

9 *Dutch loan-translations in Indonesian*

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1 Introduction

The development of the Indonesian language is a fascinating and important story. It is well-known that Malay was adopted as 'the language of Indonesia' in the *Sumpah Pemuda* (Oath of the Youth) in 1928, and it is agreed that this was 'the best chosen language', as Jack Prentice wrote in *Hemisphere* in 1978, because of its wide spread and accessibility to the population of the East Indies.

The story becomes more complicated, however, when we observe that several different varieties of Malay were involved in the process, a process which had been going on for some centuries, long before the nationalist movement was ever heard of. The variety of Malay that was adopted as a worthy medium for the new state of Indonesia was High or Riau Malay, rather than Low, the lingua franca or bazaar Malay.

In fact both varieties played a vital part. In the centuries preceding Independence, we see the involvement of outsiders in the use and spread of this indigenous language, on both official and non-official levels. From very small beginnings in Ambon and Batavia in the early seventeenth century, Dutch authority extended itself little by little till it covered the entire Archipelago, and parallel with this it became necessary to address questions and adopt measures relating to language use, beginning with the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and continuing in the post-VOC period in the nineteenth century (Hoffman 1979).

In the course of the nineteenth century we note the efforts of scholars such as H. Von Dewall, H.N. van der Tuuk and H.C. Klinkert to standardise and codify the Malay language. There were also government initiatives to set out rules for spelling and grammar seen in the work of C.A. van Ophuijsen, at one time inspector of native education and later Leiden professor, in particular his *Maleische Spraakkunst* (Malay grammar) of 1910 (revised edition 1915). This set up a norm for correct Malay usage which had a definitive influence till the end of the colonial period and perhaps beyond.

It might be thought remarkable that the Dutch did not promote the use of Dutch as lingua franca among their native subjects, and in practice often refused to speak Dutch to them (Groeneboer 1993:233). Instead, they used a variety of Malay for purposes of communication. This was done by officials in the field, by planters and traders, and others

who had to have dealings with the natives. The variety used by them has to be distinguished from the so-called High Malay promoted by the government, and that used in Malay literature, at the Malay courts, for purposes of the Islamic religion, and of course the varieties used as vernacular by a range of ethnic groups.

In 1891, A.A. Fokker had already foreseen the unifying influence that one language, namely Malay, could have for the Indies (cited in Hoffman 1979:84–85). With the spread of education beginning in the early twentieth century, Low Malay became unfashionable, and the literature which had grown up in it would eventually become extinct. Before long the editors of Balai Pustaka would be working to produce and distribute 'good, correct' Malay in their publications; and the effect of this on the development of Malay/Indonesian has been stressed elsewhere (Teeuw 1972).

Also from the beginning of the twentieth century, as part of the Ethical Policy, Dutch began to occupy a much more prominent place in education (Groeneboer 1993:233). It can be said that a knowledge of Dutch was essential for advancement, and it is this language that the elite, including leaders of the nationalist movement, learned and used for purposes of communication, both at home and in public. It can safely be claimed that Dutch was the sole window on the modern world, as very few would have had an opportunity to study other European languages, such as French, German or English. On the other hand, many obtained an excellent mastery of Dutch via their schooling. An early and famous example is R.A. Kartini, whose letters are written in highly idiomatic Dutch. In the prewar period a number of young men got the chance to travel to The Netherlands for purposes of study at Dutch universities, so that Dutch became not only socially and culturally prestigious but also a natural vehicle for their thoughts.

