

Gaul, conversation and youth genre(s) in Java

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This paper provides a nuanced understanding of *bahasa gaul* ‘the language of sociability’. It does so by examining more than 25 hours of casual youth conversations in Malang, East Java. Some studies have discussed the linguistic forms (e.g. idioms, abbreviations) associated with *bahasa gaul*, but few have shown how these forms are used in interaction. In this paper, I show how *bahasa gaul* styles are used to enact interactional stances in Indonesian youth conversations. These stances enable youth to challenge traditional hierarchies of the prior generation, and by doing so construct a contemporary sense of what it means to be Indonesian, and speak the national language. Such social practices are core to the *gaul* identity in post-Reform Indonesia, but they are also contextually-bound and localised. Consequently, I argue, it is more useful to think of *bahasa gaul* as a series of localised, generic practices rather than a named language variety.

1. Introduction¹

Gaul, literally ‘social’, emerged as an important youth identity in post-Suharto Indonesia. Language features associated with *bahasa gaul* ‘the language of sociability’ were an important resource for the construction of a *gaul* identity. *Bahasa gaul* has been described in a general sense (e.g. Smith-Hefner, 2007; Manns, 2010) but few researchers (e.g. Djenar, 2008, 2012; Djenar & Ewing, 2015; Djenar, Ewing & Manns, 2018) have demonstrated how its use is patterned or structured. The current paper explores how *bahasa gaul* is used in casual youth conversations in Malang, East Java. Specifically, I show how *gaul* styles are selected at key points within conversations to enact stances. It is these stances, I argue, as much as the selection of the styles themselves, that enable young speakers to construct *gaul* as a social category. Genre is a useful concept for understanding how interactional stances may be recognized as linked to identities. Genres may be defined as “culturally recognised, patterned ways of speaking, or structured cognitive frameworks for engaging in discourse” (Coupland, 2007, p. 15). Along these lines, Coupland (2007, p. 15) posits a participant-focused view of genre:

[The main criterion for genre is] that participants have some significant awareness, as part of their cultural and communicative competence, of how the event-types they are engaging with are socially constituted ways of speaking.

The current paper discusses this awareness in terms of the dialogic organisation of conversation (see Bakhtin, 1981). Dialogic in this case refers to how every utterance (or indeed language feature) takes its meaning from prior utterances and/or prior uses of

¹ This paper has benefited greatly from conversations and correspondences with Julie Bradshaw, Novi Djenar, Robert Englebretson, Michael Ewing, Simon Musgrave, Catur Siwi Dia Rachmatika and Nancy Smith-Hefner. However, none of these individuals have seen this paper nor should my gratitude here be interpreted as their support for the ideas herein. Any mistakes or infelicities remain my own.

the same utterance (Du Bois, 2007). In other words, conversation participants are continuously drawing on and reacting to the words of others. The dialogic nature and use of *bahasa gaul* will be made clearer throughout this paper. This clarification, in turn, will lead to a discussion of how *bahasa gaul* indexes a socially constituted way of speaking in Malang, and how, as a locally constituted way of speaking, it is different from the *bahasa gaul* spoken in other places. Yet, it is firstly essential to set out what I mean by *gaul* and *bahasa gaul* in this paper.

2. Gaul identity and bahasa gaul

Boellstorff (2004, p. 189) perhaps best encapsulates *bahasa gaul* when he dubs it “[t]he language of association and interaction”. This is the language that Indonesians use among themselves to interact in informal contexts, and it takes many forms depending on the interlocutors or context. In other words, there is not a national *bahasa gaul* per se, but rather locally constructed and perceived understandings of *bahasa gaul*. This understanding might include Indonesian language styles, ethnic language styles or other language styles as relevant to the local context. What is considered *bahasa gaul* in Jakarta is different in many ways from what is considered *bahasa gaul* in Malang, East Java. There may even be differences in what is considered *bahasa gaul* across social groups or generations within a single geographic location like Malang. For example, among the working class and many older people in Malang, *bahasa gaul* is Javanese and a local ludling known as *bahasa walikan* ‘front-to-back language’ (see Yannuar and Kadarisman, this volume). Among the middle class and many younger people in Malang, *bahasa gaul* is typically Javanese, a variety of Indonesian or a mix of both. Yet, most important to the current paper is the idea that the *bahasa gaul* in Jakarta influences the *bahasa gaul* spoken in other parts of Indonesia. Djenar (2012, p. 49) writes, “[t]hat the colloquial Jakartan Indonesian has had a significant influence on the language of urban youth is unquestionable”. This was indeed the case among the young and middle class of Malang at the time the current study was conducted (from 2007-2009).

