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**On the Internet, no-one knows you're from
Suroboyo: Ethnic identity from the digital
margins to the mainstream core**

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On the Internet, no-one knows you're from Suroboyo: Ethnic identity from the digital margins to the mainstream core

Howard Manns and Simon Musgrave (Monash University)

Abstract:

This paper examines the evolving nature of language and identity in post-Reform Indonesia by investigating the use of language variation to instigate and resolve ethnic-national tensions in online forums. We show how language variation emerges against the backdrop of the semiotic registers already established in Indonesia by examining a discussion of ethnicity begun on Twitter and continued in the online forum Kaskus. These discussions often entail the strategic elevation of the ethnic self and the strategic denigration of the ethnic other and we illustrate how language variation is implicated in either strategy. Language, of course, is not ideologically neutral and while *Kaskus* may appear to be a topsy-turvy sociolinguistic hub, Standard Indonesian continues to voice 'authority' thus maintaining its New Order role as a unifying force. However, this authority is undermined by the informal and casual nature of the semiotic register associated with *Kaskus* as well as the often tongue-in-cheek use of ethnic languages which invokes linguistic peripheries within this space. We conclude that the internet provides yet one more periphery through which New Order ideologies of language become 're-imagined' and 'de-naturalized' in the post-Reform era (see Goebel 2008). Thus, through the internet, the local, ethnic self may explore and resolve tensions around what it means to be a member of the wider, Indonesian community.

The development of Indonesia as a single nation encompassing hundreds of different ethnolinguistic groups has been extensively discussed (e.g. Anderson 2006; Errington 1992; Errington 2000; Keane 1997). The current panel discusses Indonesia and its languages in terms of centres and peripheries and comes in the wake of research that frames language issues in the post-Reform era in terms of semiotic registers and enregisterment (Goebel 2008; 2010; cf. Agha 2005). New Order discourse positioned (or enregistered) the Indonesian language (semiotic register 1 (SR1)) to modern, national spheres and the path to modernity and the wider global community unequivocally went through this sphere. In contrast, ethnic languages became enregistered to 'traditional', ethnic spheres (semiotic register 2 (SR2)). The New Order sought to define ethnic identity as quaint and backwards (the antithesis of the forward-looking, modern state) through public acts like the creation of *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah* 'Miniature Garden of Beautiful Indonesia' in Jakarta (Pemberton 1994). *Taman Mini* is a Disneyland-like park, consisting of traditional ethnic homes and displays of regional, ethnic culture. *Taman Mini* contributed to the New Order's desire to commodify, domesticate and enregister ethnic culture, within the Indonesian sphere, as having links to region, attire, housing, custom and tourism (Goebel 2010:18; see also Triastuti & Rakhmani 2011 for discussion of *Taman Mini* as a metaphor for regional blogospheres in Indonesia).

However, there has been a revalorization and rediscovery of ethnic identity in the post-Reform era. Indonesians are largely free to explore and discover concepts like youth, gender and ethnicity outside the bounds of draconian New Order discourse (Clark 2004; Cole 2010) and, since the latter part of the

New Order, online contexts have been important in opening up new spaces for political discussion (Hill & Sen 2002; Lim 2012). At first glance, these contexts show continuities with New Order discourse and behaviour. For example, Merlyna Lim, an Indonesian academic currently based in Canada, blogs in Indonesian¹ and in Sundanese². The subject matter of the two blogs differs in a way that is consistent with Goebel's account of the semiotic registers available to Indonesians as do aspects of the language used. There is some overlap in topic, and language, but notably for Lim, discussions of politics take place in Indonesian (SR1), and discussions of music in Sundanese (SR2). This firm distinction between the SR1 and SR2, and their respectively associated contexts is reflected across a number of similar sites and blogs.

