

Power, Language, and Identity: A Foucauldian Analysis of Post-Colonial Language Education Policy in Indonesia

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Abstract. This study challenges the dominant postcolonial discourse on the education of the Indonesian Language and Literature as a neutral vehicle in shaping the national identity and inculcating cultural values by employing Foucauldian genealogical analysis. By questioning the taken-for-granted belief that literature naturally falls under the responsibility of character education's mandate, the research traces the power/knowledge relations of four historical periods (Dutch colonial period (1900–1942), Japanese occupation (1942–1945), Soekarno period (1945–1966), and the New Order regime (1966–1998)). Genealogical analysis of documents shows that the contemporary moral regime positioning teachers as agents to 'give' values is a sedimentation of discursive formations. Each historical period left different power/knowledge structures: colonial linguistic subordination embodied in Sasrasoegonda's grammar arrangement, episteme rupture during the Japanese occupation that elevated the Indonesian language while banning Dutch, systematic structuring of ideologically selected literature in the revolutionary nationalism era, and standardization that exiled politically controversial works in the New Order regime. Three interweaving mechanisms illustrate how power/knowledge formations were articulated: disciplinary normalization through the standard written curricula, ideological interpellation through the selection of canonical texts, and governmentality self-regulation through the production of the moral teacher. This moral regime marginalizes discursive formations that position subjects beyond their social, political, and cultural locations. The research challenges the popular notion of literature as a transparent cultural transmission medium and reveals that the literary discourse not only acts as an ideological state apparatus but also a field of struggle for alternative meaning-making. The current democratic reforms, which use the communicative competence framework to advance the discourse of diversity, can be seen as a new governmental technology to maintain the standardization pressure while seemingly empowering the teachers. For a meaningful educational transformation, the research calls for a realization that teaching language and literature is an inherently political practice that opens a space for pedagogical counter-conduct that can create a real space for criticality and freedom from the state-led moral frameworks.

Keywords: genealogy, critical discourse analysis, Indonesian Language and Literature, curriculum.

Galia, kalba ir tapatybė: postkolonijinės kalbos mokymo politikos Indonezijoje analizė pagal Michel Foucault

Santrauka. Tyrimo naudojamas M. Foucault genealoginės analizės metodas ir kvestionuojamas vyraujantis postkolonijinis diskursas apie indoneziečių kalbos ir literatūros mokymą kaip neutralią priemonę formuojant nacionalinę tapatybę ir diegiant kultūrinės vertybes. Keliami klausimai dėl savaimės suprantamo įsitikinimo, kad literatūra natūraliai priklauso charakterio ugdymo sričiai, ir atsekami galios bei žinių santykiai keturiais istoriniais laikotarpiais (Olandijos kolonijinio laikotarpio (1900–1942), Japonijos okupacijos (1942–1945), Soekarno laikotarpio

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(1945–1966) ir Naujosios tvarkos režimo (1966–1998). Mūsų atlikta genealoginė dokumentų analizė atskleidė, kad šiuolaikinė moralinė pozicija, teigianti, jog mokytojai yra vertybių „perdavėjai“, yra diskursuose vyravusių nuostatų išdava. Kiekvienas istorinis laikotarpis paliko skirtingas galios ir žinių struktūras: Sasasoegondos gramatikoje įkūnijama kolonijinė kalbų subordinacija, Japonijos okupacijos metu įvyko episteminis lūžis, kuris iškėlė indoneziečių ir uždraudė olandų kalbą, revoliucinio nacionalizmo eroje reiškėsi sistemingas ideologiškai atrinktos literatūros struktūrinimas, o Naujosios tvarkos režimo metu vyravo politiškai kontroversiškus kūrinius išstūmęs standartizavimas. Atskleisti trys susipynę mechanizmai iliustruoja, kaip buvo perteikiamos galios ir žinios, tai buvo drausminimo normalizavimas standartinėmis mokymo programomis, ideologinis pašaukimas per kanoninių tekstų atranką ir valdžios savireguliacija per moralaus mokytojo iškėlimą. Toks moralinis reguliavimas marginalizuoja diskursus, kurie subjektus pozicionuoja už jų socialinių, politinių ir kultūrinių ribų. Tyrime abejojama populiaria literatūros kaip skaidrios kultūros perdavimo priemonės samprata ir parodoma, kad literatūrinis diskursas veikia ne tik kaip ideologinis valstybės aparatas, bet ir kaip alternatyvios prasmės kūrimo kovos laukas. Dabartinės demokratinės reformos, kurios naudoja komunikacinės kompetencijos sistemą siekdamos skatinti įvairovės diskursą, gali būti vertinamos kaip nauja valdymo technologija, skirta išlaikyti spaudimą viską standartizuoti, tuo pačiu tariamai suteikiant daugiau galių mokytojams. Tyrimas padeda suprasti, kad, siekiant reikšmingos švietimo transformacijos, kalbos ir literatūros mokymas tampa iš esmės politine praktika, kuri atveria erdvę atvirktiniam elgesiui, kuris gali sukurti realią erdvę kritiškumui ir laisvei nuo valstybės vadovaujamų moralinių suvaržymų.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: genealogija, kritinė diskurso analizė, indoneziečių kalba ir literatūra, mokymo programa.