The application of labels to language varieties in a diffuse and/or changing speech community is problematic (Errington, 1985), and this was certainly the case among the young and middle class of Malang at the time. Some language styles could be categorised as *bahasa gaul* styles without controversy among young people in Malang. These uncontroversial styles included ephemeral abbreviations, blends, lexical items and idiomatic expressions, which were included in popular and widely available dictionaries (e.g. Sahertian, 2001; Emka, 2007; Haikal, 2007). For instance, *PD*, pronounced *pede*, is an abbreviation for *percaya diri* ‘to believe in oneself’. *BT*, pronounced *bete*, is an English-derived abbreviation of ‘bad tempered’ and means ‘to be in a bad mood’ when used as *bahasa gaul*. Youth frequently learn these styles from Jakarta-based mass media outlets, actors and musicians. *Bahasa gaul* in this sense draws on a number of sources including homosexual argot, English and *Prokem* (Smith-Hefner, 2007), the latter an argot associated with gangsters and criminals (Rahardja & Chambert-Loir, 1988). However, the labelling of some other language styles as *bahasa gaul* was controversial. For instance, language styles linked to Jakarta Indonesian (e.g. *deh*, *dong*, *gué*) were varyingly labelled *bahasa gaul*, Jakarta Indonesian or Colloquial Indonesian in Malang (see Manns, 2011, 2014). For the purposes of the current paper, I include these Jakarta styles in the analysis of *bahasa gaul* as I will show how they are important for enacting stances vis-à-vis *gaul* identity in Malang.

Some work has been done on the functions of *bahasa gaul* styles and their relevance to *gaul* identity. Smith-Hefner (2007) provides a thorough description of *bahasa gaul* as well as a preliminary description of its functions. Among other things, she finds that

young Indonesians frequently used *bahasa gaul* to discuss taboo topics. For example, a young Indonesian going out on a date might be warned by friends to buy a *safeting* ‘condom’, so he or she won’t end up *MBA*, an abbreviation meaning ‘married by accident’. Smith-Hefner (2007) and Manns (2010) have shown that *plesetan*, literally ‘slip of the tongue’, is an important means through which youth exhibit their creative linguistics abilities. *Plesetan* is a punning and word game in which speakers creatively manipulate words and meanings through word blending or the manipulation of sounds (Jurriëns, 2009). For instance, someone hearing *aku benci kamu* ‘I hate you’ might break down the syllables of *benci* ‘hate’ and reformulate them as *benar benar cinta* ‘[you] really love [me]’. Thus, the youth identity *gaul* and its associated language styles have been moderately well-described. However, scholars (e.g. Djenar, Ewing & Manns, 2018) have only recently shown how *gaul* identity and *bahasa gaul* emerge in interaction between young people. In other words, earlier work like Smith-Hefner’s provides a thorough account of what young people said about *gaul* and *bahasa gaul*, but we have only recently begun to examine what young people actually do with these styles in interaction. The current paper joins this more recent work on *bahasa gaul* in interaction, and frames this interaction in terms of stance, indexicality and dialogicity.

3. Stance, indexicality and dialogicity

Stance has become a productive analytical tool for studies of language in interaction (Jaffe, 2009). Du Bois (2007, p. 163) provides a useful and well-cited working definition of stance:

[s]tance is a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field.

Social categories are built around common stances through social practice (Eckert, 2012). These stances are indexed locally in discourse through the use of linguistic and non-linguistic styles drawn from the wider community (Eckert, 2012). Repeated stances can emerge as stabilised repertoires of styles linked to situations and/or social identities (Ochs, 1990; Bauman, 2004; Johnstone, 2009). Thus, with reference to the current paper, we might expect youth concerned with *gaul* to take stances through the use of language features associated with *bahasa gaul*. Furthermore, certain styles, not originally *gaul*, may come to be linked to *bahasa gaul* due to their repeated use for *gaul*-like stances. For instance, *bahasa gay* provided a rich source of lexical borrowing for Indonesian youth from the 1990s (Boellstorff, 2004). Through repeated use by young people, many words originally linked to *bahasa gay* came to be associated with *bahasa gaul* in Jakarta and other areas of Indonesia.

