The Austronesian Languages of Asia and Madagascar

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Colonial History and Language Policy in Insular Southeast Asia and Madagascar

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CHAPTER THREE

COLONIAL HISTORY AND LANGUAGE POLICY IN INSULAR SOUTHWEST ASIA AND MADAGASCAR

Hein Steinhauer

1 INTRODUCTION

The present chapter discusses background and practice of language policy in those countries in which a majority of the population has a western Austronesian language as its mother tongue, i.e. in Malaysia, Indonesia, East Timor, Brunei Darussalam, the Philippines and Madagascar. In addition some notes will be presented with regard to western Austronesian languages which are spoken by a (sizable) minority in neighboring countries (Guam, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam).

The area under discussion is characterized by a wide variety of languages, totalling well over 10% of the estimated number of the languages of the world. Austronesian languages form the majority also in terms of their number of speakers, although more than 200 languages in this area belong to language groups other than Austronesian (Austro-Asiatic, Sinitic, Arabic, Dravidian, Indo-European and of course the non-Austronesian indigenous languages from East Indonesia).

The linguistic ecology of the area before the arrival of the first Europeans can only be reconstructed in vague terms. To what extent language policies existed in pre-colonial times must necessarily remain a matter of conjecture and circumstantial evidence. Languages such as Cham, Malay, Sundanese, Javanese, Buginese, Makassarese, Batak and various Philippine languages were used in script. The sultanates, kingdoms and empires which had existed before the arrival of the Europeans had in all likelihood not been monolingual states. Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam had been supra-ethnic religions long before the European expansion and the languages of their holy scriptures had to be accommodated within the existing language ecology. In many if not all language communities there existed and still exist language varieties for special purposes, such as charms, lawsuits, traditional ceremonies, interethnic contact, and situations requiring the exclusion of the uninitiated or possible evil powers (taboo languages; see Fox, RITUAL LANGUAGES).

The phenomenon of speech levels in languages such as Javanese, and especially the artificial character of many of the ‘ceremonial’ (krama) counterparts of ‘common’ (ngoko) words in that language, suggests conscious language engineering. What has since become a matter of communicative competence may once have been purposeful
interference by some authority in the choice of a language variety or even in the shape of words and utterances.

‘Some authority’, because there is no policy without power. A language is a dialect with a navy, and power comes from the barrel of a gun. Whatever the situation in Southeast Asia may have been at the end of the European Middle Ages, it is obvious that its linguistic ecology changed dramatically with the arrival of the European mercantile convoys with their superior war potential.

At first, European control was geographically confined to shattered strongholds and their immediate hinterlands. In practice it was dependent on the vicissitudes of diplomacy and war, both with regional powers and rival Europeans. Their communicative needs were limited to the necessity to obtain commodities for trade and, to a lesser extent, to make converts.

Only when the Europeans in the course of the nineteenth century extended their interference by conquering the hinterlands of their earlier settlements and by active exploitation through large-scale plantation and mining projects did language become a matter of active political concern. The areas under discussion came under state control and started to develop into states, whose borders were defined by European armies and European politicians.

Hereafter I shall discuss the development and essentials of language policies for each of the countries involved. Not only governments had their language policies, but also other organizations, notably missionary societies. But I shall concentrate on the role of the state and discuss the role of the churches only in relation to the policies of the states.

2 INDONESIA

At the time of the arrival of the first Europeans Malay had become the major language of interethnic communication in Southeast Asia and beyond. Not only did it function as the language of interethnic trade, it had also become the language of Islam, presumably because Muslim merchants from India and the Middle East were the first to introduce Islam in the harbor towns of the archipelago. The arrival of the Portuguese put an end to the role of Malacca as the center of Islamic Malay culture. It did not change the role of Malay. For centuries the Portuguese had been fighting against the ‘Moors’ within and outside Portugal, and it lay in the nature of their reconquista that they did not confine themselves to trade after their conquest of Malacca in 1511. They vigorously started to spread Catholicism. And the language they used for this purpose was the language which was most widely understood: Malay. The Jesuit Francis Xavier, for instance, spent some months in Malacca in order to learn Malay before sailing on to East Indonesia to convert the Moluccans.

At the end of the sixteenth century under the reign of King Philip II, Portugal became united with Spain. The Netherlands, which had become part of the Spanish empire about a century earlier, were at war with Spain over high taxes and freedom of religion. With Spain being in charge of the Portuguese harbors, the Dutch had to sail to Southeast Asia themselves in order to acquire the goods they used to ship from Portugal to the rest of Europe. Being at war with Spain in Europe, they were also at war with the Portuguese in Southeast Asia. And since converts to Catholicism meant a safety risk for the Protestant Dutch, they had to fight them on the spiritual battlefield by converting them again, this time to Protestantism. Again it was Malay which became the main vehicle of their proselytizing activities. For a long time Protestant minds were divided over the variety of
Malay that should be used for a translation of the holy scriptures, but finally they chose a highly stilted form of Malay in Latin script which abounded with ill-adapted Arabic and Persian loanwords.

In their more secular dealings with the local population the Dutch also adapted to the local practice of using (varieties of) Malay in interethnic communication. Knowledge of Dutch among the local population was never stimulated.

After the first defeat of Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna (1814–15) decided that France should have a strong northern neighbor, and that therefore the Dutch ‘possessions’ in the East, which had been taken over by the English in 1811 after the annexation of the Netherlands by France, should be returned. At a subsequent conference in London it was agreed that by an exchange of territories in Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula the border between the Dutch and English spheres of influence would run through the Straits of Malacca. The result was that from 1824 onwards the Malay world was split, divided by the same sea route by which it was once united. And from that same time onwards Malay also became split, namely into a Dutch and a British variety.

Having regained their ‘possessions’ in the east, the Dutch started to exploit the colony more systematically, first for some decades by creating a forced plantation economy with commercial crops. They concentrated their activities on Java, which caused them to pay attention to the major language of Java, Javanese. Malay, however, remained the language of contact with most local rulers in and outside Java. The increasing exploitation forced the Dutch also to pay attention to education: they needed local people for all kinds of (lower) administrative jobs. In most schools Malay became the language of instruction. The general attitude of the Dutch was that Dutch, and the knowledge which came with it, was unfit for the local population and would endanger the colonial hierarchy of power. Only the nobility and children of local rulers were allowed to attend Dutch schools.

The intensification of Dutch colonialism also made it necessary to set up a special institute for the training of civil servants to be sent to the colony. Important in their training were Malay and Javanese. Training in Javanese, however, did not yield the expected results. In practice, Malay in various shades of corruption was used by Dutch civil servants and most other colonists in their contacts with the indigenous population. When in the course of the nineteenth century the Dutch extended their rule over the areas outside Java, the importance of Malay only increased, to an extent that standardization could no longer be postponed. This resulted in the spelling and grammar of Van Ophuijsen (Ophuijsen 1901 and 1910). Van Ophuijsen’s grammar was based on classical Malay rather than on Malay as it was spoken in the shape of Bazaar Malay or one of the many indigenous varieties. It was this language which was spread all over Indonesia by pupils of the teachers training institute of Fort de Kocq (today Bukittinggi in West Sumatra). And it was this language which was used in the many books, both literary and educational, which were published by the governmental ‘Committee for Popular Literature’ (Balai Pustaka) in the final decades of Dutch colonial rule.