Introduction

A still-dominant view in postcolonial educational contexts is that language and literature play a crucial role in the formation of the national identity and the transmission of cultural values (Pennycook, 2017; Sayuti, 2020; Sayuti & Wiyatmi, 2017). In the context of the Indonesian Language and Literature, this view is so pervasive that prospective teachers have become the agents to ‘instill’ character education values through literary learning. This teaching process is, in fact, about moral obligation embodied in the school curriculum; a moral regime that marginalizes other discourses about the subject’s positioning in the broader discursive field of social, political, historical, and cultural vistas. This study seeks to trace down the knowledge and power relations embedded in such educational discourse through genealogical analysis.

The genealogical approach, elaborating Foucault’s genealogical analysis, makes sense of the emergence, constitution, and transformation of educational discourses over time (Ball, 2019; Foucault, 1980). Such an approach reveals the contingent, the contested, and the power-laden nature of the processes by which a particular kind of language teaching became the taken-for-granted thing, while others were discarded or neglected. This kind of analysis is productive in post-colonial settings where educational discourses carry multiple layers of sedimentation from colonialism, nationalism, authoritarianism, and democracy.¹

The complex trajectories of the Indonesian Language and Literature education show how such discourses have served different political projects in different eras. Under the Dutch, instruction in Malay served instrumental administrative functions, positioning

¹ The genealogical periodization emerged through analysis of discursive ruptures rather than predetermined political boundaries. The key rupture moments include: 1928 Youth Pledge (discursive preparation), 1942 language prohibition (implementation) by the Japanese, 1965 Lekra exclusion (ideological consolidation), 1972 EYD standardization (technical control), 1998 curriculum decentralization (democratic opening).

indigenous languages as inferior to Dutch while facilitating practical communication needs between the colonizers and the colonized (Alisjahbana, 1957; Ricklefs, 2008). This framing of language education as utilitarian rather than culturally-redemptive, in order to serve the Dutch interests, has had enduring effects throughout successive political projects. The *Sumpah Pemuda* (Youth Pledge) of 1928 represented a significant discursive shift in positioning Indonesian as the national unifying language, but attempts to implement this through education were stymied by entrenched colonial systems and anxieties about declining international standards (Foulcher, 2000; Suwignyo, 2012). These tensions between practical communication, cultural identity, and international legitimacy would reappear repeatedly in these discourses, which serves as evidence of a lasting set of contradictions embodied by the educational discourse rather than a unifying pedagogical philosophy. The inclusion of literature in the Indonesian language curriculums during the 1950s showed how the texts chosen to be taught operate as ideological curation; literary works were chosen to align with the prevailing political narratives of both the anti-imperialist revolutionary Sukarno and the development-focused Soeharto's project of social harmony (Faruk, 1994; Teeuw, 1967).

Soeharto's discourse of standardization was an ideological project through and beyond pedagogy, with literature by Lekra figures systematically excluded, the study of the structure prioritized over critique, and the creation of a centralized curriculum development body denoting how such educational discourse was designed to mass-produce compliant citizens rather than critical thinkers (Buchori, 2009; Foulcher, 2020; Sumardjo, 1992). This project of language standardization, nominally in the name of national unity through the creation of the Centre for Language Development and Cultivation, effectively marginalized the country's linguistic diversity while institutionalizing rote learning as the dominant pedagogical mode. This shows how educational 'improvement' can be simultaneously an ideological constraint. Post-1998 curriculum reforms show how the underlying contradictions are unresolved despite the apparent democratization and decentralization of the education system.