The study of indexicality is essential for understanding stance and stance-taking. The study of indexicality focuses on the index, which may be understood in its simplest sense as linguistic (or non-linguistic) feature that points to some social meaning. So (in the simplest sense), we can understand a linguistic feature like the pronoun *saya* as an index pointing to social meanings like social distance or formality, and conversely the selection of *aku* as pointing to social closeness or informality (see Djenar, Ewing & Manns, 2018). Many might suggest the Jakarta pronoun *gué* indexes Jakarta identity, especially when used in places like Malang (see Manns, 2011, 2014). However, studies of indexicality have shown that the use of indexes in interaction are locally oriented, and best understood with reference to stance and stance-taking (see Djenar, Ewing & Manns, 2018). Studies of stance frequently draw on Ochs’ (1992) notion of direct and

indirect indexicality. Ochs (1992) argues that linguistic variables normally viewed as directly linked to identities (e.g. *gué*=Jakarta identity) are, in fact, often indirectly related. This indirect relationship is mediated by stance, social events and social acts (Ochs, 1992). For instance, Englebretson (2007) and Manns (2012) have shown that non-Jakarta youth do not use Jakarta pronouns because they wish to directly index Jakarta identity. Rather, these speakers select these pronouns to draw on stereotypical qualities of Jakarta speakers, such as ‘coolness’, ‘toughness’ or ‘outspokenness’. In keeping with Ochs (1992), Manns (2012) argues that stances like these enable Malang youth to indirectly index *gaul*. I build on this idea in the current paper by showing how language styles are selected to enact stances, and it is these stances as much as the language styles themselves that construct *gaul* and *bahasa gaul*.

Dialogicality has been among the key concepts to stance scholars concerned with indexicality in interaction. Du Bois (2007, p. 140) writes:

Dialogicality makes its presence felt to the extent that a stancetaker’s words derive from, and further engage with, the words of those who have spoken before—whether immediately within the current exchange of stance utterances, or more remotely along the horizons of language and prior text as projected by the community of discourse.

Dialogicity then encompasses two related concepts. The first (remote) concept entails our understanding of indexes and indexicality above. A speaker who selects a linguistic feature (consciously or subconsciously) invokes dialogic meanings associated with a perceived user of that feature from some other time or place (i.e. what Bakhtin (1981) discusses as ‘voicing’). As noted above, a speaker in Malang who selects *gué* on one level invokes a user of Jakarta Indonesian, but on another the many perceived qualities of that user (e.g. ‘coolness’, ‘toughness’). The second (immediate) notion of dialogicity relates to the way in which the speaker in an interaction responds to the immediately prior utterance, and how this influences the utterances that follow. For instance, a speaker who wishes to end a discussion or debate on a topic might punctuate an utterance with the interactional particle *dong*. Djenar, Ewing and Manns (2018) note that *dong* enacts a stance demanding that a hearer recognize common ground, and in fact that the hearer should already be aware of this common ground. In an interaction, use of *dong* often insinuates that the topic no longer needs to be discussed, and consequently further utterances (at least on this topic) are no longer necessary or even welcome.

This paper shows that such dialogic stances (e.g. the toughness invoked by Jakarta Indonesian; demands for recognition of common ground) are important to enacting *gaul* identity. I do this by exploring the use of *bahasa gaul* styles in casual conversations by 25 young, educated Javanese individuals in Malang, East Java. More than 25 hours of casually-occurring conversations among these middle class participants were recorded, transcribed and analysed. To minimize the observer’s paradox (cf. Labov, 1972), I was not present during any of the recordings. I drew on the sequential perspective and Conversation Analysis (CA) concepts to analyse stance, indexicality and dialogicity in the data. It has been noted that CA typically requires that an analyst have native speaker intuition regarding forms and functions (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1988). Thus, all analytical findings were cross-checked with research assistants and the participants themselves whenever possible.

