

Rough Draft

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF THE MALAY LANGUAGE
AND
REGIONALISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The Malayan language is a branch of the Malayo-Polynesian linguistic family which covers the territory extending from Madagascar in the west, through the Indonesian Archipelago, through the Malayan Peninsula to the borders of Burma and Siam, to the Philippines and Formosa in the north and across the Pacific to Melanesia and Micronesia, even to distant Hawaii. This Malayo-Polynesian linguistic family comprises, apart from the Malay language, the Polynesian, Melanesian and Micronesian languages. The Malay language is the largest branch of this group. It is the language originally spoken in Middle and South Sumatra and in the states on the Peninsula of Malaya. The inter-insular trade, however, brought about the expansion of this language to the coastal areas of the islands in the entire archipelago. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Three times it was the language used in the process of establishment of three foreign influences in the archipelago. First by Islam, then by the Portuguese whom the Malays of Malaya were the first to come into contact with; and, subsequently, the Dutch. The situation is now such that the Malay language is ~~xxx~~ spoken and understood everywhere on all the islands of the archipelago except for the most remote rural areas. In many parts

replaced the ~~Indonesian~~
it has even ~~replaced~~ original native tongue like in West Borneo, Batavia
and most of the islands of the Moluccas between Celebes and New Guinea.
It is now spoken and understood at least by all those who are in one or the
other way connected with go vernment commerce both in Malaya and the Indo-
nesian archipelago. The development of the nationalist movement in Indonesia
has greatly reaffirmed the position of the Malay language and its development
towards its acceptance as the lingua franca for these areas. The Indonesian
nationalist movement^{was born} which in its modern form in 1908, had by 1929 finally
overcome the more or less separatist and regional elements of its initial
growth and emerged in that year as a culturally and politically unitarian
movement comprising the entire archipelago or rather the entire territory of
the Dutch East Indies and accepted at the same time the Malay language, from
then on called the Indonesian language, as its national language. Nationalist
propaganda and ^{agitation} ~~nationalist~~ and nationalist political education from then on almost
exclusively carried out the Indonesian language. The acceptance of this decision
was general despite the fact that, for instance 45 million out of the 70 million
of the entire archipelago spoke a language which was, in many respects, ~~little~~
better developed and had a longer cultural past, the Javanese language. But in
this process of national reawakening apparently questions of ^{ethical} ~~national~~ prestige,

especially in the face of the common foe, did not arise. It was also this decision which gave the development of the Malay language a tremendous impetus/^{developing it} from an unorganized ^{maid} ~~hand~~ for all foreigners and for all different ethnic groups, used rather loosely without a strict observance of its grammar nor its idiom, to a modern language which had to serve as the medium between the exigencies of western civilization and the nationalists~~propaganda~~. The nationalist propaganda and the nationalist press had to adapt the language in order to make it a suitable vehicle for the expression of modern political and social thinking and the interest which then at that time ~~had~~ developed among the nationalists for western culture aroused the eagerness among the nationalist to free themselves from the frozen and strict forms of literary expression, from the epic and from the pantun, and it was at that time that the first attempts were made to find new forms of literary expression/ ~~which find no room in a communal or feudal society and it is no surprise to find~~ ~~the process of individualization which took place parallel to and which~~ ^{nationalist} was a part of the general/reawakening in Asia was reflected in this choice of modern literary expression. The Japanese military occupation and the consequent discarding of the Dutch language precipitated the full development of the Malay language from a medium for a commercial and political activity to a medium which could adequately cover all fields of human activity. It was at that time that the first language

commission was set up which codified the new developments at that time and became the vanguard of further adaptation and renovation of the Indonesian language.

During the Japanese period all education and certainly all higher education was shifted over night from Dutch to Indonesian and it was at this time that, of necessity, the growth of the Indonesian language was accelerated. The general revival of the Malay language which was brought about by the situation^x ~~it~~/^{was} also reflected in the structure of the language, the syntax and idiom of the Dutch language which ~~xxx~~, like most modern languages, ^{are} more descriptive or circumscriptive rather than indicative like most ancient languages, left a permanent impact on the syntaxes and the idiom of modern Indonesian language, a situation which made the Indonesian language much more flexible and suitable for the adaptation to western philosophical and technical/^{description and} terminology. The Indonesian revolution which was partly brought about by a general social and economic dislocation of the social fabric and the psychological bewilderment of the people as a result thereof has again precipitated this development. In the development of the Indonesian language the Indonesian revolution means the definite breach with the past and it was then that the Indonesian language not only changed in form but ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ even more definitely in substance.