Although successive curricula (from the Curriculum 2004 of the Competency-Based Curriculum through the Curriculums 2006 and 2013 of the School-Based Curriculum to the current *Merdeka* Curriculum reforms) theoretically enabled regional innovation and critical approaches including previously-banned works, such as Pramoedya's novels, implementation has often simply reproduced the rote-based traditional pedagogical *status quo*. The 'new minister, new curriculum' cycle demonstrates not real innovation in pedagogy, but rather cycling of a superficial policy that perpetuates a deeper structural continuity (Pratama, 2015). Recent innovations, such as 'literature in schools' programs focused on author celebrity and digital literacy programs of technical rather than social approaches to language, show how reforms can preserve the underlying power relations while creating an image of progressive change (Emilia, 2005; Sayuti, 2003, 2015).

This genealogy reveals recurrent tensions in the Indonesian Language and Literature education: between linguistic diversity and national unity, between local knowledge and the standard content, between critical thinking and ideological reproduction. These ten-

sions point to larger questions about how multilingual post-colonial societies balance cultural diversity with national cohesion in education, and how language policies include and exclude different communities. By examining curriculum documents, policy statements, and practices during different political periods², this research reveals how ostensibly neutral pedagogical practices contribute to larger projects of subject-making and social control. Its implications extend beyond the Indonesian education policy to broader questions of post-colonial pedagogy, linguistic justice, and critical literacy, contributing to international scholarly conversation on the politics of language education and providing specific insights for reforming the Indonesian Language and Literature curriculum in more inclusive and critically reflective directions.

Methods

This study uses Michel Foucault's genealogical method as elaborated in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Foucault, 2020) and *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* (Foucault, 2019). Genealogy opposes traditional historiography's search for linear origins and continuities with the study of discontinuities, ruptures, and contradictions in discursive formation. Genealogy works as a 'history of the present' by examining the past's configurations, not to understand origins and genealogy, but rather to problematize and reveal the contingency of the so-called 'natural' or 'inevitable' (Koopman, 2013). The concept of a 'history of the present' serves as the methodological foundation of this study. In other words, history is studied not for its own sake, but, instead, for questioning and problematizing the present.

The analysis covers documents representing the period of 1900–2020, selected to cover the educational discourse of each major political period. The documents covering the colonial period (1900–1942) include Sasrasoegonda's compendium of the Malay grammar book titled *Kitab jang menjatakan djalan bahasa Melajoe* (Sasrasoegonda, 1986), Dutch Ethical Policy documents, and curriculum documents for indigenous schools. For the independence and Sukarno era (1945–1966), sources include Ki Hadjar Dewantara's statements about the educational policy, the proceedings of both the first Indonesian Language Congress in Solo (1938) and the second Congress in Medan (1954), curriculum documents from the Ministry of Education and Culture, and statements from S. Takdir Alisjahbana and the language planning committee (Alisjahbana, 1976). For the New Order period, the documents are curriculum standardization in 1975, 1984, and 1994, Center for Language Development policy documents, prescribed textbook series, and Ministry guidelines on the formation of a literary canon. As for the Reform era (1998–2020), documents include the Competency-Based Curriculum (2004), the School-Based Curriculum (2006), the 2013 Curriculum, and the *Merdeka*

² Primary sources analyzed include: curriculum documents from 1948–2013; policy statements of key figures such as Ki Hadjar Dewantara, S. Takdir Alisjahbana, and Jazir Burhan; Indonesian Language Congress proceedings (1938, 1954, 1991); post-1998 reform curricula (Competency-Based Curriculum 2004, School-Based Curriculum 2006, 2013 Curriculum, *Merdeka* Curriculum); and the contemporary policy framework for digital literacy and 21st century skills.

Curriculum documents, teacher guidebooks, and policy papers on digital literacy integration.