4. *Bahasa gaul* and interpersonal stances

Stances enacted with *bahasa gaul* language styles are sometimes taken up as acts of (*gaul*) identity (cf. Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). In other words, in Ochs' terms above, these stances are interpreted as being directly indexical of *gaul*. These are stances of interpersonal alignment arguably forged through the shared consumption and use of *bahasa gaul* texts (e.g. media, comics) (see Manns, 2014; Djenar, Ewing & Manns, 2018). These stances are normally performed rather than merely spoken. Performing a *bahasa gaul* utterance often entails speaking it more loudly and quickly and drawing out the pronunciation of the final syllable. However, some *bahasa gaul* utterances have idiosyncratic pronunciations based on prior use, for instance, in the mass media. Performed stances are sometimes taken up through the performed repetition of the form. This is the case in the following example:

(1)

Sylvia

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Habis itu | After that |
| 2 | Aku dapet kuliah di Malang | I started studying in Malang |
| 3 | Gitu de::h. | like that de::h². |

Citra

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 4 | Gitu de::h @@. | Like that de::h @@. |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|

The exact meaning of the interactional particle *deh* is tricky to pin down. Djenar, Ewing and Manns (2018, p. 89) argue *deh* indexes indifference to common ground, and bears some similarity to the English 'I'm just saying' or 'whatever'. When performed, the Jakarta interactional particle *deh* (and *dong*, which is discussed below) is spoken with a strong falling intonation with a slight upward lilt at the end. In the example above, Sylvia describes how she came to study in Malang and finishes the utterance by performing the *bahasa gaul* idiom *gitu deh* 'that's the way it is/was'. We may expect that Citra will not question Sylvia's subjective narrative unless she knows or suspects that it isn't true. This is indeed the case here, and in line 4 Citra repeats Sylvia's performed act of identity and laughs. Repetition in Javanese culture means more than mere agreement or acknowledgement of information (Keeler, 2001). It has the same effect as an English speaker saying *you bet* (Keeler, 2001). Repetition for interpersonal alignment is also noted in the following example:

² Interactional particles have not been translated as exact translations are not possible and the relevant meanings are discussed in-text.

(2)

Candra

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Enak diajak ngobrol | It's nice to chat |
| 2 | kayak kita do::ng , Hen. | like we're doing do::ng , Hen. |

Henny

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| 3 | Iya iya lah. | Iya iya lah. |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|

Candra

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| 4 | Iya iya lah. | Iya iya lah. |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|

Candra performs the interactional particle *do:ng* in line 2 for a stance of interpersonal alignment. Candra presents the subjective view that it is nice to be able to talk with Henny. She presents this subjective evaluation as obvious through the use of *dong*. As noted above, the interactional particle *dong* indexes a demand that a hearer recognize common ground, and in fact implies the hearer should already be aware of what is being said. It generally functions as a stronger assertion of common ground than the form *deh*. Henny recognises this stance as an assertion of interpersonal alignment. Henny responds with the performed idiomatic expression *iya iya lah* (literally 'yes, yes' and an interactional particle *lah* used for emphasis) in line 3. The expression *iya iya lah* was in common use at the time of this study due to its use on a popular television talk show called *Cerewis*, literally 'talkative'. Candra repeats the idiomatic expression, and thus, completes a three-turn act of interpersonal alignment across lines 2, 3 and 4.

Stances of interpersonal alignment such as these often occur within the genre of *curhat* (from *curahan hati*, literally, 'pouring out of one's heart'). *Curhat* is an informal genre of conversation in which a speaker discusses a troubling personal issue with an intimate friend. This is seen in the following example:

(3)

Jenny

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Kayaknya lebih dewasa kamu | It seems like you're more mature |
| 2 | sama Sally de::h . | than Sally de::h . |

Henny

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| 3 | Iya iya lah, | Iya iya lah, |
| 4 | secara gitu lho! | you know it is! |

This dyad comes at the end of a *curhat*. In the prior text, Henny has been confiding to Jenny that her sister is in a relationship with an immature boy who may be cheating on her. The form *deh* here is performed by Jenny line 2 to assert that Henny is more mature than her sister. The form *deh's* meaning in line 2, though difficult to translate exactly, approximates the English 'I'm just saying'. Henny follows this stance by performing

evaluation that the job is in fact far from the bus station. In the following example, the interactional particle *deh* is used by a speaker who expects and receives a dispreferred response:

(5)

Fadil

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Perasaan kamu yo wes? | How did you feel yeah? |
| 2 | Cerita deh . | Go ahead tell me deh . |

Citra

- | | | |
|---|--------|-----|
| 3 | Bukan. | No. |
|---|--------|-----|

Here, the interlocutors are discussing plans for an upcoming debate. The topic has turned to the arrogance of the judges at a previous event. Fadil asks Citra to speak directly and honestly about her dislike for these judges in the stance in line 1. However, prevailing Javanese cultural practices suggest that one should suppress the open expressions of negative feelings (Mulder, 2007). Consequently, Fadil likely expects that Citra will be hesitant to do so. Therefore, he also selects *deh* to urge her to speak about the judges without reservation in line 2. As with Example (5), the use of *deh* here indexes indifference to common ground, but in actuality serves as a subtle nudge to Citra to talk about her feelings. It is difficult to translate exactly (as with the use of this and other interactional particles above), but it means something along the lines of ‘tell me or whatever’. Citra refuses and thus gives the dispreferred response in response. A dispreferred response is given once again in the next example but this time with the *bahasa gaul* idiomatic construction *ngapain* ‘what are you doing?’:

(6)

Peni

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Yang jelas besok Bonita pulang. | What’s for sure is tomorrow I’m going home. |
|---|---------------------------------|---|

Mina

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2 | Lho mbak | What mbak ³ !? |
| 3 | Antum ngapain sih pulang mbak? | What are you doing sih going home mbak? |

Peni is excited about going home to visit her family in Madura, an island just north of Java, and expresses this in line 1. The preferred response in this instance would perhaps be an utterance in which Mina shares in Peni’s excitement or asks her casually what she plans to do. However, Mina confronts Peni in lines 2-3, albeit jokingly, to ask her why she would want to go home. In addition to the idiomatic construction *ngapain* (line 3), Mina uses a sassy voice intonation and the interactional particle *sih* to index that this is a playful confrontation. The interactional particle *sih* indexes a desire for the hearer to update common ground or in other words a speaker’s wish for the hearer to accept what

³ *Mbak* is a Javanese-Indonesian kin term meaning ‘older sister’. Kin terms are not translated in the current paper.

is being said (see Djenar, Ewing & Manns, 2018, p. 83). Here, it serves to emphasize ‘what are you doing?’.

The use of *bahasa gaul* for dispreferred responses may be understood on two levels. Firstly, as Englebretson (2007) and Manns (2012) have shown, non-Jakarta speakers may adopt Jakarta styles to invoke certain attributes associated with their speakers. In this case, speakers are arguably drawing on the perception that Jakarta speakers are outspoken, bold, but also (in the case of *deh*) cool and indifferent. Middle class Jakartans are often described in terms of *individualisme* (Mulder, 2007; Wallach, 2008). In Indonesian, *individualisme* has a meaning more closely approximating the English ‘selfishness’ (Wallach, 2008). This often leads Jakarta elites to be viewed as arrogant (Wallach, 2008). In a review of Jakarta society at the end of the New Order, Redana (1997, p. 141) lamented, “people aren’t embarrassed or modest any more, they only become rich, or want to be spoken of as being rich”.⁴ This leads Jakarta forms to have an indexicality of ‘boldness’. Yet, such boldness may be problematic in Javanese communication, which is guided by an ideology of politeness and harmonious relations (cf. C. Geertz, 1960; Wolfowitz, 1991; Keeler, 2001) and this leads to the second point of discussion.

