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978-0-521-63448-9 - Shifting Languages: Interaction and Identity in Javanese Indonesia

J. Joseph Errington

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## SHIFTING LANGUAGES

INTERACTION AND IDENTITY IN  
JAVANESE INDONESIA

Indonesian is the national language of a vast, plural nation-state, the world's fourth-largest country with a population of more than 200 million people. Local minority languages are rapidly being displaced by Indonesian, and it is predicted that by 2020 roughly 70 percent of the projected population of 260 million will be Indonesian-speaking. This growth, unprecedented in the developing world, is largely due to the forceful presence of state institutions which use, promote, and disseminate a language first introduced by the Dutch colonial rulers. Joseph Errington's third book on language in Indonesia is a detailed analysis of "shifting languages" in two small Javanese communities. A key figure in this area of research, he examines changing conversational practices in relation to questions of ethnicity, nationalism, and political culture. The theoretical observations have implications beyond the two villages for other parts of Indonesia, Southeast Asia, and for the developing world in general.

JOSEPH ERRINGTON is the author of two books on language and social change in Java, and numerous articles. He is Professor of Anthropology and East Asian Languages and Literatures at Yale University.

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STUDIES IN THE SOCIAL AND  
CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF LANGUAGE NO. 19

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This series represents the concerns of scholars in the anthropology and sociology of language, sociolinguistics, and socially and culturally informed psycholinguistics. Its aim is to develop theoretical perspectives on the social and cultural character of language by methodological and empirical emphasis on the occurrence of language in its communicative and interactional settings, on the socio-culturally grounded “meanings” and “functions” of linguistic forms, and on the social scientific study of language use across cultures. Exploring the essentially ethnographic nature of linguistic data and language practices, the approaches may be synchronic or diachronic, normative or variational, spontaneously occurring or induced by an investigator. The books in the series make substantive and theoretical contributions to debates over the nature of language’s embeddedness in social and cultural life, and over the role of language in sociocultural systems.

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If there has been any benefit to the slowness with which this work has gestated, it has been the chance to interact with other scholars in ways which have shaped it directly and indirectly over ten years or so. I cannot refrain from mentioning some of these. In 1988, support from a Yale Senior Faculty Fellowship made possible a six-month residence at the Center for Psychosocial Studies in Chicago. Then and since, I have continually benefited from animated discussions involving members of several of the Center's working groups. I hope the influence of those contacts is as apparent to them as it is to me; I owe thanks to Barney Weissbourd, Ben Lee, and Greg Urban.

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Some things never seem to end, including (it seems) my engagement with people in south-central Java. So my debt of thanks to them shows no signs of diminishing. I did not know when I met her in 1986 that I would have Mbak Tinuk as a companion now, as then; her help with the drudgery of research then was invaluable, and her gracious presence over the years since has helped me to feel that my writing has not become totally remote from the Javanese language or people. I owe no less to the persons who worked and consulted with me during the research. I cannot help but extend thanks specifically to Mas Dib, Pak Hari, Mas Poino, Pak Wanda, and Mbak Endhang for their interest and help.

My village hosts, who never made me feel like the encumbrance I surely often was, showed a graciousness and patience which I remember fondly and with gratitude. Their willingness to accept me as a visitor made it possible; my memory of that acceptance has sometimes been an impetus for seeing it through as best I can. So too I owe much to people in Java I was unable to meet, but whose voices have lingered in my memory as their words have entered this text. For better or worse, all of these people deserve credit for whatever value this book has, and certainly none of the blame for its inadequacies. *Nyuwun pangapunten saderengipun.*

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## PREFACE: SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

As this book has developed, I have found myself addressing two different audiences: “area specialists” on one hand, and anthropological linguists on the other. Each imagined readership was focal for one of two earlier works which I wrote about Javanese, and both together have shaped this work. One way to provide a sense of what might be in this book for both, then, is to sketch its relation to its two predecessors.

Those two previous works were much more narrowly focused: on Javanese to the exclusion of Indonesian, and on use in tightly knit elite circles to the exclusion of the vast majority of Javanese. One could leave either book with little sense that the elites described in them are bilingual, as are millions of their coethnics; that they speak in ways significantly different from those found in other Javanese communities; that the Javanese part of Indonesia is being massively transformed by national development and a saturating, authoritarian state. This book represents an effort to redress these points of neglect comprehensively but also fairly concisely.