The same institution also published books in some of the major regional languages. At the same time the Dutch government employed a number of ‘linguistic civil servants’ whose task it was to study and describe lesser known regional languages.

Meanwhile, around World War I, the first national movements had begun to manifest themselves. For many of the nationalists Dutch was their first or first second language. However, it was not Dutch that was chosen as the incumbent national language. In 1928, the participants of the Second National Youth Congress proclaimed Malay (henceforth called Indonesian) as the unifying language of the unified peoples of Indonesia under the slogan ‘one people: the Indonesians; one country: Indonesia; one language: Indonesian’.

Among the 500 Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages of Indonesia, Javanese was, and still is, by far the most important in terms of number of first-language speakers (more than one third of a population of well over 200 million people), but with its elaborate system of speech levels and long history of written and oral literature it was too much tied to Javanese culture and cultural expression to be suitable as a supra-ethnic language of a democratic, post-colonial society of free and equal citizens. Indonesian, on the other hand, did not have such an ethnic bias: Malay varieties had always had a supra-ethnic and supra-cultural function. Both the standardized form of the Balai Pustaka publications and the language of the indigenous press (often run by Chinese and Eurasians and in a language much closer to Bazaar Malay) had opened up visions of the world outside Indonesia, including events such as the Philippine revolution and the defeat of Russia by Japan. Yet the choice for Malay, and not Javanese or Dutch, to become ‘Indonesian’ was not the result of a reasoned debate, let alone some kind of referendum. The attitude of the Dutch police present at the meetings – by forbidding every discussion which they saw as ‘political’ – had caused enough anger and frustration that the aforementioned slogan proposed at the closing session by the congress’ secretary, Mohamed Yamin, was immediately accepted. The point of no return came in World War II, when Japan forbade all use of Dutch in favor of Indonesian, which from then onwards effectively became the new national language. Already in the Japanese time corpus planning activities began. They were vigorously continued after independence (proclaimed on 17 August 1945). Under the aegis of Ministry of Education and Culture, a special language institute was set up to deal with all matters concerning the national language and other languages in use in Indonesia. This National Center for Language Development and Cultivation (Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa), as it was called from 1974, has the following major tasks: standardization and corpus planning of Indonesian; propagation of its (proper) use and language counselling; and coordination of linguistic research projects. Its official name was shortened to Pusat Bahasa (‘Language Center’) in 2001.

An important achievement in the field of standardization was the joint spelling reform of 1972 together with Malaysia, which united the Dutch and English based orthographies of both countries. The spelling reform was followed in 1975 by an agreement on terminology formation. The main standardization activities are the production of (standard) grammars and dictionaries (such as Tata Bahasa Baku Bahasa Indonesia 1988 and Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia 1988 and their subsequent revised editions).

Corpus planning mainly involves terminology development and, to a lesser extent, stylistics. Cooperation with Malaysia developed also in this field: since 1972 the Majelis Bahasa Indonesia-Malaysia (MBIM, Indonesian-Malaysian Language Council) has conducted joint meetings twice a year, in which the results of national terminology boards are compared. In 1985 Brunei Darussalam became an official member of the council, which was then renamed Maj(e)lis Bahasa Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia (MABBIM).

Propagation is done by weekly one-hour radio and television programs, courses (on request) for all layers of the civil and military service as well as for other sections of society, publication of books and pamphlets, and by the organization of a yearly ‘language month’ (consisting of congresses, seminars and various nationwide contests for schoolchildren on Indonesian language and literature). Linguistic research is carried out routinely by Pusat Bahasa staff and, on a project basis coordinated by the Pusat Bahasa, by teams all over Indonesia. Each year a number of these studies is published, dependent on the available budget and on relative quality. Some of these studies do deserve wider
distribution, but as a measure against ‘commercialization’ of government functions the *Pusat Bahasa* is not allowed to market its publications.

After the fall of Suharto in 1999, the activities of the *Pusat Bahasa* have not remained unchallenged. Standardization is prescriptive and centralized per se. Moreover, spoken varieties of Malay/Indonesian were never standardized, and the differences between these and the official language are considerable. Consequently, the standardizing efforts of the *Pusat Bahasa* were now associated by some critics with the dictatorial dirigism of the Suharto regime. Decentralization has become the solution to various problems with which Indonesia has been confronted since the economic crisis of 1998. A similar approach is being followed with respect to the tasks of the *Pusat Bahasa*. Until 1999 the Center had had only three regional branches; since 1999 that number has risen to seventeen. These regional branches are expected to take over the tasks of the central institute with regard to the local languages and the propagation of the national language in the provinces. To what extent this will result in more attention to the local languages has to be awaited.

It is very likely, however, that the ongoing decentralization of education will have such an effect. The constitution of 1945 already stipulated that the regional languages are an integral part of Indonesian culture and should be supported by the government if they were fostered by their speakers. In practice that meant that languages other than Indonesian were allowed as languages of instruction only in the lower grades of primary education, to be replaced completely by Indonesian in the fourth grade. Even this practice was forbidden for some years, to become reestablished since 1994. A new curriculum introduced in that year allowed for a few hours of ‘local input’; for the rest the curriculum was the sole responsibility of Jakarta. After the fall of Suharto, as a measure to counteract break-away aspirations in regions outside Java, a new education policy was formulated which shifted the responsibility for education in the provinces from Jakarta to the local authorities. The implementation of this highly decentralized system of education started in 2001. It may be expected that now more attention will be paid to the local languages, which may result locally in problems and conflicts that on the national level had been avoided by the choice of Malay/Indonesian as the national language with a nation-building function: in most provinces there is no obvious local language which could be promoted to supra-ethnic status without being perceived by speakers of other local languages within the province as a takeover bid (see the sections on Tagalog and Malagasy below for comparable problems). The success of Malay for that matter as a language with a true nation-building function is illustrated by the fact that the independence movements at Indonesia’s western and eastern extremes, i.e. in Aceh and Papua (West New Guinea), reject Indonesian as a possible national language once they are free. Instead they opt for ‘Malay’ alongside Arabic and Acehnese in Aceh and for regional Malay in Papua. The model of Malay for the Acehnese is probably the Malaysian standard variety. The latter differs considerably from Indonesian and is much more perceived as a vehicle of Islamic faith. In Papua varieties of East Indonesian spoken Malay similar to Ambonese Malay (see van Minde 1997 for a description) are widely used in everyday communication.

3 MALAYSIA

Compared to Indonesia the language ecology of Malaysia is in some respects more complicated. The number of languages currently spoken by its citizens may not exceed 50,
but its colonial history has been more disruptive linguistically than the documented history of Indonesia. Before the arrival of the Europeans, the town of Malacca was the Malay window to the world. It had a mixed population of Malays, and expats and settlers from all over Southeast Asia and beyond, among them a community of Malaisized Chinese. The influence of the first Europeans (Portuguese 1511–1641, Dutch 1641–1824) did not reach very far beyond Malacca. Only around 1800 did the British appear on the scene, establishing themselves in Penang, founding Singapore, and taking over Malacca from the Dutch. In the course of the nineteenth century they expanded their influence to the sultanates in the interior, which had always been predominantly Malay, the Austro-Asiatic Aslian communities being marginal and marginalized.