These dispreferred stances are often though not always performed rather than merely spoken. Thus, the observations made about performance above are also apt here. Coupland (2007, p. 154) notes that performance of linguistics forms leads to “processes of social comparison and re-evaluation (aesthetic and moral) focused on the real and metaphorical identities of speakers”. The selection and performance of *bahasa gaul* blurs the line between the real and metaphorical identities. Malang youth are noted performing *bahasa gaul* to project a certain level of irony. The selection of *bahasa gaul* enables participants to do what Du Bois (1986) has called ‘speaking the culture’. Haiman (1998, p. 87), reviewing Du Bois (1986), writes: “the speaker of formulaic utterances conceals or submerges his or her true core self in order to ‘speak the culture’”. Speaking the culture through *bahasa gaul* enables the enactment of stances which are strategically ironic. *Bahasa gaul* enables a speaker to index a shared membership in an imagined community (cf. Anderson, 1983) called *gaul*. Speaking *gaul* culture enables participants to accomplish immediate goals by exploiting the possibility that they are not to be interpreted literally. This enables such stances to be accomplished without coming into conflict with existing Javanese cultural practices. In fact, as was noted in the previous section, performance also brings stances within a frame of *ramai*.

6. *Bahasa gaul* and deontic stances

Deontic stances strongly urge belief or action on the part of a listener. For instance, the interactional particles *sih* and *dong* referred to above are more deontic than epistemic because they strongly and directly urge belief or action on the part of a hearer. The forms *sih* and *dong* are more deontic in the sense that they enact stances deriving from “subjective reaction and personal feelings” rather than epistemic knowledge (Berman, 2004, p. 108). Thus, these stances have the potential to be face-threatening acts, especially within Javanese culture as noted above.

Bahasa gaul language styles are used for deontic stances in a similar manner to dispreferred stances above. Speakers draw on the perceived boldness or the subtle but strategic cool indifference of Jakartans while at the same time blurring the line between

⁴ *Orang tidak lagi “malu,” sungkan, menjadi atau disebut kaya.*

author and utterance (cf. Clift, 1999). The Jakartan applicative suffix *-in* is often used in imperative, deontic stances in Malang as in the following example. Here, an *anak soleh* ‘devout Muslim’ speaker reminds a friend to buy her something to eat:

(7)

Mina

1 Ayo mbak!

Let’s go mbak!

2 **Beliin** ane ma’em!

Buy me some food!

The selection of *-in* marks this utterance as a playful and ironic stance. This utterance may be interpreted at face value (Mina wants food) or as a joke (Mina does not want food). In this example, it is highly likely that Mina wants food. Yet, the selection of *-in* indexes a kind of ironic ambiguity which reduces the likelihood that this utterance will be interpreted as face-threatening. Regardless, the follow-up stance for a deontic stance is often unremarkable. In short, the participants sometimes acquiesce and sometimes not. However, participants are noted at times using *bahasa gaul* to counter the original stance. This is seen in the following example:

(8)

Mina

1 Terus **ngapain?**

What are you doing?

2 Jangan, jangan ntar di sana.

Don’t, don’t go there later.

3 **Dong dong dong dong**, nggak **dong**.

Dong, dong, dong, dong, no, **dong**.

Peni

4 @@

@@

Here, Mina attempts to persuade Peni to not meet up with a lecturer. Mina performs the *bahasa gaul* idiom *dong dong dong* to implore her not to attend in line 3 (adding two additional *dongs* for extra emphasis). *Dong dong dong* was in popular use at the time of this study. This was due to its use on the popular television talk show *Cerewis* as with *iya iya lah* above. *Dong dong dong* conveys a strongly emphasised ‘duh, what were you thinking?’ as it is derived from the interactional particle *dong*. However, it is performed rather than spoken and this blurs the line between speaker and utterance as noted with the dispreferred responses above. The expression *dong dong dong* is normally performed by pronouncing the three *dongs* quickly, like a bell. In doing so, the speaker often pokes the listener or him or herself in the head with each *dong*. The playful nature of this stance is seen in Peni’s first response, which is simply laughter.

The applicative suffix *-in* is often selected with the interactional particle *dong* in imperative, deontic utterances. This is seen in the following example:

(9)

Risky

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Dugem saya, | As for my clubbing, |
| 2 | hanya sekali saja pergi ke dugem. | I've only been clubbing just one time. |

Candra

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| 3 | Gimana ceritain do::ng! ? | Tell me what is was like do::ng! ? |
|---|----------------------------------|--|

Candra selects the suffix *-in* and *dong* here to implore Risky to discuss his clubbing experience. The selection of both variants (*-in* and *dong*) indexes a playful irony which in fact is strategically focused. Candra truly wants Risky to discuss his experience but loosely cloaks this aim by 'speaking the culture'. Candra performs this utterance using the playful voice intonation described above. This enables Candra to index this stance with regard to boldness, *ramai* and *gaul*. However, imperative utterances with the suffix *-in* do not need to be performed. Example (9) is performed because of the presence of the interactional particle *dong*. In contrast, Example (7) above was not performed and this is the case for a majority of the imperative uses of *-in*.