We will argue here that this idealized distinction between the SR1 and the SR2 does not persist across all contexts, online or otherwise. This becomes clear when this New Order distinction becomes elevated and promoted above other possible realities in the online world. In what follows, we firstly review attempts by a Jakarta-based celebrity to denigrate and marginalize a regional hub and its language users through his Twitter account. This celebrity's vision we show is largely a continuation of New Order discourse, and a firm distinction between the SR1 and SR2. However, we also review the online backlash to this celebrity and his Tweets and, in doing so, we show (as Goebel (2010) has elsewhere) that a third semiotic register (SR3) emerges. This SR3 allows both a de-naturalization of the monologic ideologies imposed on everyday Indonesians by the New Order and a re-naturalization of alternative ideologies. We close by reviewing why this marginalized SR3 is critically relevant in a contemporary Indonesia, where outside of Jakarta, ethnic selves are once again moving from the periphery to the core.

1. Constructing development and modernity in the Jakarta mould: Kei Savourie's Jakarta-centric vision

Kei Savourie is a Jakarta-based, celebrity relationship consultant. On January 13, 2013, in a series of tweets to 20,000 followers, Savourie characterized Surabaya as a city with an identity crisis, unable to choose between traditional Javanese culture and modernity. In these tweets, Savourie sets out his view of an open and inclusive Indonesian society. In fact, although set out in Jakarta Indonesian, and with a Jakarta-centric 'mould' for modernity, his views echo New Order discourse about ethnicity, language and progress. This becomes manifest in Savourie's first tweet:

(1)

¹ *Celoteh si Mer* <http://merlyna.blogspot.com.au/>

² *Hariring kuring* <https://daveuhkolot.wordpress.com/>. Professor Lim also has an English language blog: *Merlyna's Bits of Bytes* <http://merlyna.org/>.



Translation: *You can't become global and speak English without speaking good Indonesian. How do you expect to expect to advance?*

Here Savourie asserts that it is not possible to become a globally-oriented, English speaker if one cannot even master *baik* 'good' Indonesian. In other words, the path to the global and progress passes through Indonesian. He clarifies this point in a later retweet when someone asks him if Indonesian really is necessary for wider global engagement: *Yah nasional dulu lah, sebelum global* 'Yeah, first national, then global'. Savourie links the mastery of *baik* 'good' Indonesian to *maju* 'progress', and this may be understood as a modified view of New Order discourse. The New Order had an unyielding vision for the Indonesian language and its speakers. In New Order discourse, good and correct Indonesian served as the foundation for *perkembangan* 'development' and *kemajuan* 'progress'. In working toward development and progress, Suharto and New Order agents insisted that Indonesians speak *Bahasa Indonesian yang Baik dan Benar* 'Indonesian that is good and correct'.

Manns (2014) among others has argued that the focus on 'correct' Indonesian has become less of a concern for post-Reform youth. Post-Reform youth and media outlets have become more focused on the Indonesian that is *baik* 'good', in this case meaning appropriate to context. Savourie clarifies this point in the series of tweets that follow. Most relevant to the current discussion, he makes explicit links between SR1 and SR2, and what he believes to be the appropriate contexts for their use.

(2)



Translation: *If you want to be modern, you know, you have to be open and outward looking. [And] when you're in the office, the school or the mall, you speak Javanese?*

In this tweet, Savourie posits that a modern society must be *terbuka* 'open, outward looking'. This is not possible in Savourie's view if Javanese (SR2) is spoken in the *kantor* 'office', *sekolah* 'school' or *mall* (seemingly in his view SR1 spaces). The use of ethnic languages like Javanese in national spaces excludes those who do not understand these languages:

(3)



Translation: *There's nothing wrong with Javanese. But it strongly indexes ethnicity and exclusivism, [and] this isn't appropriate in the modern era.*

In this tweet, Savourie clarifies that he is not opposed to Javanese. He literally says *medok Jowo* 'strong Javanese accent', but clarifies in a later tweet he is referring to the Javanese language rather than accent. Savourie feels that the Javanese language is a strong index of ethnicity and exclusivism, and thus not compatible with modernity. Once again, in doing so, Savourie invokes New Order discourses about ethnicity, which positioned national identity first and ethnic identity second, and also posits a hierarchy of languages (Javanese < Indonesian < English) along which an Indonesian can move towards openness and modernity.

