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EDITORS’ NOTE

This international seminar on Language Maintenance and Shift IV (LAMAS IV for short) is a continuation of the previous international seminar with the same theme conducted by the Master Program in Linguistics, Diponegoro University on 18 November 2014.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the seminar committee for putting together the seminar that gave rise to this collection of papers. Thanks also go to the Head and the Secretary of the Master Program in Linguistics Diponegoro University, without whom the seminar would not have been possible.

The table of contents lists all the papers presented at the seminar: The first four papers are those presented by invited keynote speakers. They are Dr. Sugiyono (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Jakarta, Indonesia), Dr. Zane Goebel (La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia), Prof. Yudha Thianto, Ph.D. (Trinity Christian College, Illinois, USA), Dr. Deli Nirmala, M.Hum (Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia).

In terms of the topic areas, there are 21 papers in applied linguistics, 20 papers in sociolinguistics, 14 papers in theoretical linguistics, 18 papers in discourse/pragmatics, and 13 papers (miscellaneous).

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RETRIEVING THE SOCIO-POLITICAL HISTORY OF INDONESIAN

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Abstract

This paper deals with historical facts on the use of Malay before it was renamed as *Bahasa Indonesia*. Its early development reflects the successful attempt of language planning activities done by some socio-political activists. Its socio-political history proves that the activities of language planning cannot escape from policies made by socio-political activists. The case is the same as any attempt of language maintenance. It is not a matter of linguistics alone. To make language maintenance successful, sociolinguists should seriously make good policies to be politically carried out in appropriate linguistic domains.

Keywords: Indonesian, Low Malay, High Malay, language planning, history of Indonesian.

Introduction

According to the national history, the name of Indonesian Language was 'officially' declared for the first time on October 28, 1928. Intentionally, I give 'a quotation mark' to the word, *officially*, because the declaration had no constitutional grounds at that very time. My reason is simple. The declaration of Indonesian Language, as an autonomous language, by some political activists in order to rename the existing Malay Language is of paramount importance. According to sociolinguists, who study the realms of Language Planning and Policy, the constitutional grounds for such an autonomous language for a new nation really matters. The people who supported a new name for the existing Malay Language still lived under the government of Netherlands East Indies (NEI) when the Republic of Indonesia (RI) had not existed yet. Therefore, I am able to safely argue that the grounds for the official declaration of Indonesian Language at that time tend to be more socio-political than legal or constitutional in characteristics. Thus, the word *officially* used as a topic in this paragraph is attributed to a truly socio-politically statement, instead of legal or constitutional one.

Needs for National Unity

That the corpus of Indonesian Language (*Bahasa Indonesia*) derived from, rather than to say, was similar to that of the Malay Language (*Bahasa Melajoe*) is linguistically true. Most linguists and historians will agree to this argument. In fact, a notable Indonesian linguist, Anton Moeliono (1993), honestly described that during the Indonesian Youth Congress in 1928 not all political activists, who supported the new language, were able to speak *Bahasa Melajoe*, let alone the modern *Bahasa Indonesia* as it is spoken today; and most probably the language used in the Congress was not only *Bahasa Melajoe* but Dutch as well. This fact indicates that in the early 1930s decade *Bahasa Indonesia* had not yet gained popular supports from most people throughout this archipelago. Its sociolinguistic fact is completely different from that of today when *Bahasa Indonesia* is so popular among the people in this country. Such a kind of sociolinguistic development is very interesting to learn but, I believe, no linguist will be able to comprehend it without scrutinizing the socio-political history of the speakers, which I try to explain in this paper.

In the early 1910s decades, socio-political activists established some social organizations based on various interests. Most organizations set up a dream of a new nation, which means that, there was emergent spirit of nationalism although, politically speaking, they had not had enough courage yet to openly struggle for independence from the NEI government. Take an example of *Boedi Oetomo*, which was established in Mei 1908 by a general practitioner, Wahidin Sudira Husada. According to van Niel (1970), it was an organization whose members were moderate Javanese intellectuals so that, the NEI government did consider it as having no endangering nationalistic spirit. However, by the

Indonesian activists, this organization was regarded as the symbol of the emergence of nationalistic spirit. Nowadays, the government of the Republic of Indonesia has officially celebrated its anniversary, May 20, as the day of National Awakening (*Hari Kebangkitan Nasional*). Such a kind of social organization was also set up by Indonesian students in the Netherlands. For the readers' convenience, I have tried to list some similar organizations in the following table.

