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The Making of Language: Developmentalism in Indonesia

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As commonly understood in contemporary English or its translation in the many languages of the so-called Developing countries, development [1] was not only unknown and unspoken of in the pre-colonial communities of what is now Indonesia. It was simply unthinkable. So was the idea of 'language.' In fact, the introduction of the two concepts and the practices to which they refer were inseparable. Once these communities constituted a nation, the work of 'Developing the nation' has been persistently accompanied by the task of 'Developing the national language'.

This article is a critical reappraisal of a common but a-historical view of language. Contrary to the pervasive view, language is not universal. Rather, it is a phenomenon expressing the particular history of a society. I shall examine the radical social transformation that has taken place in the communities of Indonesia during the last few centuries, a transformation both caused by and resulting from the introduction and widespread use of 'language' and 'Development.' It is the story of an irreversible restructuring of pre-existing vernacular world-views and social activities of non-Western and non-industrialised communities.

This discussion will begin with an introduction of the major features of traditional Javanese and Malay communities, where neither 'language' nor 'Development' was known. As a contrast, the prominent features of official contemporary Bahasa Indonesia will then be examined. Finally, I will suggest some preliminary interpretations of how Developmentalist thinking and practice came to the fore in this historical process, as well as recording some noticeable responses it has evoked from the general population.

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1 It is now possible, and useful, to stress the distinction between 'Development,' an independent noun (e.g. ' ... of Development'), and 'development,' a noun of process (e.g. 'development of ...').

Language-Free Communities

Language is not a universal category or cultural activity. Though it may sound odd, not all people have a language in the sense in which this term is currently used in English. The historical construction of Bahasa Indonesia as a *bahasa*, 'language,' was both similar and integral to the process of constructing Indonesia as a *bangsa*, 'nation' – as well as her national *Pembangunan*, 'Development.'

The word *bahasa* is a very old one. It came to the several communities of what is now Indonesia and neighbouring areas from Sanskrit. But it did not then mean 'language.' The newly acquired meanings of *bahasa* were derived from modern European languages. My provisional survey suggests that at at least in the two most widely spoken and influential languages in Indonesia, Malay and Javanese, there was no word for 'language' and no way or even need to express the idea until the latter part of the last century. Of course, both the modern words 'bahasa' and 'language' have a variety of meanings and definitions. Taken together, however, they belong to a commonly shared history and particular worldview radically different from that of the old Malay or Javanese *ba(ha)sa*, as we will soon see. Precisely for this reason, the discussion below is bound to suffer shortcomings, for neither contemporary English nor Bahasa Indonesia can help us understand the vernacular worlds of old Javanese and Malay as satisfactorily as we may want.

The word, *'bahasa,'* is found in R.O. Windstedt's *The English-Malay Dictionary* (1939: 100), and even as late as the 1930s it was used to translate the English word 'culture.' In modern Malaysia and Indonesia, however, 'culture' is uniformly equated with the more recently coined word, *kebudayaan*. It is very probable that the term *kebudayaan* was still unknown when Windstedt prepared his dictionary. His rendering of 'culture' as *bahasa* was presumably the best he could do. But to equate the old word, *bahasa*, with 'culture' or even *kebudayaan* was still problematic.

An American scholar has more recently tried to exhaust modern English categories in her attempt to embrace the old idea of *bahasa* in Malay communities: "religion, culture, manners, norms, and speech are equated in the term *bahasa*" (Errington, 1974: 7). But she quickly admits that "it is a falsification even to say that ... these 'aspects' are 'equated'. *Bahasa is unitary* ..." The meanings of *bhasa* in Old Javanese always include some reference to mighty, highly respected, respectful, or respectable persons, activities, or things (see Zoetmulder, 1974: 146-147; 1982: 220); in contrast to the neutral meanings of the tool-like 'language,' both *bahasa* in old Malay and *bhasa* in Old Javanese did not belong to ordinary persons. Their domain was confined to persons and activities of high status in the social hierarchy.