Savourie does not go so far as to suggest Javanese as a 'condition' to be abandoned or left behind, but rather as a language whose use should be relegated to certain contexts. Savourie makes reference to the Central Javanese cities of Yogyakarta (Jogja) and Surakarta (Solo) to make this point:

(4)



Translation: *If you're really like Jogja and Solo, and you're truly concerned with preserving Javanese culture, then you have to speak Javanese.*

For Savourie, people in places like Jogja and Solo need to use Javanese because such people are concerned with the preservation of Javanese culture. Herein lies Savourie's issue with Surabaya, and what he labels its *krisis identitas* 'identity crisis':

(5)



Translation: *Every time I go to Surabaya, I always shake my head when I see the clash of cultures that takes place here. Surabaya has an identity crisis.*

He professes to be confused and seemingly annoyed by the *benturan* ‘collision’ of cultures in Indonesia’s second largest city. On the surface, Savourie seems sufficiently impressed with Surabaya’s malls, fashions and lifestyles, but he finds the use of Javanese incompatible with these modern practices:

(6)



Translation: *It has large malls, modern ways of hanging out, up-to-date fashion, but the language is Javanese. My brain can't make sense of [literally 'receive] this contrast.*

He flags that his brain is unable to *terima* ‘receive’ this contrast. ‘Receive’ in this case overlaps with its oft-used English meaning (e.g. Received Pronunciation), wherein it means “accepted in the most polite circles in society” (cf. Hughes, Trudgill & Watt 2005:3). In the Indonesian case, the meaning of ‘receive’ is broader, meaning a person’s view of what is accepted or appropriate in any context, not merely ‘polite circles’.

Links between language and context, and what is received or not received are at the core of Savourie’s critique of Surabaya and its *krisis identitas* ‘identity crisis’. For Savourie, Indonesian identity and the Indonesian language (SR1) belong in modern, national spheres. More so, the path to modernity and the wider global community path is through these spheres. In contrast, Javanese identity and the Javanese language belong in ‘traditional’, ethnic spheres (SR2). And the two spheres are incompatible. Savourie’s issue with Surabaya (and more accurately its Javanese speakers) is its attempt to bridge these two spheres. To these ends, Savourie makes what is perhaps his most damning assessment of Surabaya and its residents in the post-Reform era: *sok soka* ‘they are pretending, putting on airs’.

(7)



Kei Savourie @KeiSavourie

4h

Surabaya gak semodern Jakarta, tapi orang-orangnya sok modern.

Gak setradisional Jogja, tapi sok jowo. Kentang.

Expand

Translation: *Surabaya isn't as modern as Jakarta, but the people pretend to be modern. It isn't as traditional as Jogja, but they pretend to be Javanese. It falls short of the mark.*

Savourie argues that Surabaya is not as modern as Jakarta, and consequently its speakers are merely *sok modern* 'pretending to be modern'. Surabaya is not as traditional as Jogja, and so its speakers are *sok Jowo* 'pretending to be Javanese'. *Sok soka* 'pretending' is highly problematic for post-Reform youth, who value the *asli* 'authentic' (Boellstorff 2004; Manns 2011), Boellstorff, focusing on the Indonesian context, has argued that post-colonial discourse by its very nature is derivative. Consequently, social practices in a post-colonial society like Indonesia entail a struggle from the *palsu* 'false, derivative' to the *asli* 'authentic'. By labelling Surabaya residents *sok soka*, Kei firmly positions them within the realm of the *palsu*. Indonesia in *asli* terms, at least as far as Saviourie is concerned, entails a firm distinction between SR1 and SR2. The views of a single individual, even a public figure, would be unremarkable were they not shared by many others. And a series of replies and retweets suggest that Saviourie's views are shared by a number of Indonesians. However, there was also a vociferous online backlash, and this suggests that the monologic New Order vision for language and identity, was by no means universally shared and warrants further exploration.