Year	Name of Social Organization
1908	1) <i>Boedi Oetomo</i>
1908	2) <i>Indische Vereniging</i>
1915	3) <i>Tri Kara Dharma</i>
1917	4) <i>Jong Soematanen Bond</i>
1918	5) <i>Jong Java</i>
1918	6) <i>Jong Minahasa</i>
1920	7) <i>Jong Ambon</i>
1920	8) <i>Jong Soelawesi</i>
1920	9) <i>Sekar Roekoen</i>
1922	10) <i>Indonesische Vereniging</i>
1924	11) <i>Perhimpoean Indonesia</i>
1925	12) <i>Jong Islamieten Bond</i>
1926	13) <i>Perhimpoean Peladjar-Peladjar Indonesia</i>
1927	14) <i>Jong Indonesie</i>
1927	15) <i>Pemoeda Indonesia</i>

Table 1: Year and Name of Social Organizations

From the table above, we can learn at least four different words, namely: *Indische*, *Indonesische*, *Indonesie*, and *Indonesia*. Of course, the last new word, which is not foreign for the Malay tongue, would be chosen by the activists to name a new language best referring to their national spirit. The word *Indonesische* was not a novel term. In fact, it had been frequently used by Logan (1850) and Bastian (1884) as a geographical jargon referring to the vast area in the archipelago. The word *Indonesia*, the Malay version for *Indonesische*, became even more crucial for most socio-political activists to accommodate their spiritual need for national identity. However, let us learn this evidence: out of fifteen organizations, only three used Malay, three used Javanese and eight used Dutch Language as their name. The number of names implies that the Malay Language was not yet popularly used by the indigenous people in the early 1920s decade. See their names in the following table.

Languages	Names of Organizations
Malay (3)	<i>Perhimpoean Indonesia; Perhimpoean Peladjar-Peladjar Indonesia; Pemoeda Indonesia</i>
Javanese (3)	<i>Boedi Oetama; Tri Kara Dharma; Sekar Roekoen</i>
Dutch (8)	<i>Indische Vereniging; Jong Soematanen Bond; Jong Java; Jong Minahasa; Jong Ambon; Jong Soelawesi; Jong Islamieten Bond; Jong Indonesie</i>

Table 2: Languages used as Names of Organizations

Selecting the Language of Unity

As a matter fact, the urgent need for “a language of unity” had ever been spoken out by Muhammad Thamrin since the year of 1918 when he forwarded a proposal to *Volksraad* (People's Council) in Batavia. He suggested that the Malay language be promoted to be the second “official language” in addition to Dutch. This fact is implicit evidence showing us that the Malay language could be the language of wider community or, in other words, “the language of unity” for the indigenous people in the archipelago. Unfortunately, this proposal had failed of success.

Then, those political activists launched another attempt. On November 15, 1925, M. Tabrani was elected to be the chairman of a committee, whose task was to prepare the first Indonesian Youth Congress (April 30 to May 2, 1926) in Batavia. Its main objective was to initiate a national

collaboration of the existing social organizations throughout the archipelago or, at least, among those listed in table above.

In the First Congress, Muhammad Yamin presented a paper proposing two vernaculars, Javanese and Malay, to be worth selecting as “the language of unity” for the country. In response to the proposal, Tabrani (the chairman of the committee) suggested that if Malay be promoted, it should be renamed first as Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia*). This fact was stated in the proceedings, *Verslag van het Eerste Indonesische Juedgcongres*, which was surprisingly written in Dutch and still well-preserved in the Jakarta National Museum. Since the First Congress, the Malay language had become even more popular among the political activists in *Perhimpunan Peladjar-Peladjar Indonesia*. In addition, Soekarno, the leader of *Jong Indonesie*, started to launch a radical campaign for its use in official meetings and daily interactions. Tabrani’s suggestion to rename the language from *Bahasa Melajoe* to *Bahasa Indonesia*, based on Yamin’s paper, is really a scientifically brilliant idea in the realm of national language planning and policies.