East Malaysia (Sarawak and Sabah (formerly North Borneo)) had been under the suzerainty of the Brunei sultanate, which meant that the Malay spoken at the Brunei court had some status as the language of the state, whereas other varieties were used as a lingua franca among the multi-ethnic population. In the course of the nineteenth century the power of Brunei had weakened. As a result, Sarawak and Sabah became contested areas among European powers, and they were finally ceded by the Brunei sultan to become British protectorates (1888). Less than a decade later British power over the tin-rich states of mainland Malaysia was formalized by the establishment of the Federated Malay States, consisting of Selangor, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, and Perak. Malay (in Arabic script) had been the language of the state in all mainland sultanates. It was almost entirely replaced by English in the Federated States, although Malay remained the language of the courts. In the unfederated states of Kelantan, Terengganu, Perlis, Kedah and Johor, which retained some autonomy in internal affairs, Malay maintained its position next to English. It was British policy therefore that all British officials serving in the Malayan civil service should know Malay.

British rule over mainland Malaysia caused major changes in the ethnic composition of the Malaysian population and in the country’s linguistic ecology. The discovery of the tin mines led to large-scale immigration of Chinese miners, while for their rubber plantations the British contracted coolies from southern India. The present demographic constellation of the country (30% Chinese, 8% Indians, and 61% Malays and other ‘indigenous’ groups according to the census of 1990) is a direct consequence of its colonial economic exploitation.

Traditional education in the Malay sultanates as well as in Sarawak and Sabah was Islamic, with Malay as the language of instruction. Under British rule education was primarily private (Chinese, Muslim–Malay, Christian–English). British educational policy with regard to the Malays was inspired by the wish to teach them ‘the dignity of manual labor’ and to avoid ‘the troubles which ha[d] arisen in India through over-education’ (a colonial officer in 1915, quoted in Hassan Ahmad 1999:42), or as the Director of Education of the Federated Malay States put it in 1920: ‘to make the son of the fisherman or peasant a more intelligent fisherman or farmer than his father had been’ (ibid.). By the same token English education was deemed unfit for the Malays. However, English in education could be used for the newcomers from China and India.

Up until the independence of mainland Malaysia (1957), Malay vernacular state schools had been restricted to 4 or 6 years of primary education. The only Malay post-primary education was the teacher training schools, among which the Sultan Idris Training College at Tanjung Maling in Perak became the most influential. One of its teachers, Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad (Za’ba), became the founder of modern Malaysian Standard Malay (comparable to Van Ophuijsen in the Dutch Indies). Although based on the same classical Malay tradition as maintained in the Johor–Riau region, the standard varieties
of Indonesian and Malaysian Malay are considerably different: European words were borrowed through English in Malaysia and through Dutch in Indonesia. Arabic loanwords are more frequent and less assimilated in Malaysia than in Indonesia. Original Malay vocabulary shows striking semantic differences. Derivational affixation is formally the same but is not parallel in distribution and/or meaning. Finally, Malaysian Malay had a later and English-based tradition of romanization.

Za’ba was also the director of the translation department of the Pejabat Karang-Mengarang (Book-Writing Bureau), which was modelled after Balai Pustaka in the Dutch Indies but had a smaller budget because ‘the British [we]re more efficient than the Dutch’. In spite of that, the number of Malay school books published by the Bureau during its existence between 1924 and 1957 remained limited.

When mainland Malaysia was heading towards independence, the status of the original population and the Chinese and Indians became a hot issue, and so did the status of Malay and English. The compromise was that the ‘immigrants’ would acquire full citizenship of the new state, but that Malay would become the national language, which would replace English at all levels of education as well as in government within a period of ten years after independence. The governmental body to standardize, modernize, and propagate this Malay language, the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Council for Language and Literature), was the sister organization of the Indonesian Pusat Bahasa. It became operational in 1956. In contrast to the Pusat Bahasa, the Council does not have in-house research tasks. Its publishing activities are commercialized. In other fields their activities are similar: producing a standard dictionary and grammar, propagating the standard language and monitoring and advising on its use, organizing ‘language month’ activities, etc. As indicated in the previous section it cooperates with the Indonesian Pusat Bahasa in unifying spelling and in terminology development.

But in spite of these efforts, the transition towards Malay as the national language has been more difficult than in Indonesia. Sarawak and Sabah, which joined the Malaysian Federation in 1963, at first maintained English as the language of government. It was not until 1967 that Sabah adopted Malay as its official language, and Sarawak only decided to do so in 1985. Also in mainland Malaysia, the position of Malay as the sole national language was not unchallenged. Discussing the national language question, however, was made a punishable offense after the serious racial clashes between Malays and Chinese in Kuala Lumpur on 13 May 1969. Malay was the national language and its supra-ethnic function was emphasized by its new official name: bahasa Malaysia. However, for unclear reasons the old name bahasa Melayu was reintroduced in the 1990s.

The riots of May 1969 also meant the beginning of the implementation of the National Education System, that is, the gradual transition from education in English to education in the national language from kindergarten to university. Within this system the pre-independence private schools with Chinese or Tamil as a medium language continued to exist, albeit with the obligation to give thorough instruction in the national language. English remained a compulsory subject in all primary and secondary education. In the national schools with Malay as a medium language, the possibility exists to teach the ‘mother tongue’ (i.e. Chinese or Tamil) if this is the wish of a sufficient number of parents (and if teachers are available). Such facilities are not provided for the Aslian languages on the mainland or the various Austronesian languages in Sabah and Sarawak. Iban is given some attention in Sarawak, but efforts to give Kadazan-Dusun some status shattered on the failure to agree on a standard dialect (Prof. H. Asmah Haji Omar, p. c.).

Two developments hampered full implementation of the National Education System. In the 1990s Malaysia’s economy began to attract international attention. The result was
a mushrooming of private colleges providing education in English and leading to certificates for study at the British, Australian and American universities to which they were affiliated.

At the same time the Malaysian government started to issue ambiguous signals regarding the status of Malay. Government officials (including the Prime Minister) were criticized for using English in public speeches, even if no foreigners were in the audience. When they did speak Malay, they failed – with rare exceptions – to use the standardized pronunciation (which maintains a word-final [a] where the Johor has [æ]). Most confusing of all was the recurrent emphasis on the importance of English as the language of wider communication, essential for Malaysia’s ambitious development policy to become a global high-tech and economic player by 2020. As a result, the efforts to make Malay the only language of instruction (including at tertiary level) were no longer wholeheartedly pursued. Especially in the fields of science and technology, English education has remained the norm at tertiary level, with the obvious effect that students who followed secondary education at Malay language schools are at a serious disadvantage.

So far, the status of Malay as a national symbol remains undisputed. However, as an official language to be used in official communication (including education and government) it has to compete with English, much more so than is the case in Indonesia.

4 BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Since centuries before the European presence in the archipelago the Brunei sultanate had been an important centre in Southeast Asian trade. Its political power once reached as far as Manila and for a long time extended over the whole of northern Borneo. A variant of classical Malay was presumably the language of the court. The puak Brunei were numerically and politically the dominant group in this multi-ethnic country. Their mother tongue – Brunei Malay – is a distinct variety of Malay and considerably different from the court language and the current national language.

In the course of the nineteenth century Brunei lost control of Sabah and Sarawak and was reduced to its present size. It became a British protectorate from 1888 until its independence in 1984. However, Malay never ceased to be used in government (albeit alongside English), and in the constitution of 1959 it was declared the official language of the country.