I wrote one monograph (*Language and social change in Java: linguistic reflexes of modernization in a traditional royal polity*, Ohio University Monographs in International Studies, 1985) for area specialists, aiming to diagnose some fairly broad dimensions of social change from some fairly narrow aspects of Javanese usage since the turn of the century. Chapters 2 through 5 of this book are aimed at much the same audience, but deal more broadly with dimensions of Javanese and Indonesian usage alike. My goal there is to develop a multifaceted overview of Javanese and Indonesian as mediators of shifting forms of political authority, and thus as linguistic grounds for shifting understandings of ethnic and national hierarchy. I hope that readers interested in social change will find that their willingness to deal with a few linguistic particulars is rewarded with some sense of Indonesian development’s most intimate engagements with everyday life, as it enters and is mediated in bilingual interaction.

My second book (*Structure and style in Javanese: a semiotic view of linguistic etiquette*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988) was a more

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abstract, model-driven account of systemic change in Javanese elite usage, and was organized around descriptive particulars and comparative/theoretical concerns of primary interest to anthropological linguists. In its latter part, this book deals with similar details under a broader social purview. Descriptive material in chapters 6 through 10, framed with an eye to the politics and culture of bilingualism in south-central Java, is intended to subserve an account of talk as social praxis: structurally shaped, interactionally emergent, but also tacitly informed by shifting senses of both languages' broader values.

Although this book's two parts are thus framed with an eye to institutional and interactional dimensions of language use, I have tried to link them in thematically explicit, reciprocally revealing ways. If I have succeeded, then "macro" social forces can be considered in relation to "micro" social processes of everyday life; transient textures of talk can be considered interpretively as ripples on the surface of larger, shifting social tides. If I have failed to create such links, I hope that each part can nonetheless stand on its own as a more modest but useful sketch of aspects of a complex dynamic of sociolinguistic change.

## NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY AND TRANSCRIPTION

For the sake of convenience, I transcribe Javanese and Indonesian with orthographies as similar as possible to their standard spelling systems, introducing diacritics for just a few salient instances of allophonic variation. Provenances of words and talk in Javanese and Indonesian are marked as J and I respectively. In the following charts I note phonetic values of some allophones otherwise not transcribed.

### INDONESIAN

#### Vowels

|      | Front unrounded | Central unrounded | Back rounded |
|------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| High | i~(I)           |                   | u~(U)        |
| Mid  | e               | e                 | o            |
| Low  |                 | a                 |              |

Following ordinary spelling rules, I do not distinguish orthographically between front-mid /é/ and mid-central shwa. Low, tense allophones of /i/ and /u/ are not orthographically distinguished.

#### Consonants

|                | Labial | Apico-dental | Palatal | Dorso-velar | Glottal |
|----------------|--------|--------------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Voiceless stop | p      | t            | c       | k           |         |
| Voiced stop    | b      | d            | j       | g           |         |
| Fricatives     | f      | s            | sy      | kh          | h       |
| Nasal          | m      | n            | ny      | ng          |         |
| Liquid         |        | r, l         |         |             |         |
| Glides         | w      |              | y       |             |         |

/k/ ordinarily alternates with glottal stop in word final position and intervocalically in Javanese dialects.

## JAVANESE

Standard Javanese orthography (Subalidinata and Nartoatmojo 1975) is adapted here.

## Vowels

|      | Front unrounded | Central unrounded | Back rounded |
|------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| High | i~(I)           |                   | u~(U)        |
| Mid  | é~è             | e                 | o            |
| Low  |                 | a~                | á            |

Back rounded á, a regular allophone of low central unrounded a, appears in final, open syllables and penultimate open syllables preceding such a syllable. Differences between front-mid, front-low, and central shwa, not ordinarily transcribed, are distinguished in this book.

## Consonants

|                | Labial | Apico-dental | Apico-alveolar | Palatal | Velar | Glottal |
|----------------|--------|--------------|----------------|---------|-------|---------|
| Voiceless stop | p      | t            | th             | c       | k     |         |
| Voiced stop    | b      | d            | dh             | j       | g     | h       |
| Fricatives     | (f)    | s            |                |         |       |         |
| Nasal          | m      | n            |                | ny      | ng    |         |
| Liquid         |        | r, l         |                |         |       |         |
| Glides         | w      |              |                | y       |       |         |

In the standard dialect, /k/ is realized as glottal stop in word final and intervocalic positions. I transcribe it here in all environments as /k/. /f/ is non-native and appears only in foreign words. Voiced stops are generally articulated with breathy voice in non-final positions.