In the literature created in this period is reflected the attempts of the younger generation to account for and to locate their newly discovered individuality, their newly discovered "I" (ego). In its modern poetry the same attitude and, in general,

the influence of people like T.S. Elliott and the Dutch poets Slauserhoff and ~~Versnel~~ Marsman although both have in common the search for the correct location or correct place of the ~~atomized~~ individuality in society. Without even trying to go any further than the barest of outlines as presented here it is quite clear that the Malay language and especially the Malay language as is spoken in the Indonesian archipelago is a reflection and even an expression of the nationalist development and ^{therefore} its role closely connected with the political development in Indonesia and of Indonesia. The question ^{then} arises if the modern ~~Indonesian~~ Indonesian language is an expression of Indonesian nationalism what will its role be in any regional thinking in ^{our} Southeast Asia. In order to clear the grounds for a consideration of this question it should be remembered that outside ^{the} Indonesia/Malay language is spoken in the Malayan peninsula, in British West and North Borneo and that the Tagalog, the official Philippine language, is a member of the Malayo-Polynesian linguistic groups. Apart from small Malay-speaking minorities in Burma, Siam and Indo-China, the languages of the countries around Indonesia have no relationship to the Malayan language. It is possible to go even further than that. Several of these countries have not even solved their own linguistic problems in their own country. In Indo-China they have three totally different languages. Vietnamese, with the largest number of speakers, Cambodian

and Laotian. In Burmah there are also three languages, ^{Burman, Karen and} Shan. It should then also be realized that colonial nationalism and therefore Indonesian nationalism has only a limited objective and only a temporary and interim character. That colonial nationalism has no aims beyond the attainment of political freedom as the only possible basis for a life in human dignity. And that certainly the colonial nationalism has no claims whatsoever for a universal abdication of those values and standards, spiritually and politically, by which its adherents live. In that respect it is fundamentally different and contrary to the kind of nationalism which arose in the free countries of Europe in the 20th century. In short, colonial nationalism has no political ^{nor} ~~nor~~ cultural expansionist elements. It is a rejection and as such it can be expected that, after the attainment of its political aims colonial nationalism as such will die down and the revitalized energies of the peoples will have to find ----- . Therefore, a deliberate expansion of the Malay language beyond the boundaries of the Dutch East Indies is out of the question. It remains possible, of course, that as a result of Indonesia's emergence as a free nation the Malay speaking territories outside of Indonesia will seek a closer tie with Indonesia, and especially the Malaysians in Malaya would like to safeguard their position in Malaya especially vis-a-vis the Chinese by advocating closer ties with our country.

Regional Southeast Asian thinking, however, is a constant preoccupation of the leaders in Southeast Asia. Any of the economic and political problems and even the question as to how much political strength can be generated through the entire Southeast Asian region will depend on the ability of these newly emerged and emerging nations to approach these problems on a regional basis. On the other hand there are, apart from the general preoccupation of the people with their own national problems at the moment, strong potential elements of political and economic isolationist thinking and it still remains to be seen ~~in what~~ ^{what} direction the developments in these countries will take. In my opinion, it is premature at the moment to try and calculate when concrete steps toward regional development will take place if at all. In any case it is certain that such a development will take place on the basis of political and economic factors. In working out the mutual relationship in such a regional alignment the question of cultural relationship does not arise and certainly ~~not~~ the question of language does not figure a priori in this question. The question which language will predominantly be spoken throughout these areas, if such an alignment is shaping up, will not be determined in the first place by factors of cultural kinship or by a deliberate choice but it is a question which will be determined by the factors of political and economic

development and by factors with regard to the power relations within such a regional alignment. The development of regional thinking, moreover, is in the first place a preoccupation of the ^{politically articulate leading groups and of the} commercially active parts of the different societies. And bearing in mind only the fact that no definite commercial trade patterns have developed yet in Southeast Asia, it is understandable that the question of language does by no means arise as yet. It should also be realized that in the development of such regional thinking the question of language is generally not considered of too great importance, at least if no desire is existent among any of the nations concerned for cultural domination. The same holds true for the development of regional thinking in Western Europe where the Congress of Europe is not particularly concerned with the question as to what language shall be spoken. Therefore, in the development of regional thinking in Southeast Asia the development of the different languages of the nations concerned nor question of cultural kinship will either promote or ----- process. It is very well possible that for the time being the question will be entirely left to considerations of practicality and that the English language will play an important role in cementing the relationship in these areas. It is also possible that developments in the world outside Southeast Asia will very definitely set the pattern of development both politically and culturally.