**Transcript**

***Dr Anthony Jukes – Languages of Minahasa (Indonesia)***

My project is based in Minahasa which is a region of Indonesia. It’s situated in Sulawesi. Sulawesi is an island kind of under the Philippines and between Borneo and New Guinea, looks a bit like a “K”. It’s a fascinating island and the particular bit that I’m working in is right next to the Philippines and so the languages there are really like Philippine languages much more than they are like Indonesian. And, there are eight languages spoken in that region. I’m focusing on three of them really to give a very thorough description and documentation of these languages.

What I’m hoping to get out of this is very thorough descriptions of not all, but at least three of the languages of the region and the purpose of that is, well, as a linguist I want to know what the extents, the extent and the limits of variation in human language are and every bit of data that we have about that is helpful for I guess, kind of getting the linguistic project ahead. And, specifically these languages have got very interesting things about, well, the distinction between noun and verb. For some linguistic theories it’s important to have that but in these languages it’s not at all clear that you can really draw that distinction very clearly. It’s not at all clear that you can say that there’s a subject. They’ve got very complex ways of marking voice and who does what to whom and where and with what and that sort of thing. This is really what gets me excited as a linguist is trying to work out that. What I also want to have is a very thorough documentation of these languages. A lot of recordings of the language being used in context and that’s because these languages are all endangered. They’re dying out as not just standard Indonesian but as the local variety of Malay which is called Minado Malay takes over.

It’s useful for me as a linguist of course and it’s useful for linguists to know more about languages. But I think more than that, it’s useful for us as Australians to know more about Indonesia. This is a detailed look at a particular region of Indonesia and it’s an interesting one. It’s an interesting place. It’s somewhere that I think we need to know better. As Australians we need to know more about the diversity of Indonesia. We tend to, I think, get a bit of a monolithic view of it as being this one place. We think of Jakarta and Java as really being Indonesia. But, Bali of course, if we go on holiday there. But, there’s a lot more to it than that. There’s a lot of regional variation. There’s a lot of language variation and I want to just let people know a bit more about that. It’s also, it’s exciting for me because I work with not just communities in Indonesia but around the world and even in Melbourne there’s quite a few families of Minahasans who have settled here and they’ve been here for a while. And, they’re interested in trying to preserve or to revive their local languages and their local cultures and so as we kind of enter a more globalised era then these people who are spread throughout the world, they’re not just in Indonesia, but they’re here, they’re in the Netherlands, they’re in the States, they’re in Hong Kong and in Japan. They like to keep in touch with each other and I see one of the things I can do is I can make available to them material in their languages that they can access from wherever they are and so that’s one of the things I hope to achieve.