

Language ideologies and the development of distinctive writing communities in early 20th and 21st centuries Indonesia

Ideology is a mediating link between social groups and changing language use patterns; thus, it is to these ideologies that I look to offer insights into emergent language forms in Indonesia in the early 20th and 21st centuries. The importance of ideology in language change is most prominent at times of social, cultural, or political transitions because ideologies relate not only to language use but to identity, aesthetics, and morality. Patterns of language use reveal notions of the person and his/her affiliation to communities such as socio-political organizations, religious communities, nation-states, and cultural and educational associations.

In this paper, I examine the linguistic features of distinct writing communities of two periods, the late colonial period of the 1920s and 1930s and the post-Suharto period (1998-present), in order to discover a link between ideology and language use patterns in these writing communities. In the late colonial period of the early 20th century, there were three distinct presses, the *Peranakan* Chinese presses, the 'liar' or revolutionary press, and the colonial government's *Balai Pustaka* press, each espousing a socio-political ideology and a variety of Malay with distinctive features. In the post-Suharto period, there are emerging three distinctive writing communities; the popular Islamic literature that is promoting an Islamic modernity; the popular, trendy, mostly Jakarta-based, 'youth' culture that is promoting a cosmopolitan (western) modernity; and the powerful Jakarta-based presses that promote a nationalist modernity via a standard Indonesian that is the legacy of Suharto's New Order regime.

I briefly describe the linguistic features of each of the six communities and connect each group with its ideological perspective and with the broader social, political, and cultural context. I conclude with a discussion of the importance of language ideologies in the emergence of distinctive speech and writing communities, especially at times when cultural and linguistic hegemonies are being questioned.

References

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