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**Modelling unitary and fragmented
language ideologies on Indonesian
television**

by

Zane Goebel[©] (La Trobe University, Melbourne)

z.goebel@latrobe.edu.au

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Modelling unitary and fragmented language ideologies on Indonesian television¹

Zane Goebel, La Trobe University, z.goebel@latrobe.edu.au

Abstract

From 1968 to 1998 the bureaucracy, the education system, and the media became key to centralization and language standardization efforts in Indonesia. During this period these processes helped create versions of the familiar formula of language plus person plus territory equals nation and ultimately an ideology that Indonesian and ethnic languages were unitary languages. Those who spoke state-authorized versions of Indonesian and ethnic languages become Indonesian citizens and members of ethnolinguistic cores residing in Indonesia's peripheries. While this process was pushed along by the marketization of ethnic languages on television in the early 1990s, marketization also challenged the ideology of unitary languages through the modelling of mixed languaging practices. The constant tension between centralization and fragmentation is the central focus of this paper which shows how ethnolinguistic identity and mixed languaging practices were modelled on Indonesian television. My focus is 400 hours of footage recorded in 2009 which shows that mixed language practices were modelled across all television stations, most genres, and most timeslots. This co-occurred with other semiotic content that anchored this practice to territory; helping produce older unitary formulas of personhood. As with the early 1990s, this tension appears to be a reflex of the seeking of niche markets (fragmentation). Yet the copying of the sell-well format of representing ethnolinguistic cores created another round of market saturation and of seeking new markets, this time in the peripheries of established ethnolinguistic peripheries.

1. This is a version of the paper to be presented in the symposium "Margins, hubs, and peripheries in a decentralizing Indonesia" at the Sociolinguistics of Globalization conference, to be held from 3-6 June in Hong Kong.

Introduction

In this paper I tease out the tensions between the centralization and fragmentation of ideas about language as a unitary phenomenon as modelled on Indonesian television. I will focus on some of the semiotic features that have assisted the move between centralization and fragmentation. I will argue that territory continues to play a key role in changing the social value of mixed languaging practices. In doing so, I will examine some of the antecedents of these changes which have essentially centralized some peripheral ethnic languages while also reconfiguring ideas about the make-up of language in the imagination of those who produce television programming.

I take much of my inspiration from some of the common themes to be found in the work of Bahktin (1981), Hobsbawm (1992), Bourdieu (1991), Foucault (1978), and Wallerstein (2001) and those who have taken up on these ideas in the broad field of sociolinguistics (e.g. Blommaert, 2010; Blommaert, Leppänen, & Spotti, 2012; Heller, 2011; Heller & Duchêne, 2012b; Kelly-Holmes, 2010; Kuipers, 1998; Pietikainen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013). I will be especially concerned with ideas about pride and profit, purity versus impurity, normality versus abnormality, orders of indexicality, centres of normativity, and polycentricity. After looking at these ideas, I briefly look at the development of the ideology of language and ethnicity in Indonesia, before turning to television representations of peripheral ethnic languages.

Core–periphery tensions

In recent years, ideas about the relationship between language and political economy has received increasing interest from sociolinguists (Blommaert, 2010; Heller, 2011; Heller & Duchêne, 2012b; Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013). Common to many is the intellectual inspiration offered in the work of Wallerstein (2001) and Bakhtin (1981). My point of

departure in this paper are four of the themes that emerge in sociolinguistic extensions of these works, namely the fluidity of cores and peripheries; closely related to this is the fluidity of notions of unitary and fragmented languages; the inter-relationship between the two and how this fluidity can be explained by taking a historical view of the political economy in which such fluidity occurs; and the recursive use of the semiotic features that constitute the ideology of unitary languages – that is, languages that are associated with ideologies of nationalism such as one nation, one territory, one people, and one language.