2. De-constructing the Jakarta vision and constructing a 'Surabaya' mould

2.1 De-constructing the Jakarta mould

A number of internet sites debated and critiqued the tweets of Saviourie and his followers. A majority of users on these sites (many of them claiming to be Surabayans) rejected their views. In the discussions that followed, two prevailing themes emerged. Firstly, in contrast to Kei Saviourie's vision for an open and inclusive society, a competing mould for a modern Indonesia clearly emerges. Saviourie's arguably New Order-influenced perspective positions ethnic languages in ethnic spaces (SR2), and Indonesian in modern spaces (SR1). Conversely, many internet users and a few bloggers argue that a society which is truly *terbuka* 'open, outward looking', accepts, acknowledges and even celebrates diversity. Thus, for these speakers, the rigid links between SR1 and SR2 and their respective contexts breaks down. Along these lines, a second prevailing theme emerges in the critique of Saviourie and his followers. Language, or more accurately, languages, are critically important in the critique of Saviourie's Jakarta mould. This is both the case the variety of languages used to critique the Jakarta mould, but also in the discussion of another mould: one we label here a Surabaya mould.

This becomes particularly salient in reviewing four discussion threads on the Indonesian site *Kaskus*. *Kaskus* is Indonesia's third most popular social networking site (after Facebook and Youtube). Most relevant to the current discussion, there are a number of open forums for the discussion of contemporary issues, and Savourie's tweets became a focus in four threads. On the whole, *Kaskus* contributors do not want to accept the position which Kei gives to Jakarta. Firstly, several speakers make the common point that Jakarta is a place distinct from its surroundings; it is *on* Java but not necessarily *of* Java:

(8)

rasanya Jakarta itu pulau tersendiri. Bukan pulau jawa	-darkrevenant ³	<i>Jakarta feels like its own island. Like it's not on the island of Java.</i>	-darkrevenant
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Secondly, several contributors reject characteristic features of informal Jakarta language. As has been shown in other studies (Manns 2011; Manns 2014), the use of the Hokkien-derived pronouns *gue* and *elo* is an obvious target. Note in the second extract here the questioning of the authenticity of the hipster, and by implication, Jakarta mould:

(9)

Cocote wong goblok gak usah dirungokno. Mosok omong2an gak formal karo konco dewe kudu nggawe bahasa indonesia. Opo kudu nggawe "loe - gue".?	-	<i>This person's an idiot and shouldn't be listened to. Does he really think it's appropriate to use Indonesian in informal situations chatting with my buddies? Would it be right to use 'loe-gue'?</i>	-retardation
retardation ⁴			

(10)

Dialek atau logat itu ga menentukan suatu regional untuk menjadi metropolitan. Lebih baik ngomong aku kamu, sampeyan, kon dll dengan medok		<i>That [Jakarta] dialect or accent isn't something that determines whether a regional place becomes a 'metropolitan' city. It's better to use aku, kamu,</i>	
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³ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/1#12> (accessed 03/05/2105).

⁴ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/2#28> (accessed 03/05/2105).

daripada harus gue elo sepanjang hari (apalagi harus dengan intonasi yang sok hipster).

sampeyan, kon, with a strong accent rather than being forced to use gue or elo all day (more so being forced to do so with a pretend hipster intonation).

- DJ_Nixxx⁵

- DJ_Nixxx

In this thread, there are also several contributions which point to the enduring Betawi influence in Jakarta linguistic repertoires:

(11)

jakarta emang bukan jawa tapi berada di pulau jawa,,, sosial masyarakat disana udah campuran,,, klo betawi nya sekarang ini udah pada minggir (minjem istilah bang ben) tapi masih banyak koq di jakarta yg make vocal betawi temen gw juga ada orang jawa, gaya ngomongnya kaya betawi condet,,,

Jakarta truly isn't part of Java even if it's on Java,,, society there is already mixed,,, It seems like the Betawi language has already been swept aside (there are still borrowings like bang ben), But there are a lot of people in Jakarta who still have Betawi accents I have a Javanese friend, and he speaks like he's in a Betawi neighbourhood.

