Tergantung **("It depends"):**
A quantitative analysis of language choice in Indonesia

This paper examines language choice and *domains*, using Indonesia as a case study. In multilingual settings, "who speaks what language to whom and when" provides "socio-cultural context for…variation in language choice" (Fishman 1965: 72). Fishman enumerates nine *domains* of language use: family, playground/street, school, church, literature, the press, the military, courts, and government administration. In-depth studies of language choice with small numbers of speakers have largely concluded that individual social networks are more predictive of language choice patterns than domains (Gal 1978, Li 1994, Zentella 1997, Dubois and Horvath 1998). Here we argue that analyses of language choice by domain continue to be a useful metric for analyzing language shift, and we can collapse multiple sociolinguistic contexts into fewer domains for analysis. We consider intra-speaker variation in language choice from the point of view of the larger community – examining the degree to which different speech contexts cluster in a community where 700+ languages are gradually losing ground to a dominant national language.

We surveyed 548 participants at fifteen Indonesian universities in eleven locales, asking about their personal and linguistic background, parents'/grandparents' language use, language beliefs, and language use in 34 contexts that differed by interlocutor (e.g. mother, neighbors, maid), setting (e.g. home, work, the market), and activity (e.g. counting, texting, praying). 14/34 contexts included two variables (e.g. praying privately, praying in a place of worship). With these data we can analyze sociolinguistic contexts of language use and focus on the question of whether some sets of contexts cluster into broader domains. Our results suggest that it is possible to collapse 34 contexts into fewer domains and still get the same results.

Our results show that most respondents grew up in multilingual households. Respondents reported using Indonesian, 80 local languages, and 14 foreign languages, exemplifying the complexity of the Indonesian linguistic landscape. Respondents also distinguished between registers (listing, for example, *Jawa kromo* (high Javanese) or *Jawa ngoko* (Low Javanese) in different contexts). The results demonstrate Indonesian's expansion from school and official settings to extensive informal daily use, as seen in Table 1. Some pairs of contexts are closely related. For example, a respondent has a 94% probability of using the same language(s) with her father that she does with her mother. Moreover, by analyzing the probability that an individual will use the same language in context A and B for each context we find a great deal of agreement with Fishman's domains. We can identify a *family* cluster, for example, that includes the contexts 'with mother,' 'with father,' 'with siblings,' 'with grandparents,' 'with maid,' 'when dreaming,' and 'when angry.' Finally, we also find quantitative support for an implicational scale of language choice (cf. Gal 1978). At two ends of the scale we see that the language(s) used with one's spouse is highly correlated with all other contexts (Figure 1), while the language(s) used when watching TV has a low probability of being shared with any other context (Figure 2).

References

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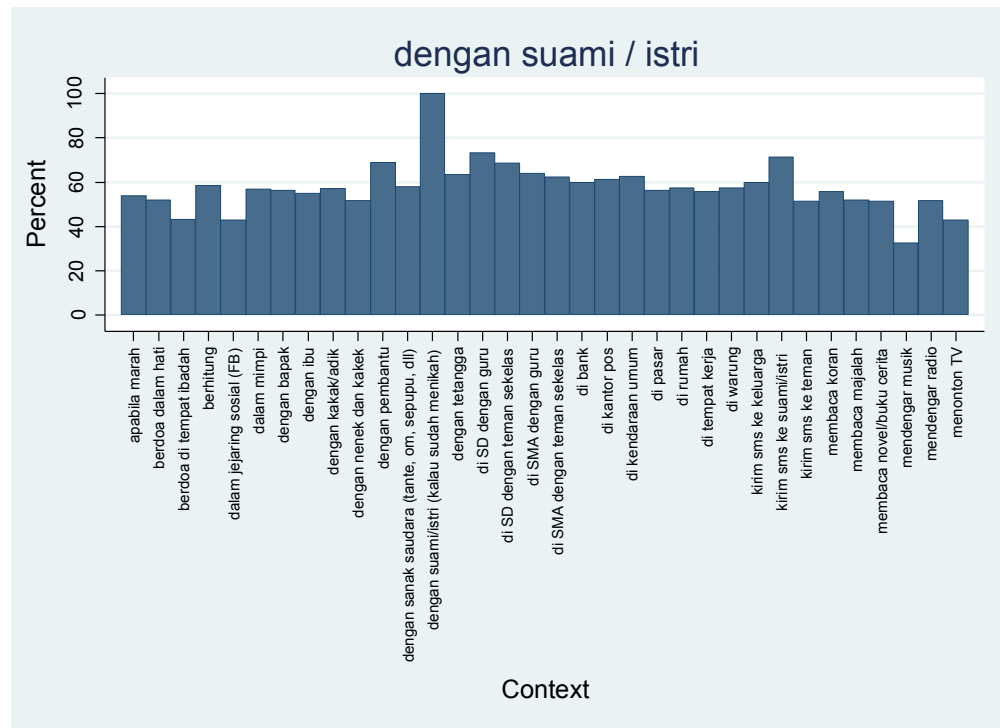
Figures and tables