To a considerable degree, the old sense of *bhasa* survives in modern Javanese as *'basa'* (see Wolff and Poedjosoedarmo, 1982: 5). *Basa* is not an abstract and generic category such as 'language.' It strictly refers to the Javanese language, and even more specifically to *Krama* (high-level Javanese). Thus, when Javanese speak Bahasa Indonesia or any foreign language to each other, they seem to be engaged in a social interaction very similar to

speaking to non-Javanese Indonesians or Indonesian-speaking foreigners. It is an interaction between neutrally defined individual interlocutors. When the same Javanese speak *basa* to each other, they are in a completely different world, one specifically Javanese, where human beings and the whole cosmos are defined and categorised. A Javanese who fails to speak basa in any situation where it is called for is commonly called *during njawani*, 'not yet Javanese,' implying immaturity or being less than fully human. James T. Siegel (1986) provides a provoking account of the nature and complexity of the Javanese *basa*, though he indiscriminately calls it "language."

Foreigners, when they are beginning to study Malay or Indonesian, often unselfconsciously speak of 'Bahasa' when they refer to what Malaysians and Indonesians invariably call *Bahasa Malaysia* or *Bahasa Indonesia*. Obviously, these foreigners simply want to shorten the proper name, but to contemporary Malaysians and Indonesians alike *bahasa* is a generic term, 'language,' quite distinct from the proper name of a specific language.

Bahasa was in fact formerly an independent word that specifically meant 'Malay.' But in Malay communities in former times, one's integrity and stature was to a significant degree measured by one's bahasa. It meant a great deal more than skill in the Malay language. The expression *budi bahasa* implies stature. Richard J. Wilkinson translates the phrase as "good taste and courtesy; tact and breeding". In the old Malay world not every adult 'knew [his/her] language.' The popular expression *orang yang tak tahu bahasa*, literally 'a person who does not know language,' was commonly used to refer to those who have "no breeding" (Wilkinson, 1901: 136).

The great shift from the old to the new meanings of bahasa can be seen in the contemporary appropriation of the proverb *bahasa menunjukkan bangsa*, 'manners reveal descent' (Wilkinson, 1901: 136). To many contemporary Indonesians, that old proverb translates as 'language reflects nationality,' a metaphor for saying 'each community has its own way of life.' The appropriation is mostly unconscious, but discernible by examining semantic changes of the words bahasa and bangsa.

The idea of 'nation' was non-existent in this region for most of the past century, and was still alien to many indigenous intellectuals at the turn of the century. Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Anak Semua Bangsa*, 'The Child of All Nations,' is the second volume of a quasi-historical tetralogy and the only Indonesian work nominated for the Nobel Prize. It depicts how absurd the idea of 'nation' was for the late 19th century protagonist personifying Tirto Adhi Soerjo, supposedly the first Indonesian nationalist figure, upon hearing it for the first time from a Dutch acquaintance. It was also extremely difficult for this acquaintance to formulate an explanation (Toer, 1980: 274 - 275).

Even as late as 1921, when writing the now famous sonnet, *'Bahasa, Bangsa,'* Mohammad Yamin (another notable figure in the nationalist movement) did not have the notion of Indonesian nationhood in mind. He was referring to his homeland (Sumatera) and mother tongue (Minang). Formerly, *bangsa* did not exactly or exclusively mean 'descent'; it could be broadly rendered as 'kind' or 'sort.'[2] Descent is one of several indicators or attributes of one's *bangsa*. Many royal families were called *bangsawan*. In today's bahasa, *bangsa* is an important word meaning 'nation,' one where there is less and less place for any *bangsawan*.

Ivan Illich (1982), whose insight has been a major source of inspiration to this discussion, attempted to breathe new life into the old word 'vernacular' for significant non-industrial human experiences. For him, the word 'vernacular' primarily means anything homemade, homespun, home-grown, "not destined for the market place." For my present purpose, I would like to emphasise other very important features of vernacular worlds, namely their (i) relatively great autonomy: (ii) considerable self-sufficiency; and (iii) minimal standardisation of human and social practices. A good case to illustrate this point is the nature of the Javanese musical instrument set, the *gamelan*.

A remarkable characteristic of *gamelan* to the outsider is the fact that each set constitutes not only a complete, coherent, and harmonious range of tunes, but it has its own structure and range of sounds. There are no standard tones for different sets and no standard scales for each instrument within a set. Members of a gamelan belong exclusively to each other; each is not always exchangeable to those belonging to other sets. The important implication is that there is no objective and standardised criterion for 'false notes' in this tradition. In other words, there is no one hegemonic set of values providing meanings for a range of concrete entities and activities.