- Noshade⁶

- Noshade

One contribution manages to combine several of these lines of argument at once. It negatively characterises Jakarta style on the basis of pronoun use, it links this contemporary usage to historical Betawi influence, and it argues that present Jakarta style is itself the outcome of the mixing of cultures from different regions:

(12)

lah emang patokannya bahasa modern nan gaul itu apaan sih?bahasa jakartaan pake lu gua lu gua?itu juga bahasa daerah betawi kaleeeeeeee yg juga hasil

Really, what are the standards for what constitutes modern and 'sociable' language? Jakartan language and using lu gua lu gua? That's totally a regional

⁵ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/3#54> (accessed 03/05/2105)

⁶ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/2#27> (accessed 03/05/2105).

serapan dan percampuran budaya dari beberapa daerah.

language, too, for the Betawi, and it's been influenced and mixed with a number of regional cultures.

Morning_Sky,⁷

Morning_Sky

Thus several lines of argument are deployed via various linguistic strategies to show that Jakarta has more in common with Surabaya than Kei wishes to acknowledge. Establishing this position complements other strategies which are used to express the value of what is distinctive about Surabaya, to which we will turn in the next section

2.2 Constructing the Surabaya mould

Kaskus contributors construct an alternative, positive version of local identity, but it is noticeable that this is done almost entirely from within SR1. We note two exceptions to this generalisation. Firstly, in his tweets, Savourie uses a vowel switch from *a* to *o* (*Jawa* → *Jowo*) as an indexical sign for the Javanese language and culture.⁸ Whereas Savourie used this switch to critique Surabaya, defenders of Surabaya make the same vowel shift indexical of their identity and loyalty. For example in one Kaskus thread devoted to the topic,⁹ the starting post in the thread immediately extends this usage to the name of the city: *Suroboyo*. The first response is written primarily in Javanese but with many vowel substitutions even where standard Javanese uses *a*: *opo*, *boso* and so on. As the thread develops, the use of Javanese, and specifically of Javanese with vowel substitution, is characteristic of many of the responses which reject Savourie's criticisms. This linguistic choice represents an act of identity (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985) within the context of this debate, and we would suggest that the explicit indexing of ethnolinguistic identity here aligns this use of language with Goebel's SR2. Secondly, there are some emotive strategies used to reject Savourie's view, and these do shift into SR2. In fact, the most emotive rejection of Savourie's perspective comes through Javanese, especially the frequent use of the East Javanese word *jancok* 'fuck'. However, a majority of the logical discussion, engagement and deconstruction of Savourie's viewpoints take place through SR1. This suggests that, even in the post-reform society, the national language exerts a powerful centralising force to the extent that discussions which might be seen as undermining its role can only appropriately be carried out using it. This is not to underestimate the importance and, in some cases,

⁷ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/3#43> (accessed 03/05/2105).

⁸ To be precise, Savourie seems to distinguish between language and culture at this point; he uses *Jowo* in references to language but talks of *budaya Jawa*.

⁹ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/1> (accessed 27/04/2015).

the sophistication of the arguments brought forward; but we note that there do seem still to be limits to what can be achieved using the resources of registers other than SR1.

There are a number of posts in the various threads we have examined which advance a position in favour of bilingualism, but in which the origin of the speaker is not revealed:

(13)

dia ngiri gan dr balita orang jawa tu dah
bisa 2 bahasa bilingual, basa indo ama
jawa

*He's missed the point that from childhood
the Javanese can already speak two
languages and are bilingual. They speak
Indonesian and Javanese.*

- Juancock

Juancock,¹⁰

In other cases, a mixture of Javanese (in this example, *pie*) and Indonesian is used in making this point:

(14)

krisis identitas?
mungkin iya, tapi kalau harus
meninggalkan bahasa daerah buat ke
arah modern, jangan deh. ntar orang
daerah belajar bahasa jawanya ke orang
bule, pie to

*Identity crisis?
Maybe, you know, but, if moving towards
modernity means leaving behind your
regional language, I say don't do it?
Later, folks in the regions will be studying
Javanese alongside foreigners, and how
will that feel?*

- deltarex

deltarex¹¹

These sentiments are also linked to the comments which contest the notion of what *terbuka* should mean in this discussion. Savourie equates modernity with openness, and our discussion of the extensions of this idea showed that it was closely linked to the assumption of a hierarchy of languages. Against this, Kaskus contributors put forward a view that openness has to apply in multiple directions, towards the international and modern world, but also towards the local and traditional:

¹⁰ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/1#13> (accessed 03/05/2105).