After independence the Bruneian Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka was established. It is the sister organization and a close copy of the Malaysian Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and the Indonesian Pusat Bahasa, with a similar task: the propagation and corpus planning of standard Malay. This standard Malay is very similar to the Malaysian standard, only differing from it in pronunciation and in its lexical influence from the local Brunei Malay. In developing a standard language Brunei cooperates with Malaysia and Indonesia. As mentioned in the section on Indonesia (above), Brunei joined its neighbours in forming the Maj(e)lis Bahasa Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia (MABBIM).

Meanwhile the role of the local Malay variety, Brunei Malay, is also growing within the linguistic ecology of the country – to the detriment of the six indigenous minority languages of the country, five of which are non-Malayic (Martin and Poedjosoedarmo 1996). Today it is generally accepted as the national lingua franca and it is increasingly used by Bruneians of other ethnic backgrounds. This is the Bruneian manifestation of the globally observable reduction of the domains in which minority languages are a proper vehicle of communication.
Until the end of the 1980s the minority languages were officially qualified as Malay dialects, which released the government from the obligation of paying special attention to them. Only since the last decade has the understanding gained ground that these languages are not Malay, and beginnings have been made to describe them (cf. CLYNES, BELAIT). Yet the undisputed state ideology remains Melayu Islam Beraja (to be Malay, Muslim, and governed by a King). The combined effects of the status of Malay (both Brunei Malay and the standard variety) and of educational policy are such that transmission of the minority languages to new generations is no longer guaranteed.

Before 1888 education had been identical with Islamic religious schooling, with an emphasis on Arabic and with Malay as the language of instruction. After 1888 this Malay education continued to expand and in 1914 the first secular Malay-medium school was established. Other schools followed. Only in 1952 was English introduced into the curriculum of these schools. Meanwhile English-medium schools had been established after the discovery of oil in 1929, which required increased communication with the outside world. These schools were private schools, organized by (non-sectarian) Christian missionaries. It was not until 1951 that the first government English school was opened.

Until 1985 both types of education coexisted, but in order to achieve equal opportunities for all citizens, both types of education were combined after independence (1984). Within this new system of bilingual education, Malay is the medium of instruction in the first three grades of primary education. In the next three grades of primary education and in the seven years of secondary education English is the medium of instruction for an increasing number of subjects, including science and mathematics (see Jones 1996 and Oţog 1996 for details). The intended result of this system is that graduates of secondary education retain Malay as their ‘first’ language, while acquiring a high degree of proficiency in English as a second language.

The philosophy behind this model of additive bilingualism is that Malay, being the emblem of national culture and identity, is the first language of all citizens. However, the Malay which is supposed to be used at school as the medium of instruction and which is an obligatory subject at all levels of primary and secondary education is the standard variety, which is not the first language of any Bruneian. In practice, therefore, it is Brunei Malay which often replaces standard Malay as a medium of instruction, also in regions where a minority language is spoken.

5 EAST TIMOR

Among the 15–20 indigenous (Austronesian and non-Austronesian) languages currently spoken in East Timor, Austronesian Tetum is the most widespread. Presumably it was already the major language of inter-ethnic communication when the Portuguese made Dili their stronghold in the area. In any case the language was adopted by the Roman Catholic Church as the vehicle for the faith. Consequently it also became the language of contact between the Portuguese and the local population. In the capital, Dili, which was located in the Mambai-speaking area, a variety arose – known as Tetum-Praça – which, compared with the more western Tetum Terik dialects, contains some grammatical simplifications and above all a conspicuous number of Portuguese loanwords. Portuguese remained confined to the more formal domains. Yet the first four centuries of Portuguese presence in the area were not characterized by any consciously planned changes in the linguistic ecology. Only in the 1950s did Portugal change its policy: it now
became the explicit objective to turn all East Timorese into Catholic, Portuguese-speaking citizens (cf. Hajek 2000). Education was the means to achieve this and many new (elementary) schools were built, resulting in some 75% of the schoolchildren obtaining Portuguese lessons in 1974, the year of the Portuguese revolution. Since the 1950s the use of Tetum and other regional languages had been forbidden in schools. Portuguese had to be the language of education, while also in church the role of Portuguese had become more important than before.

In 1975 the Portuguese withdrew from East Timor. And after a short interval in which the East Timorese nationalists tried to promote Tetum in education, Indonesian armed forces with the consent of the American government intervened and ‘saved the country for the free world’. From then on Portuguese was repressed as the ‘colonial language’ the country had to be freed from. In order to smooth the integration of East Timor into the Indonesian Republic the use and knowledge of Indonesian had to be fostered as fast and as much as possible.

From 1976 to 1999 Indonesian was used throughout the educational system introduced by the Indonesians, which ranged from kindergarten to university. As a result several generations of students received their complete education in Indonesian, and although schooling may not have been successful everywhere because of the unstable political situation, the role and knowledge of Portuguese obviously lessened. However, refugees in Portugal and Australia and the guerrilla movement did not partake in this language shift, and continued to use Portuguese (and English) in their international public dealings, and Tetum and Portuguese internally. Not less importantly, the church did not shift to Indonesian either, in spite of Indonesian pressure. Instead, Tetum became the language of the Roman Catholic religion, with the grudging consent of the Indonesians: after all, a Tetum-speaking Catholic was less of a security risk than an Indonesian-speaking atheist (alias communist). One of the results of this church policy was the translation of the gospels into Tetum Terik.

After the destructive withdrawal of the Indonesian forces from East Timor in 1999 the linguistic ecology of the country changed again. For most East Timorese, Indonesian was no longer a neutral language – if it ever was. It was associated with military oppression and terror and is now officially the language of a foreign power. As such, Indonesian was disqualified as a possible national and official language for East Timor. On 30 August 2000 the Conselho Nacional da Resistência Timorense (CNRT) adopted the motion that Portuguese would be chosen as official language and Tetum as national language, and that Tetum had to be ‘developed’ within a period of five to ten years (Eccles 2000:23). On 11 December 2001 the new National Assembly adopted Portuguese and Tetum as the official languages of the new country. A proposal for Indonesian, known by some 70% of the population, was rejected.

The practical implementations of these decisions have to be awaited. Portuguese is ready for use: it is a standardized, modern language, in which teaching materials and other publications are – in principle – readily available. Most educated people older than 40–45 still know it quite well. Strong support is given from Portugal and Portuguese-speaking countries, financially and through expertise. The shift from Indonesian to Portuguese within the education system, however, can only be gradual.

As regards the status of Tetum much work still has to be done. The body responsible for the implementation of the national language policy is the Instituto Nacional de Linguística in Dili, the status of which can be compared with the Indonesian Pusat Bahasa and its sister organizations in Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam. A standard spelling (with some deviations from the most widespread practice until recently) has
already been accepted. The next steps which have to be (or are being) taken are the production of a standard grammar, textbooks, teaching materials, and the 'modernization' of the lexicon in order to make the language suitable for use outside the domains of mostly informal spoken interchanges; finally, dictionaries will have to be produced. In any case, the future of the status of Tetum will depend on the progress and effectiveness of these corpus-planning activities.

During the United Nations interim government some pressure has been exerted to assign a (more) central place to English after independence. It is foreseen that English will have a place in education, but not too prominently: at the above-mentioned meeting of the CNRT it was stipulated that every hour devoted to English should be counterbalanced by two hours of Portuguese in order to avoid possible effects of 'linguistic imperialism' (Eccles 2000:24). To what extent Indonesian will continue to have a role in education (as a subject) is still uncertain.

