

Language policy in superdiverse Indonesia, 1st ed.

by Subhan Zein, New York/London, Routledge, 2020, 288 pp., £120.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-367-02954-8

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BOOK REVIEW

Language policy in superdiverse Indonesia, 1st ed., by Subhan Zein, New York/London, Routledge, 2020, 288 pp., £120.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-367-02954-8

Language policy involves deliberate choices about language, including consideration of its form and function by specialised agencies with the power to implement and sustain such policies (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003). Recent decades have seen a dramatic increase in language planning and policy (LPP) studies. However, although it is a developing country with a highly diverse linguistic ecology, Indonesia has received limited scholarly attention in the field of LPP. As King and Bigelow (2018, p. 466) argue, 'the policy development and implementation components of superdiversity have been the least addressed, and are arguably the area of greatest need'. Subhan Zein's *Language Policy in Superdiverse Indonesia* makes a valuable addition to the existing knowledge about LPP by drawing on the highly diverse linguistic ecology of Indonesia to examine the diversification of language practices within that ecology, and by employing a superdiverse perspective to investigate not only transitional language (e.g. national languages, indigenous languages) but also other forms of linguistic variety (e.g. dialects, registers) and practices of language mixing performed by people from diverse cultures, religions, and social classes.

This book consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 includes the background information, research significance, conceptual explanation and basic framework of the book. A general overview of Indonesia, including its location, territorial area, climate, landscape, history and demographic characteristics, is presented, so as to introduce readers to the country covered in the book. There is a statistical uniqueness related to the linguistic diversity in Indonesia; it is estimated that one tenth of the languages spoken in the world are spoken in Indonesia (Steinhauer, 1994). Zein innovatively seeks to expand the definition of 'language policy' and the term 'superdiversity' in order to capture the broadest range of language practices. The contributor's elaboration in the introduction lays a foundation for this book that aims to discuss the complexity of language policy in Indonesia.

Chapter 2, 'Linguistic ecology and language policy', focuses on the inseparable relationship between linguistic ecology and language policy. The chapter responds to and extends Kaplan and Baldauf's (1997) view that language planning activities implicate the language ecosystem. It discusses all the linguistic varieties – including Indonesian, indigenous languages, 43 Malayic and non-Malayic regional lingua francas (RLFs), heritage languages, sign languages, and languages in education – that fall within Indonesia's national boundaries and constitute the sociolinguistic situation of the country. To demonstrate the country's superdiverse linguistic ecology, the author lists Indonesia's 13 largest languages (p. 33) alongside accurate numbers of their users, which vividly reveals the languages that are endangered and their relationship with the population. For compatibility with the multilingual context, Zein proposes a new concept – 'superglossia'. Superglossia successfully illustrates the complexity, dynamism, and polycentricity of the linguistic ecology in Indonesia, which is also a necessary standpoint enabling the author to adopt a superdiversity perspective in Indonesia's language policy. However, while language planning should be people-oriented (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997), there is not enough observation on how local people interpret and react to relevant language policies in this chapter, and further relevant investigations would offer fundamental empirical support for the improvement of language policy.

Chapter 3 is devoted to a discussion of 'Status planning', which refers to 'deliberate efforts to secure the allocation of roles and functions of languages and literacies over a community or national territory' (Cooper, 1989). With an analysis of the contemporary status planning of various languages in Indonesia, the author points out several concerns of the existing policy: (1) the apparent neglect in status planning of RLFs, heritage and sign languages, and languages in the religious domain; (2) the status planning does not reflect the changing socio-linguistic within the country, such as 'foreign' language; (3) the pursuit of elevating status of Indonesian as an international language, all of which are considered premature with the absence of global spread, lack of political strength and limited cultural and scientific influence. It is necessary to increase the status of the 348 languages in the country that are endangered and dying, as well as other elements of Indonesia's superdiversity. One strategy to change this is through 'co-officializing', which refers to endorsing official legitimacy in the fields of governance, administration and education to certain language, in order to increase their prestige and function in the society.

In Chapter 4 the reader is guided through 'Corpus planning'. This consists of codification and cultivation (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997); specifically, codification refers to the selection and standardisation of a linguistic norm, while cultivation entails efforts to develop the linguistic resources of a language juxtaposed with domains of language use. The successful corpus planning of Indonesian may have led the language to reach 'its apogee' (Wright, 2016, p. 96), but much remains to be done in terms of the corpus planning of other languages in Indonesia, including indigenous languages, regional lingua francas (RLFs), heritage languages, and sign languages, which constitute the multilingual ecology of Indonesia. The author provides practical suggestions by calling for more scholarly attention paid to LOTI and greater involvement of local governments, so as to promote multilingual development.

It is alarming that language endangerment has worsened significantly in recent years, with Simons and Lewis (2013) noting that 32 percent of the world's 7,103 living languages are endangered. In Chapter 5, 'Revitalization planning', Zein uses the term 'revitalization planning' to describe such endeavours as language maintenance, revival, preservation, restoration, reversal, etc., and attends to tackling concerns about dead, dying, endangered, abandoned, undervalued, underutilised, and exterminated languages in the Indonesia's plurilingual context. He highlights the need to develop a discourse of revitalisation planning to cater for Indonesia's superdiversity, which includes the preservation of culture (Mulyana, 2008), biodiversity and linguistic human rights (LHRs). Besides languages, revitalisation planning is also about language speakers, since its success is dependent upon its integration with the education of language speakers (language-in-education policy) (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). Accordingly, the author proposes 'revitalization planning as consilience' so as to expand the discourse of the term and form a new and comprehensive theory.