In line with Wallerstein's (2001) work, many of the discussions point out that cores and peripheries are quite fluid, with cores becoming peripheries and vice-versa. For example, under specific economic and political conditions rural areas as exemplars of peripherality can become a type of core of authenticity through heritage tourism (e.g. Heller, 2013; Jaffe & Oliva, 2013; Pietikäinen, 2013; Pujolar, 2013). Typically, this reconfiguration occurs in multiple settings so that with any core or centre of normativity there are multiple peripheries (e.g. Blommaert, 2010; Heller, 2011). Within peripheries there are also multiple centres of normativity – i.e. polycentricity – that also become hierarchically ordered as reconfiguration occurs (e.g. Blommaert, 2010; Heller, 2011). This hierarchically ordering is often tightly related to ideas about purity, order, and normativity (e.g. Blommaert et al., 2012; Heller, 2013; Kuipers, 1998; Pietikäinen, 2013; Pujolar, 2013). Often these centres of normativity have what Silverstein (2003) describes as “higher order indexical relations” with dress, performance, housing, and so on so that the presence of one sign could point to ethnicity, gender, class, authenticity, etc. Agha (Agha, 2007) refers to this constellation as a semiotic register.

In semiotic terms these reconfigurations typically are a recursion of a familiar unitary ideology of the nation-state and contain semiotic features relating to territory, linguistic form and social type (e.g. Gal, 2012; Heller, 2013; Jaffe & Oliva, 2013; Pietikäinen, 2013; Pujolar,

2013). In the peripheries of Finland, for example, cores of Sami-ness are to be found in multiple sites through performances of locals wearing clothing emblematic of Sami-ness and speaking fragments of Sami language (Pietikäinen, 2013). Even so, in these same sites, and resonating with Bakhtin's (1981) ideas about heteroglossia and double voicing, some performances also contain new elements that may not be Sami, but are represented as such (Pietikäinen, 2013).

The third common theme to all of this work is the importance of taking a multiple time-scales approach time when understanding the relationship of reconfiguration processes to reconfigurations in the political economy. For many of these studies, the reconfiguration of peripheral areas occurs during economic downturn and as governments move between ideologies of national identity or pride and the need to pay for government services through the seeking of profit (Heller, 2011, 2013; Heller & Duchêne, 2012a). Again taking inspiration from the work of Wallerstein (2001), the main idea is that as enterprises' profits dwindle due to the saturation of the market (e.g. as more enterprises copy sell-well products and services), and as cheap inputs are increasingly unavailable, enterprises seek niche markets. One way of doing this is commodifying language and culture. In doing so, languages of the peripheries gain social and economic value, in Bourdieu's (1991) sense, though as noted earlier, some varieties from the peripheries are more socially valued than others.

The fourth theme is the relationship of replication to continuity and change and the scale of change. Most studies focused on a particular setting and thus change seems to refer to local change, yet studies of the role of imitation or replication in change suggest the need for one-to-many participation frameworks (e.g. schools and the mass media) to move an emergent local core to one that becomes core in a larger territory (Agha, 2007; Urban, 2001). Put in terms of work on enregisterment (Agha, 2007), for semiotic forms to become widely recognized, they need to be replicated on a large scale. This is achieved through replication as

precise copy, imitation, and through commentaries on these replications and imitations (Agha, 2007; Lempert, 2014; Urban, 2001). In the following sections I take up each theme starting with a brief historical look at the formation of ethnicity as a category in Indonesia and its relationship with political economy.

Managing diversity to form cores and peripheries in Indonesia

A series of inter-related processes underpinned by the seeking of profit during the nineteenth century helped the Netherlands become a core with an Indonesian periphery (for recent summaries of the scholarship on this period see Goebel, 2015, In press). The diversity management efforts of missionaries, colonial administrators, school teachers, medical personal, local elite, and scholars helped to establish ethnolinguistic peripheries made up of speakers of Sundanese, Javanese, Balinese, etc. in the then Dutch East Indies (e.g. Errington, 2001; Moriyama, 2005; Stoler, 1995a, 1995b). As elsewhere in the world these practices helped to naturalize or enregister the idea of nation as linked to territory and language, as in the familiar semiotic formula of one people, one language, one territory, one nation. These ideas co-occurred with prescriptivist and moral ideologies that language was pure and not contaminated with unauthorised fragments. The upshot of this was that the literary Malay of the colonial publisher, *balai pustaka*, became an emerging standard and the language of the elite who inhabited the cores of the Dutch East Indies, while particular varieties of local languages became part of an emerging ethnolinguistic core that was distinguished from impure, non-normative and immoral languages of the ethnolinguistic peripheries.