East Timorese leaders realize that provisions have to be made for indigenous languages other than Tetum (Ramos Horta, p. c.). For the moment, however, priority will be given to the development and standardization of Tetum. Research with regard to all local languages is coordinated by the Instituto Nacional de Linguística.

6 THE PHILIPPINES

When the first Europeans arrived in the Philippines the majority of its estimated half million inhabitants lived in small territorial units, each originally belonging to a single kinship group. Only in the Sulu archipelago and in the adjacent areas of Mindanao had Islam made inroads and sultanates come into existence. From there Islam spread northward, to reach the Manila area by 1565. Malay influence must have been strong, starting in the tenth century or earlier (as suggested by the Laguna copper plate; see MAHDI, THIS VOLUME), and reaching as far north as southern Luzon.

The first reported interference in local affairs by Europeans was the arrival of Ferdinand Magellan at Cebu in 1521, who claimed the island for Spain. In 1565 the Spanish established themselves permanently on Cebu. They shifted their centre of administrative, military, commercial and religious activity to Manila in 1573. At the lower level of administration, Spanish colonial rule was indirect, thus creating a Filipino upper class of 'principales'. At the higher level, state and church were inseparable, so much so that the term 'friarocracy' was coined. Much executive and legislative power was assigned to the Jesuits and to the friars of the Augustinian, Dominican and Franciscan orders, all recruited from Spain or of Spanish descent. Most conspicuous among the lasting results of their activities were the conversion of the majority of the population to Catholicism and the establishment of a system of large land estates. From the very beginning the orders had the sole responsibility for education. Even after 1863, when the Spanish government established free public primary education, the friars kept the supervision of the educational system on all levels, whereas the Jesuits remained responsible for the teacher-training colleges. Although Spanish was the language of the government, the orders, with the exception of the Jesuits, opposed the teaching of Spanish to the 'indios'. An impressive number of publications in and on the major local languages had already appeared in the earliest decades of Spanish rule, most of them in or on Tagalog (Llamzon 1968:735).

Only a very few Filipinos had been allowed to enter Spanish schools. It was among these – mostly upper class – ‘ilustrados’ that the nationalist movement arose in the final
decades of the nineteenth century. In its initial stages the emphasis was on assimilation and emancipation, one of its programs being the extension of Spanish teaching to a wider base of the population. Since most ilustrados were of Tagalog origin, like the famous author and national hero José Rizal, only Tagalog came to be considered as an alternative to Spanish. When the movement took a populist turn and its aims shifted towards independence, Tagalog became its first language. The geographical core of the movement was the Tagalog-speaking greater Manila area, and although the leaders of the revolution expressed notions of a national unit embracing all inhabitants of the Philippines, its actual scope remained limited.

In the provisional constitution of the First Republic (1897), it was proclaimed – in Spanish – that ‘el tagálog será la lengua oficial de la República’ (Tagalog shall be the official language of the republic) (Gonzalez 1980:12). With the outbreak of the Spanish–American war (April 1898) the revolt against Spain also spread to non-Tagalog areas, and on 12 June 1898 the Act of Independence was proclaimed, in Spanish. At the Constitutional Assembly (convening in Malolos, September 1898) representatives with non-Tagalog backgrounds were present. Among them were speakers of Ilokano, Bikolano, Kapampangan, Pangasinan and – notably – Bisayan. This linguistically mixed constellation of a largely Spanish-educated elite was the reason why Tagalog was rejected in favor of Spanish as the official language for the time being, to be used in ‘acts of public authorities and judicial affairs’ (Gonzalez 1980:20). Spanish also remained prominent in the educational program of the new republic, whereas no mention was made of any of the local languages.

However, the defeat of the Spanish meant the beginning of the Anglicization of the Philippines. In the Treaty of Paris of December 1898, Spain ceded the Philippines and some smaller former colonies to the United States in exchange for $20 million. From allies against the Spanish, the Philippine revolutionaries now became America’s enemy: the revolution was crushed, and American institutions were established. Most important among these were the separation of church and state, representative bodies and mass education. Theoretically, the medium of instruction in schools and universities was supposed to be a local language. In practice it was English.

Meanwhile the old elite adjusted to the new situation: they kept their economic power and dominated political life. Since many of them were Spanish-educated, Spanish remained an official language alongside English. English soon became the most important if not the only language to be used in official domains, with the exception of the law, where Spanish could not be ousted so easily. In the 37 years of direct American rule the percentage of Filipinos able to speak English had risen to more than 25% (Gonzalez 1980:26), whereas the percentage of those with knowledge of Spanish towards the end of Spanish colonial rule had probably been less than 3%.

At the same time, the larger local languages were used in printing and in the press. Most of the publications were in Tagalog, however. And it was Tagalog which was proposed by some nationalists as the most suitable candidate for a national language. However, the question was sensitive from the start. Tagalog was spoken by some 20% of the Filipinos in and around the political, cultural and economic center of power. Bisayan, on the other hand, was the mother tongue of about twice as many speakers, and with its plantations and exports, the Bisayan homeland contributed significantly to the Philippine economy.

The discussion came to a temporary conclusion with the constitution of 1935, when the Philippines were granted independence within a commonwealth construction: according
to the constitution it was stipulated that the National Assembly would ‘take steps towards the development and adoption of a common national language based on one of the existing languages’ (Gonzalez 1980:59). One year later the National Language Institute was established, which was responsible for the selection, standardization and elaboration of this common national language. Arguing that it was the best-studied Philippine language with the richest literature, the Institute recommended Tagalog as the most suitable base for the national language. On 30 December 1937 president Quezon proclaimed a national language based on the ‘Tagalog dialect’ to become effective two years later. In the meantime, a grammar, a Tagalog–English vocabulary and a teacher’s manual were prepared. In 1940 Tagalog would be introduced as a subject in the fifth and sixth grades of elementary schools as well as in normal schools, if teachers were available. At the end of the Commonwealth period (July 1946) Tagalog would be an official language like English and Spanish, and it would gradually replace English as medium of instruction. The authority of president Quezon had saved Tagalog for the time being, but it was accepted with bitterness by the Bisayans, if indeed they accepted it at all.

Shortly after the Japanese conquest, however, Tagalog and Japanese were proclaimed official languages. For the time being the use of English was still allowed as a medium of instruction, to be replaced eventually by the local vernaculars. The production of schoolbooks in Tagalog was stimulated. At the same time the government of the ‘Second Republic’ (1942–44) conducted vigorous proficiency training campaigns in Tagalog among the non-Tagalog. Because of the war, however, the results outside the greater Manila area were limited.

After the war, Tagalog began to be taught as a subject at all levels of education. However, the efforts to disseminate the language were somewhat traditional: the accent shifted from proficiency training to training in grammatical knowledge, and the same teaching methods were applied to both Tagalog and non-Tagalog. In order to stress its national symbolic function, the language was called wikang pambansa(ng Pilipino) ‘the (Philippine) national language’. After 1959 the official name became Pilipino. It was supposedly different from Tagalog and only ‘Tagalog-based’. For speakers of other regional languages, however, and foremost the Bisayans, this epithet remained a thin disguise.

Meanwhile the continued standardization and elaboration efforts of the Institute of National Language (previously the National Language Institute) gave rise to fierce clashes between purists and liberals. In the early 1960s this even amounted to – unsuccessful – lawsuits against members of the Institute and high government officials in which the use of puristic Tagalog in the national language was challenged. In spite of these obstructions Pilipino gained ground. There was an increase in Pilipino publications, and the role of Pilipino in education, as a subject as well as a language of instruction, became more prominent (Bonifacio 1969). When towards the end of the 1960s the students revolted against American military and cultural imperialism, it was the common Manila variety of Tagalog which became the vehicle and symbol of their struggle.

