission

- Insufficient inter-generational transmission

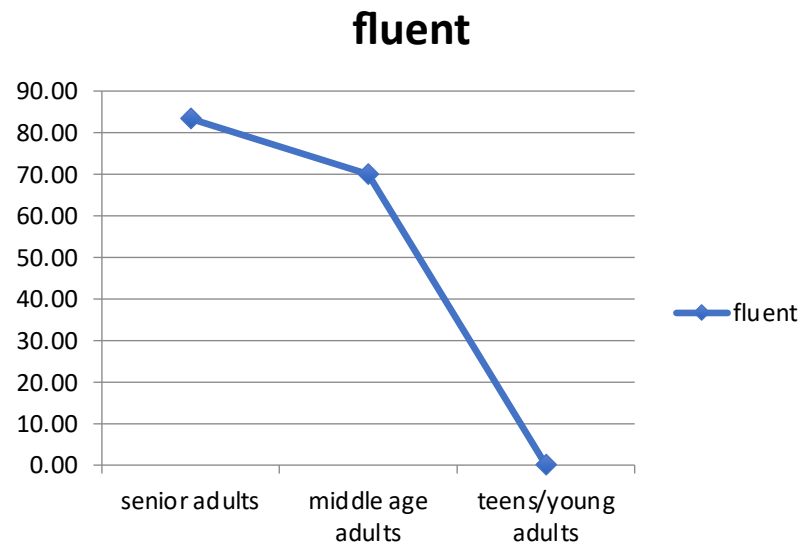


Figure 1: Fluency in Enggano across generations

