

STANDARDISATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEWSPAPERS' BAHASA INDONESIA

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Languages are something living as far as they adapt themselves to the requirements of modern developments by adding new words to the original vocabulary and old archaic words are not used anymore (for instance as the result of cultural change or word taboos) or are replaced by other ones (for instance by borrowing from adjacent languages or dialects). The syntax of a language almost never changes considerably (creole and mixed languages excepted) though it may be affected by 'loan translations' from foreign languages.

Here we are examining the Bahasa Indonesia, the 'Indonesian Language', i.e. the National Language of the Republic of Indonesia, as it is used in modern newspapers with regard to its standardisation and its development. These investigations, made by a non-Indonesian, are based on the analysis of Indonesian newspapers from different parts of the Republic, viz. from Java, Sumatra and Sulawesi. For a stranger, not living in the country concerned, may notice things which possibly are not or almost not observed by those who use the language as mother-tongue which they use and hear daily. From afar one often has a more critical view on things than from nearby.

The Bahasa Indonesia which is based on 'classical' Malay (later the lingua franca) and on the vernacular of peoples in Sumatra and in the Riau Archipelago developed or was developed into the National Language of the Republic of Indonesia mainly between 1940 and 1949-50. Before all between 1945 and 1950 a special committee had the task to adapt its vocabulary to the requirements of modern times. New words were mostly borrowed from the Dutch language with which the intellectual leaders (of that time) were familiar. These borrowings from the Dutch language were adapted to Malay phonology and morphologically they mostly are treated like Malay words. As is well known, borrowing from foreign non-

Indonesian languages (from Sanskrit and other Indian languages, from Arabic and from Portuguese) was familiar in Malay and in other Indonesian languages since many centuries before. In the thirties it was not unusual that in Malay newspapers Malay sentences were only understandable if they were translated into Dutch first, because Malay syntax was at least partly influenced by the syntax of the Dutch language. The Indonesian journalists were automatically influenced by the structure of the Dutch language which at that time was used by some of them as colloquial speech. But afterwards the basic structure became a Malay one again.

Newspapers' Bahasa Indonesia of recent times which is uniformly written with the new alphabet, is generally more or less homogeneous as to its structure. But they show certain tendencies (trends) as to their vocabularies. They are as follows:

1. Loan-words from the Dutch language seem to occur in a greater number in Sumatran and Sulawesi newspapers than in Javanese ones. The reason probably is that Jakarta as the capital of the Republic has more direct connections with abroad and with foreigners than Sumatra and Sulawesi. Therefore at Jakarta Dutch loan-words are more easily replaced by English or American ones. Some examples are: *knalpot* (Dutch *idem*) *silencer*, *inflasi* (Dutch *inflatie*) *inflation*.

2. Loan-words from English (or American) are increasing - as also in German newspapers - on a large scale. They mostly concern words referring to sports, technics (nuclear research) and economics because of their international use, for instance *hook kanan* *right hook*, *target*, *gol* (English: *goal*), *masterplan*, *problim* (English: *problem*), *crossarms*. But they concern other words also which are frequently used in the daily language, for instance *festival*, *hobby*, *gap*, *menu makanan* (English: *menu*). Verbs are constructed with Indonesian affixes, for instance *di/klaim/=kan* *to be claimed*. In Sumatran newspapers new borrowings sometimes are explained (in brackets) if the Indonesian spelling varies from the original one, for instance *koching* (*coaching*), or if they are used for the first time, they are explained in Bahasa Indonesia, for instance *shooting* (*pemotretan; penembakan; perburuan*). Loan-translations from English are very rare, for instance *kiri-luar* (English: *out-side left* (reversed order of the words)), *pencakar langit* *sky-scraper*.

Principally loan-words from Dutch are and were borrowed by the oral way, while those from English (or American) are taken over by way of script, i.e. they usually are written in the English (American) way (in spite of the divergent pronunciation).

3. Borrowings from Javanese, of course, are more frequently to be found in newspapers from Java than in those from Sumatra or Sulawesi.

In all of them for instance the plural article *para* (*concerning persons*) is to be met with in place of the iteration of the noun; the same holds good for political terms. If borrowings from Javanese occur in newspapers outside of Java one may suppose then that the journalist concerned either has lived for some time in Jakarta or that it is an official term.

The same holds good for loan-words from the Omong Jakarta which, of course, are to be met with in Jakarta newspapers and only exceptionally in those of other parts of the archipelago.