The very idea of deliberate intervention in order to regulate or develop one's language is an unfamiliar one to speakers of English. In Indonesia, however, having made their choice of the 'language of Indonesia' in 1928, at the first Language Congress held on 25–28 June 1938 the speakers were already debating the steps needing to be taken to make it into a modern, effective language. For example, Amir Sjarifoeddin spoke on the topic of 'Accommodating Foreign Words and Concepts into the Indonesian Language' (Resolutions 1995:1). No action could be taken in this direction until the Japanese Occupation, when a Komisi Bahasa was set up and allowed to work on the development of terminology; as a result of its efforts two little volumes under the title of *Kamoes Istilah* [Dictionary of Terms] appeared in 1946 and 1947. In fact the creation of terms, perceived as necessary to express concepts in foreign languages, has remained a preoccupation of the relevant institutions right down to the present day, with the publication of a *Pedoman Pengindonesiaan Nama dan Kata Asing* [Guide to the Indonesianisation of foreign names and words] by the Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa, Jakarta, in 1995. The policy has been, if possible, to create a new term by taking indigenous elements rather than foreign ones, sometimes leading to grotesque results. An example is the word *kinerja* created to render 'business performance', constructed from a Malay root-word, *kerja*, with an archaic Javanese infix, *-in-* which has the function of forming a passive verb. Incongruity and artificiality are features of these formations.

At the same time, borrowing by Malay/Indonesian from Western sources continues to occur in a spontaneous way, at an unofficial level, and this process has probably been occurring since the early part of this century. This borrowing will have taken place due to:

- (a) a perceived lack of a suitable equivalent in Malay/Indonesian, more specifically for objects and concepts that did not exist in traditional culture and society; and
- (b) a familiarity on the part of the speaker/writer and his audience with the donor language.

English-speaking students of Indonesian are often unaware of the origin of loans in Indonesian, or they attribute them to English in cases where they resemble English words. However, the strong influence of English on Indonesian is something quite recent, and the loan words concerned may date from an earlier stage than is realised. Sometimes such loans can be confusing to speakers of English (or of Malaysian Malay, where English influence predominates) who do not realise that the loans originate not from English, but from Dutch. Examples include the following:

Indonesian *polis* 'insurance policy', from Dutch *polis*, but compare

Indonesian *polisi* 'police', from Dutch *politie* pronounced [politsi];

Indonesian *konsekwen*, pronounced [konsekwén] 'consistent', from Dutch *consequent*, hence not English 'consequent(ly)'.

Tracing the etymologies of such loan words is not difficult, as they can easily be detected due to their appearance: their lack of similarity to other Indonesian words and corresponding resemblance to a foreign word.

There is, however, another type of loan, which may not readily be recognisable as such. Students of Indonesian may well attribute the seeming oddity of certain words to some eccentricity of Indonesian, whereas it may also be attributable to a source outside Indonesian.

The type of loans being referred to here have been termed 'loan-translation' (probably based on the Dutch term *leenvertaling*), although the term itself may not be entirely satisfactory: if it means a translation which has been borrowed, then it is unclear. Actually it is a loan which has been translated. In the linguistic literature the term 'calque' is found. The definition proposed here is 'a word which is a product of semantic transference between languages'.

It is because of the fact that these loans do look like Indonesian, and of course are Indonesian, that they may not be recognised as such, until one analyses them and discovers that the literal meaning of the base word corresponds directly with that of a foreign word. There are two interesting characteristics to note:

- (a) The new term is odd if explained according to the normal meaning of the Indonesian root-word it is based on; and,
- (b) The new term is likely to be associated with an area of meaning or activity that was absent in traditional culture or society.

Above it was argued that Dutch was widely used and possessed a high degree of prestige in the pre-war period when the Indonesian language was receiving its modern form. For this reason, the origin of the loan-translations in Indonesian from this early period can be traced to Dutch. However, it is not yet possible to trace exactly *when* a word entered circulation, without extensive research using datable materials. The influence of Dutch on those who developed and used Malay/Indonesian probably dates from at least as early as the 1920s, and also continued much longer than is generally surmised — while the generation of Dutch-educated people continued to live, and there are still many of them alive today. The influence of English may well be stronger among the next generation, who had no Dutch education, suggesting a generational difference, although against this assertion it can be

stated that Dutch words still occur in the youth slang of Jakarta, for example *spreken* 'to speak Dutch', or *sterek* 'strong'.