During the late colonial period a whole host of new infrastructures were introduced, including infrastructures of surveillance or governmentality (e.g. census, schooling), communication (e.g. radio and print media) and transportation (e.g. trams, railways, petrol driven transport, etc.). These infrastructures along with the social activities and organizations

that came with them or emerged with their help also reproduced ideologies about peripheral ethnolinguistic identity (e.g. Cohen, 2006; Dick, 2002; Elson, 2008; Errington, 1998a; Mrázek, 2002; Stoler, 1995b; Suryadi, 2006). Ideas about ethnolinguistic identity were largely reproduced under the Japanese occupation during World War 2 and after Japan's surrender when a group of elite Indonesians declared independence in August 1945 (e.g. Elson, 2008; and the papers in Reid, Akira, Brewster, & Carruthers, 1986).

Following a five year war with the Dutch who tried to re-colonize Indonesia (Anderson, 1972; Kahin, 1970 [1952]), Indonesia had a number of periods of nation building. The first 1945-1966 can be brutally characterized as one of ideological struggles over communism and Indonesian style democracy, and sustained political dialogue and military action to form a unitary state by halting independence movements in the peripheries, including areas outside of the big cities in Java and the islands outside Java (e.g. Elson, 2008; Kahin, 1970 [1952]; Legge, 1961). During this time there was only moderate investment in other important nation-building infrastructures, such as schooling (e.g. Bjork, 2005) and limited investment and success in language planning activities (Dardjowidjojo, 1998). While the formula of one nation, one people, one territory, and one language was imitated in much of the political discourses in the centres of the cores and peripheries and written into the Indonesian constitution, it wasn't until regime change in 1966 that this ideology was imitated on a massive scale.

The massification of education, a reinvigorated government sponsored internal migration scheme, heavy investment in transportation and communication infrastructure, the commodification of ethnicity, strong efforts to centralize the bureaucracy, and equally strong efforts in the area of language planning and standardization all contributed to the imitation ideas about one nation, one territory, one people and one language in the period between 1966 to 1998 (e.g. Adams, 1984; Alisjahbana, 1976; Bjork, 2005; Dardjowidjojo, 1998; Dick,

2002; Jones & Hull, 1997; Kitley, 2000; Nababan, 1991; Sullivan, 1992). To oversimplify this period what emerged was a core where there was the national language, Indonesian, and in the peripheries there were ethnic language cores (*bahasa daerah*). To extend this a little, we can say that standard Indonesian (*bahasa Indonesia baku*) was at the top of the linguistic hierarchy, vernacular varieties of Indonesian had co-equal value with some ethnic languages (e.g. Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese). These were followed by other increasingly marginalized or dying ethnic languages (e.g. Florey, 1990; Kuipers, 1998). At the bottom of this hierarchy are stigmatized mixed languages (Errington, 1998b) and each of these cores had higher order indexical relations with dress, car number plates, monuments, architecture, and performance (e.g. some of the papers in Hooker, 1993; Parker, 2002).

Imitating pride to make profit

While pride in pure Indonesian and pure ethnic languages was a feature of government efforts, the television industry imitated features of the semiotic formula of territory, language and people for profit. The deregulation of Indonesian television from 1990 onwards enabled four new commercial television stations (ANTEVE, RCTI, SCTV and TPI) to compete with the government broadcaster, TVRI (Kitley, 2000; Sen & Hill, 2000). While this market expansion was initially driven by a few economically and politically powerful people (Kitley, 2000: 230-231), the rising cost of inputs caused by foreign currency fluctuations and negative evaluations about programming by audiences quickly saturated this new market and engendered moves to increase market share (Loven, 2008; Rachmah, 2006). This was done by looking for new niche audiences in the ethnolinguistic peripheries via local content programming, which included the use of fragments of local languages, as in the now famous *si Doel Anak Sekolah* “Doel an educated lad” (Goebel, 2008; Loven, 2008; Rachmah, 2006; Sen & Hill, 2000).