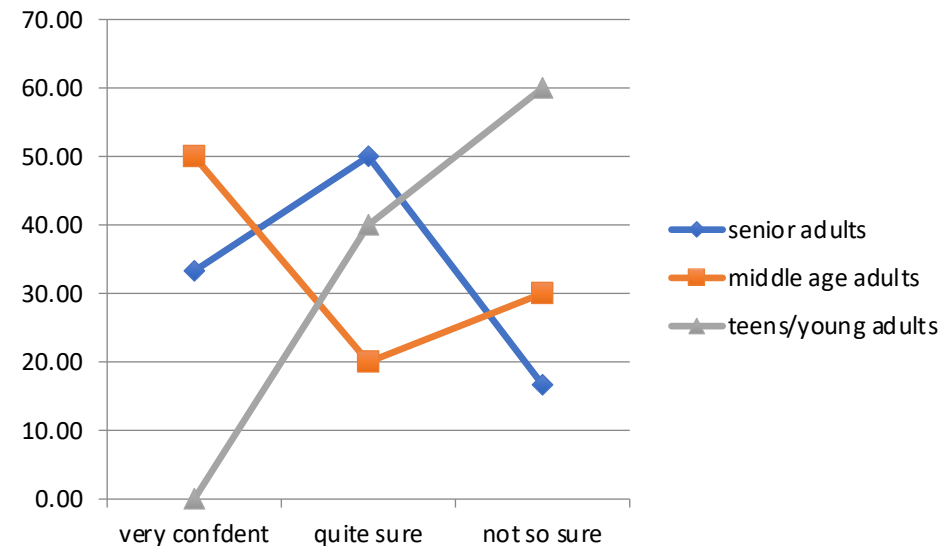
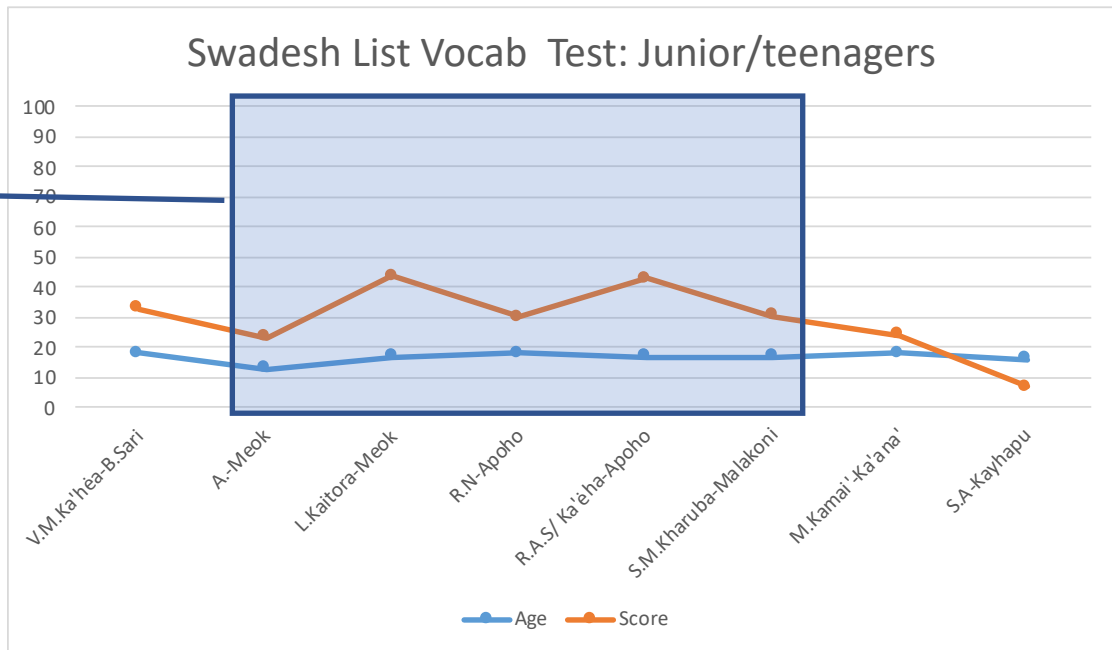
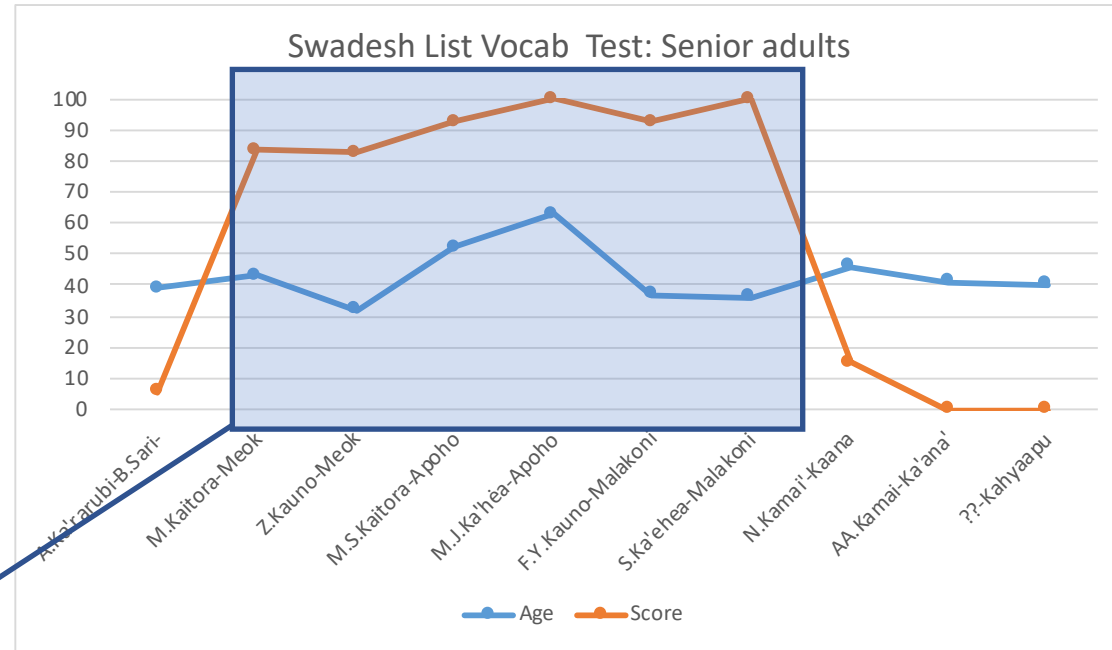
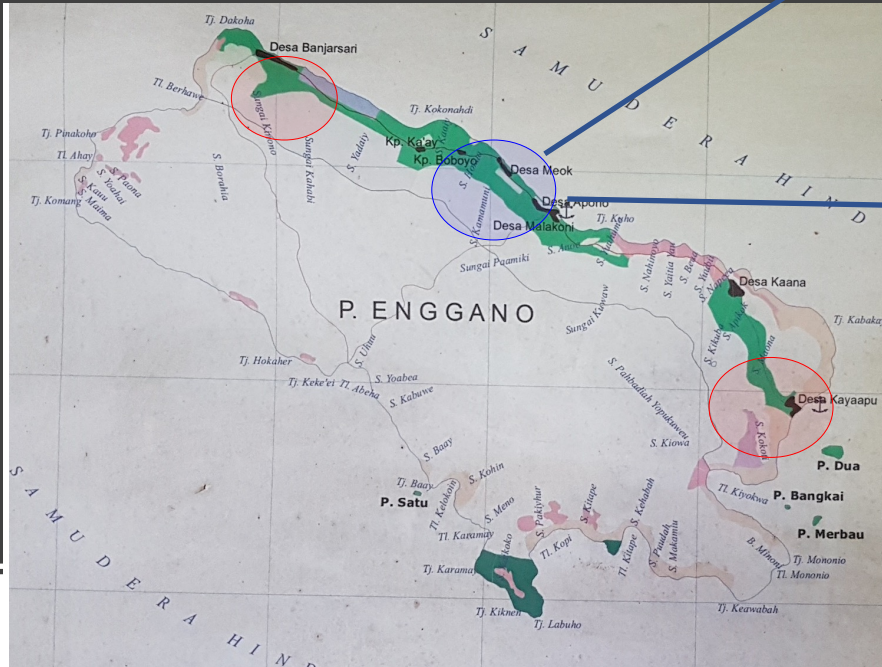