The genealogical analysis involved six interrelated analytical stages up to the production of the comprehensive periodization presented in Table 1. The first stage was the *periodization*, where political transitions were considered as tentative temporal boundaries that were subsequently refined by identifying moments of discursive ruptures rather than simple policy changes. For instance, while the 1928 Youth Pledge created discursive conditions for the ascendancy of Indonesian to the status of a national language, the actual pedagogical transformation happened gradually with the Japanese occupation policies (1942–1945). The second stage was discursive analysis, where documents were coded to identify patterns of recurrent topics, such as definitions of language competencies, literature's educational functions, teachers' roles, students' subject positions, and the construction of a national identity. This analytical exercise revealed how the same terms, such as 'character building', had different meanings across historical periods.

Moreover, the third analytical stage involved identification of power relations. The key actors and institutions were identified through document analysis: colonial administrators, nationalist educators, New Order curriculum developers, and reform-era educational consultants. Their relative influence was tracked through the adoption of policies and the exertion of discursive authority. This exercise revealed how different groups gained or lost control over the educational discourse. The fourth stage was the identification of discontinuities, which involved identifying significant moments when the educational discourse took a different turn: the language policies of the Japanese occupation in 1942, the exclusion of Lekra in 1965, the standardization of spelling in 1972 (EYD), the decentralization of the curriculum in 1998, and so on. These were moments of ruptures rather than evolutionary development; whereas, the current educational practices were contingent.

The fifth stage was contextualization, which related the discursive changes to broader socio-political changes. This exercise showed how the educational discourse served different governmental projects: colonial administration, nationalist integration, and developmentalism control and democratic competency development. The synthesis of the analysis is presented in the form of comprehensive periodization: the table of historical discontinuities. This table was produced in the sixth and final stage. It is a table that categorizes findings across eight analytical dimensions: Era, Political Context and Key Events, Language Policy and Teaching Focus, Main Educational Objective, Dominant Discourse, Power Relations and Control Mechanisms, Key Practices and Pedagogical Methods, and Resistance and Negotiation forms. Each dimension reports analytical conclusions based on multiple documents and not direct quotations. The era boundaries are determined by the identification of discursive discontinuities and ruptures rather than political dates.

The periodization in Table 1 was established inductively via the genealogical analysis and not a priori by a historical period. Temporal boundaries were delimited at moments of discursive discontinuity, or points in time when the educational discourse had shifted too drastically to be explainable by gradual evolution. This approach echoes Foucault's

emphasis on ruptures and discontinuities rather than continuums of historical development.

The construction of Table 1 involved several interrelated analytical procedures. Teaching focus emerged from a systematic analysis of curriculum documents, while the main objectives were based on policy statements and ministerial directives. The dominant discourse was inductively developed from thematic coding to identify how language, literature, and national identity were conceptualized. The key practices were identified through textbook analysis and teacher guidebooks. Power relations columns synthesize institutional analyses and policy genealogy. Forms of resistance and negotiation were identified through counter-narratives in documents, policy reversals, and discrepancies between the official policy and the implementation records.

Documents were analyzed in three rounds. The first was a descriptive coding process that was used to identify explicit statements about the educational purposes, methods, and outcomes made in all sources. The second stage was an interpretive analysis that was used to identify and analyze implicit assumptions about language, literature, and the national identity embedded in the educational discourse. The final round was a genealogical synthesis intended to identify how the current practices emerged out of historical contestations, and to reveal the contingency of current practices. In addition, validation procedures were implemented. They involved triangulation across document types (policy documents, textbooks, scholarly commentaries) and consistency in time to ensure that the identified discursive patterns were sustainable rather than aberrant occurrences.

Results and discussion

The Results section is presented first, followed by the Discussion to facilitate understanding. The separation of subheadings between Results and Discussion is provided to emphasize the writing structure.

The Construction of Knowledge and Power

Genealogical analysis of language and literature education in Indonesia reveals Foucault's (1980) construction of power/knowledge, where knowledge is never neutral but adheres to particular relations of power. The formation of discourse in language education demonstrates how each epoch produces a particular translation of 'knowable knowledge' about language and identity that serve a larger political project. Genealogical analysis reveals three mechanisms of power in language education: disciplinary normalization, ideological interpellation, and governmentality self-regulation. In the Dutch colonial period, language education functions as what Groeneboer (1998) referred to as linguistic colonialism, notably, a system that normalized social hierarchies through restricted access to prestigious linguistic capital (Table 1). The positioning of Malay as merely a 'practical form of communication' for Dutch colonial subjects, while the Dutch language remained the language of administrative prestige, reflects Foucault's process of 'dividing practices', a technique that constructs subjects through processes of