Figure 1: Probability that speaker will choose same language group in the other 33 language contexts, given that the speaker uses that language group with a spouse (*dengan suami/istri*).
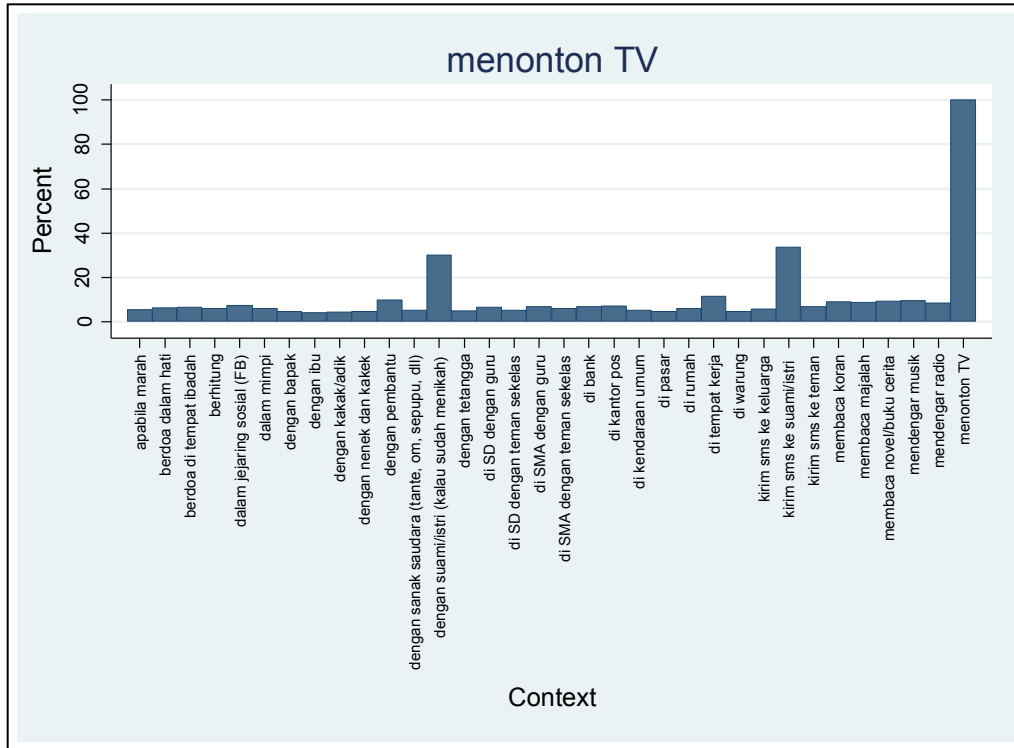
Figure 2: Probability that speaker will choose same language group as the other 33 contexts given that the speaker uses that language group when watching TV (*menonton TV*)

Language groups	Frequency (across contexts)	Percent
0	4,183	27.12
1	1,512	9.8
2	8,585	55.66
3	825	5.35
4	320	20.7
Total responses	15,425	100.00

Table 1: Frequency of responses from 548 respondents in 34 different contexts: 0=local; 1=local and Indonesian; 2=Indonesian; 3=local/Indonesian and foreign; 4=foreign (Note: 3,207 missing values where respondents did not indicate any language)