Figure 2: Confidence level of Enggano survival

Vocabulary (Swadesh list) test

- The Enggano people in conservative villages have higher language competence than those in the non-conservative ones



Vocabulary (Swadesh list) Test

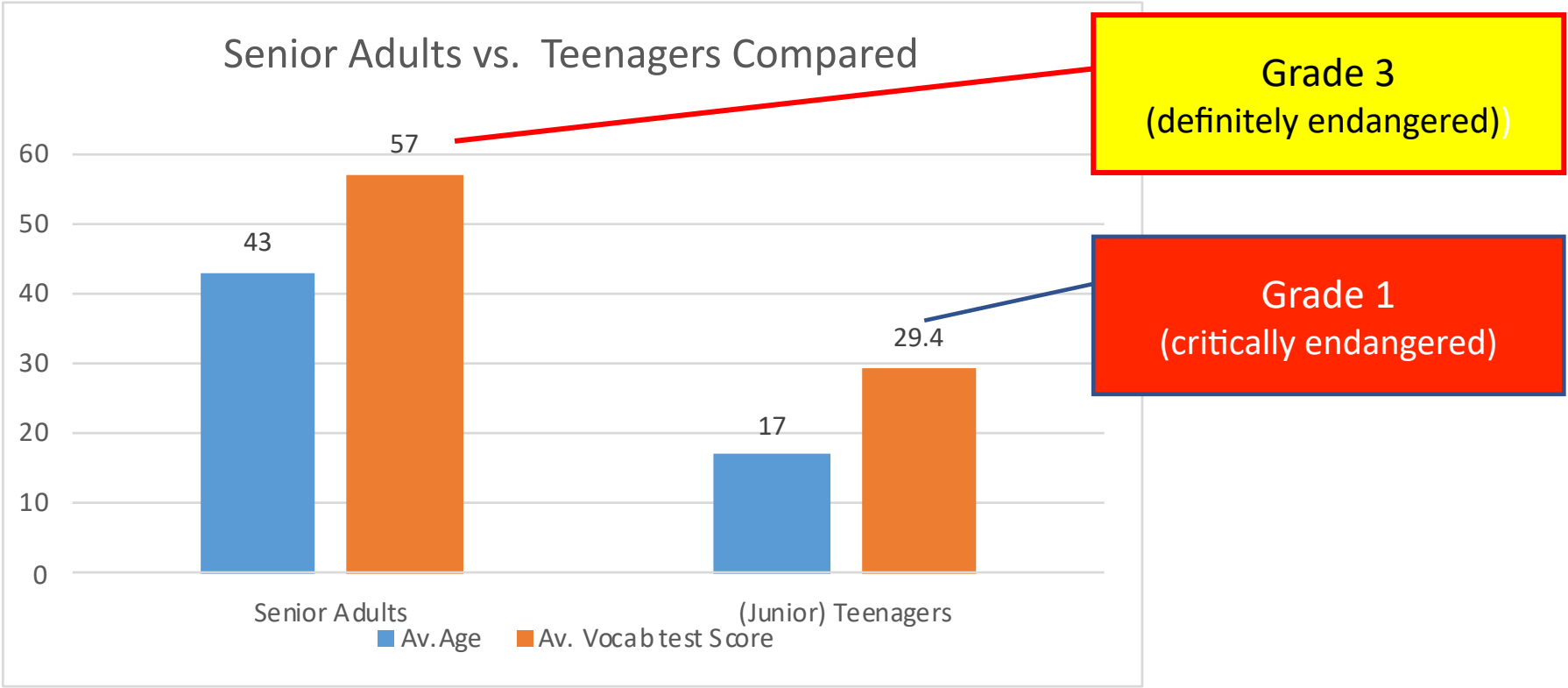


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Interim summary: overall vitality

(based on UNESCO's 6-point scale Language Vitality Assessment)

- LOW VITALITY:
 - based on subjective reporting:
Grade 3 (definitely endangered)
 - a clear shift towards Indonesian among the Enggano children in the domestic and non-domestic domains
 - Based on the vocab test
 - Grade 1 (critically endangered) to Grade 3 (definitely endangered)