Table 1. Development of discourse and practices in Indonesian Language and Literature Teaching

Era	Political Context & Key Events	Language Policy & Teaching Focus	Main Educational Objective	Dominant Discourse	Power Relations & Control Mechanisms	Key Practices & Pedagogical Methods	Resistance & Negotiation
Dutch Colonial Period (1900-1942)	Colonial administration establishing ethnic schools; Emergence of nationalist movements; Sasrasoegonda's grammar book (1910) as foundational text	Malay as lingua franca in indigenous schools; Limited access to Dutch education; Focus on practical communication and basic literacy	Practical communication for colonial subjects; Preparation of lower-level administrative staff	Language as tool for colonial administration and social stratification; Malay positioned as 'native' language inferior to Dutch	Dutch as prestigious language for elite; Malay restricted to lower educational levels; Ethnic segregation in schooling	Teaching through traditional grammar methods based on Greek-Latin models; Limited textbook availability; Focus on reading and writing skills	Indigenous intellectuals using Dutch education to critique colonialism; Early development of Malay literature as cultural resistance
Japanese Occupation (1942-1945)	Military occupation; Anti-Western propaganda; Mobilization for Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere	Prohibition of Dutch language; Indonesian as sole language of instruction; Japanese as mandatory subject	Propaganda dissemination and mass mobilization; Creating loyal subjects for Japanese Empire	Language as tool for anti-Western struggle and Pan-Asian solidarity; Indonesian positioned as liberator from colonial linguistic domination	Japanese as new prestige language; Indonesian elevated but subordinated to Japanese; Centralized curriculum control	Massive translation projects from Dutch to Indonesian; Creation of new Indonesian terminology; Uniform textbook distribution through Bunkyo Kyoku	Local teachers adapting Dutch materials; Community preservation of local languages in private spheres
Early Independence/Sukarno Era (1945-1966)	Proclamation of Independence; Revolutionary period; Parliamentary democracy; Guided Democracy	Indonesian as language of unity and sovereignty; Gradual introduction from Grade 3; Emphasis on national standardization	Building unified national identity; Eliminating colonial linguistic legacy; Democratizing education	Language as symbol of independence and national sovereignty; Indonesian as equalizing force against regional hierarchies	State control over language standardization; Indonesian positioned above regional languages; Educational nationalism	Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational philosophy; Development of national curriculum; Creation of Indonesian literary canon; Teacher training programs	Debates over regional language roles; Intellectual discussions on linguistic democracy; Regional variations in implementation
New Order/Soeharto Era (1966-1998)	Authoritarian development; Political stability through control; Pancasila ideology; Economic modernization	Standard Indonesian and canonical literature; Character building through prescribed texts; National examination system	Character formation and national stability; Development of human resources for modernization	Language as tool for ideological control; Indonesian as vehicle for Pancasila values and national discipline	Centralized curriculum control; Standardized national examinations; Ideological screening of texts; Teacher certification systems	Structural linguistic approach; Rote memorization of canonical texts; Grammar-translation method; Uniform textbook system (Buku Paket)	Underground literary movements; Teacher adaptation of materials; Student preference for popular culture texts
Reform Era/Post-1998	Democratic transition; Regional autonomy; Globalization; Multiculturalism recognition; Technology integration	Communicative competence and critical literacy; Integration of local content; Media and digital literacy	Development of 21 st -century skills; Preparation for global competition; Democratic citizenship	Language as tool for empowerment and critical thinking; Recognition of multilingual resources; Global citizenship discourse	Decentralized curriculum development; Regional autonomy in education; Market-driven textbook industry; International standardization pressure	Communicative and contextual approaches; Project-based learning; Integration of technology; Local content curriculum; Genre-based pedagogy	Teacher resistance to new methods; Parental preference for traditional approaches; Regional variations in implementation quality

categorization and exclusion (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 2014; Meadmore, 1993). As Groeneboer (1998) demonstrates, “*bahasa Belanda memungkinkan mereka merenungkan suatu masyarakat pascakolonial dan menyusun rencana-rencana untuk masa depan*” (Dutch language enabled them to contemplate a postcolonial society and formulate plans for the future).