Just as is the case with sounds, neither are persons, activities, tools, properties, space, time, words or meanings neutral and standardised units. They are closely interrelated. They are signified within the particular community's immediate memory and concern. In the words of Illich, they are "vernacular." Thus, even if we accept the common ethnocentric and tempocentric biases embedded in the view of 'traditional' rural communities as more static, more rigid and less participatory than their modern counterparts, this judgemental view is debatable in its own terms.

The inseparable redefinitions of *bahasa* and the people to whom it belongs signifies a complex chain of historical events. For the moment, let me proceed with two major developments: the idea that *bahasa* (as 'language') and human beings are inseparable entities; and of the hegemony of industrialised Western definitions of humanity and the world over various non-Western vernacular conceptions and values.

Vernacular Worlds Redefined

It is clear from the discussion in the previous paragraphs that in older Malay and Javanese communities, the term *bahasa* (or *bhasa; basa*) did not refer to something abstract and neutral. It was neither simply a tool of communication nor a system of codes or symbols that arbitrarily signified something else (a reality). It was a social activity. It was socially bound, constructed and reconstructed in specific settings, rather than scientifically and universally rule-governed.

Let us now look at the contrast between the internalised meanings of bahasa and its current legitimate definition. The prestigious and recently published *Ensiklopedi Indonesia* describes bahasa as,

> *Kumpulan kata dan aturannya yang tetap di dalam menggabungkannya berupa kalimat. Merupakan sistem bunyi yang melambangkan pengertian-pengertian tertentu .... Secara umum bahasa tak tergantung kepada susunan masyarakat.*

2 Even today in Java one still speaks of *bangsa* as denoting 'groups' or 'type.'

Perubahan struktur sosial dan ekonomi sedikit saja pengaruhnya kepada perkembangan bahasa. (Shadily, 1980: 358)

Groups of words and the rules governing those words to form sentences. It is a system of sounds that signifies certain meanings. ... In general, language does not depend on social structures. Changes in social and economic structures do not greatly influence the development of language.

In no way do we get a sense that bahasa has any direct or essential relationship to human beings. In fact, the relationship between language and social structures is explicitly denied. A reference to human beings is made in another Indonesian encyclopedia, *Ensiklopedi Umum,* but the separability between human thought/feelings and human language remains. Here, bahasa is defined as,

ungkapan pikiran dan perasaan manusia yang secara teratur dinyatakan dengan memakai alat bunyi. Perasaan dan pikiran merupakan isi-bahasa, sedangkan bunyi yang teratur merupakan bentuk-bahasa.

(Pringgodigdo and Shadily, 1973: 139)

the orderly expression of human thought and feeling as manifested in speech. Feelings and thoughts are the content of language, the orderly sounds are the form of language.

In this view, thought/feelings can presumably exist beyond language, and vice-versa. Significantly, no example of language-free thought or feelings (or thought-and-feelings-free language) is ever presented by proponents of this commonly held view. Although Hassan Shadily was responsible for preparing both encyclopedias, there is a surprising and striking difference between the two in their views on the relation between language and social structure. The second work notes that social factors are inseparable from the structure of language. "Linguistic expressions depend on the social milieu of their speakers ..."

To be fair, it must once again be acknowledged that there are various views of language among Indonesian intellectuals. I have discussed this briefly elsewhere (Heryanto, 1987: 43), noting that not all Indonesians who discuss language and social structure see the two as having a dialectical relationship or as mutually constituted. Rather, it is common for them to view language as merely a reflection of the social structure (see e.g. Simatupang, 1983; Moedjanto, 1985: 299). Despite this variety of views, the notion of language as primarily an instrument is clearly dominant in modern Indonesia. This view informed the initial writings of Indonesian grammars by one of the forefathers of Indonesian grammar, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbhana (1959). It is also shared by Anton M. Moeliono (1982: 8), who headed the national language centre *(Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa);* by Daoed Joesoef (1983), then a Minister of Education and Culture; and by a large number of other Indonesian thinkers, including Gunawan Wibisono Adidarmodjo (1983), Harsja W. Bachtiar *(Kompas,* 1985), and Jujun S. Suriosumantri (1985). To complete our picture of this dominant view, we may also note that the same notion was presented by President-to-be General Soeharto in the embryonic year of the New Order (Soeharto, 1967: 37).