The success of local content programming encouraged other producers to imitate the format of local content (Loven, 2008; Rachmah, 2006). This co-occurred with ongoing political and fiscal decentralization that started in 2001 which produced a period of intense change that increased the social value of ethnicity and ethnic languages in Indonesia (e.g. the papers in Davidson & Henley, 2007). To get votes in political contests candidates used ethnic languages in speeches (Aspinall, 2011), parents and academics pressured schools to teach ethnic languages (e.g. Arps, 2010; Sudarkam Mertonono, 2014), and political figures and bureaucrats made regular calls for the use of ethnic languages as the language of the office (e.g. Moriyama, 2012). These efforts all contributed to the formation of ethnolinguistic cores within Indonesia's peripheries. In the following section I provide an example of the emergence of a centre of normativity in the Sundanese speaking periphery within the social domain of television.

Reproducing unitary languages

In this section I provide one example of the imitation of the unitary language ideology in a television soap that I recorded as part of a larger data base of television recordings that I made in 2009 while in rural Cirebon, West Java (discussed in more detail in Goebel, 2015). Ten of the commercial broadcasters were Jakarta-based, while one was local. I recorded each station for a minimum of a day, and often up to four days when broadcast reception was good. These recordings were made starting at around five in the morning and usually finishing at one the following morning. Thus, while my data was not a perfect sample, nevertheless, it does provide enough data to point out some patterns of broadcast content and representational practices. What I wish to emphasize here is that the sell-well genre of local content soaps of the early nineties onwards has been imitated across a wide range of genres. Some of the common semiotic features used to reproduce ideas of language as emblematic of

6 number plate visible)

Jiran

7 **akang** (0.5) mau dibawakan . barangnya = **Older brother**, can I carry your goods for
you?

Male client 2

8 =
9 oh **tiasa atuh neng tiasa** . eh **antosannya** Oh **of course** [you] **can Younger Sister**,
10 . **yeuh** bayaran **anu ayeuna neng** . (gives **yes** [you] **can**. Eh, **wait a moment OK**,
11 money) **dua rebu** . **tah ku akang** **Here is the payment for now Younger**
12 **ditambahan deui sarebu** (0.5) **Sister, two thousand** (rupiah). **Here,**
Older Brother will give you one more
thousand.

Jiran

13 **nuhun kang** = **Thanks Older Brother.**

Male client 2

14 = **neng . tong hilaf enjing ka** **Younger sister, don't forget to come**
15 **dieu deui nya . sok atuh** angkut *barang* **back here tomorrow OK. Please take the**
16 *barangna* . hati hati **nya neng nya** **goods, be careful OK Younger Sister OK.**

Source: Jiran, Sorayaintercinefilms, broadcast on Indosiar

Apart from the actual language being used, which directly indexes Sundanese ethnic identity, most of the signs represented here have higher order indexical relations with Sundanese ethnic identity and the language of the ethnic other. For example, the talk here and indeed the rest of the interaction that occurs in the market is subtitled, helping to signal

ethnolinguistic otherness. The talk is also linked to territory by the presence of a number of small vans and trucks that all have a highly visible “D” preceding a series of numbers on their vehicle’s number plate. This prefix is the one used for Bandung and surrounds which have long-term associations with Sundanese-ness. The anchoring of this dialogue to region and implicitly to Sundanese-ness is also reinforced through the occurrence of other dialogues in this setting which are also subtitled. This suggests a community who all speak the same local medium. Note too that there are few Indonesian forms (plain font).

Representing and normalizing mixed languaging practices on television

Apart from documentary type genres aimed at children, the imitation of ideologies of purity tended to be rare in my data base. What was much more common was a type of stylized alternation where linguistic fragments of an ethnic language were used across a range of genres, including talk shows and soaps. In this section I will look at just one example of this practice drawing on the same soap discussed in extract 1. In the episode that I recorded in August 2009, none of the explicit signs found in extract 1 were present. In this setting, Jiran’s husband (Pendi) is at a telephone exchange trying to call Jiran while speaking to himself and to the service officer. As with extract 1, Sundanese is in bold, ambiguous forms are in italics, and Indonesian is in plain font.

