Chapter 2

Then There were Languages: Bahasa Indonesia was One Among Many

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Having lost its naive objectivism, universalism has been unfashionable among many in the humanities. One consequence of this is illustrated in the discourses on the concept of 'culture'. In the last 50 years or so, culture has been severely deconstructed, demystified and pluralised. One culmination of such awareness finds articulation in the work of Joel S. Kahn, who argues that, despite its inclusive claims and pretensions, 'universalism always has its others and this is unavoidable ... universalism is a culture like any other, differing only in that it always fails to recognise itself as such' (Kahn, 2001: 23). Having seen this we must, nonetheless, admit that the legacies of universalism survive in various areas and often in implicit ways. A case in point is the idea of 'language;' 'human' is another.

This chapter looks at one such universalist legacy in the invention of 'bahasa' (now commonly translated as 'language') in post-colonial Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous nation, and more specifically during the authoritarian government of New Order (1966–98). It will examine the historical circumstances under which such invention could take place the way it did. In order to highlight the radical social transformation that the invention has required, a brief reconstruction of the situation before invention will be attempted. This is a story of an irreversible, though incomplete, restructuring of pre-existing vernacular world-views and social activities of non-Western and non-industrialised communities. I will proceed with an introductory note of the major features of vernacular Javanese and Malay communities, where 'language' was neither existent, nor imaginable. For contrast, salient characteristics of contemporary Bahasa Indonesia will then be examined. Finally, I will suggest some preliminary interpretation of how developmentalism as one form of universalism and practice came to the fore in this historical process. I will also note some of the resistance that the process has provoked.

A World with No Language

Theorists of the incipience of nations have commonly given serious attention to the role of language in the global construction of nations. Not many among them, however, perceive the relationship between nation and language as dialectical and mutually constitutive. Instead they see languages largely as a property of changing communities that facilitated the transformation of these communities from older forms of affinity into nations. In what follows we will examine how 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'.[1] Once a prevailing and highly ideological term in many parts of the world, Development has started to appear obsolete. The logic that gave it its earlier power, however, and the material interests of those who benefited from its past hegemony survive well under different names ('globalisation' is one of the most popular) with various forms of adjustment to contemporary contexts.

The word *bahasa* has a long history, with Sanskrit origin, that spread well in several communities of what is now South-East Asia, including Indonesia. It did not mean 'language', and not many contemporary Indonesians recognise this. It took European colonialism to introduce the idea of 'language' before the old word *bahasa* came to articulate this newly-acquired concept. The adoption of a pre-existing word in East Asia to articulate a new concept from modern Western Europe helped make the concept appear universal. Language was – as it is today – believed to be a universal property of human species, in all its variations, existing in a separate sphere from, but universally referring to, more or less one and the same objective world.

My preliminary survey suggests that at least in the two most widely spoken and influential languages in Indonesia, Malay and Javanese, there was no word for 'language'. More importantly, there was neither a way nor a need to express the idea until the latter part of the 19th century. Here I am not concerned with semantic or morphological precision. Obviously, the modern words '*bahasa*' and 'language' have more than one variant of meanings and definitions, and each variant has undergone a long history of changes. 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. For this reason, the discussion below is inevitably problematic. Neither contemporary English nor Bahasa Indonesia can express and represent the vernacular worlds of Javanese and Malay 'as they actually were' so to speak.

The oldest case that I have been able to find where 'bahasa' makes an entry into a dictionary is in R.O. Windstedt's *The English–Malay Dictionary* (1939: 100). Even as late as that it was used to translate the English word 'culture', presumably because 'language' would mean a very different thing at that time. Now we have some idea of how long and complicated the semantic history of the word 'culture' is in English is (see Williams, 1977: 11–20, 1983: 87–93; Kahn, 1989), but this should not complicate the issue at hand. Apparently there was no word for 'culture' in what is now Indonesia, until the early decades of the 20th century when a few privileged natives in the Dutch East Indies colony began to read what their colonial masters wrote (in admiration, disgust or pity) about 'their own' native cultures. From the third decade of the century, a new term, *kebudayaan*, entered with authority into the public consciousness to translate the various notions of 'culture' as prevailed in Europe.