Among the non-Tagalog elder generations, however, Pilipino continued to be felt as an implicit takeover bid by the Tagalogs. When in 1971 preparations were started for a convention to revise the American-based constitution, anti-Tagalog resentments flared up again and were vigorously voiced. As a result, Tagalog-based Pilipino was in fact rejected as the national language. In the constitution of 1973 it was stated that for the time being English and Pilipino would be the official languages, but steps would be taken to develop a new common national language based on all Philippine languages, to be known as Filipino.
The function of this new language was clear: a symbol of national unity. But it was less clear what it would look like, and how it should be propagated and disseminated. In the Aquino Constitution of 1986 the section on language asserts that

[the national language of the Philippines is Filipino. As it evolves, it shall be further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages. Subject to provisions of law and as the Congress may deem appropriate, the Government shall take steps to initiate and sustain the use of Filipino as a medium of official communication and as language of instruction.]

In 1988 President Aquino declared Filipino to be used as the medium of instruction at all levels of education and as the language of official communication in government. The decree itself was in English and had obviously bypassed the Congress. The latter had not yet passed the bill on the Commission on Filipino language, which was to be assigned the task of developing Filipino. This not yet existing Filipino now had to be used as medium of instruction, and as a consequence could only be Pilipino, or ‘Tagalog in disguise’ in the eyes of the non-Tagalog. The reaction was predictable: there was strong protest from the Congress because the decree ‘kick[ed] the Constitution in the face’ and Congress too (Philippines Free Press 1991), and open obstruction from the Bisayans. In Cebu province the governor refused to implement the decree and insisted instead that Cebuano, the major variety of Bisayan, be used as a language of education.

The future of Filipino is uncertain. As long as it remains non-existent it functions as a symbol of national unity. But as soon as it is given content it becomes divisive rather than uniting. Meanwhile Pilipino (whether or not considered to be Filipino) continues to be taught at schools all over the country. Knowledge of it is in fact undeniably increasing, which is also the result of increased mobility, ongoing urbanization and the influence of the film industry and mass media.

The polyglossic situation has not changed: the local vernaculars have kept their function within the family, as auxiliary languages (alongside English and Pilipino) in the lower grades of state schools, and as the daily language in rural areas. In the urbanized centres and in interethnic communication, Tagalog-based Pilipino has remained the major medium. In business, industry, higher education and in private schools English continues to be the main language.

7 MADAGASCAR

The linguistic situation of Madagascar is markedly different from that of other countries discussed in this chapter. Madagascar has the unique characteristic of being practically monolingual, i.e. the indigenous language varieties which collectively form the Malagasy language are closely related dialects. There was once an allegedly Arabic-speaking settlement in the southeast, and there is a small community of Bantu-speaking Comorans in the northwest. Furthermore, there are some Indian, Pakistani, Chinese and French immigrants and expatriates. By and large, however, the country may be said to be linguistically homogeneous. Yet ecologically and economically it is not, and this is ultimately the reason why the development of the national language shows similarities with the Philippine case.

Although Madagascar was frequented by European ships on their way to Asia – one of the oldest European sources on an Austronesian language is De Houtman’s remarkable study on Malay and Malagasy (first published in 1603; see Lombard et al. 1970) – the island appeared not to be attractive enough for a lasting European settlement until the
beginning of the nineteenth century. Before that time it was never a political unit because of its widely diverging ecologies and economies: wet rice cultivation in the central highlands, fishery, dry rice cultivation and export crops along the small eastern coast, rain forests in the north and along the eastern mountain slopes, and cattle breeding in the savannahs of the broad western coastal areas and in the very dry bush and cactus land in the south and southwest.

Usually the Malagasy are subdivided into 18 different ethnic groups, and this roughly corresponds to the division into dialects (see Wermter and Rubino, this volume). The most important groups in order of their numbers are the Merina (northern central mountains), the Betsimisaraka (along the east coast), the Betsileo (southern central mountains), the Tsimihety (northern mountains), the Sakalava (western savannahs), and the Antandroy (southern dry lands).

Before the age of colonialism groups of clans were united into kingdoms, among which those of the Sakalava and the Merina became the most prominent. Society in these kingdoms was stratified into a hierarchy of castes, with nobility (andriana), commoners (hova) and (descendants of) slaves (andevo). A king or queen stood at the head of the kingdom. This social stratification facilitated the slave trade, in which the coastal kingdoms of the Sakalava became most involved. These kingdoms consequently had regular contacts with Europeans well before the nineteenth century.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the Merina kingdoms in the central mountains were united under King Andrianampoinimerina (1782–1810). He was succeeded by his son Radama I (1810–28), who defeated the Sakalava and extended Merina power over practically the whole of Madagascar. Only the extreme south remained independent until the beginning of French colonization.

Until the nineteenth century Malagasy was rarely written. If it was, it was in Arabic script, nowadays called sorabe ‘big writing’ (the traditional name is volan’onjatsy). The Antaimoro in the south had been the exclusive owners of this script, and what they wrote was chronicles, divinations, and treatises on astrology and medicines (the oldest records go back as far as the fifteenth century). Faced with the necessity to keep the European colonial powers at a distance, Radama I decided to modernize his country, among other things by introducing literacy. In 1823 he proclaimed the Latin script, as it had been introduced for Malagasy by the Reverend Jones of the London Missionary Society (LMS), to be the official alphabet of the kingdom. He also gave the LMS a free hand to establish schools and to develop teaching materials. The new education system was concentrated in the central highlands, and first among the literates were the children of the Merina nobility. The number of schools rose from one with three pupils in 1820 to 23 with an average of 100 pupils (one third of whom were girls) in 1828 (Heseltine 1971:105).

Under Radama’s daughter, Queen Ranavalona I, however, a backlash caused the demise of the school system. First it was forbidden for slaves to become literate, then for everybody who did not belong to the government service, and finally all schools were closed (1835). French Catholics profited from the temporarily low profile of the British Protestants by establishing their first mission in 1837. In 1862 after the death of Ranavalona I the schools were reopened and the LMS reappeared on the scene. Again education was concentrated in the central highlands and insofar as Malagasy was used as language of instruction, it was the Merina dialect.

Until the end of the nineteenth century Madagascar remained an internationally recognized, independent state with ambassadors in London and Paris. Its sovereignty came to an end when Galliéni conquered the country for France by force of arms in 1896. As the first governor-general of the new colony, Galliéni vigorously stimulated French-style
education. At the same time he encouraged all French officials to learn Malagasy. Until World War II many of them did. After the war the French policy of assimilation was continued, but in 1958 the Malagasy opted for independence, which was effectuated in 1960, on which occasion the French were proclaimed to be Madagascar’s nineteenth tribe. Many French citizens continued working as teachers, especially in secondary and higher education, which remained completely French. It was not until 1965 that Malagasy became a compulsory subject in secondary schools.