## OTHER CONVENTIONS

Conversational texts are set out in columns, such that transcriptions of original verbiage are on the left with translations on the right. I have tried to match original verbiage with its translation on a line-by-line basis; much detail not directly relevant to expository concerns has been omitted in the interests of accessibility.

Line numbers, provided for convenience of reference, appear in multiples of five.

Conversational latching is marked as follows:

ending segment==

==latching segment.

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*Note on orthography and transcription*

xv

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Conversational overlaps are marked as follows:

preceding | segment

| beginning of overlap.

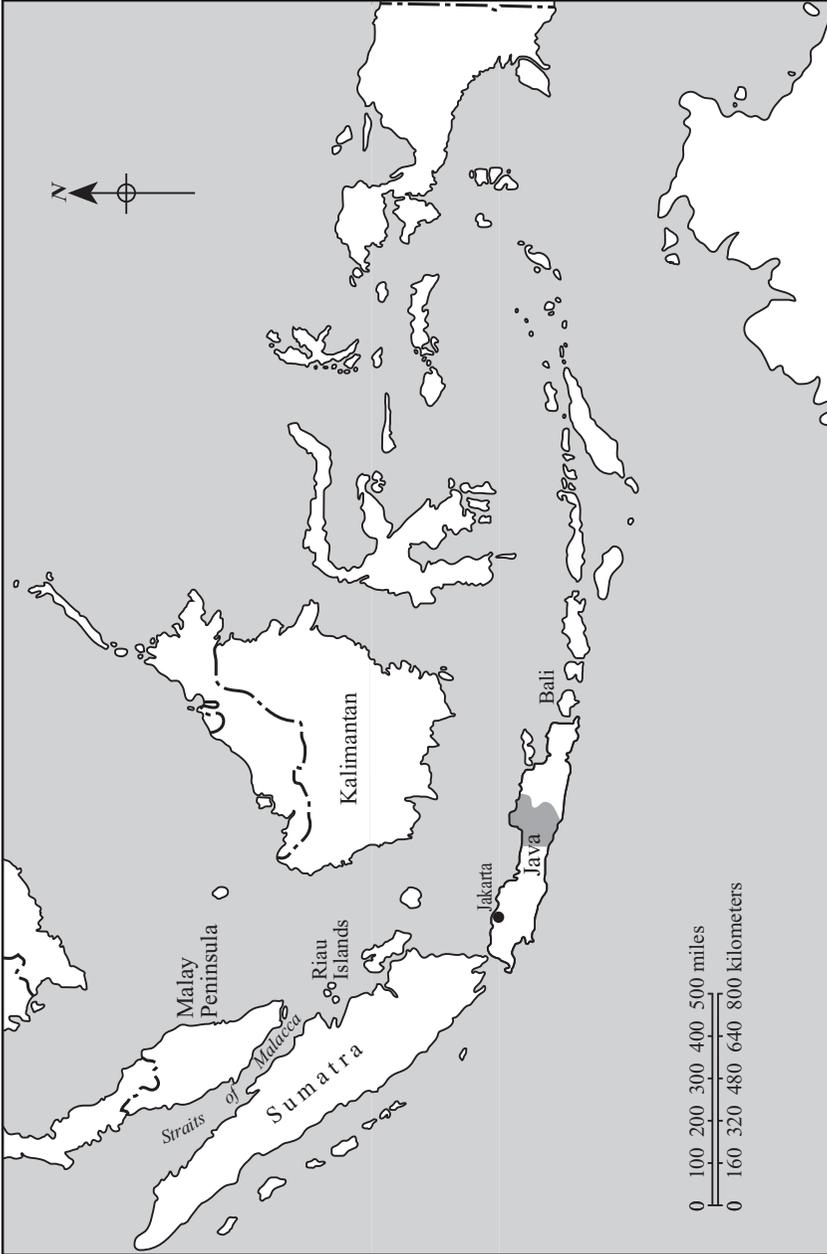
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Map 1 *The Indonesian archipelago*

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