

THE FUNCTIONS OF INDONESIAN IN CENTRAL JAVA¹

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1. INTRODUCTION

The population of Central Java (the area around the cities of Yogyakarta and Surakarta on the island of Java, Indonesia) is to a large extent bilingual. First, there is the language native to the region, Javanese, which is the mother tongue of the vast majority of the native-born population, and second there is Indonesian, the national language of Indonesia, which is very widely known and used in daily life, especially by the generations which have grown up since World War II. In this paper we shall discuss the function which Indonesian occupies in the Javanese speech community of Central Java.² What we describe for Central Java also holds true in its broad outlines for other areas where Javanese is spoken, but there are differences which arise from difference in attitudes toward Javanese in Central Java as opposed to Javanese elsewhere.

To start out with, we must distinguish two subcommunities of the Javanese speech community whose speech and behavior differ markedly: the Peranakan, Javanese speakers of Chinese ancestry, and the Pribumi, the rest (for the most part, people of native Javanese ancestry). Although these communities speak the same language and have absolutely no difficulty understanding each other's speech, the function of Indonesian and attitudes toward it in the two communities are so dif-

ferent that we must deal with them separately.

Let us start with the Pribumi speech community (or rather the sizeable portion of the Pribumi community which has a good command of Indonesian and uses it frequently in daily life). In Central Java, as throughout Indonesia, Indonesian is the official language and is used for the kind of functions which official languages commonly occupy: in schools above the first few grades, for any activities involving the government (courts, military, public health, agricultural extension, etc.), for national mass media, advertising, and the like, and other such activities which are carried out on a national scale. Indonesian is also a language of wider communication. It is the language of business above the bazaar level and is the language of communication with non-Javanese. Indonesian, thus, also has the function of creating distance and clarifies the outsider's status as an outsider. The corollary of this is that Javanese (as is true also for other regional languages) is the code for in-group identification, the recognition of a person as 'one of us'; and Javanese have the tendency to use Indonesian with all non-Javanese, even those who know Javanese.

The activities for which Indonesian is typically used are prestigious activities, and in using Indonesian people get the kind of prestige one would get from engaging in these activities. Thus, Indonesian functions as a means for conferring prestige of a certain sort. For example, Indonesian is associated with education. A well-educated person is fluent in Indonesian, and therefore fluency in Indonesian gives one the prestige of being well-educated. Indonesian is also the language of Jakarta, the capital city, and as such is associated with people who have gone places, especially with the elite (most of whom live or have lived in the capital or at least frequently go there). It is the language which non-Javanese use, and since these people in Central Java are often perceived to be economically better off than the ordinary Javanese, their language has an aura of prestige. On account of these factors, Indonesian has become an important code among Javanese: it is used not only to communicate with non-Javanese or to talk about subjects for which Javanese is normally not used, but it is also a device for asserting the status or right to prestige which is ascribed to speakers of Indonesian.

Finally, Indonesian also has the function of avoiding Javanese, where the use of Javanese involves a speech-level choice which would create a feeling of awkwardness. (We shall discuss this function in Section 3.1., below.)

1.1. SPEECH LEVELS

In order to understand the functions which Indonesian occupies in Central Java we must give a short description of Javanese speech levels.³ As is well known, Javanese has speech levels, a series of alternative vocabularies, the choice of which depends upon the relative statuses of the speaker and the interlocutor and their degree of intimacy. A person of low status gives a high level speech to his superior. A high-status person gives low level speech to his inferior. Intimates give each other low level. In other words, the choice of a lower or higher speech level is governed by considerations very similar in type to the ones which govern the choice of *tu* or *vous* in French, *du* or *Sie* in German, *ты* or *вы* in Russian, and so forth. There are differences: whereas the *tu-vous* alternation involves only these pronouns and verbal agreement in French, the Javanese levels involve close to a thousand vocabulary items. Further, in the European languages there is only a two-way choice: one speaks either on a *vous* level or on a *tu* level; in Javanese, level choice is a cline: one may speak on a purely low level or on a purely high level or on any of an infinite number of levels in between, depending on how many and for which particular meanings one chooses the high as opposed to the low alternative form.⁴ In Javanese the picture is further complicated by the occurrence of honorific vocabulary which gives honor to the person spoken or referred to and which is employed or not employed irrespective of the speech level. The presence or absence of honorific vocabulary is also referred to by the term 'speech level'.

2. FORM OF INDONESIAN USED BY JAVANESE SPEAKERS TO OTHER JAVANESE SPEAKERS

With this brief description of what speech levels are, we are now in a position to understand the form which Indonesian takes when used in everyday conversations among Javanese. First, except for formal speech on formal occasions or discussions of an official nature, there is practically no conversation purely in Indonesian (or, for that matter, in many circles, purely in Javanese). Instead, we find a constant switch from Indonesian to Javanese and back. It is possible to do this because the syntactic structures of the two languages are very close. Now this switch is by no means random. The choice of Indonesian forms is governed by factors or motives which we shall examine in the succeeding section. Further, there are certain forms in Javanese which very clearly indicate speech level (functors, demonstratives and pronouns and certain other words of high frequency in conversation), and

these forms have a strong tendency to be put in Javanese so that the speech level is clear. (When the purpose of a shift to Indonesian is to obscure the speech level, as we describe in Section 3.1., below, these forms are put in Indonesian). The following citation exemplifies the shift to Indonesian where Javanese forms are interspersed to preserve the speech level. The speaker has shifted to Indonesian because of the subject (school), but the Indonesian is broken by forms which clearly indicate a high speech level (*meniko this*, *éngkang marker*, etc.). In this citation and all citations in this paper forms that are Indonesian and not Javanese are capitalised.⁵

1. Lajeng kulo raq énggéh meniko kéngéng pón wastani dados PANI-TIYA MENERIMA MURÉT. Wonten maléh anu meniko, MASALAH laré éngkang NILÉNYA KURANG BEGITU BAÉQ, ATÓ ANAQ YHANG DHATANG meniko BISA DITERIMA.

further I you-know also umm could passive-marker be-called be THE-COMMITTEE TO-ACCEPT PUPILS. There-is also umm this PROBLEM child who HIS-GRADES NOT-SO VERY GOOD OR CHILD THAT COMES that-one CAN BE-ACCEPTED

'Further, I could also be called the admissions committee. Further there is, umm, the problem of the child whose grades aren't good enough or whether the child that comes can be admitted.'

In a similar way, Javanese forms of lower level are inserted in between Indonesian forms in utterances which are at a lower level.

3. FACTORS WHICH LEAD TO A CHOICE OF INDONESIAN AS OPPOSED TO JAVANESE

In Java Indonesian functions much as the High forms of diglossia function in the four speech communities which Ferguson describes and Javanese functions much like the Low forms. We find that Indonesian is used for most of the functions which Ferguson outlines for the High form in diglossia: personal letters, political matters, university lectures, news broadcasts, newspaper editorials or news stories; and Javanese is used for the functions which he lists as typically performed by Low: instructions to servants, waiters, workmen, clerks, conversation with family friends, colleagues, radio 'soap opera', caption on political cartoon (in publications whose readership is largely Javanese). The only exception is that poetry and sermons are in Javanese (if aimed at a Javanese audience). Whether or not the term diglossia should properly be applied to the Javanese speech community is a question we cannot consider here. There are enough differences in language attitudes and forms which the alternative codes take between the Javanese speech community and Ferguson's illustrations