

***Ollei, I was too drunk ollei... Lucky I did not hit someone:***  
**Nativisation of a newly emerging postcolonial English variety in Palau**

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This paper reports variationist research on the adoption and adaptation of indigenous Palauan discourse-pragmatic features in a newly emerging postcolonial English variety in the Pacific. The use of the Palauan address terms *ollei*, *charrach* and *cherrang* has been expanded in Palauan English, so for example, Palauan's male-exclusive term *ollei* (Josephs 1990) is used by females in Palauan English. The original function of *ollei* as an address term has also been expanded to serve some of the functions that *you know* (e.g., appealing for understanding: Müller 2005) and *dude* (exclamation, mitigation, agreement, discourse structure: Kiesling 2004) are acknowledged as serving in other varieties of English.

The data consist of over 85,000 words by 20 teenagers, which is part of a "new" larger corpus of Palauan English containing recording of different generations collected between 2010 and 2015. Spontaneous conversation among same-sex close friends are qualitatively and quantitatively analysed to examine both the distributions and functions of *ollei* and *cherrang* together with those of *you know* and *dude*.

Our real-time analysis of these address terms on the basis of an "older" corpus of Palauan English conversations collected in 2000 and a "newer" one collected between 2010 and 2015 indicates linguistic change in progress. We can draw this conclusion from only rare occurrences of these Palauan address terms in our older corpus as opposed to their very frequent use among predominantly teenagers in our newer corpus. This suggests that they are likely to have been only slowly entering the variety in the late 1990s, but have been spreading rapidly by 2010, mostly among teenagers.

Our statistical analyses of these address terms used by teenagers in our new corpus according to gender and education indicate that they are strongly sociolinguistically stratified by education and gender. Particularly boys who are publicly, rather than privately educated, and who have not travelled extensively outside of Palau appear to be leaders of this linguistic change. A closer analysis of functional distributions, however, suggest that young girls also use *ollei* to other girls only when *ollei* serves functions other than its original function as an address term. Girls seem to be conservatively following the traditional rule of how to use *ollei* in Palauan (i.e., the male-exclusive term used by males to address males; Josephs 1990), not using *ollei* when it serves as the original function as an address term, but only when *ollei* serves the expanded functions, do girls also use it.

The actuation of the adoption of these indigenous address terms in Palauan English is discussed in terms of (a) contextual factors (the continued lack of face-to-face American English input to everyday life in Palau) and (b) change in speakers' perceptions towards English spoken in Palau (from L2 for adults to their own distinct variety of English, "Palish", for youngsters). This paper argues that this is potential evidence of the nativisation of Palauan English, while emphasising the need for a further, more specific account for the linguistic diffusion of these grammaticalised discourse markers.

**References:**

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