In the 1970s Madagascar followed a leftist policy, which on the cultural plain aimed at the ‘malgachisation’ of secondary and higher education. However, the policy was weakly planned and finally had to be aborted. Nonetheless, several bodies have continued working on standardization and terminology development for all fields of science. The avowed idea is to enrich a Merina-based Malagasy with lexicon from other dialects in order to achieve a truly national language. For the moment, however, both French and Malagasy are official languages. A major reason why French may be expected to suppress the rise of (Merina-based) Malagasy as the main or only official language in the future (apart from pressure from France itself) is the continued resentment of the peripheral tribes towards Merina dominance.

8 LANGUAGE POLICY IN OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

8.1 Guam

In 1521 Guam became a midway station in the Spanish galleon trade between Mexico and the Philippines. Vigorous efforts by the Spaniards to save the souls of the indigenous Chamorro population almost resulted in their termination: from an estimated 65,000 to 85,000 at the arrival of the Spaniards the population had dwindled to some 5000 in 1741. The Spaniards killed and deported the Chamorro male warriors in particular. If the Chamorro language continued to be spoken, albeit with heavy Spanish influences, this was largely due to the matrilineal culture of Chamorro society.

As a result of the Spanish–American War, Guam became American (1898). Henceforth all instruction was given in English and ‘No Chamorro’ became the rule. In schools the use of Chamorro was forbidden on penalty of a fine or even physical punishment.

After World War II Guam became a major military base, which further marginalized the original population, who were outnumbered by American army personnel. Yet thanks to the Naval Clearing Act, Guam was closed for tourists and non-military immigrants. This relatively quiet situation changed in 1962 when Kennedy lifted the Clearing Act, which caused an influx into Guam of Asians, Americans and Pacific islanders.

As a reaction, the government installed the Chamorro Language Commission, which had the task of writing a grammar and a dictionary. A few years later the Chamorro Language and Culture Program was set up with the purpose of reviving and preserving the Chamorro language through the school system. In the mid-1970s Chamorro was accepted by law as a subject (20 minutes daily in the first three grades of primary education, and 30 minutes in the higher grades). And as a language of instruction it was allowed for teaching Chamorro and foreign languages; all other courses, however, had to be conducted in English only. In 1993 the first courses in Chamorro were given at the University of Guam, as part of a teacher training program (see Clampitt-Dunlap 1995 for details).
8.2 Singapore

Established as a trading station by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819, Singapore became a major port of call in the trade between Europe and China in the course of the nineteenth century, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal (1869). With the development of rubber planting in mainland Malaysia in the last decades of the nineteenth century, it also became the main centre of the rubber trade in the world. Its prosperity attracted immigrants on a large scale, turning it into the multi-ethnic city it is today. The majority (78%) of the 3 million Singaporeans are now of Chinese descent (consisting of Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, and others). Indians (mainly Tamil) constitute a minority of 7%, whereas the original population of the island state, the Malay, have dwindled to some 14%.

Already at an early stage Singapore acquired a special status within the British colonial system. In 1867 it came under direct control of the Colonial Office. After the Japanese occupation in World War II Singapore was made a separate Crown Colony. In 1959 it acquired internal self-governance and in 1963 it joined the Federation of Malaysia as an independent member. Two years later, however, it seceded from the Federation to become a fully independent state.

Because of the common history with Malaysia and the economic importance of the Malay peninsula as Singapore’s immediate hinterland, Malay still is the national language of the state. This official Malay is the Malaysian standard variety. Alongside Malay and English, Tamil and Mandarin Chinese have also been proclaimed official languages. All four of them may be used in parliament. In practice, however, English remains the primary language of administration and commerce.

Education under direct British rule had been exclusively English. After independence it remained English-based with English as language of instruction. However, in line with the constitution Malay, Mandarin and Tamil are taught as ‘mother tongues’ in primary and secondary education, even though few Chinese have Mandarin as their home language, and not all Indians speak Tamil. The idea behind this educational policy is to wipe out linguistic dividing lines within the different ethnic communities: Indians speak Tamil, Chinese speak Mandarin, and Malays speak Standard Malay. Subsequent ‘Speak Mandarin’ campaigns have had the additional benefit of easing access to the emerging mainland Chinese market. Since the economic incentive to choose Tamil is less obvious, an increasing number of pupils of Indian descent appear to choose Malay as their ‘mother tongue’.

8.3 Taiwan

In 1624 the Dutch established a post in western Taiwan, and in the 37 years they maintained themselves on the island they introduced the roman script for at least two of the aboriginal Formosan languages (Siraya and Favorlang). Long after they had been defeated by the Chinese admiral Zheng Chenggong (known in contemporary Dutch sources as Koxinga), this script was used by descendants of the first users at least until the early nineteenth century (cf. Adelaar 1999). The conquest of Zheng Chenggong meant the sinification of the island, first by large-scale immigration of speakers of Ho Lo (a Fukien dialect), later followed by Hakka speakers.

From 1895 until the end of World War II Taiwan was part of the Japanese empire. During that time Japanese was the national language, and the indigenous languages (both the Austronesian and the Chinese) had no status whatsoever. In 1945 Taiwan became part of China. But with the victory of the communists over the armies of the Kuomintang
in mainland China in 1949 it was separated again. Taiwan was flooded by a third wave of immigrants from the mainland, many of whom spoke Mandarin. They were the remnants of the Kuomintang armies and their supporters, and considered themselves the rightful rulers of the whole of China. Under this fiction they established martial law and continued the one-language policy of the Japanese, substituting Mandarin Chinese for Japanese. During martial law broadcasting in the local varieties of Chinese (Taiwanese/Ho Lo and Hakka) was allowed on condition that they should in time be completely replaced by Mandarin. Towards the end of martial law broadcasts in these languages were reduced to one hour daily. In communist China spelling reforms were implemented for Mandarin Chinese, but for political reasons these were not accepted in Taiwan.

In 1988 martial law was finally lifted. The subsequent democratic process led to a new political perspective, according to which Taiwan was no longer an appendix of the great Chinese empire but a country in its own right. Local languages and cultures, including those of the Austronesian minorities, came to be reevaluated. For the past few years, Mandarin has no longer been the only language of instruction. In the lower grades the local languages are beginning to be used as such (insofar as teachers are available), and since 1996 one ‘period’ per week has been allotted to the teaching of these languages in the elementary education curriculum.

8.4 Thailand

In Thailand all state education is in Standard Thai, with centralized control and a curriculum determined in Bangkok. The major regional languages as well as the smaller minority languages are all part of a language hierarchy dominated by Standard Thai. The languages of the Austronesian sea-nomads scattered along the west coast of southern Thailand, Moken/Moklen (approximately 2500–3000 speakers per group; see Larish, Moken and Moklen) and Urak Lawoi’ (with some 3000 speakers) are at the bottom of this hierarchy (Smalley 1994:366–367). No efforts are made to preserve these languages. A Thai-based writing system for Urak Lawoi’, developed by missionaries, has not reversed the process of cultural deprivation and language decline.