In his recently published dissertation, Khaidir Anwar (1980: 12) pays serious attention to this question and presents a strong argument in line with mainstream thinking.

... as far as cognitive thought and knowledge is concerned, one's language acts mostly as an instrument rather than a shaper. Our *Weltanschauung* has not much to do with our native language, and our considered opinion of an issue having socio-political significance is not shaped by our mother tongue. [English original]

Some Indonesian scholars do hold opposing views. Unfortunately, such views are extremely rare, too much on the periphery of the discourse to draw the public attention they deserve, and are mostly presented in passing comments. Examples worthy of mention include Slamet Iman Santoso (1983) and Sartono Kartodirdjo (1987).

The contrast between these two views of language can also be examined by the way old communities and their descendants deal with words and names. Modern Indonesians are familiar with the English aphorism 'what's in a name?,' in translation *'apalah artinya sebuah nama?,'* emphasising the arbitrary relationship between a name and the person or thing named. By contrast, more traditionally-inclined Malays and Javanese see in proper names and sacred words a supernatural power. They have *mantera,* 'magic formulas,' charms and spells to create and control perceived events. In both communities there are taboos on uttering some names (e.g. of deities, royal families, spirits, heirlooms, and wild beasts).

Traditionally-inclined Javanese are extremely careful about naming children so as to avoid misfortune. Thus, the relationship between a name and the named is not considered arbitrary. To these Javanese, each name has what is called *bobot,* a term which in other senses can simply be rendered into English as 'weight.' *Bobot* in relation to naming a person refers to the quantity and quality of supernatural power it carries. Parents want to make sure that each of their children has a benevolent and auspicious name. However, each person in this community is entitled to only a particular range of possible names in accordance with his or her position within the social hierarchy. When a child often gets sick or goes through other major difficulties, the common practice is to change the child's name to lighten its burden. The child is thought to suffer from bearing a name with too much *bobot.*

The contrast between the more traditional and the more modern meanings of bahasa, as well as their respectively defined worlds, may now be evident. But the transformation that these communities experienced remains unclear. What we know is that this process undermined indigenous definitions and imposed a new set of definitions, a new ordering of meanings. It is also clear that these came predominantly from the modern West. Of course, this is not the unique experience of Malay or Javanese communities. A vast corpus of writings on colonialism, imperialism, under-development and dependency seeks to explain Western domination of various communities across the globe. But most of these writings concentrate on economic and social analysis; questions of language are virtually ignored.

Another common feature of these writings is their tendency to make sweeping generalisations about the histories of different non-Western communities. As we want to deal with the specific experience of Indonesian communities, some of the brief remarks that Benedict Anderson (1990) makes on the impact of Western contact with Java are of great interest. Anderson describes the shattering of the old Javanese cosmology after the introduction and rapid expansion of trains, clocks, and the newspaper industry in late 19th century Java. The traditional perspective of time, space, human beings and all other realities was radically and

fatally challenged by a new "re-presentation" of reality: maps, calendar, statistical figures, and the print alphabet. Anderson shows how confident the Javanese had been in their relatively autonomous and closed cosmology.

> In the 18th and 19th centuries, Javanese rulers had called themselves Pakubuwono (Nail of the Cosmos) and Hamengkubuwono (Holder of the Cosmos) without much self-consciousness, though from today's perspective there is something irremediably laughable about rival rulers with capitals (Surakarta and Jogjakarta) less than 50 miles apart calling themselves by such world-conquering appellations.

The extent to which the changes in the past century affected confidence in the old cosmology can be imagined from this account:

> By 1900, however, Yogyakarta and Surakarta were, above all, railway junctions along the trunk-line between the great port cities of Batavia and Surabaya. These cities in turn were subordinates to the Hague; and the Hague was the capital of a speck on the northwest periphery of Europe ... there was no longer any place or person whereby the Cosmos could be nailed. In colonial classrooms cheap metal globes were being happily spun by seven-year-olds.