4. Loan-words for modern terms sometimes are borrowed (in newspapers of all three areas mentioned) from Sanskrit or from Latin. Sanskrit loan-words generally are borrowed via Javanese, for instance *dasawarsa decennial*, *adiaksa* = *adhyaksa judge* (Sskrt.: *adhy-aksha an inspector, superintendent*), *payudara a woman's breast* (Sskrt.: *payodhara idem*), *sutradara movie or play director* (Sskrt.: *sūtradhāra a stage-manager*).¹ From Latin are borrowed or 'latinised', for instance *dies natalis*, *civitas academica*; *prioritas priority*, *kapasitas capacity*.

5. Now and then some slang expressions are to be found which are explained by the common word in brackets, for instance boat *narcotics*, *nis-san* (in place of *ganja*) *hashish hemp*.

6. Loan-words from Malaysian Malay begin to be borrowed in Jakarta newspapers, for instance *kawasan* (B.I. *daerah*) *region, area*; *meng/galak/kan* (B.I. *menggiatkan*) *to encourage*. That is understandable because the political, cultural and linguistic relations between both states have been resumed since several years, and a common alphabet has been accepted and is used now.

7. Innovations on the morphological level in Indonesian newspapers are certain affix combinations which did not exist in 'classical' Malay, for instance *ke/ber--an*, *pem/ber--an* and *ke/pe- + prenasalisation -an*, for instance *pemberangkatan*, *keberangkatan departure*; *keberhasilan success*; *kepemimpinan leadership*. Javanese newspapers sometimes mark the plural of things by reduplication of the first syllable and weakening of every vowel in this syllable to *e*, and suffixing *-an*, for instance *rerumputan grasses* (from *rumput grass*), *dedaunan leafage* (from *daun leaf*). This kind of plural is used in the Sundanese language.

¹In newspapers and in the daily language the Sanskrit possessive suffix *-vān-* and the Sanskrit *mahā great* have been re-introduced as productive means of forming words, for instance *sejarawan historian*, *gerilyawan guerrilla*; *mahabesar very great*, *mahabiskop archbishop*. Both of them are added to words of Sanskrit origin as well as other words.

In Javanese and other newspapers like in colloquial Bahasa Indonesia in the interior of Java the active verbal prefix *me* is frequently omitted.

8. Another common feature of modern Indonesian newspapers is the use of a very great number of abbreviations which, of course, was and is influenced by American newspapers. Their number is so great (and almost every day new ones are to be found) that in 1970 a voluminous but not complete *Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms used in Indonesia* was published. Some examples are: *Wib* : Waktu Indonesia Barat *West Indonesian time*; *Laksus Pangkok Kamtibda Aceh* : Pelaksana khusus keamanan ketertiban Daerah Aceh *Special executor of security and order of the district Aceh*.

There seems to be a certain danger that the vocabulary of the Bahasa Indonesia newspapers may become unintelligible to the common Indonesian reader who is not familiar with the English language by the considerable increase of borrowings from English (or American). Whereas the numerous loan-words from Sanskrit, Arabic and Portuguese have been adopted into the vernacular language since centuries, the very great number of new ones which is daily enlarged must be learnt within a very short time. Therefore it is understandable that just lately, in the Indonesian television, popular courses are given by an Indonesian linguist concerning the adaptation of the Bahasa Indonesia to modern times and proposals to possibilities of its development. Wide consideration is given to them by Indonesians who are admonished to use their language with more discipline.

In order to understand the development of the modern Bahasa Indonesia it is good to call to our mind some important dates referring to its history: As is known, Malay and the later Bahasa Indonesia are based on 'classical' Malay and on the vernacular of peoples in Sumatra and in the Riau Archipelago. In 1928 young Indonesian nationalists demanded, among other things, that their country (in those days the Dutch East Indies) be given 'one language, the Bahasa Indonesia'. Malay (was) developed into the Bahasa Indonesia before all between 1944 and 1950, after it was accepted and acknowledged by the Japanese, besides Japanese, as the official language of the archipelago occupied by them. In 1942 they founded the 'Komisi Bahasa Indonesia' (Bahasa Indonesia Committee). Its task was to change the Malay language (*Marei-go*), i.e. the lingua franca, into a modern language, namely the Bahasa Indonesia (*Indonesia-go*) by providing the Indonesian language with an adequate and uniform technical and scientific terminology. In addition it was to examine the vocabulary of colloquial speech and make a discriminate selection from it; and finally it was to create a modern and uniform