- Questions include this:
 - What are the **most critical factors** affecting the low level of vitality?

Analysis:

Extended language ecologies & social networks

4 types of “situated ecologies” of language (Steffensen & Fill 2013, 2014):

- **Natural** ecology
- **Socio-cultural** ecology
- **Symbolic** ecology
- **Cognitive** ecology

Social networks (Milroy 1987; Marshall 2004 among others):

- Degree of (social/physical) integrations of speakers in the speech community
 - **Close-knit networks vs. loose-knit** networks
 - **strong vs. weak social pressure** supporting language varieties specific to particular social groups

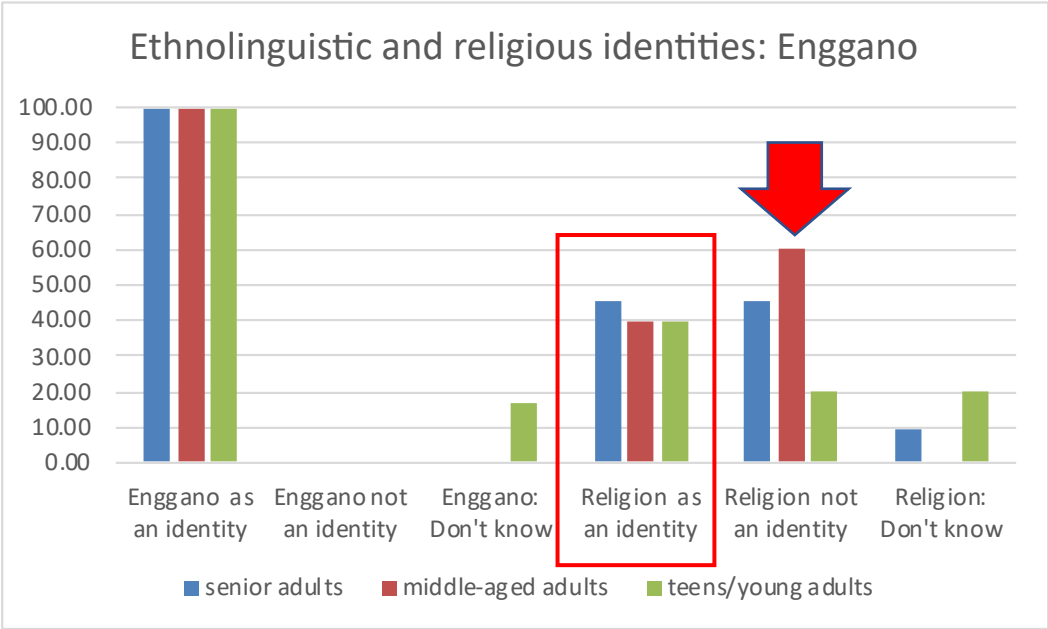
Analysis: Interdisciplinary eco-linguistic perspective