Many of the observations made about dispreferred stances are equally as applicable to deontic stances. The overlap between the two was noted at the start of this section. In a general sense, speakers draw on the indexicality of 'boldness' to accomplish deontic stances. The responses to these deontic stances was noted to be generally unremarkable. However, some speakers are noted countering deontic stances with *bahasa gaul* in the response. Within this section, examples (7), (8) and (9) included use of the suffix *-in* and there are a few observations to make about the use of this suffix in Malang. This suffix is not often performed in the manner described for other *bahasa gaul* styles. A full discussion of this suffix is beyond the scope of the current paper. However, it is worth speculating in a general sense on why this form may not be performed. Firstly, this may simply be due to its bound nature. Most *bahasa gaul* forms are free morphemes and idiomatic expressions. They may, as a result, more easily develop their own histories independent of other forms. Secondly, the suffix *-in* may be more fully incorporated into the local variety of Indonesian than the other forms.

7. *Bahasa gaul* and cheeky stances

I have been arguing that it is stances as much as the selection of *bahasa gaul* that enables young speakers to construct *gaul* as a social category. This is perhaps clearest in the use of *bahasa gaul* to enact 'cheeky' and self-confident stances. These stances include tongue-in-cheek arrogance, insults and the use of constructed dialogues to claim to have misbehaved. These stances are often performed rather than spoken, again blurring the line between speaker and utterance. Both insult and tongue-in-cheek arrogance are illustrated in the following example. Here, Tika is describing me, the researcher, to Samson.

(10)

Samson

1 Ya, pasti sama aku tinggian dia pasti. Yeah, without a doubt he's taller than me.

Tika

2 **Iya iya lah.** **Iya iya lah.**

Samson

3 Kurang ajar. Rude.

Tika

4 [Tapi] But...

Samson

5 [Tapi] yang pasti kerenana **gué dong.** But without a doubt **I'm cooler dong.**

Tika takes a playful jab at Samson's height in line 2 through the use of the *bahasa gaul* expression *iya iya lah*. Rather than merely confirming that I am taller than Samson, she emphasizes that 'of course' this is the case. Samson takes offense (real or feigned) by saying *kurang ajar*. This is literally 'lacking in education' but it more accurately means something along the lines of 'that was uncalled for' or 'rude' or in some instances as a swearword (e.g. 'damn!'). Samson recovers his pride, partially at my expense, in line 5. He does this by selecting *gué* to emphasise that he is 'cool' in comparison to me. He also adds a performed *dong* to emphasise that this is the case. Samson is originally from Kediri and attends university in Malang. However, he also works as a fashion model in Jakarta. In this example, Samson's selection of *gué* enables him to invoke his Jakarta lifestyle which includes clubbing, modelling and other 'cool' activities (see Manns, 2012).

Cheeky stances are frequently insults but these are almost always performed rather than spoken through *bahasa gaul*. It was argued that by performing *bahasa gaul*, speakers simultaneously index ironic distancing and *ramai* 'noisy, bustling'. Speakers are noted exploiting this ambiguity to accomplish face-threatening stances, such as providing a pejorative evaluation of a listener. For example, this speaker performs English and *dong* to pejoratively evaluate a listener's weight:

(11)

Samson

1 Minggir awas **should you can do do::ng.** You **should watch out do::ng.**

2 Ah katanya tambah langsing, Uh, you said you'd slim down,

3 ah rugi kamu turun berapa kilo sih? uh how many kilos have you lost sih?

Here, the speaker playfully warns his best friend that she should lose weight. The English and the stylised use of *dong* in line 1 enables the speaker to embed this

subjective evaluation of his listener within multiple layers of discourse. This strategy shifts the responsibility of interpreting this stance to the listener. This stance is presented as a potential act of identity due to its performed forms. Yet, in actuality, this stance may be a very honest evaluation of the listener presented as a Trojan horse.