The very late birth of *kebudayaan* may also explain why Windstedt translated *bahasa* as 'culture' in his dictionary. His rendering of 'culture' as *bahasa* was presumably the best anyone could do at that point. In any case, to equate the old word *bahasa* with 'culture' was then and is now still problematic. Anthropologist Errington tried to exhaust modern English categories 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), and yet with no satisfactory success. She admits that 'it is a falsification even to say that ... these "aspects" are "equated". *Bahasa is unitary ...*' The meanings of *bhāsa* in Old Javanese always include some reference to mighty, highly respected, respectful, or respectable persons, activities, or things (see Zoetmulder, 1974: 146–7, 1982: 220). In contrast to the neutral meanings of the tool-like 'language', both *bahasa* in old Malay and *bhāsa* in Old Javanese did not belong to ordinary persons. They occupy a domain that was confined to persons and activities of high status. This is not something that deserves our celebration, but as we shall soon see, neither does what has come to colonise it in a later period.

The old sense of *bhāsa* survives in modern Javanese in the 20th century as '*basa*' (see Wolff & Poedjosoedarmo, 1982: 5). *Basa* is not an abstract and generic category as 'language' is. It strictly refers to the Javanese speech act, and more specifically to *Krama* (high-level Javanese). Thus, when Indonesians of ethnic Javanese speak in Bahasa Indonesia to each other, they are engaged in a social interaction very similar to their speaking to non-Javanese who speak it. From a vernacular Javanese viewpoint, this is an interaction between 'neutrally' individual interlocutors with disturbingly 'ambiguous' social positions and relationships to each other and to the world. When the same Javanese switch to *basa*, they find themselves in a radically different world. For better or worse, it is unequivocally Javanese, where persons and the whole cosmos have been hierarchically defined and categorised. A Javanese who fails to speak *basa* in any situation where it is called for is described as *during nJawani* ('not yet Javanese'), implying immaturity or being less than human. Anthropologist James T. Siegel (1986) offers a rather cynical account of the nature and complexity of the Javanese *basa* (see more below), and indiscriminately calls it 'language'.

When beginning to study Malay or Indonesian, foreigners often unselfconsciously speak of 'Bahasa' to refer to what the Malaysians and Indonesians invariably call *Bahasa Malaysia* or *Bahasa Indonesia*, the standard names of their respective twin national languages. Most likely, these foreigners want to shorten the proper name, but such utterance sounds odd to the contemporary Indonesian ear. To the latter, *bahasa* is a generic term, 'language', quite distinct from the proper name of a specific language. True, there was a time when *bahasa* meant specifically Malay. However, that was the time in Malay vernacular communities where *bahasa* meant a great deal more than linguistic skills or exchange. One's integrity and stature was to a significant degree measured by it. The expression *budi bahasa* implies stature. Richard J. Wilkinson translates the phrase as 'good taste and courtesy; tact and breeding' (1901: 136). In the old Malay world not every adult necessarily 'knew 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 'know no manners'.[2] In this light, Windstedt's 1939 dictionary rendering of *bahasa* as 'culture' can be better appreciated.

Another indicator of the great shift from the old to the new meanings of *bahasa* is available 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 symptomatically modern way of saying 'each community has its own way of life'. The appropriation is mostly unconscious, and the motivation can be understood by examining semantic changes of the words *bahasa* and *bangsa*.

For most of the 19th century, the idea of 'nation' was non-existent in this region, and it remained alien to many indigenous intellectuals at the turn of the century. Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Anak Semua Bangsa* (*The Child of All Nations*) 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: 274–5). Even as late as 1921, when writing the now-famous sonnet, '*Bahasa Bangsa*' (see Teeuw, 1979: 10),

Mohammad Yamin (another notable figure in the nationalist movement) did not have the notion of Indonesian nationhood in mind. Rather he was referring to Sumatera island as his homeland, and Minang his mother tongue. Formerly, *bangsa* did not exactly or exclusively mean 'descent'; it could be broadly rendered as 'kind' or 'sort.' Even today in Java one still speaks of *bangsa* as denoting 'groups' or 'type.' Descent is one of several indicators or attributes of one's *bangsa*. Many royal families were called *bangsawan*. In today's Bahasa Indonesia, *bangsa* is an important word meaning 'nation,' one where there is less and less place and privileges for any *bangsawan*, although a new type of aristocrat with global credentials and outlook (the middle class and the bourgeoisie) appears on the horizon (see Wallerstein, 1988).