As long ago as 1964 Slametmuljana produced a little book entitled *Semantik* [Semantics], in which he described all kinds of shifts in meaning in the development of Indonesian, but does not seem to have recognised the phenomenon of loan-translation as such. And in 1989 Harimurti Kridalaksana wrote a short article on 'The Impact of Borrowing on the Structure of Language — The Indonesian Case', in which he wrote:

Through the ages, our language has shown itself to be a very flexible language by freely incorporating lexical items and adapting a significant number of grammatical items and constructions, so that its identity is preserved. Another method of maintaining its identity is translation. In fact it does involve borrowing, namely semantic borrowing, because in translation we transfer a message (as formulated by meaning) and change the form. Still, translation does enrich the language. (Kridalaksana 1989:295)

No examples are given to illustrate this.

There do not seem to exist any other discussions of this subject, so we are now free to consider some specific instances of loan-translation. The method will be to take a particular Indonesian term, give the usual English translation, and then explain its derivation by comparison with a Dutch word. The list is not intended to be exhaustive. Finally a comparison with (Malayan) Malay, using R.O. Winstedt's *English–Malay dictionary* of 1958, a time when any Indonesian influence on Malay will have been negligible, will demonstrate the fact that Indonesian is different. L. Suryadinata's *Comparative dictionary of Malay–Indonesian synonyms* of 1991 can be used as a check. When this has been done, some general conclusions will be drawn.

2 Loan-translations

Among the items which come under consideration as possible loan-translations, some appear to be quite clear cases, while others are less clear, and may be the result of independent parallel development. Bearing this in mind, the examples have been arranged into four groups.

I. The following items can be traced fairly clearly to a Dutch substratum. They are not listed in any particular order.

1. *keberatan* 'objection'

Winstedt (1958) lists *sangkutan* 'obstacle'. However, *keberatan* reflects Dutch 'bezwaar', which contains the word *zwaar* 'heavy', which in turn corresponds with Malay *berat* 'heavy'. With the affixes *ke-* *-an*, we might have expected an abstract noun, 'heaviness' (not listed by Echols and Shadily 1989), or a meaning 'too heavy'.

2. *pendapat* 'opinion'

Winstedt gives *fikiran* 'thought'. It reflects Dutch *bevinding*, which contains *vinde* 'to find', hence leading back to *dapat* 'get'. The affix *peN-*, however, would normally give a noun with meaning 'the doer ...'.

3. *mengenai* 'concerning'

Winstedt gives *fasal, dari hal*, but *mengenai* reflects Dutch *betreffend*, which contains *treffen* 'to hit, strike', in turn leading to *kena* 'hit', the base word of *mengenai*.

4. *kurang lebih* 'approximately'

Winstedt gives *lebih kurang*. Given the word order, the Indonesian order is more likely to reflect Dutch *min of meer* 'less or more'.

5. *sampai dengan, s/d* 'until'

Winstedt gives *hingga sampai*. The expression reflects Dutch *tot en met* 'up to and including', which is made explicit in Dutch when counting a series of items, but is understood in English.

6. *bersih* 'net' and its opposite *kotor* 'gross'

For the former Winstedt gives *berseh* and the latter *penoh*. The Indonesian terms are likely to come from Dutch *zuiver* and *onzuiver*, which mean 'pure' and 'impure', and thus lead to Indonesian 'clean' and 'dirty'. The current Dutch terms are *bruto* and *netto*.

7. *sebesar* 'in the amount of'

Winstedt lists nothing for this item. It occurs regularly before an amount (e.g. of money), and can be translated with 'to the amount of' (not: 'as large as'). It is not normal to use anything in English here. Thus, *sebesar* reflects Dutch *ter grote van* or *ten bedrage van*, meaning 'to the amount of'.

8. *penerangan* 'information'

Winstedt gives only *khobar* 'news'. However, in Indonesian *penerangan* has the rather specific meaning of 'spreading information'. The Dutch term is *inlichting*, which contains *licht*, meaning 'light', suggesting Indonesian *terang* 'bright, clear' as the base word.

9. *penyuluhan* 'education extension, counselling'

Winstedt seems to have nothing here. The Indonesian term is a noun indicating 'the act of ...', corresponding to the verb *menyulahi*, meaning 'to light the way ahead'. This is suggested by the Dutch term *voorlichting*, from elements meaning: 'in-front-lighting'. The image in Indonesian is of a torch (*suluh*) lighting the path, hence of the spread of useful information.