¹¹ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/1#6> (accessed 27/04/2015).

(15)

Halah orang gak jelas. Surabaya sekarang itu kan hasil alkuturasi dari bermacam2 budaya. Dan budaya yg terbuka itu adalah budaya yg bisa menyerap budaya asing tanpa harus saling berbenturan. Lihat aja banyak budaya loakal juga hasil alkuturasi budaya asing.

God, this person doesn't make sense. Surabaya, you know, has become acculturated with a mix of cultures. And a culture that is open is a culture that absorbs foreign cultures without any conflict. Look at lots of local cultures that have become acculturated with outside cultures.

-polkmn

polkmn¹²

This position implies, we suggest, a view of languages as separated perhaps in their functions, but not evaluated hierarchically.

There is one part of the construction of the Surabaya mould which is linked less closely to SR1. Savourie laments the lack of a distinctive ambience in Surabaya; the use of (local) Javanese is asserted as a special characteristic against this, and this point is made in both Javanese and in Indonesian:

(16)

Cuk nguyuhe ndodok ae ape mrotes wong suroboyo medok. Justru bosu Suroboyoan iku wes dadi ciri khas.

Fuck, I piss on this dude squatting, and protest the idea that Surabayans are 'accented'. It's just that Surabaya Javanese is our special, defining feature.

- retardation¹³

- retardation

(17)

riset gak penting dan dangkal,surabaya mau dipaksa gmn ya tetep medok, justru itu ciri khas nya.

His research is unimportant and shallow. Surabaya should be forced to act if we're derided for our accent? It's just our special, defining feature.

¹² <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/1#4> (accessed 03/05/2105).

¹³ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/2#28> (accessed 04/05/2015).

bangtoyib¹⁴

-bangtoyib

These posts also contest the negative evaluation of *medok* as a categorisation. This point is taken further by another Kaskus contributor who delinks the notion of *medok* from its association with accent:

(18)

Memangnya kenapa kalau logat daerahnya medok? Justru itu menunjukkan jati diri dan kekhasan daerahnya.

Really why should a regional accent be considered medok? It's just indexing your own heart, and your regional distinctiveness.

- blackdoors

- blackdoors

15

These ideas about the distinctiveness of accents are also reflected by comments which talk about accommodation when moving from one city to another:

(19)

aku kuliah nag jogja yo ngurangi misuhku

I studied in Jogja, yeah, and I tried to swear less.

- majapalAvante

majapalAvante¹⁶

(20)

aku yo wong suroboyo sing kuliah jogja, cok-cokanku yo rodok ilang. Hehehe

I'm a Surabayan who studied in Jogja, and I was forced to stop saying 'fuck'. Hehehe.

¹⁴ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/1#15> (accessed 04/05/2015).

¹⁵ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/1#19> (accessed 03/05/2105).

¹⁶ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/1#16> (accessed 04/05/2015).

- remajajelata¹⁷

- remajajelata

One contribution in the different medium of a blog post makes this point amongst others. Devi Eriana in a post titled *Antara medok & megapolitan* sets out a very nuanced response to Savourie's criticism which is written throughout in *bahasa yang baik dan benar*. There is a single use of the vowel substitution in the passage where the author acknowledges that she is herself from Surabaya:

(21)

Kebetulan saya orang Jawa Timur, saya lahir di Surabaya yang besar di Surabaya dan Malang. Saya paham betul dengan pergaulan dan bahasa sehari-hari yang digunakan oleh orang-orangnya. Mayoritas kami menggunakan bahasa Jawa dengan logat **Suroboyoan** yang kental.¹⁸

Truly I am East Javanese. I was born in Surabaya, which is the bigger of Malang and Surabaya. I am truly familiar with the every day language and socializing of its people. Most of us use Javanese with a thick Surabaya accent.