Ivan Illich (1982), whose insight has been a source of inspiration to this discussion, revitalises the old word 'vernacular' in reference to anything home-made, homespun, home-grown, 'not destined for the market place'. For our present purpose, important features of vernacular worlds include a relatively large degree of autonomy, considerable self-sufficiency and minimal standardisation of human and social practices. The Javanese musical instrument set, the *gamelan,* illustrates this point. To outsiders, a remarkable characteristic of *gamelan* 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.[3] Members of a *gamelan* set belong exclusively to each other; each is not always exchangeable with 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 meaning neutral and standardised units.[4] They are mutually and deeply embedded. 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 in the view of 'traditional' rural communities as more static, more rigid and less participatory than their modern counterparts, this judgemental view is seriously flawed in its own terms.

The inseparable re-definitions of *bahasa* and the people to whom it belongs signify 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 essentially universal and inseparable entities; and the triumph of industrialised Western definitions of humanity and the

world over various non-Western vernacular conceptions and values. It must be said from the outset, this process has not been entirely a coercive imposition. Segments of the vernacular communities welcome it, with different degrees of enthusiasm, and for various reasons.

New Wine in Old Bottles

In vernacular Malay and Javanese communities, the term *bahasa* (or *bhāsa; basa*) did not refer to something abstract and neutral. It was neither a handy tool of communication nor a system of codes or symbols that arbitrarily signified something else (a reality) as 'language' has come to be most commonly understood. It was overtly – more so than today's 'languages' – a social activity. It was explicitly a socially bound practice, rather than secularly and logically rule-governed.

The contrast between that vernacular activity and the meanings of *bahasa* should now be obvious. The prestigious *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. Perubahan struktur sosial dan ekonomi sedikit saja pengaruhnya kepada perkembangan bahasa.*
>
> (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.) (Shadily, 1980: 358)

There is no suggestion that *bahasa* has any direct or essential relationship with 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.*
>
> (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.) (Pringgodigdo and Shadily, 1973: 139)

In this view, thought/feelings can presumably exist outside language, and vice-versa. Significantly, no example of language-free thought or feelings (or thought-and-feelings-free language) is presented by proponents of this commonly held view. Although Hassan Shadily was responsible for preparing both encyclopedias, there is a striking difference between the two in their views on the relation between language and social structure. The second work notes that social factors are inherent in the structure of language. 'Linguistic expressions depend on the social milieu of their speakers' (Pringgodigdo & Shadily, 1973: 139).

To be fair, there are various views of language among Indonesian intellectuals. I have discussed this briefly elsewhere (Heryanto, 1987: 43). Nonetheless, it is fair to say that for many, language is merely a reflection of social structures (see e.g. Simatupang, 1983; Moedjanto, 1985: 299). More seriously problematic is the notion of language as primarily an objective instrument, detachable from human thought, social structures and worldly interests. This view informed the initial writings of one of the forefathers of Indonesian grammar, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (1959). It is also shared by Anton M. Moeliono (1982: 8), one of Indonesia's most eminent figures in the promotion of language planning at the height of the nation's Developmentalism. Other figures of importance who subscribe to the same view include Daoed Joesoef (1983), then a Minister of Education and Culture, and a number of other Indonesian thinkers, Gunawan Wibisono Adidarmodjo (1983), Harsja W. Bachtiar (*Kompas*, 1985) and Jujun S. Suriasumantri (1985). The same notion was presented by President-to-be General Soeharto in the embryonic year of the New Order (Soeharto, 1967: 37). Pushing further the orthodoxy of the day, Khaidir Anwar writes:

> 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. (Anwar, 1980: 12)

Alternative views that acknowledge the inseparable links between language and social life exist among Indonesians. 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. Early examples worthy of mention include Slamet Iman Santoso (1983) and Sartono Kartodirdjo (1987). Contrasting 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 being named. By contrast, more traditionally-inclined Malays and Javanese acknowledge certain divine links between at least selected words and events. Theirs is a world where proper names and formulaic words have real or potential supernatural power. Their *mantera*, 'magic formulas,' charms and spells are deployed to create, prevent, negotiate or control events of major importance. There are taboos on uttering certain names (e.g. of deities, royal families, spirits, heirlooms and certain animals).