grammar of the Bahasa Indonesia. The first technical terms thus chosen were then published in the official Japanese government papers. The Indonesian members of the committee principally had the same linguistic problems which their successors had in later times. Up to 1942 Dutch (besides Malay) had been the official language of the Dutch East Indies' government as well as the language of modern culture in Indonesia. Immediately after the Japanese occupation ended it was prohibited (like English, too). Therefore a vacuum ensued since the school-books were all written in Dutch. Nor did the Indonesian teachers at these schools know enough Malay to be able to translate the text-books into that language. And the few Indonesians who commanded sufficient knowledge of both, Dutch and Malay, had to face the difficult problem that quite often there were no Indonesian equivalents for Dutch technical and scientific terms. The result was that almost every teacher tried to do his best by coining his own words for such terms. The same happened in other fields, as for instance the administration, legislation and in various professions. Frequently it was difficult to find a common usage of originally Indonesian words which had been taken over from different regional languages where they had other meanings. At the time the Japanese occupation came to an end, about 7,000 new words had already been accepted into the Bahasa Indonesia. After the proclamation of the Republic, in 1945 and 1946 the Kaum Pemuda ('Youngsters') prohibited the use of foreign languages, but yet English became more and more favoured. In 1948 in Yogyakarta the Balai Bahasa ('House of language') was founded with a section 'Bahasa Indonesia'. In 1950 this Balai Bahasa was split into inter alia, the 'Lembaga Bahasa dan Budaya' (Institute for Language and Culture) which was attached to the Fakultas Sastra (Faculty of Letters) of the Universitas Indonesia at Jakarta. The Inspeksi Bahasa Indonesia dan Bahasa Daerah (Commission for the Bahasa Indonesia and Regional Languages) was founded in 1954, and the Panitia Pengembangan Bahasa Indonesia (Committee for the Development of the Bahasa Indonesia) was called into being in 1972. President Suharto in his speeches of August 16, 1972, and of 1974 (in Parliament) called on the Indonesians to use a correct Bahasa Indonesia and to use Indonesian and no foreign words in it. The Lembaga Bahasa Nasional (Institute for the National Language) at Jakarta investigates the grammar of modern Bahasa Indonesia and possibilities of its instruction, and it draws up an inventory of scholars of the Bahasa Indonesia.

All these recent efforts give evidence of the fact that the modern Bahasa Indonesia is in a certain crisis which may not only be seen from the use of the Bahasa Indonesia in the mass-media but also in

colloquial Bahasa Indonesia. The investigation into the use of modern Bahasa Indonesia and its development is given high priority by the Republic.

Besides the aforementioned peculiarities of the use of modern Bahasa Indonesia by Indonesian newspapers, the Indonesian press again and again criticises or publishes critics on certain characteristics of the use of the Bahasa Indonesia which are to be observed in recent times. The following critics come to the fore:

1. Indonesian newspapers show great deficiencies in the structure of Bahasa Indonesia sentences, in the correct use of words as well as pre- and suffixes.
2. Beginning from the sixties correct Bahasa Indonesia is paid less attention.
3. Only a small part of the more than 300,000 words investigated or newly accepted by the Lembaga Bahasa Nasional is used by the Indonesian people.
4. 50 to 60% of the Indonesians do not speak Bahasa Indonesia correctly.
5. Indonesian intellectuals prefer words from foreign languages which are not understood by the common people.
6. Some technical terms taken from foreign languages are translated into Bahasa Indonesia differently by local scholars, for instance Bahasa Indonesia *lempung* means at the Gajah Mada University, Yogya, *clay*, at Bogor *loam*. English *silt loam* is translated in Bandung by *geluh berlanau*, in Bogor by *lempung berdebu*.

The influx of a very great number of English loan-words, according to Indonesian newspapers, has different reasons, namely:

1. Signs or posters etc. are written in English for foreign tourists (for instance 'keep your city clean!' (at Samarinda), 'Welcome!' (at the airfield at Pangkal Pinang / Bangka), or 'Railway Station' (besides the Indonesian 'Stasiun (from the Dutch language) Kereta Api' (at Gambir Station, Jakarta).
2. Sometimes governmental announcements are published in English for foreign enterprises.
3. Possibly an Indonesian who prefers loan-words from foreign languages or who speaks some foreign language is regarded more learned and of 'higher' standing than a person who does not know a foreign language, i.e. it is a question of prestige. The knowledge of a foreign language may induce him to prefer to speak the foreign language in place of the Bahasa Indonesia.