Extract 2 Stylized alternation anchored to Sundanese locales

Pendi

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | eh. gancang atuh subhan di angkat | Eh. quickly come on Subhan pick up the |
| 2 | <i>teleponna</i> . heeh ini mah darurat . sia teh | <i>phone</i> . Heeh, this is an emergency right |
| 3 | jeung noan tidak angkat telepon . aing teh | here right now . What are you doing , |
| 4 | lagi butuh uang untuk kimoterapi si putri | [you] aren’t picking up the phone. Here I |

5	(dials another telephone number)(12.0)	am really needing money for Putri's chemotherapy.
6	ah sarua waé . sengaja apa si subhan teh	Ah it's just the same [no answer], are you
7	(1.0) tidak mau angkat telepon dari urang	doing it on purpose Subhan, [you] don't
8	(3.0)	want to answer a call from me .
9	ah si brengsek mah si subhan . si jiran	Ah that Subhan is an idiot. That Jiran is
10	mah sama waé (2.0) di sini mah lagi perlu	also the same . Here [I] need a lot of money
11	uang banyak buat bayar kimoterapi si putri.	to pay for Putri's chemotherapy, not to
12	belum buat makan . belum buat kartu uh	mention food, not to mention playing
13	(slams down telephone) (3.0)	cards.

Telephone booth attendant

14	(stands up) atuh kang . jangan di banting	Gee Older Brother , don't slam the phone.
15	banting teleponnya.	

Pendi

16	ieu mah telepon blegug . teu bisa	This telephone sucks , it doesn't ever
17	nyambung nyambung .	connect.

Telephone booth attendant

18	telepon sananya yang blegug . telepon sini	It's the receiving telephone that sucks , the
19	teh . bener semua . ini telepon baru semua	phones here are really good, they are all
20	akang . huh dasar	new Older Brother , huh fool.

Source: Jiran, Sorayaintercine Films, broadcast on Indosiar

Unlike extract 1, here there is a lot of alternation between Sundanese and Indonesian. Both participants orient to this type of alternation and there is no medium repair, which implies that this type of alternation is habitual. The semiotic features used to anchor this

episode to territory continue to include linguistic form, as was the case for extract 1, but there are no subtitles. Here, the talk and setting are contrasted with the prior Malaysian setting primarily by way of participants being involved (e.g., Jiran, the sultan, his other wives, and servants) and the subtitles that go with the dialogue that is represented as occurring in Malaysia (and contains Malay and English mediums). In a sense, the medium being used in the telephone booth is anchored to place by a movement to a rural setting together with the movement from subtitled to no subtitles.

When compared with the talk of clients 1 and 2 in extract 1, this talk seems much more stylized insofar as it presupposes that the use of fragments or “just enough” (Blommaert & Varis, 2011) linguistic forms will be sufficient to invoke a change in place. In a sense, we are also getting a glimpse of the producer’s and actors’ perception of their imagined audience’s competence to comprehend. In other words, we can suggest that the success of such stylized alternation is dependent on the imagined audience’s knowledge of the voices of widely circulating Sundanese stereotypes.

While extract 1 represents a clear case of the appropriation of a language from one center of normativity in the periphery via the well-known semiotic formula of nationalism, extract 2 only uses some of this formula. It is also the case the extract 1 neatly imitates the well-known ideology of pure languages, while extract 2 starts to contest this ideology. In a sense, within one television serial multiple centers of normativity are modelled. While this practice is a continuation of the representational practices of the early nineties, it seemed to be much more common in the programming I recorded in 2009. For example, over the three-week period that I recorded, there were the following soaps that had these types of representation: dramas set in Indonesian and Malaysia: *Tangisan Isabela* (Isabela’s Tears) and *Amira* [a woman’s name] (Indosiar) and *Maharani* [a woman’s name] (TPI); the comedy *Suami-Suami Takut Istri* (Husbands Afraid of Their Wives) (TransTV); the dramas *Bunda*

(Mother) and *Dimas dan Raka* [two men's names] (TPI) and *Inayah* [a woman's name] (Indosiar).