Ba(ha)sa was under a great and growing threat. "In the 1890s the colonial regime for the first time began a sustained effort to turn local elites bi- or trilingual through the institution of government primary and (later) secondary schools" (Anderson, 1990). It was no longer possible for the Javanese to ignore the newly perceived fact that Javanese was no other than one of many existing languages. In lieu of the monopoly of *basa* in the Javanised cosmos, people began to speak more and more of *Ba(ha) sa Melayu*, 'Malay,' *ba(ha) sa Belanda*, 'Dutch,' and later *Bahasa Indonesia*, 'Indonesian.' It is now common for Javanese to speak of *Bahasa Jawa*, 'Javanese.' The use of dictionaries among the schooled elites from near the end of the 19th century led to a further assumption that "languages are translatable" (Anderson, 1990). Still more fundamental to our concern than these all-encompassing changes, something that lies beyond Anderson's immediate interest, was the idea and practice of learning a powerful language in school.

The demise of the old *ba(ha)sa* and the rise of bahasa as 'language' can be seen as part of the process of globalisation and Westernisation. In this we see not only the application of industrialised Western definitions of language and human beings globally, but we also see a Western mode of language practice (in Becker's coinage, 'languaging') occupying the dominant positions in the global social hierarchy. Western languages become the model for language studies. There now seems to be a high correlation between student's achievement of mastering Indonesian and English (see *Kompas*, 1984). While painfully unlearning their own traditions, indigenous communities began to learn what appears to be the more powerful and more promising 'knowledge' and 'truth' available in Western languages and world-views.

The shift of fundamental meanings of Bahasa from being specifically Javanese or Malay into that of being a generic, abstract and universal category strips off people's vernacular world-views. It is not a quantitative change (in addition to the familiar Javanese *bhasa* they now discover a number of other kinds of bahasa), but a qualitative one. Speaking of both ancient and modern colonialism, Becker (1984: 145) notes that one of its most subtle forces "is the undermining of not just the substance but the framework of someone's learning." The Western domination in bahasa is subtle, for it expresses itself in what appears to be an indigenous word.

There is certainly a great need for more comprehensive study of the history of Bahasa Indonesia from a socio-historical perspective. More important, I think, is the history of the idea and practice of ba(ha)sa. Students of Indonesian languages do not yet have what the students of Southeast Asian history have in the joint work by Anthony Reid and David Marr (1979), *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, or students of Javanese politics in the work be Benedict Anderson (1972), "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture." These works are examples of studies attempting to raise fundamental questions that still need further critical exploration. With a few exceptions, studies of 'language' and languages in Indonesia seem to be less aware and critical of the general practice of imposing Western concept and theories to analyse existing 'realities' in Indonesian communities. (It must be admitted that although this article is intended to be a critical reflection on Western domination, it is undoubtedly also a product of global Western-style training.)

As we shall see, this Westernisation is not totally covert or subtle. Neither is its conquest taking place without resistance. For the moment, we only need to note how this redefinition of bahasa implies a redefinition of human beings in the world (Williams, 1977: 21) and how the new redefinition relates to Development.[3]

The breakdown of the old meanings of bahasa implies a serious challange to the former image of esteemed human beings. Nowadays, one's failure in performing the proper bahasa as indicating that one is not yet an ideal Javanese or Malay, hardly has any validity. Every Javanese and Malay is now taught to view and define his/her essential being and others' within the modern Western world view: all are indiscriminately and universally 'human beings.' In the 1940s Javanese nationalists joined the confident advocacy of their fellow countrymen in propagating the idea of 'humanism' in the Constitution and the official state ideology, *Pancasila*. Today, *Kemanusiaan*, 'humanitarianism,' has become one of the most respected and glorified notions; its value has certainly outweighed the importance of being *nJawani* or keeping one's *budi bahasa*.

A case in point that best illustrates the experience of contemporary Bahasa Indonesia is the impressive widespread of the pronoun *Anda*, after the English pronoun 'you.'[4] The word was introduced with the specific aim to stamp out and replace the many existing options for second person pronouns, which modernists often have perceived as confusing and 'non-democratic' in character. In the 1970s a colleague of mine collected over 50 different second-person pronouns in use in the small town of Salatiga, each designating a different interpersonal relationship. The successful promotion of Anda cannot be fully explained merely in terms of a cultural assertion by one section of the nation's elite. Rather, it must also be attributed to technological development in the expanding mass media in New Order Indonesia: messages must be communicated to a mass and abstract audience.