The criticism on the incorrect or neglected use of the Bahasa Indonesia covers all linguistic fields. The main theme of it seems to

be the high percentage of loan-words in the Bahasa Indonesia, as well those taken from foreign as those taken from regional Indonesian languages. There seem to exist the following Indonesian points of view as to loan-words:

- a) Loan-words used in the daily language which are 'all the mode', but which are not absolutely necessary, should be replaced by Bahasa Indonesia expressions, for instance *shopping centre* or *youth centre* should be called: *pusat belanja* and *gelanggang remaja*. In place of *like it or not*, *of course*, or *problem* the Indonesian *suka atau tidak*; *tentu saja*, or *masalah* (from Arabic!) should be used. But also loan-words from Javanese or from the Omong Jakarta should be avoided. Such foreign words or expressions (from foreign or from regional Indonesian languages) are used by some speakers of Bahasa Indonesia because they do not yet know the equivalent Indonesian term for it, or they like to look more learned. Technical or scientific terms which are received from foreign languages should be taken over. In order to become part of the vocabulary of the Bahasa Indonesia they should be written and pronounced in the Bahasa Indonesia way, that is they should be adapted to the phonological system of the Bahasa Indonesia, for instance *konsep* (Dutch, English *concept*), or *proyek* (Dutch, English *project*) etc.
- b) One should try to replace loan-words from foreign languages by equivalents from regional languages, if they do not exist in the Bahasa Indonesia. If that is not possible, one should try to take them from other languages like Sanskrit or Arabic. But it must be mentioned here that Indonesia does not (yet) have enough scholars who study regional Indonesian languages. Up to now the interest of Indonesian students for this important linguistic field is very small.
- c) Some Indonesians are of the opinion that the Bahasa Indonesia should take over as many (technical and scientific) terms from foreign languages as possible in order to give it a more international vocabulary.

I conclude my paper with some general remarks concerning the Bahasa Indonesia:

1. Malay on which the Bahasa Indonesia is based originally was the mother-tongue only of some people in Sumatra and in the Riau Archipelago. Therefore, for most Indonesians the Bahasa Indonesia was and still is the second language which they must learn in addition to their regional language. And this problem of bilingualism makes it so difficult to develop a modern standard language, because bilingual people, as a rule, (unconsciously) tend to think and to express their thoughts in the mother-tongue first. On the other side, in modern times the use of regional languages decreases in Indonesia because part of the inhabitants of the rural areas where regional languages are spoken uses to settle in towns.

2. The Bahasa Indonesia has proved that it is quite possible to consciously influence the development of a common (national) language in an archipelago with hundreds of regional languages and to guide it into specific directions, provided that country is caught in a crisis and stands in need of leadership, both of which applied to the historical and political circumstances of Indonesia during and shortly after the Japanese occupation. At that time all Indonesians were eager to get a national language because it was a political necessity. The process of language innovation had to be accomplished in a relatively very short time.

3. The very quick development of modern technical sciences created a vast vocabulary of new terms, and the fact that they were published, before all, in English made it necessary for all languages in the world to take them over. Like medical or chemical technical terms these terms mostly are based on Greek or Latin, that is on related languages. Therefore, there were and are no great difficulties for these languages to accept these terms into their respective Indo-European languages, where only a small part of them was used and is understood by the common people while they belong to the special language of scientists or intellectuals. There are almost no problems as to the number and kind of loan-words to be taken over. But for the Indonesians those new terms are words from a quite foreign family of languages with which there do not exist any common linguistic bonds.

4. In all European countries there exist differences between the language of the common people and that of scientists and intellectuals, between the spoken and the written language. That is taken as granted and does not cause any problems there. Besides, for instance in Germany, there exist also dialectical differences. But since Luther the Germans have a common written language which is generally accepted as standard language. And here, I think, we have a main point for the existence of certain difficulties in the modern Bahasa Indonesia, where, up to now, there does not yet exist a common written language. For poets, scientists, teachers etc., and the mass media do not always speak the same Bahasa Indonesia, that is to say, their respective Bahasa Indonesia is more or less individual. Linguistic unification possibly could be reached by creating a standard Bahasa Indonesia which then is to be used and made known by the mass media, by sufficient reading material, and by teaching the correct grammar of it in the schools and universities. Of course, it will take some time to write such a standard grammar of the Bahasa Indonesia and to publish sufficient literature in this standard language. Before all, this linguistic problem must be given high priority so that the people becomes conscious of it and is willing to accept and realise proposals to use a standard Bahasa Indonesia.