



## Subhan Zein: Language Policy in Superdiverse Indonesia

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In response to the paucity of scholars' studies on language policy and planning (LPP) in linguistically diverse countries, Subhan Zein comprehensively analyses LPP in Indonesia, a developing country whose linguistic ecology is extremely diverse. Spolsky (2004) asserts that language practices, language ideologies, and language planning are core components of language policy. Zein's account of language policy in Indonesia highlights its official regulations from the perspective of historical linguistic superdiversity. The author utilizes statistical information and synthesizes research on linguistic diversity to capture the uniqueness of superdiverse Indonesia. Zein's discussion of LPP in Indonesia is addressed across seven chapters.

Chapter 1 introduces readers to background details regarding geographical and demographic characteristics, polity, and language history. Owing a total area of 4,986,325 square kilometers and a population of 269,538,028, 707 languages are spoken by more than 600 ethnic groups in Indonesia. Zein points out that superdiverse Indonesia is characterized by intensive language contact among language speakers and complex linguistic varieties derived from dynamic growth of language over centuries.

Chapter 2 focuses on the close interaction between language ecology and language policy. Linguistic ecology involves national language, indigenous languages, regional lingua francas (RLFs), heritage languages, sign languages, foreign and additional languages, and international lingua franca. Zein uses statistical information and descriptions of Indonesia's language varieties to demonstrate its sociolinguistic richness. He carefully elaborates on how language policy promotes the dynamic polycentricity of sociolinguistic landscapes, wherein multilingual Indonesia constitutes a form of superglossia. Notions on the objectification of language are discussed to capture the ideological legitimacy of linguistically superdiverse environments.

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Chapter 3 discusses the status planning of Indonesian as a unifying language, as compared with other languages. Zein argues that imposing Indonesian as the standardized national language results in ideological obfuscation and suppression towards other linguistic varieties. He further contends that contemporary status planning leads to the neglect of indigenous languages and RLFs, misrepresentation of current sociolinguistic situations, and the premature status elevation for Indonesian as international language, given the country's limited socio-political and economic strength, and insignificant scientific and cultural infrastructure. Current policy documents indicate the need for non-national languages in people's linguistic repertoire of Indonesia. The endorsement of official recognition for indigenous languages, RLFs, sign languages, and religion-based languages can enhance the role of those languages in community and reduce the loss rate for Indonesia's 348 endangered indigenous languages.

Chapter 4 deals with corpus planning which involves processes of codification and cultivation. Zein describes Indonesian corpus planning in terms of orthographical and grammatical standardization, and terminological expansion. This chapter describes how *Badan Bahasa* (Indonesia's language planning agency) attentively supports corpus planning for Indonesian, yet the attention to other languages is inevitably obscured. Claims have been made that planning for Indonesian have successfully peaked its acquisition and use, Zein argues for empirical evidence to support this claim and calls for expanding the role of *Badan Bahasa* and increasing research into languages other than Indonesian.

Chapter 5 promotes revitalization planning in dealing with the alarming status of endangered indigenous languages. Zein synthesizes studies about the decline of language vitality in Indonesia and analyzes factors for language endangerment. He clearly indicates the need for preserving this country's culture, biodiversity, and linguistic human rights to maintain superdiverse Indonesia. In responses, he proposes language revitalization efforts through language maintenance, preservation, and digital documentation to tackle issues surrounding language endangerment and sustain the Indonesia's plurilingualism.

Chapter 6 highlights the importance of language-in-education policy for facilitating linguistic superdiversity in Indonesia. Zein describes the complexity of language education management under three different ministries. He reviews policies regarding language pedagogy of Indonesian, indigenous languages, and curriculum-endorsed additional languages. This chapter addresses how language-in-education policy is inevitably affected by tensions between nationalism and internationalism, tradition and modernity, and unity and diversity (Kohler, 2019, p. 295). Zein pinpoints that the contestation for competing interests between promoting education in Indonesian as a national language and mother tongue education can endanger the survival of linguistic superdiversity in Indonesia. The increased literacy rate in Indonesian is claimed as demonstrating successful policy enactment, but the unbalanced dominance of Indonesian and English suppress the linguistic vitality of other languages. A call for the reorientation of language-in-education policy signifies the importance of policy decentralization and plurilingualism, binds strong ties among indigenous languages, and addresses issues of qualified educational personnel.

Chapter 7 provides Zein's conclusion and recommendations for the conceptualization of language policy within linguistically superdiverse Indonesia. The author contends that support for superglossia is necessary for comprehensive representation of the robust linguistic ecology and sociolinguistic situations across the Indonesian archipelago. He recommends further exploration of language ideologies, language planning discourse, language mobility, and language maintenance to achieve language policy goals and sustain Indonesia's superdiverse nature. He concludes with a call for employing micro-linguistic analysis to examine how media institutions' polarization of socio-political issues and current political power structures might bring social changes to the superdiverse nature of Indonesia.

This book provides comprehensive analysis and thorough recommendations about LPP for preserving linguistic superdiversity in Indonesia. Zein thoroughly conveys the dynamic growth of linguistic varieties from the perspectives of history, polity, ideology, and intense language mobility across islands in archipelagic Indonesia. He addresses interdisciplinary perspectives and a wide range of themes for characterizing Indonesia's linguistic superdiversity. All in all, this book not only broadens readers' insights into the field of LPP and language diversity, but also invites scholars and language stakeholders to further explore how LPP plays fundamental roles in dynamism and polycentricity of language maintenance and preservation within superdiverse linguistic environments.

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