Within such communities that can still be found in many parts of Indonesia, people are very careful about naming children so as to avoid misfortune. Thus, the relationship between a name and the named is not considered arbitrary. To many Javanese, each name has what is called *bobot* (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 status. 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 spiritual burden. The child is thought to suffer from bearing a name with too much *bobot*.

It is tempting to account for such contrast by adopting the familiar categories such as 'traditional' communities versus 'modern' societies. While there is admittedly some value in using these categories, it is important not to assume that they are mutually exclusive, distinguished objectively by levels of achievement and superiority, and that one category will inevitably replace the other in consistent and predictable ways (the variations across the world being only in pace and styles). The process is obviously much more complex and messier than that. Despite this, by and large the global process invariably undermined indigenous definitions and imposed a new set of definitions, a new ordering of meanings. It is also observable that the major source of energy in these social changes came predominantly from the modern West. The experience of Malay or Javanese communities is not unique. The vast and interrelated corpus of writings on colonialism, imperialism, under-development, dependency, post-colonialism, subalternism and globalism seeks to explain the Western cultural domination of various communities in the world, its varied local manifestations, and also the responses it provokes. Unfortunately, a common feature of these writings is their tendency to make sweeping generalisations about the histories of different non-Western communities. More seriously from the point of view of our concern here, the questions of language are inadequately or poorly

treated, if at all. One recent attempt to rectify this has come from the collaborative work of Rigg *et al.* (1999). These authors seek to offer a better understanding of local perceptions and languages of Development in South-East Asia in the 'post-developmentalist' era. They shed new light on local variations of certain Developmentalist keywords in Thailand, Burma and Indonesia. But they stop short of asking the more fundamental issues of the mode of communication ('languages') that gave birth to selected keywords they analyse.[5]

Discussing the early rise of nationalist consciousness in Indonesia, Benedict Anderson (1996) notes the impact of Western contact with Java. He 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. (Anderson, 1996: 27)

The extent to which the changes in the 19th century affected confidence in the old cosmology can be imagined from Anderson's next few lines:

> By 1990, however, Jogjakarta 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 'native' children. (Anderson, 1996: 27–8)

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, 1996: 29). 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 Javanese 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 conviction that 'languages are translatable' (Anderson, 1996: 29). 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 state-sponsored formal schooling.

The demise of the old *ba(ha)sa* and the rise of *bahasa* as 'language' can be seen as part of the process of both globalisation and Westernisation. In this we see not only the application of industrialised definitions of language and human beings globally, but we also see a particularly Western mode of language practice occupying the dominant positions in the global social hierarchy. Western languages – Western *standardized* languages, to be more precise – become the model for language studies. A high correlation between student's achievement of mastering Indonesian and English was evident by the early 1980s (see *Kompas*, 1984), well before MTV 'Americanised' the language of urban youths, advertisements and entertainment industry more broadly. While painfully, though not always coercively, unlearning their own traditions, indigenous communities began to learn what appears to be the more powerful and more materially rewarding 'knowledge' and 'truth' available in Western languages and world-views.[6]

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 without the service of a new vocabulary. It is not a quantitative change (in addition to the familiar Javanese *basa* 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 industrial Western domination in bahasa is subtle, for it expresses itself in what appears to be an 'indigenous' word.

