Patterns of variation in Indonesian Sign Language:
A corpus study of negative and interrogative constructions.

What is now referred to as Indonesian Sign Language (BISINDO) emerged in Java in the 1950s, if not before, and is used by thousands of deaf people in urban centres across the Indonesian archipelago (Author 2015). Taken as a whole, a series of recent linguistic studies of BISINDO reveal considerable variation within and between these urban centres (Bharoto 2011, Wijaya 2011, Isma 2012, Author 2013, 2015). Meanwhile, socio-historical research points to factors promoting both convergence and divergence between different regional varieties (Author 2019).

This paper presents the findings of analysis currently underway on the grammatical domains of negation and interrogatives in BISINDO. This analysis is based on the Corpus of Indonesian Sign Language Varieties, which includes data from over 130 signers aged 16 to 71 in six cities: Solo (Central Java), Makassar (South Sulawesi), Ambon (Maluku), Padang (West Sumatra), Pontianak (West Kalimantan) and Singaraja (Bali).

Both domains feature complex relations between form and function. Analysis of negative constructions so far has found that the six varieties have a similar but not identical set of negative particles, clitics and suppletives. A single predicate can be negated using different grammatical variants, as demonstrated in 1(a)-1(c), where the modal predicate 'can' is negated using a different variant each time. Grammaticalisation can be observed in this domain, and there is evidence to suggest that Solo BISINDO – and particularly its younger signers – sometimes favours variants that are more morphologically complex (Author 2019).

1(a)   Negation with basic clause negator (NEG – predicate order)   *Makassar*

mouthing:		tidak	bisa
manual gloss:	**TJ:PRO1**	**TIDAK**	**BISA**
English gloss:	PRO1	NEG	can
translation:	*'I cannot do it.'*		

1(b)   Manual negation coextensive with mouthed predicate (simultaneous)   *Makassar*

bicara	bisa	tidak-apa-apa
BICARA	**TIDAK**	**TIDAK-APA-APA**
talk	NEG	never mind
'If you cannot speak, it doesn't matter'		

1(c)   Simultaneous negation with suppletive (TIDAK-BISA)   *Solo*

belum bisa	(*belum* = neg. completive)
TIDAK-BISA	
cannot	
'I couldn't yet [ask for a break].'	

For the first time, I present quantitative analysis based on the coding of internal and external factors for tokens in each domain – negation and interrogation. The aim is to shine a light on how BISINDO is developing, and prompt questions that are of relevance to the field as a whole, including the identification of negative clitics and the spread of gestures.

References

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