Lastly, speakers often use *bahasa gaul* within constructed dialogues to claim to have taken bold and self-confident stances with non-present adults. These stances, I argue, enable a speaker to project the kind of rebellious image which is relevant to the construction and substantiation of *gaul* identity. Tannen (2007) finds that ‘constructed dialogue’ is a more accurate label for what has traditionally been called ‘reported speech’. Tannen (2007, p. 17) writes that “framing discourse as dialogue is not a ‘report’ at all; rather, it is the recontextualisation of words in a current discourse⁵”. The notion of constructed dialogue is well-suited to the reporting of prior exchanges in Javanese discourse. Such reporting has previously been labelled as ‘modelled speech’ in Javanese discourse (Keeler, 1987; Errington, 1998). Modelled speech is the direct quotation of conversations had with non-present others. It is similar to English reported speech, but modelled speech more typically involves a full shift to the kind of language used in the prior or hypothetical context.

Bahasa gaul is often selected in constructed dialogue to playfully claim to have taken bold stances where this is unlikely to have been the case. For example, the speaker in the following extract describes an interaction with her mother:

(12)

Mega

1 Aku suruh mamaku

I told my mum

2 **cariin do::ng!**

Look do::ng!

Here, Mega brags to a friend about how she demanded that her mother find a copy of a film for her. It is not impossible, but improbable that Mega enacted such a strong stance with her mother. The use of *dong* in line 2 enables Mega to project a sassy and self-confident persona by virtue of this modelled stance taken with an adult and authority figure. Once again, speakers are able to draw on the ‘bold’ voice of Jakartans to enact stances in the immediate context. Furthermore, these stances are performed rather than merely spoken and this frames these stances as *ramai*.

8. Conclusion

This paper has drawn on stance, indexicality and dialogicity to show how *bahasa gaul* may be understood as a series of locally instantiated generic practices. By now, a few studies have shown how *bahasa gaul* includes idiomatic expressions, slang words and elements of Jakarta Indonesian. These studies have linked *bahasa gaul* to *gaul* identity, which is forged in post-Reform youth challenging traditional hierarchies, and defining what it means to be Indonesian and speak Indonesian (e.g. Smith-Hefner, 2007). However, scholars have only recently begun to investigate how *bahasa gaul* language

⁵ Djenar, Ewing and Manns (2018, Chapter 5) discuss this in terms of voice presentation and framing. A discussion of the differences between reported speech, constructed dialogue, modelled speech and voice presentation is beyond the scope of the current paper.

styles get used in interaction (e.g. Djenar, Ewing & Manns, 2018). The preceding sections have shown how the use of *bahasa gaul* is patterned and sequenced in casual conversations in Malang, East Java. Speakers select *bahasa gaul* among other things to invoke interpersonal alignment, persuade a hearer to accept a viewpoint or complete an action or to present cheeky, pejorative evaluations of another. Hearers respond with *bahasa gaul* to perform interpersonal alignment, present dispreferred responses or to take cheeky stances of their own. I have argued throughout this paper that it is these stances as much as the use *bahasa gaul* language styles that constitute *gaul* as a social identity.

In sum, this paper has shown how the social category *gaul* has “culturally recognised, patterned ways of speaking, or structured cognitive frameworks for engaging in discourse” (cf. Coupland, 2007, p. 15). In doing so, it has provided a more nuanced understanding of *gaul* and conversation as a genre in Malang, East Java. However, as noted at the start, *gaul* and *bahasa gaul* are localized practices. Even within Malang, working class people have a different understanding of *bahasa gaul* than middle class people, and younger people have a different understanding of *bahasa gaul* than older people (see Manns, 2011). Work by Djenar, Ewing and Manns (2018) has set out how Indonesian youth practices vary across geographic locations (e.g. Bandung, Jakarta, Malang), and across discourse types (e.g. comics, conversation, teen lit). Future work will likely show how youth practices vary and evolve across time and space in Indonesia. Suffice it to say for now, Indonesian youth practices are best thought of not just in terms of named language varieties like *bahasa gaul*, but rather as a series of localized, generic practices.

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