Chapter 6 examines 'Language-in-education policy'. Tensions between localism and globalisation, tradition and modernity, unity and diversity (Kohler, 2019) continuously influence language-in-education policy. It is the fact that recent policies related to teaching Indonesian in school have contributed to a remarkable increase in literacy rates in that language, but the dominance of Indonesian and English means that education is a significantly unbalanced arena for linguistic survival, especially for indigenous languages. Besides English, other 'imported languages', including Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Korean, and Mandarin, are also endorsed in the educational curriculum in Indonesia. The author emphasises the need to reorient language-in-education policy in Indonesia by identifying language problems in educational institutions and offering specific measures to manage them; meanwhile, to facilitate multilingual development, personnel policy should also be taken into consideration to facilitate a better management of the teaching workforce and the professional preparation

of language teachers. It must be noted that, with the advent of globalisation, many relevant economic and social factors, such as international trade, cultural exchanges, and international relations, may also influence language policy in school and should be taken into consideration in further discussions. Moreover, offering some possible solutions to the adjustment issue would enrich the practical implications of relevant findings.

It is clear that in the above-mentioned chapters, the author follows the traditional language planning mode, providing logically structured analysis on language issues in Indonesia and covering accounts of the important topics that are emerging in this country. Such a comprehensive exploration is a valuable addition to the extant literature on Indonesia's linguistic ecology. It is noteworthy that, while discussions in these themed chapters of the book, perhaps for its focus and positioning, are usually limited to linguistic frameworks, future work would surely benefit from some interdisciplinary explorations from other perspectives.

Considering the emerging themes in the 21st century, in the concluding chapter, Zein recommends further exploration in the following areas. First, ideology plays an integral role in language policy (Spolsky, 2004), and it is therefore essential to examine how ideologies influence the regulation, mediation, and facilitation of beliefs, ideas, and perceptions related to Indonesian, in order to achieve language policy goals beyond linguistic structures per se. Second, examining discourse planning in the context of Indonesia's language policy is also fundamental (Latif & Ibrahim, 1996) in order to understand the different directions to be pursued in language policy over the years, even decades, to come. Third, discussions of superdiversity in mainstream scholarship have traditionally focused on international migration (Suyanto & Amin, 2017; Yusuf, 2017), but investigating patterns in the intranational spatial mobility of language speakers is of great significance. Finally, we still know little as to how Indonesia or LOTI have developed concurrently with the dynamic and complex growth of the Indonesian media, and thus, it is necessary to employ micro-linguistic analysis on mainstream media (Arps, 2010) such as television and radio and on social media platforms such as Twitter.

In general, this book has several strengths. First, all the chapters are logically structured and their arguments are solidly supported. Instead of a monotonous narration of the history and development of Indonesia, the author presents numbers and other data that emphasise the highly diverse character of the country (Chapter 2). The comprehensible and accessible nature of the book invites readers to take an enjoyable journey among Indonesia's diverse languages.

Second, Zein succeeds in offering insightful accounts of the important topics that are emerging in multilingual Indonesia and dominating its language policy discourse, including indigenous languages (Chapter 3), Indonesian (Chapters 2 and 4), RLFs (Chapter 5), and language in education (Chapter 6). Steinhauer (1994, p. 778) maintains that 'Indonesia is a Mecca for linguists and linguistics' and 'in reality rather a backwater'. Most publications to date have been articles or book chapters discussing mainly Indonesian and English. This book-length contribution discloses and describes the linguistic ecology of this multilingual country and targets at a wide range of readers in multilingual contexts.

Third, the author applies a new lens – the superdiverse perspective – to the discussion of Indonesia's complex linguistic environment, exploring not only Indonesian (Chapters 2 and 4) but also the development of languages other than Indonesian (Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6). Such a perspective underscores the need for policymakers' recognition of the new conditions created by diversification in interaction patterns (Blackledge et al., 2018) and contributes to the multilingual development.

Apart from its merits, this volume also has some limitations. According to Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), language planning should be people-oriented. One point that could benefit

from more explanation would be how different groups of people, for instance government officials, linguistic experts, and common people, act and interact differently in the implementation of language policy in multilingual Indonesia. In particular, to address language conflicts, such as in Chapter 2, it is important to observe and analyse how local people interpret and react to relevant language policies. Without such investigation, the effectiveness of policy implementation towards multilingual development remains unclear. Secondly, with the acceleration of globalisation, many relevant economic and social factors such as labour mobility, trade, cultural exchanges, and international relations will also exert an increasingly important influence on language diversity, multilingualism and language policy in Indonesia. Particularly, on language-in-education policy (Chapter 6), it could be noted that Indonesian/Chinese bilateral cooperation in terms of economy and trade is one of the most important reasons for the growth in Mandarin education in schools in Indonesia (p. 187), especially in recent years. Such factors and their impacts are worthy of in-depth discussion. Finally, language diversity, especially multilingual development, actually involves not only linguistics, but many other disciplines, and interdisciplinary explorations from such perspectives as education, psychology, sociology and economics, would undoubtedly bring new insights and broaden the visions of this field.

All in all, covering a wide range of themes and containing thorough discussions on many different practices, this systematic, in-depth, and integrated book offers well-structured and content-based insights about Indonesia's language policy as well as the country's linguistic ecology, and will be an important guide for researchers, teachers, and students with an interest in language policy and language planning.

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