As bahasa was perceived to be a generic category and a global phenomenon, so persons became individual

3 For the next few paragraphs I am indebted to the insight of Ivan Illich (1982).

4 I have written a critical reflection on the use of *Anda* (Heryanto, 1978).

human beings and vernacular communities were transformed into a nation, a new conceptual category. In sum, in contrast to the major features of vernacular worlds discussed above, standardisation, abstraction and globalisation now characterises our industrialised environment.

The Rise of Developmentalism

The global standardisation of what were formerly exclusive and heterogeneous beings lay the foundations for what in subsequent years became Development programmes. Advancing the idea of modernisation and standardisation of Bahasa Indonesia, Alisjahbana (1976: 59) "consider[s] the plurality of languages in the modern world ... a great handicap. It hampers... understanding between individuals as well as nations." He asserts this with full awareness that standardised language entails standardised general behaviour, which he values highly (Alisjahbana, 1976: 101). This decade saw the imposed standardisation of traditional arts and ritual practices, which had long been independent of elite engineering (see *Surabaya Post*, 1986: *Kompas*, 1986). Following the idea of essentially homogenous beings is the idea of standardised 'basic human needs.' As Illich (1979; 1982) argues, we have now come to a point where presupposed basic human needs translate materially into a set of consumption patterns. Fulfillment of these basic needs is defined as consuming an increasing amount of mass-produced industrial commodities.

The use of the term 'Western' to designate the current world hegemony is no longer fully satisfactory. Perhaps a better term is 'industrialisation' or its euphemistic and more value-laden synonym, 'Development', in which the Western world still dominates but no longer exclusively so. In world capitalism, industrialisation requires standardisation to make mass production and market exchange faster, easier and more economical. Consequently, progress demands the demise of diverse and vernacular activities, social institutions and worldviews.

This is not to romanticise the bygone and what – at a distance – appears exotic. Many modern schooled Javanese accept the pervasive condemnation in Indonesia to the effect that Javanese traditional culture was where inequity was nurtured and democracy denied. It must be acknowledged that some of the Developmentalists' criticism of traditional culture is important and well-taken. The point is that having claimed to liberate millions of people from 'backwardness' and to bring equity, democracy and enlightenment, Development has evidently led them to another variant of alienation, disempowerment and dependence, this time of an even greater scale. Once 'liberated' from their vernacularity, Javanese or Malay words can now be translated into any industrial languages across the globe; the speakers became 'free' individual wanderers whose labour is exchangeable in the market.

The constitution and reproduction of this hegemony relies heavily on the mass standardised consumption of its products. That mass consumption in turn rests on the assumption of 'scarcity' of basic needs and on modern economics, which is based on that same assumption. Thus, no longer do all members of the Javanese or Malay communities attempt to achieve self-defined states or being (for example, to be *njawani*, or to acquire *budi bahasa*). They must now compete with other 'human beings' for the same universally standardised and scarce attainments. As industrialisation has developed hand-in-hand with capitalism, communities across the globe have been made to consider greed as respectable (Benjamin, 1988: 13). Equity is now seen to mean (re-) distribution of the new privilege to consume what is scarce. Not only are all of us defined as human beings, but also as *homo economicus*, or its extreme extension, *homo industrialis* (Illich, 1979). Even words and meanings have become 'scarce' industrial commodities in a way which would have been unthinkable in the communities of the Indies archipelago during the past century. Prerequisites which were formerly only sensible in limited activities, such as construction and industry, are now regarded by the former head of the nation's language centre as indispensable requirements for sustaining Bahasa Indonesia: "manpower, material, management, and money" (Halim, 1981: 335).