Since its conversion to Islam in 1474, Pattani had been the Malay-speaking centre of an independent and at times powerful sultanate. Periodically it had to pay tribute to the Thai kings, but it was not until 1893 that it came under direct Thai rule. Today Pattani Malay is spoken by probably over a million speakers in the southeastern provinces of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and the southern part of Songkhla (Smalley 1994:155). In the southwestern province of Satun another variety of Malay is endemic, although its speakers are mostly bilingual (Satun Malay and Paktay (Southern Thai)) and the Thai system of education has generally been accepted. In the Pattani Malay area, however, Thai educational policy met with much resistance. Until the 1960s the impact of state schools was minimal. Most education was private, centered around a local Muslim teacher. The main activity in this private education was the reading of religious texts. These texts were Standard Malay written in Arabic script, and they were discussed in Pattani Malay. During the major waves of Thai chauvinism (under King Vajiravudh at the beginning of the twentieth century, and under Prime Minister Phibunsongkhram during World War II and again in the 1950s) attempts to force assimilation of the national minorities had had the opposite effect among the Malays. In the 1960s, however, the Thai government succeeded in bringing the private schools under its control. Since 1968 no new schools for Islamic
education have been able to be established any more, and the existing Islamic schools have had to adopt a common Thai curriculum as well as Thai as the main language of instruction. Malay is only allowed for religion. Today the number of private schools in the Pattani-speaking provinces still exceeds the number of state schools (Zaphir Nikhab, p.c.), but their former function of teaching Islamic values and religion has been taken over by extracurricular courses and weekend schools.

8.5 Vietnam

Of the five Austronesian languages of Vietnam, only Cham used to be a literary language. It was the language of the Champa kingdom (seventh–fifteenth century) which once covered large parts of mainland Southeast Asia. This kingdom was regularly at war with the Vietnamese kingdom of Annam in the north and the Khmer in the west, and it was finally annexed by the Annamites in 1471. The subsequent influx of Vietnamese into the southern regions of Indochina drove most of the Austronesians to the mountains of central Vietnam. This created a state of relatively stable symbiosis, in which the Cham and the other Austronesian ethnic groups had become minorities vis-à-vis the Vietnamese. This situation continued to exist for centuries. Even under colonial French rule no dramatic change occurred. The French hardly interfered with the minorities, who had an illiteracy rate of almost 100%. No minority language was used in any of the few schools that were accessible to children from the minorities.

The situation began to change with the anti-colonial struggle during and after World War II. Especially after the Americans had succeeded the French in their efforts to ‘save’ Vietnam for the West, the minorities came under pressure. The jungles of the central highlands provided the best hiding place for the anti-colonial/communist forces, and the Ho Chi Minh Trail ran through the regions populated by the Austronesian minorities. The logic of war required the destruction of their habitat by continuous bombardments and defoliation of the jungle. The Cham and other minorities were deported and/or concentrated into fortified settlements from where they no longer had access to their ancestors’ territories.

After the defeat of the American forces and their South Vietnamese allies, the situation hardly improved for the Austronesian minorities. Vietnamese nationalism and communist ideology did not leave much room for independent cultural development. Streams of landless Vietnamese began to settle in the areas which were once exclusively inhabited by the minority groups. Mass education (in Vietnamese) was introduced and large infrastructural works (industry, mines, roads and dams) further transformed the traditional way of life of the minorities. As a consequence they were marginalized in their own traditional lands.

Officially the need for preservation and cultivation of the minority cultures is acknowledged, but in practice other priorities prevail. As regards the Austronesian languages, only for Cham is some provision made in education, and that only in the provinces of Binh Tuan and Ninh Thuan, some 200 km north of Ho Chin Minh City. In Ninh Thuan a large cultural centre for the Cham ethnic group has been set up. A Committee for Drafting School Textbooks in Cham (Ban Biên Soán Chu Cham) has been installed. The committee also supervises the 150 schools in the two provinces where the books are to be used. So far five schoolbooks have been produced. However, the committee does not have at its disposal typewriters adapted to the traditional Cham writing system, let alone computers. The books therefore have had to be written by hand (see Po Dharma 2001 for further details).
9 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Recurrent in the above discussions is the problem of legitimation. The multi-ethnic and multi-cultural states of Southeast Asia (including Madagascar) are ultimately the product of European and American wars, greed, and political agreements. A major raison d’être of the modern states (also outside Southeast Asia) is the existence – either imagined or not – of one particular language functioning as an emblem of the nation. Such a language may indeed be purely imaginary (such as Filipino), or of no practical consequence (such as Malay in Singapore). But in most cases the language chosen as the national language is meant also to be used as an official language, i.e. in official communication, education, and/or the media.

In the colonial period it was in most countries the language of the (European) colonizing power which fulfilled these official functions: English in Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore; Dutch in Indonesia; Portuguese in East Timor; French in Madagascar and Vietnam; and Spanish and subsequently English in the Philippines and Guam. Malay became a secondary official language in the Dutch Indies and Brunei Darussalam, and to a lesser extent in Malaysia. With independence, indigenous languages were proclaimed to be national: Malay in Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, and – in another variety – in Indonesia, Pilipino/Tagalog in the Philippines, and Malagasy in Madagascar.

Taiwan and East Timor were exceptional in that they were (also) colonized by Asian powers. The consequence was that Japanese and subsequently Mandarin were imposed upon the Taiwanese as their national language, whereas Indonesian became the ‘national’ language of East Timor from its annexation by Indonesia in 1975 until the withdrawal of the Indonesian armed forces in 1999. East Timor continues to be an exception since it is the only country in the region which since its independence has two national languages, namely Tetum and Portuguese.

In most countries the choice of an indigenous language not only as a national language but also as an official language implied subsequent provisions for corpus planning (standardization of spelling and grammar, terminology development) and propagation (education, publication, language campaigns, etc.). The success of these efforts varies from country to country. For a country such as East Timor it is too early to point to any results. The degree of success in other countries depends on funds, expertise, and political will, but above all on the acceptability of the language choice to the majority of the population. Wherever this choice was felt as a takeover bid by an identifiable section of the population it was resented by others. This was obviously the case in the Philippines and in Madagascar with regard to Pilipino/Tagalog and Merina Malagasy. In Malaysia the position of Malay as the national and official language is not undisputed either, precisely because of its function as a compensation for the position of the ‘bumiputra’ (indigenous) Malay vis-à-vis the (descendants of the) Chinese and Indian newcomers. Even in Indonesia, where the status of the national language had never been seen as unduly advantageous for any ethnic or social group, and which therefore had been most successful in its language policy, critique has recently been raised against the position of the standard language. Because of its centralized standardization it is now sometimes identified with a specific section of the population, to wit all those who had positions within the centralized Suharto regime.

Nevertheless there is neither an indigenous nor a foreign alternative for Indonesian in Indonesia. Dutch language policy failed to make Dutch indispensable in the Dutch Indies. But in the other countries the old colonial language was never completely abolished. Not without strong political support from Portugal, Portuguese was reintroduced
as a national and official language in East Timor. Pressure from France contributed to the failure of the drive for *malgachisation* in Madagascar. In the former American and British colonies the role of English is still prominent. This is obviously the case in the Philippines and Singapore (as well as in Guam), but it is also very noticeable in Malaysia and to a lesser extent in Brunei Darussalam. The status of English as the global language can only result in a greater role at the national level, and not only in the former British and American colonies.

The decision to give one language a special status automatically entails a lesser status for other languages. The Southeast Asian linguistic scene is so complicated that even trained linguists will have a very limited understanding of the existing variety of languages. Policy-makers have even less to go on. They may deny the existence of other languages (as used to be the policy in Brunei), largely neglect them (such as in Malaysia and Thailand), or confine themselves to unspecified assurances that these languages should be preserved. Within Southeast Asia the Philippines, Indonesia and especially East Timor stand out for their attention to the local languages other than the national and official languages. Nonetheless, it may be expected that the mere existence of the national and official languages in these countries (with its various implications for education and mass communication) may cause many of the minor languages to become extinct within a few generations.

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