10. *tenaga* 'member of staff, employee, worker'

Winstedt gives *orang gaji* 'wage-earner'. The basic meaning of *tenaga* is 'power'; the above is listed as a secondary meaning. It reflects Dutch *werkkracht* or just *kracht*, meaning 'employee', alongside the primary meaning 'strength'.

11. *angkatan* '1. generation (class, cohort); 2. clearance (of letterbox)'

Winstedt does not seem to have anything for either of these two meanings. Both reflect the Dutch *lichting* (although in slightly different meanings), which comes from the verb *lichten*, meaning 'to lift, raise; unload, clear', hence the use of a derived form of *angkat* 'to lift'.

12. *tembusan* 'carbon copy'

Winstedt has nothing, but Suryadinata gives *salinan berkarbon*. However, *tembusan* reflects Dutch *doorslag*, literally 'hit-through', hence the choice of *tembus* meaning 'to penetrate, break through'.

13. *menetap* 'to settle/stay permanently'

Winstedt just has *tinggal* 'to stay, live'. The word reflects Dutch *zich vestigen*, which means 'to take up one's abode' and is related to the word *vast* 'firm, fixed', which is seen in the base word, *tetap* 'fixed, stable'.

14. *jurusan* '1. direction, route (bus); 2. subject, course (university)'

For the former Winstedt gives *arah* 'direction', and for the latter *jabatan* 'department'. Both of these meanings are found in Dutch *richting* (for the latter also *studierichting*), which is connected with the verb *zich richten*, meaning 'to head for', suggesting *jurus*, meaning 'to head straight for' (apparently not an original Malay word, but Javanese).

15. *pihak* 'side'

This word, meaning 'side, party' (given by Winstedt in this meaning) is used in many places in Indonesian where it does not need to be translated into English. It reflects a specific Dutch use of *zijde* 'side', which is found in expressions such as *van katholieke zijde*, meaning literally 'from Catholic quarters', i.e. just '(from) the Catholics'. Alternatively, it could be from Dutch *kant*, as in *van de kant van*, with the same meaning.

16. *demikian* 'thus'

This word is sometimes used in Indonesian to mark the end of a quotation, attributing it to a source. This reflects Dutch *aldus*, as in *Aldus de minister*. Instead of following the quotation, in English such an attribution is more usually put in front, e.g. 'According to the minister, ...', as part of a complete sentence.

17. *keterangan* 'statement'

Winstedt: *sebutan, perkataan* 'something said'. This term is based on Dutch *verklaring*, meaning 'statement, declaration'. This contains the element *klaar*, meaning 'clear', hence Indonesian *terang* 'clear', despite the fact that the form with *ke-* *-an* should form an abstract noun 'clearness'.

18. *kepentingan* 'interests'

Winstedt gives 'concern *perkara* Sk.; advantage *untung, fa'edah* Ar.'. *Penting* is the usual word in Indonesian for 'important'; compare *mustahak* in Malaysian, according to Suryadinata. The Dutch translation of *penting* is *belangrijk*; the abstract noun *kepentingan* translates as *belang* or *belangrijkheid* 'importance', but its more frequent meaning is *belang* in the sense of 'interest(s)'. This is a very clear example of the influence of Dutch in the transfer of meaning.

Alongside the above group, there are more examples where the arguments are not quite so strong, but which may nevertheless be instances of loan-translation.

II. There is an interesting group of words all taking the prefix *ter-*.

1. *tergantung pada* 'depending on'

Winstedt has *bersandar kepada* 'leaning on', whereas Indonesian is based on *gantung* 'to hang, suspend'. The Dutch *afhankelijk van* 'dependent on' has the idea of 'hanging' in it, just as the Latin element *pend* in the English *depend*. However, the word is likely to have been introduced independently of any English influence.