As we shall see, this Westernisation is not totally covert or subtle. Neither is its conquest taking place without resistance.[7] For the moment, we need only 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.[8] The breakdown of the old meanings of *bahasa* implies a serious challenge to the former concept of esteemed human beings. Nowadays, one's failure in performing the proper *bahasa*, as indicating that one has not yet achieved the status of becoming Javanese or Malay, hardly has any validity. Every Javanese and Malay is now taught to

view and define his/her essential being and that of others anew: all are indiscriminately and universally 'human beings', regardless of abundantly re-newed inequalities. 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, at least in formal speeches; 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 use of the pronoun *Anda*, after the English pronoun 'you'.[9] The word was introduced with the specific aim to stamp out and replace the many existing options for the 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 cultural assertion by one section of the nation's elite or the aggressive invasion of English. 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. How else should a presenter address this newly constituted and widely varied audience but by the neutral term *Anda*?

As *bahasa* was perceived to be a generic category and global phenomenon, persons became individual human beings, and vernacular communities were transformed into a nation. In sum, in contrast to the major features of vernacular worlds discussed above, standardisation, abstraction and globalisation have now prevailed. Although some 'localisation' has lately become a necessary element in the gambit of global capitalism, and 'multi-culturalism' was for a while politically correct, these have come and gone as dictated at a higher level by the logic of centralised efficiency, accumulated profit and global domination.

Developmentalism Revisited

The global standardisation of what were formerly exclusive, autonomous and heterogeneous beings laid 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). The 1980s saw the imposed standardisation of traditional arts and ritual practices, which had long been independent of elite engineering (see *Surabaya Post*, 1986; *Kompas*, 1986; Zurbuchen, 1990). Following the idea of normatively 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. Fulfilment 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 has become increasingly unsatisfactory. Words like 'industrialisation', 'Development' and 'globalisation' have all had their currency for a while. They indicate that the Western world still dominates but not exclusively so. In global capitalism, industrialisation requires a significant degree of standardisation to make mass production and market exchange faster, easier and more economical. Variations of 'localisation' are tolerated and at times necessary, but they are tolerated as long as they operate under control and pose no threats to the overall system. Progress demands the demise of autonomous diversity, including vernacular activities, social institutions and worldviews.

This is not to romanticise what – at a distance – appears exotic, especially after Asian dictators misappropriated history to launch the propaganda of nativist identity (e.g. Asian values). Many modern schooled Javanese accept the popular condemnation of (real or imaginary) 'Javanese traditional culture', where inequity was justified and popular participation denied. Some of the Developmentalists' critiques of traditional culture have been refreshing and empowering to them. The point is that having claimed to liberate millions of people from 'backwardness' and to bring equity, democracy and enlightenment, Development and more recently neo-liberalism have evidently led them to another series 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 become ostensibly 'free' individual wanderers whose labour is theoretically but never wholly freely exchangeable in the ruthless 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 members of the Javanese or Malay communities – at least their elite – attempt to achieve 'self-defined' states of 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. Even words and meanings have become 'scarce' industrial commodities in a way that would have been unthinkable in the communities of the East Indies archipelago during the 19th century. Prerequisites that were formerly sensible only in limited activities, such as construction and industry, are now regarded by a former head of the nation's Language Centre as indispensable requirements for sustaining Bahasa Indonesia: 'man-power, material, management and money' (Halim, 1981: 335).

The distinguishable 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 such 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 what would be 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 'to 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 no one, let alone outsiders (the Gods and spirits of ancestors being the exception). 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 the 20th century was only a case in point.[10] 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 accommodate newly-industrialised countries. 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-modernist Development are often followed by attempts to reform, redefine and modify Development (see Rigg *et al.*, 1999). De-Development and anti-Development are hardly considered.

Other forms of resistance and defence on the part of the Indonesian communities are worth considering.[11] 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* that he disapproves. As Siegel (1986: 18) says, when the Javanese speak *basa*, the appropriate tone chosen is 'not to match one's feeling 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 definitions of *basa* as separate from 'language,' according to Siegel (1986: 298–9), the Javanese would acknowledge only 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 Indonesia, Javanese and 'Javanism' are not what Indonesia is all about.[12] 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.[13] 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 passive/active voice. Reflecting on this issue, Alton L. Becker (1983: 11) asks why South-East 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 chapter. 'Southeast Asians have traditionally taken a different approach to the description of language, one more appropriate to an oral poetic economy' (Becker, 1983: 11). Attempts at the indigenisation of Indonesian grammar are doomed to failure as long as the historical construction of what constitutes 'language' remains unquestioned.