- **A comparative analysis: the vitality of Loloan Malay**, a minority language (2000 speakers) with healthy vitality in Indonesia ([Sosiowati, Arka, Widiastuti, Aryawibawa 2019](#))
- we argue that the two most critical ecological factors for vitality are the following:
 1. the **distinctive identity-related symbolic status of the language** and
 2. **local territorial integrity allowing healthy close-knit social networks** (cf., [Gumperz and Hymes 1972](#), [Milroy 1987](#), [Milroy and Milroy 1992](#)) to function well on a daily basis.

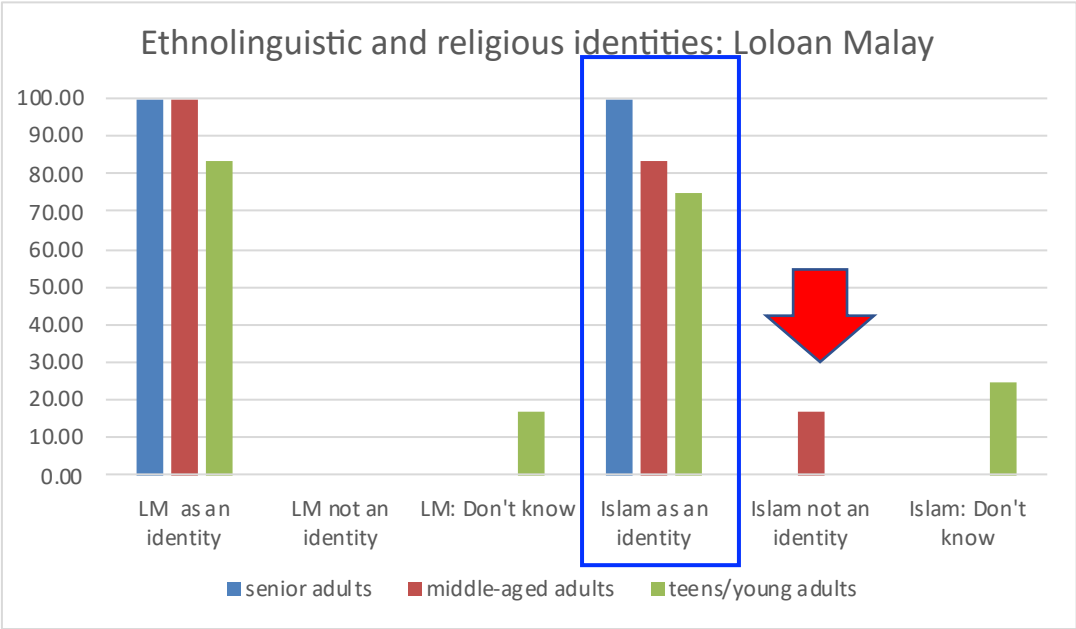


Distinctive identities

- Interconnection of distinctive religious and ethnolinguistic identities with vitality: weak (Enggano) vs. strong (Loloan Malay)



The Enggano people are split between Christians & Muslims



All LM people are Muslims

Analysis: Enggano social networks and migrants

Three main areas with the central area consisting of Meok, Apoho and Malankoli being the conservative villages where native fluent speakers generally live.