2. *terdiri dari* 'consisting of'

Winstedt gives *dibuat dari-pada* 'made of', but Indonesian has a word *diri/berdiri* 'to stand'. The Dutch *bestaand uit* contains the idea of 'standing' (compare *berdiri*), also found in the Latin element *sist* in the English *consist*; however, again the Indonesian construction is probably an early borrowing.

3. *tersebut* 'aforementioned'

Winstedt gives *yang tersebut tahadi* 'which was mentioned just now', based on the root *sebut* 'say, utter'. The Dutch seems to be simply *genoemd*, or *bovengenoemd*, meaning 'mentioned above'. This term is very common in Indonesian, and mostly does not deserve a translation into English, where it is not needed, but is much commoner in Dutch.

4. *termasuk* 'including'

Winstedt: *masuk* 'entering'. The Dutch *inclusief* or *inbegrepen* do not have any direct association with 'entering', but rather 'closing in'. The occurrence of the prefix *ter-*, normally indicating an accidental action, is also puzzling.

5. *tertanggal* 'dated'

Winstedt: *bertarikh* 'with date'. The Dutch *gedagtekend* (also the more modern form *gedateerd*) contains the idea of day or date as well as a passive form.

6. *terdapat* 'to be found, to occur; obtainable, available'

Winstedt gives *selaroh*, which he marks as 'In' (Indonesian), but such a word has not been found in Indonesian; however, *dapat* means 'to get, obtain'. The Dutch word *verkrijgbaar* contains the word *krijgen* 'to get', while the suffix *-baar* suggests '-able', one of the meanings of Indonesian *ter-*.

7. *tercatat* 'registered (letter)'

Winstedt has nothing, but Suryadinata gives us *surat daftar* 'listed (?) letter'. The Dutch term is *aangetekend*, which contains the verb *aantekenen*, meaning 'to note', which corresponds to Indonesian *catat*, with *ter-* rendering the passive seen in the combined Dutch affixes *ge-* and *-d*.

8. *ternyata* 'apparently; to turn out to be ...'

Winstedt gives *rupa-nya, rasa-nya, nampak-nya*. The underlying Dutch words are probably *klaarblijkelijk, blijken te ...,* and *het blijkt dat*, with the idea of 'to appear/turn out to be true'. Note that *nyata* means 'obvious, visible'.

III. There are some other words which are of more debatable origins.

1. *rumah sakit* 'hospital'

Winstedt gives *rumah sakit*, while Suryadinata tells us '*Rumah sakit* is also used in BM but it is not as frequent as hospital' (Suryadinata 1991:167). This is odd. The form of the word is strongly reminiscent of Dutch *ziekenhuis*, meaning literally 'house of the sick'; in addition, the formation in Indonesian is also irregular: it should mean 'the sick house'.

2. *pengisap debu* 'vacuum cleaner'

Winstedt gives us *pengisap abu* 'dust-sucker'. Both of these forms are again strongly reminiscent of Dutch *stofzuiger*, meaning 'dust-sucker'. Does this mean that in both Indonesian and Malay the vacuum cleaner became known via Dutch? Or that Malay created the term independently?

3. *latarbelakang* 'background'

Winstedt gives only *tanah*, for a fabric. The Dutch is *achtergrond*, which translates as 'back-ground'. Despite the resemblance, it is not likely to be from English via Malay, as the word *latar* is not Malay but Javanese, and therefore the term must have originated in Indonesia under influence of the Dutch word.

4. *kerajinan tangan* 'handicrafts'

Winstedt gives *pertukangan* 'skill'. The Dutch term is *handvaardigheid*, in which we see literally 'hand-skill-ness'. However, *rajin* 'industrious, diligent' is not quite the same as *vaardig*, meaning 'skilful, competent, deft'. Despite the closeness of the English, the correspondence between the affixes *ke-* *-an* and *-heid*, both making an abstract noun, makes an influence of Dutch more likely.

5. *kata pengantar* 'preface, introduction'

Winstedt lists *permulaan*, *pendahuluan*, *kata penghantar* *In*. So he attributes this term to Indonesian. The Dutch *inleiding* suggests 'leading in', and thus Indonesian *antar* 'to lead' in *kata pengantar* 'a word which leads'. However, this Dutch word means 'introduction', rather than 'preface'. There is no clear distinction in Indonesian. The Latin elements of English *introduction* also mean 'leading in'. Compare to *pendahuluan* below.

