

## Social embedding of linguistic change in adolescent Palauan English

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This paper reports variationist research on the adoption and adaptation of indigenous discourse-pragmatic features in a newly emerging postcolonial English variety in the Pacific, namely, the expanded usage of the Palauan address terms *ollei*, *charrach* and *cherrang* in Palauan English. For instance, Palauan's male-exclusive use of *ollei* has been expanded so that it is used by females (and it is also used to address females) in Palauan English. The function of *ollei* as an address term has 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.

Our real-time study 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, which is strongly sociolinguistically stratified by mobility and class (highly mobile, privately educated vs. non-mobile, publicly educated), gender and age. 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 only teenagers in our newer corpus, particularly among boys who are publicly, rather than privately educated, and who have not travelled extensively outside of Palau. Both the distributions and functions of these address terms are scrutinised together with those of *man*, *bro*, *dude* and *you know* in Palauan English.

The actuation of the adoption and adaptation of these address terms 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.