Equipped with the spirit of nationalism, almost all political activists agreed to plan another Youth Congress. Then, sometime in June 1928, Soegondo, a member of *Perhimpunan Peladjar-Peladjar Indonesia*, was assigned to be the chairman of the committee. His task was to prepare anything necessary for the Second Youth Congress to be held in Batavia on a weekend, from October 27 (Saturday) to 28 (Monday), 1928. The historians recorded that the Congress resulted in three important points, which are now popularly considered as the Youth Pledges (*Soempah Pemoeda*). One of the points is related to a new language of the nation. Moeliono translates the text into English, as follows: “We, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, uphold the language of unity, the Indonesian language” (1993:137). The literal meaning of “the language of unity” is different from that of “the national language” or “the official language”. It seems that the activists intentionally coined such a linguistic term because they were fully aware of its legal implication which might invite unexpected reactions from the NEI government.

Reasons for Promoting Malay

There are some crucial reasons for the socio-political activists to promote Malay to be the language of unity. The reasons are in correlation with the social, political and cultural conditions of the language speakers in the archipelago in the early 1920s decade.

First, in terms of social condition, *Bahasa Melajoe* had gained popularity due to the following facts. Since the early 1900s decade, there had been many formal schools teaching *Bahasa Melajoe* as a subject or language of instruction. *Bahasa Melajoe*, together with the local vernacular, had been taught in Taman Siswa schools, since it was first established in 1922. In addition, there were many literate people who were able to read Malay texts written in the alphabets. Those literate people learned how to read in primary schools which had been set up by the NEI government since 1906. Van Niel (1960) reported that the total number of primary schools in 1909 was 723. In addition, *Bahasa Melajoe* had also been used as the language of most newspapers even long before 1900. Salmon (1981) estimated that *Soerat Kabar Bahasa Melajoe* was first published in Surabaya in 1856. Kartodirdjo *et al* (1977) wrote *Bintang Soerabaja*, first published in 1860. According to van Niel (1970), the first newspaper belonging to an indigenous entrepreneur was *Medan Prijaji*, in 1907. Another important institution, which promoted the use of *Bahasa Melajoe*, was Balai Poestaka. It belonged to the NEI government whose main task was to make publications in *Bahasa Melajoe* or in other vernaculars, such as Javanese or Sundanese. However, before the socio-political activists officially declared Malay (*Bahasa Melajoe*) as “the language of unity” in the Second Youth Congress in 1928, they had to rename it first as Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia*), as suggested by Tabrani in the First Youth Congress in 1926. The main reason was to avoid unexpected regional sentiments; since the word *Melajoe* referred to a regional language in Riau. The word *Indonesia*, on the other hand, did not have any implication on any regional language at all.

The second reason refers to the fact that *Bahasa Melajoe* had become a *lingua franca* sporadically used by most traders throughout the archipelago although the number of its native speakers was markedly fewer than that of Javanese, amounting to about 45% of the total population in the archipelago (see Rustow 1968, Poedjosoedarmo 1982). Thus, geographically speaking, *Bahasa Melajoe* had gained popularity in the archipelago if compared to any other vernaculars (regional languages) including Javanese (*Bahasa Jawa*).

The third reason is in correlation with the realm of orthography. *Bahasa Melajoe* used to be presented in *Latin* or italicized-alphabetical script (which was popularly known as *Rumi*) and/or Arabic script (which was popularly known as *Jawi*). Whereas, in the 1920s decade, Javanese was still transcribed in the Javanese script, a modification of Devanagari. In fact, the alphabetical script was also used to transcribe Javanese texts but it did not gain popularity at that time, except in books published by Balai Poestaka.

The fourth reason is in terms of grammatical and sociolinguistic issues. *Bahasa Melajoe* was considered much easier to learn by non-native speakers than Javanese (or any other vernaculars) because it did not have any complicated “speech levels” (*undha-usuk*). Besides, compared to Javanese (or any other vernaculars), *Bahasa Melajoe* was regarded by many non-Javanese speakers as being more egalitarian in characteristics so that it would be acceptable for a language of national unity.