In addition to helping normalize mixed language practices in the social domain of television, we can also imagine that the ubiquity of this practice in the one-to-many participation framework of television could create new centres of normativity. For example, the imitation of mechanisms that anchored dialogue to territory could help create one where an Indonesian public could (mis)recognize whole dialogues and whole serial as emblematic of Sundanese, as found in written responses to this serial (e.g. Goebel, 2013; Goebel, 2015), and to other television content more generally (e.g. Loven, 2008; Rachmah, 2006). Even so, other centres of normativity were also emerging during this period as speakers of peripheral languages of the periphery started to lobby for and receive recognition (e.g. Arps, 2010; Yuyun W. I. Surya, 2006). In the last section I will give just one example of this.

In search of new markets: Representations of peripheral languages of the periphery

As I worked through my recordings another illustration of recursion jumped out at me, this time one which helped further fragment language ideologies while creating another new centre of normativity. In this case, we could see non-core languages of the ethno-linguistic periphery, such as local varieties of Sundanese and Javanese, being represented and used in television programming, especially comedy skits and advertisements. This programming seems to follow the same market logic that has been in play since the early 1990s: as core languages of the periphery are imitated by all programming market saturation occurs. In turn, saturation required the use of peripheral languages of the periphery to reach new markets, as in the case of the following cigarette commercial (figure 2 and extract 3).

Figure 2 Anchoring medium to Javanese-ness



Source: Jarum 76 cigarette commercial broadcast on GlobalTV 13 Aug 2009 (9-10pm)

In this commercial we have three men apparently stranded on a deserted island and thirsty when a genie bottle washes ashore. After on the men opens the bottle, the genie appears and offers to grant them a wish. The Javanese-ness of this commercial and its audience is initially presupposed and anchored to a pre-existing core within a periphery (Yogyakarta and Solo varieties of Javanese) through the representation of the genie's dress (especially the hat, *blangkon*), and his pronunciation of *beri* "give" (line 2) using the voiced consonant *mb*. The Surabayan-ness is presupposed through the use of one linguistic token, *rek* "friend" (line 4), which is associated with the type of Javanese spoken in Surabaya, East Java. Indonesian is in plain font, Javanese of the core is in bold caps, and Surabayan is in bold underline.

Extract 3 Representing peripheral languages of the periphery: Surabayan Javanese

Genie

1 (laughs and gestures with right hand) aku I'll **GIVE** you three wishes.

2 MBeri tiga permintaan

Castaway 1

2 aku mau pulang (then disappears) I want to go home.

Castaway 2

3 sama (then disappears) [Me] too.

Castaway 3

4 sepi **rek** . aaa aku pengen mereka MBalik It's quite [Why aren't you here] **friends**, [I
5 (Sound of gamelan and then castaway 1 know], I want them **TO COME BACK**
6 reappears with a water container and [here].
7 castaway 2 reappears with a pillow before
8 gesturally chiding castaway 3 for his
9 stupidity)

Conclusion

In this paper I have taken much of my inspiration from the work of Wallerstein, Bakhtin, Hobsbawn, Bourdieu, and Foucault and the interpretations of this work by those working in the areas of the sociolinguistics of globalization, especially Blommaert's (2010) work on polycentricity and centres of normativity and the work scholars looking at the relationship of political economy to language and the reconfiguration of core – periphery relations (e.g. Heller, 2011; and the papers in Heller & Duchêne, 2012b; Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013). My point of departure was the representation of peripheral languages in Java, and how semiotic features associated with old ideologies that link language to territory and group have been recursively used as television broadcasters and the producers of television content seek new niche markets. I argued that these efforts (re)producing multiple centres of normativity – i.e. polycentricity – within the emerging ethnolinguistic peripheries of Java.

While the imitation of sell-well formats was an example of the core appropriating peripheral ethnolinguistic identities for profit, much of the programming only contained fragments of these ethnic languages. In representing this type of mixing this programming helped to reconfigure models of language that were based on notions of purity, although the ubiquity of this format along with the continued anchoring of dialogue to territory suggests the normativization of a new semiotic register. It also seemed the case that this seeking of niche market continued to saturate the market to the extent that peripheral languages of the peripheries also started to be used in much of the programming. Even so, as this programming also utilized semiotic features that anchored these peripheral languages of the periphery, they too can be expected to become centres of normativity which over larger time scales may also have quite different semiotic configurations in the social domain of television to the peripheries that they are modelling. Following this logic we can also expect a continuation of this ethnolinguistic fragmentation.

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