(our emphasis)

We read this use of the indexical vowel shift as ironic; it is presented as a token of the author having a *logat yang kental* but it comes in a piece of writing which presents a detailed account of how the author's accent changed in different circumstances. This in turn is part of a sophisticated view of multiculturalism, multilingualism and the relation of local culture to modernity. Eriana's post demonstrates that it is not necessary to make a straightforward linguistic act of identity when contributing to this debate and also that it is possible to use the resources of Goebel's SR1 in putting forward a position which does not entirely embrace a nationalist ideology.

3. Conclusion

The discourse which we have analysed in this paper richly exemplifies the revaluation of languages and the creation of new relationships between hubs and margins in Indonesia today. In his account of language shift on the island of Sumba, Kuipers characterises that process thus:

"these new features make sense in relation to an historical and ideological shift that I call "marginalization," in which highly valued verbal resources are reinterpreted, drawing on spatial idiom, from whole to partial, from trunk to tip, from "total" to "local": i.e. from center

¹⁷ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5106a35e0a75b4ac7c000000/founder-of-hitmansystemcom-bilang-surabaya-krisis-identitas-medok-dan-nanggung/2#32> (accessed 04/05/2015).

¹⁸ <http://www.devieriana.com/2013/01/29/antara-medok-megapolitan/>, accessed 27/04/2015.

to margin. In a country like Indonesia, an aspiring Asian "tiger" where "modernization" of language culture and economy is central to political legitimacy, space (e.g. centers and margins) is a modality through which the contradictions and disruptions of change are normalized, naturalized, and neutralized: ideologized. “ (Kuipers 1998:4)

It may seem strange to speak of *marginalization* in relation to a language with tens of millions of speakers, but we suggest that the discursive strategies deployed by Kei Savourie and his supporters fit very closely with what Kuipers describes. The Javanese language is a highly valued resource, but in Savourie's discourse it is brought into conflict with an idea of modernity and this confrontation is depicted as having a specific spatial location, the city of Surabaya. That city is seen as a margin in comparison to the megapolitan Jakarta.

We have also shown though that the process of marginalization is resisted strongly by some participants and that these speakers in turn revalue the linguistic resources at their disposal in order to accomplish that goal. Supporters of Javanese as spoken in Surabaya make the use of that language central in the forums where they defend their position. The semiotic register associated with national discourse, Indonesian with a tendency towards a more formal variety, is available to these people and is used for some purposes, but their identity is expressed primarily through the use of Javanese in something much closer to Goebel's SR2.

An additional level of complexity is present because online communication is still peripheral within the overall language economy of Indonesia. Although a forum such as Kaskus can be seen as more central within the field of CMC, it has characteristics which clearly set it on the margin in relation to language which is *baik dan benar*. This status allows a greater degree of flexibility within that marginal space which has been configured, which in turn allows for the possibility of the creation of new peripheries which treat Kaskus itself as a centre. This allows the Kaskusers we have discussed to enregister, at least temporarily, Javanese (even a specific representation of Javanese) as an alternative to the semiotic register of Kaskus. As Gal observes in relation to the emergence of standard versions of regional languages:

Creating a standard register in a regional language recreates the particular/universal distinction within the category of the particular, making some regional linguistic forms doubly particular. The nonstandard regional forms sound like the local forms of an already particular language. More hierarchies are created within what was thought to be a unified regional form. (2012:30)

Treating one peripheral code as central in a particular context immediately opens the possibility for another code to be treated as peripheral in relation to that centre, and that is what we have described in the use of (Surabaya) Javanese in Kaskus forums.¹⁹

All of these reconfigurations are taking place in an environment where *medok* is a category which is only observable if a speaker chooses that it should be visible. Many participants choose to assert a *medok* Javanese identity in these forums, but it is not the only strategy adopted. Equally, those adopting what we characterise as the Jakarta mould can choose whether (or to what extent) they project an identity as *gaul* or *alay*. These possibilities allow for the re-imagining of New Order ideologies of language in the post-Reform era (see Goebel 2008) and, through the affordances of CMC, the local, ethnic self may explore and resolve tensions around what it means to be a member of the wider, Indonesian community.

¹⁹ The extent to which Javanese in turn is established as a centre in the forums suggests that there will be marginal variants appearing with Javanese usage. Our analysis has not extended to this level of detail as yet.

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