Conclusion

Westernisation of the Indonesian language has long been a point of concern among some circles of the nation's emergent *literati*. However, as mentioned several times earlier, the process of Westernisation was and is not wholly one of coercion. For other and more influential intellectuals, of whom Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana became a key spokesman, Westernisation was/is not only legitimate but also necessary and desirable. In one of its early issues, the journal *Pembangoenan*, 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, and so forth.) (*Pembangoenan*, 1946),

Denouncing some strong tendencies in the Indonesian language of his time, Nur Sutan Iskandar, a prominent author in the first quarter of the 20th 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: 117–8). This kind of stance was seen as ignorantly conservative by many leading intellectuals of the time. A quarter of century later we find Khaidir Anwar expressing the elitist 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 care-

fully-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 have seen a diagram, 'a family tree' of languages, and a map of nations of the world. A century ago Javanese and Malay elites acquired a new literacy that enabled them to read and locate their newly redefined *ba(ha)sa* within the global map of languages. Since the beginning of the 20th 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 'World-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 and ugly 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 nationwide programmes for Developing the language and have chosen Western standardised languages as models of what a 'developed' language should be like (see Alisjahbana, 1976: 55; Moeliono, 1977; Badudu; 1985).[14] 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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Notes

1. I purposefully spell 'Development' with a capital 'D'. This is to underscore its newly-acquired status as an independent noun (e.g. '... of Development'), in contrast to its older sibling 'development,' a noun of process (e.g. 'development of ...'). An earlier version of the arguments (significantly altered and updated here) can be found in Heryanto (1990). For a more elaborated account see Heryanto (1995).

2. Interestingly Wilkinson's (1901: 136) old dictionary translates the expression as those who have 'no breeding'. It is possible that has been more than one salient rendering in the past, or a major semantic shift has taken place since then.

3. Reportedly there have been attempts to standardise the gamelan in Bali, but their scale and appeal have been limited. Such attempts have not necessarily been motivated by the logic of industrialisation as elaborated in a moment or commercial pursuit. One reason has to do with the increased desire to experimentally create new fusion music, where Western musical instruments dominate, and ethnic flavours such as the gamelan occupy some decorative space.

4. For more examples of conceivably 'language-free' or 'unstandardised universe', see Milroy, 2001: 539–43).

5. Curiously, these authors rely mainly on non-Southeast Asian writings when they claim to study locals' views and languages. Unlike their analysis of the Thai case, the analysis of language of Development in Indonesia is presented without a single reference to text in Indonesian or by Indonesians. For a critique of orientalist tendencies in South-East Asian studies see Heryanto (2002).

6. See Milroy (2001) for an excellent account of the ideology of the standard language and how linguists have been affected by and contributed to such ideology.

7. Though not immediately relevant to the discussion at hand, see Blommaert (1999) for cases of the ideological battle in language practice across the globe.

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

9. Elsewhere I made a modest attempt at examining the significance of the use of *Anda* (Heryanto, 1978).

10. For a further account of the historical construction of the New Order keyword, *Pembangunan*, see Heryanto (1988).

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

12. For more on the recent engineering of Javanese in Java see Errington (1998: 278–81).

13. A collection of works by Armijn Pane (1953) presents an early and serious questioning of this issue, but suggests no substantial and comprehensive alternative. Most other writers make only passing comments on the matter. A more recent published study on this issue is that of Bambang Kaswanti Purwo (1988). Although no sweeping generalisation can be made, many of the indigenisation projects and desires are paradoxically indebted to, and derived from, Western colonial thoughts. The Asian values rhetoric is a case in point. Advocates of the Asian values argue for both the existence and desirability of some imagined native or authentic moral heritage, which may in fact be no more than an invention of Western colonial knowledge, reinvented in the post-colonies by a strongly Westernised, but anti-West, Asian political elite.

14. Soon after East Timor gained independence from Indonesia, the new nation's Prime Minister visited Jakarta and during his visit proposed that Indonesia help set up a language centre in Dili (*The Jakarta Post*, 2003).

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