Non-Enggano migrants typically live in the northern and southern villages of Banjarsari, Kaana and Kayaapu:

- outnumbering the local Enggano people
- Recent infrastructure development: better/additional seaports, better roads connecting the villages, more mobility
 - **Disturbing and changing the traditional ecologies and social networks**
 - **→ accelerated language shift to Indonesian**

Social networks (Milroy 1980; Marshall 2004 among others)



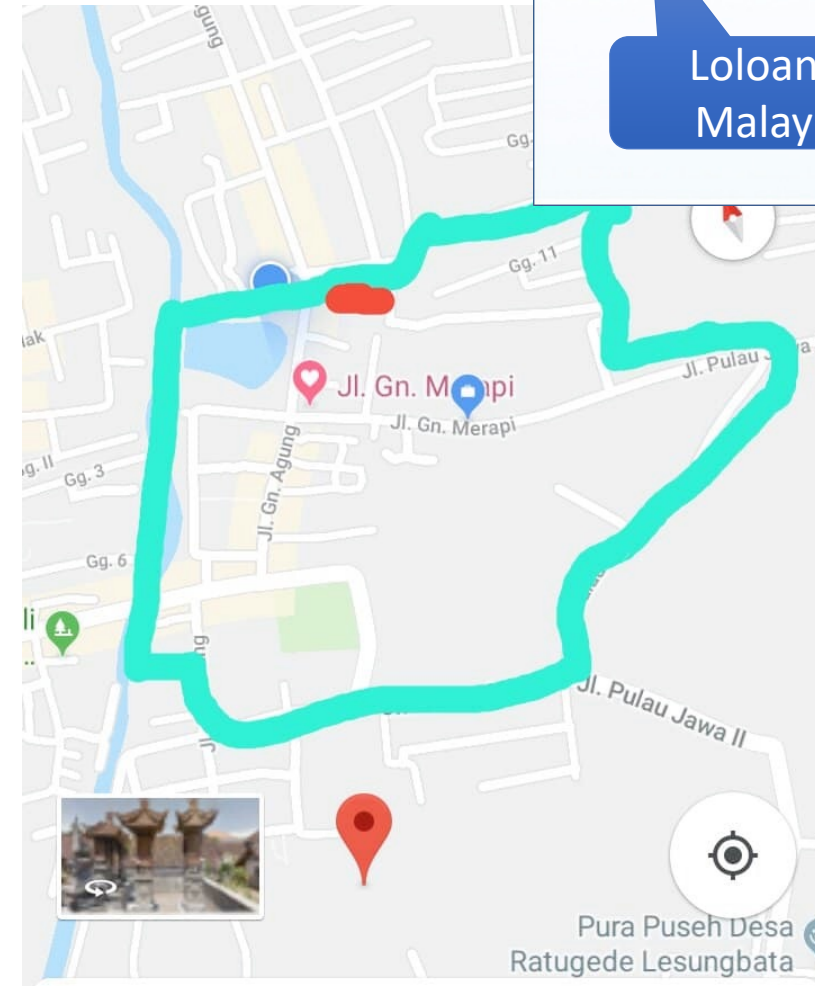
Traditional equilibrium changes due to the change in **natural ecology**; e.g., opening up of **isolation & migration**, resulting in the **weakening/loss** of the traditional social network

KA'ANA: LOOSE-KNIT SOCIAL NETWORKS

Loloan Malay: close-knit social networks

(Sosiowati, Arka, Aryawibawa, Widiastuti 2019)

- The sub-village of Loloan Timur
95% of the population are Loloan Malay people speaking the LM language
- The **territorial integrity** historically allows the formation and maintenance of **close-knit social networks**:
 - **strong social pressure** supporting language maintenance



Map of East Loloan Village

Conclusion

- The presence of **language ideology of collective identity differentiation** is critical for (ethno)linguistic vitality
 - This is **weak or absence** in Enggano, and the **Enggano vitality is low**: unlike in Loloan Malay, there is no/weak link of the ethnolinguistic and religious identities.
- **From an ecological perspective, healthy equilibrium in language competition in the diglosic context is determined by how physical-socio-cultural space is managed to give some kind of territorial integrity that allows the speech community to have opportunities for speech interactions, which in turn allow natural learning/transmission and fluency**
 - Typically happening in **close-knit social networks**: **this is absent or significantly weakened** in southern/northern villages of Enggano

Challenges and (policy) lesson learnt ...?

- Collective differentiation identities? Language loyalty?
 - How to instigate strong presence of **collective differentiation identity** at **the level of speech community** in a given **integrated socio-cultural-physical space**?
- Policy implication/interference?
 - How to help minority speech communities to **sustain the integrity of their extended territorial space** through all means (e.g., language policy regulation; financial support for capacity building and collective differentiation identity)...

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