The communities in what is now Indonesia are losing not only their own definitions of what constitutes their basic needs, but also the productive competence to satisfy the basic needs. They are now dependent on the products of industries. They can only hope to consume what they cannot produce. Significantly, Javanese has one verb, *(ng)gawe*, to refer to two opposite notions in English or Bahasa Indonesia: 'to produce', *membuat*, and 'to consume', *memakai*. But even to say that *(ng)gawe* is both 'to produce and consume' is inappropriate. The expression *nduwe gawe*, 'to have a *gawe*,' does not simply refer to some physical behaviour, but to a religious ritual and festivity. When the Javanese strove to be fully *njawani* or the Malay endeavoured to acquire sufficient *budi bahasa*, they depended on noone, let alone outsiders. Neither *budi bahasa* nor being *njawani* was economically scarce. In the contemporary language of Development, exclusive and distinct vernacular values are disappearing.

The early years of Indonesian nation-building witnessed the beginning of a phenomenal proliferation of new words circumfixed by *ke- -an* and *pe(r)- -an* (Poedjosoedarmo, 1981: 155), a tendency which Alisjahbana (1976: 58) considers a desirable indication of the modernisation of Bahasa Indonesia. These circumfixes are nominalisers, significantly referring to abstraction and generalisation. The construction of *Pembangunan* in early decades of this century was only a case in point.[5] That word re-presents the old communities anew, as one of many 'developing' nations on the globe.

Communities of human beings across the globe are put in a hierarchy by their degree of industrial Development. Some are commonly termed 'underdeveloped,' others are 'developing,' and still others are already 'developed.' In the contemporary language of Development, there is only a single phrase to designate the best projected possible future of these 'developing nations': being 'developed,' an appellation traditionally identified with the modern West and only recently extended to some other newly industrialised countries in the Northern hemisphere. Seen in this light, the so-called 'New Industrialising Countries' are posing a challenge to their Western rivals only in terms of a game the West initiated, not a radically alternative redefinition of living. A bird's-eye view of Development Studies literature (Goldsworthy, 1977) suggests that critiques of conventional-mo-

5 For a further account of the historical construction of the New Order keyword, *Pembangunan*, see my article, 'The Development of 'Development'' (Heryanto, 1988).

dernist Development are often followed by attempts to reform, redefine, and modify Development. De-Development and anti-Development are hardly ever considered.

Other forms of resistance and defence on the part of the Indonesian communities are worth considering.[6] Much of James Siegel's (1986) observation of the Javanese in Surakarta during the New Order period attests to the residual vitality of the old idea and practice of *basa*. As Siegel (1986: 18) says, when the Javanese speak *basa*. the appropriate tone chosen is "not to match one's feelings to one's words, but to one's listener's sensibility." The words are chosen "not according to [one's] listener's capability to understand, but as though languages are not arbitrary matters" (Siegel, 1986: 19). In speaking basa, the Javanese "has to find out where the hearer fits in society, and then speak as though the words were attached to the status, part of the nature of the world" (Siegel, 1986: 19). Preserving their own definition of *basa* as separate from 'language,' according to Siegel (1986: 298-299) the Javanese would only acknowledge those translatable into Javanese as 'language.' And when they are seen as languages, they are treated "as though they were Low Javanese "that must be suppressed by way of translation into High Javanese (Siegel, 1986: 301).

Despite the strong position of the Javanese in the Indonesian state, Javanese and 'Javanism' are not what Indonesian is all about. Unlike the Javanese that Siegel observed in Surakarta, the nationalist elite is more self-conscious in confronting what they see as undesirably Westernised standard grammars and studies of Bahasa Indonesia. Throughout the history of the nation, the idea of indigenising the national language has been expressed repeatedly, but, as is evident, to little avail.[7] Some of the most important and common concerns among these critical intellectuals, themselves products of Western-style education, are the applicability of Western linguistic categories such as 'subject / predicate / object,' 'nouns/verbs/adjectives,' or 'voice: passive/active.' Reflecting on this issue, Alton L. Becker (1983: 11) asks why Southeast Asians did not evolve their own 'meta-language' in the sense of "the language of the grammar." He suggests that there are at least two answers. First, "grammar comes with writing" and basic writing systems in Indonesia (Indic, Arabic, Roman) came from elsewhere. The second answer, one "less obvious," is closer to the main argument of this paper. "Southeast Asians have traditionally taken a different approach to the description of language, one more appropriate to an oral poetic economy" (Becker, 1983: 11). It appears that enthusiastic attempts at the 'indigenisation' or 'nationalisation' of Indonesian grammar will never be fundamentally attainable as long as the historical construction of what constitutes 'language' remains unquestioned.