6. *pendahuluan* 'preface, introduction'

A Dutch phrase which springs to mind here is *een woord vooraf* (lit. 'a word in advance'), in which *vooraf* may be connected with Indonesian *dahulu* 'first' (before something else).

7. *lampiran* 'enclosure, attachment, appendix'

Winstedt gives *benda lampiran* for 'enclosure', marked as 'In', telling us that this has been borrowed. There appears to be no Malay word *lampir*. The term *lampiran* turns up as early as 1938 in Pigeaud's Javanese-Dutch dictionary, with the meaning *bijlage* 'appendix', together with the verbal form *nglampiri* 'to provide with an appendix'. Here too it is apparently a neologism; a base word *lampir* does not exist in Javanese, but we do find *slampir*, as in *nylampiraké*, meaning 'to hang/drape something over (an object)'. This form can be traced to a base *sampir*. This term may therefore have been inspired by another

Dutch term, *aanhangsel*, meaning 'appendix', namely 'something hung on something else'. The possible role of Javanese is remarkable here.

8. *jiwa* 'soul' [counting word for persons]

Alongside the usual meanings of 'soul, spirit', this word is also used to count people, e.g. the inhabitants of a place. This is a normal use of Dutch *ziel*, also meaning 'soul', but has an archaic flavour in English.

9. *mempekerjakan* 'to put to work, employ'

Winstedt gives only *mengupahkan*, *menggajikan* for 'to employ'. The Indonesian form containing the root *kerja* 'work' corresponds very closely to Dutch *tewerkstellen*, which means literally 'to set to work'. The Indonesian is a *memper-* form, with causative meaning: 'to have s.o. work'.

IV. Some forms which may be late examples are interesting to note, if they give evidence of the continuing influence of Dutch.

1. *mengamankan* 'to place in protective custody'

Suryadinata (1991:18) makes a distinction between a meaning 'to make secure' and a later one; "In Indonesia, after the 1965 coup the term *mengamankan* took another meaning: to arrest or take a person into police custody". This meaning may, however, be based on the Dutch idiom *in verzekerde bewaring stelling* 'to place in protective custody', if the idea of *verzekerde* 'secured' has inspired the base word *aman* 'safe, secure'.

2. *menghayati* '1. to experience to the full; 2. to inspire'

This word does not mean the same as *mengalami* 'to experience'. It is difficult to translate into a single English word, and for this reason alone is unlikely to be influenced by it. However, it corresponds closely to the Dutch verb *beleven* 'to live through, experience', in which we see the word *leven*, meaning 'life', which in turn is the meaning of *hayat*. This is an Arabic loan word, alongside the original Malay *hidup*. A verb *menghidupi* already existed, with the meaning of 'to provide for'; would this explain the appearance of a new word? If so, it would be curious if a Dutch word formed its substratum.

3 Conclusions

There are more examples that could be discussed, but the above may be considered representative. Several tentative conclusions can be drawn.

First, the items involved seem, in many cases, to be associated with what one would call in Dutch the *ambtelijke sfeer*, the area of official activities or 'the office'. This would suggest that this was the place *par excellence* where educated 'natives' worked and where they assimilated Dutch terms and, in due course, expressed them in Malay.

Second, as far as form is concerned, the resulting terms show correspondences in the base word, but the processes of affixation often do not appear to show a regular pattern, suggesting a random, spontaneous process of word formation rather than a deliberate effort on the part of the users of this nascent Indonesian.

Third, there is a possibility that Dutch itself has changed over the period extending from the early decades of the twentieth century up to the present within this official area, so that it is not necessarily the latest Dutch term that underlies the Indonesian one.

Fourth, the innovations that occurred may have been based on Javanese as well as Malay, suggesting a role for Javanese in the formation of early Indonesian in the prewar period that has not yet been considered, although this raises the questions of when and how that may have happened, which it has been impossible to address here.

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