The final reason, in relation to political discourse, is that, by the end of 1920s decade, in their attempt to foster the spirit of nationalism some political activists needed a means of unity, which would not potentially endanger the political affairs in the archipelago. According to Tauli (1974), the means of unity might function as a means of separation as well if its supporters do not agree to wholeheartedly accept the very means. At that time, Javanese, supported by many native speakers, was supposed to predominate in any political affairs in the country so that the political discourse would be under the hegemony of its native speakers. As a matter of fact, due to political consideration, Malay whose native speakers were merely slight in number became a neutral choice for the most appropriate language of national unity.

Profile of Indonesian before 1928

Teeuw wrote that “Malay here covers a wide range of varieties” (1972:114). In the 1920s, there were two relatively different varieties, namely: Low Malay and High Malay. As it was reported by Adam (1995) that the *lingua franca* used by most people in Batavia was popularly known as *bazaar Malay* (*Melajoe Pasar*). What he meant was the Low Malay variety. The fact that the Low Malay had been widely used during the colonial era since 1900s decade was also reported by Watson (1982:36). Even long before those decades, de Graaf & Pigeaud (1984) stated that the Low Malay was used as the *lingua franca* by Chinese travelers in early decades of 1600, see for example: *Catatan Tahunan Melayu dan Cirebon*. Historical fact showed that the Low Malay had been popularly used long before the Batavia city was established in 1619 (see Adam 1995:9). In brief, compared to the High Malay, the Low Malay must have been more popularly used in daily communication in the years before 1928 (cf. Purwoko 2008) and in popular literature (cf. Hendrarti 2008).

As a matter of fact, the real profile of Indonesian is not far different from that of the Low Malay. Therefore, there was an issue of political competition between the Low Malay and the “Standard Malay” in any institutional or official settings. Maier (1993:283) reported that the NEI government necessarily founded an institution, called Balai Poestaka, in order to react against the increasing use of Low Malay in daily interactions in urban areas and especially in the domains of profession or press (cf. Suryadinata 1988:101). Its main objective was to promote a standardized variety of Malay based on a prescriptive grammar book codified by van Ophujsen. This linguistic variety was regarded as the standard variety or the “High Malay” (see Maier 1993:278).

Supported by the NEI government, Balai Poestaka claimed that their variety was better than the Low Malay variety and worth using as the basic ground for the High Malay and later to be codified as *Bahasa Indonesia* (Anonim 1948:28-9). As a matter of fact, the notion of High or Standard Malay still invited controversy. A Russian researcher pointed out that the term High Malay might also refer to the linguistic variety used by its native speakers when writing stories or performing literary works and communicating with the aristocrats in the Riau kingdom, instead of the linguistic variety used in printed materials published by Balai Poestaka (see Sykorsky 1980:501).

The competition between those two varieties reflects an attempt of language *planning* or language *engineering* (Alisjabana 1974) or language *development* (Garvin 1974). For further information on the case of early development of Indonesian, see Alisjabana (1976), Rubin *et al* (1977) and Moeliono (1993). Only after independence was there an official institution, established the government of the Republic of Indonesia, which planned and then ratified *Bahasa Indonesia* (i.e. the High Malay variety of Balai Poestaka) to be the state/national language. The Constitution (UUD 1945), Chapter 15, Article 36 states that “*bahasa Negara adalah bahasa Indonesia*” (the state

language is *Bahasa Indonesia*”). In fact, there had been some early activities of language planning done by some individuals before the independence, started from the First Congress of *Bahasa Indonesia*, in 1938, in Surakarta; it was pioneered by Alisjahbana, Armijn Pane, and Amir Hamzah (see Alisjahbana 1974:400).

Concluding Remarks

The socio-political history of Indonesian can be used as the key factors to understanding the real process of language development, maintenance, planning and policies. The enactment of language planning and maintenance or shift should not merely relate to linguistic matters. Though, unfortunately, most linguists tend to zero-in on more linguistic problems than the socio-political policies. My suggestion is that the problem of language maintenance and shift is a matter of language use so that linguists should regard socio-political issues as important as the linguistic issues, to be worth dealing with seriously.

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