6 Due to the unavailability of sufficient data, in the following I only consider examples of resistance from Javanese and Westernised cosmopolitan Indonesians. For some brief comments on the case of Malay communities, see Benjamin (1984/5).

7 A collection of works by Armijn Pane (1953) presents an early and serious questioning of this issue, but suggesting no substantial and comprehensive alternative. Most other writers make only passing comments on the matter. One of the most recent published studies on this issue is that of Bambang Kaswanti Purwo (1988)

Conclusion

Westernisation of the Indonesian language has long been a point of complaint among some circles of the nation's emergent *literati*. However, for the more aggressive and influential intellectuals, for whom Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana became a key spokesman, Westernisation was not only legitimate but also necessary and desirable. In one of its early issues, the journal *Pembangoenan* (1946), directed by Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, stated that,

> *Seperti bangsa Timur yang lain, bangsa Indonesia dengan sengaja pula menyongsong kebudayaan Eropah, dengan jalan memasuki sekolah yang didirikannya, membaca bukunya, menjadi pegawai dalam perusahaannya, turut menyertai perdagangan internasional dan lain-lain*
>
> Just like other nations of the East, the Indonesian nation consciously welcomes European culture by attending the schools it founded, reading its books, becoming employees at its firms, taking part in international trade, etc.

The process of Westernisation and its achievement of hegemony was certainly not wholly one of coercion.

Denouncing some strong tendencies in the Indonesian language of his time, Nur Sutan Iskandar, a prominent author in the first quarter of the century, lamented in a 1956 article, "there are many more peculiarities in the use of words and sentence constructions which only Western-educated intellectuals can grasp the meaning of" (cited in Anwar, 1980: 117-118). This kind of stance was seen as ignorantly conservative by many leading intellectuals of the time. Even today, we find that Khaidir Anwar expresses the dominant view, that "ordinary readers tended to have much simpler ideas than the sophisticated writers" (Anwar, 1980: 118). Furthermore, he explains that those Indonesian writers,

> regarded themselves as intellectuals in the true sense of the word... they did not want to give the impression that they were not acquainted with the sophistication of the Western ideas. They even regarded themselves as legitimate heirs of world culture... [and they] by and large wrote carefully-thought out Indonesian prose because they took pains to do so relying mainly on a Western language as a mode.
>
> (Anwar, 1980: 118)

As all communities across the globe are seen to possess their own languages, we can construct a diagramme, 'a family tree' of languages, and a map of nations of the world. A century ago Javanese and Malay elites acquired a new literacy which enabled them to read and locate their newly redefined ba(ha)sa within the global map of languages. Since the turn of the century, they have accepted the self-fulfilling conviction that languages are more and more translatable. Once their bahasa was redefined in Western terms, they made vigorous efforts to find the 'knowledge' and 'truth' discoverable only in Western languages, by way of translation and adoption. In 1945 Indonesian modernists proudly published a new 'Word-List' in which 8000 new words (mostly for scientific discourse) were introduced after being 'legalised by the Indonesian Language Committee" (see *Pembangoenan*, 1945).

Commenting on what he calls 'industrialised' languages, Ivan Illich (1982: 6, 8) notes that they "translate easily from English into Japanese or Malay." What must be added is the fact that 'industrialised' languages, like nations, have been sharply stratified into a new hierarchy. Contemporary Indonesian elites are quite convinced that some languages, like their own, are less 'developed' than others. To quote the

title of Kuntoro's (1984) essay, *Bahasa Indonesia Belum Berkembang*, 'Indonesian Language Is Still Underdeveloped.' To redress the 'shortcomings' of their own language, they have launched nation-wide programmes for Developing the language and have chosen Western languages as models of what a 'developed' language should be like (see Alisjahbana, 1976: 55; Moeliono, 1977; Badudu, 1985). Ironically, it is the very notion and success of language Development that has engendered the conviction among contemporary Indonesians that their language is 'bad and incorrect.' Thus, with the growing investment in state-sponsored programmes for language Development, Bahasa Indonesia has become a national language that the nation does not – according to the official assessment – speak and write properly.

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