While Dutch colonial language policy was mainly a disciplinary power in its hierarchizing of languages, it also created unintended spaces for resistance. The colonial education system was designed to exclude the indigenous population, but it also gave the nascent cohort of indigenous intellectuals the tools with which they would later turn against colonialism. This paradox demonstrates that even disciplinary power generates its own forms of counter-conduct: Dutch proficiency was a sign of colonial subjugation, but also a resource for anti-colonial critique.

Colonial educational material played a foundational role in shaping the power/knowledge intersection. Kridalaksana’s introduction of Sasrasoegonda’s 1910 grammar revealed how “*buku yang terbit pada tahun 1910 ini dalam sejarah Bahasa Melayu/Indonesia adalah buku tata bahasa tertua mengenai Bahasa Melayu dalam Bahasa Melayu dengan model Yunani Romawi*” (this book published in 1910 is the oldest Malay grammar book written in Malay using the Greek-Roman model) (Sasrasoegonda, 1986). This book established the conceptual framework that would be reproduced across the three subsequent periods: “*dari Sasrasoegondalah kita sekarang ini memiliki konsep-konsep yang kita pakai untuk memandang dunia bahasa*” (from Sasrasoegonda we now possess the concepts we use to view the linguistic world).

The Japanese occupation period demonstrated Foucault’s concept of epistemic rupture where Indonesian was suddenly repositioned from the colonial subject language to the ‘national language’ for “propaganda dissemination and mass mobilization” (see Table 1). The Japanese occupation is a case of an epistemic rupture that was both repressive and emancipating. By eliminating Dutch and promoting Indonesian, the Japanese served their imperial interests, but also set in motion the decolonization of Dutch hierarchies of language. The Japanese show how authoritarian language policies can unwittingly produce conditions for future democratic possibilities, even as they serve non-democratic ends. Historical documentation reveals that “*pemakaian bahasa Belanda di sekolah-sekolah dilarang oleh pemerintah pendudukan Jepang. Untuk itu, bahasa Indonesia dijadikan sebagai bahasa pengantar di semua sekolah dan merupakan mata pelajaran utama*” (the use of Dutch in schools was prohibited by the Japanese occupation government. Indonesian was therefore made the medium of instruction in all schools and became a main subject) (Makmur et al., 1993). This demonstrated the contingent nature of linguistic authority and what Foucault referred to as ‘productive power’, a power that creates subjects rather than repressing. The post-independence era under Sukarno positions Indonesian as the “language of unity and sovereignty” with the goal of “building unified national identity” (cf. Table 1). Ki Hadjar Dewantara’s philosophy of education articulated this change: “*Hanja bahasa Indonesia yang berhak mendjadi bahasa persatoean. Disampingnja masih terpelihara bahasa-daerah jang koeat*” (Only Indonesian

language has the right to become the unifying language. Alongside it, strong and powerful regional languages are still maintained) (Kemendikbud, 2017).

Moreover, the 1949 Inter-Indonesian Education Congress in Yogyakarta formalized this shift: “*bahasa Indonesia harus diajarkan di seluruh jenjang sekolah dan dipakai sebagai bahasa pengantar mulai dari sekolah rakyat hingga sekolah tinggi*” (Indonesian language must be taught at all school levels and used as the medium of instruction from elementary school to higher school) (Hidayat & Nurbaity, 2018). The Soeharto period embodies an instance of governmentality at its height where language standardization was not a matter of prohibition and coercion but of producing self-regulating subjects who internalized ‘correct’ Indonesian usage. The emphasis on “standard Indonesian and canonical literature” for “character development and national stability” (Table 1) produced Foucault’s (1977) ‘docile bodies’ – subjects trained in compliance rather than critical thinking. The 1972 implementation of Enhanced Spellings (*Ejaan Yang Disempurnakan*) provides a telling example.

Kridalaksana (2010) describes how “*pada tanggal 16 Agustus 1972, Presiden Soeharto meresmikan ejaan resmi Bahasa Indonesia yang disebut Ejaan Yang Disempurnakan*” (on August 16, 1972, President Soeharto inaugurated the official spelling system for Indonesian, the Enhanced Spelling, p. 23). This process of standardization was a form of what Wibisono (2020) refers to as “systematic historical erasure” through orthographic means. The post-1998 period demonstrates the rise of ‘neoliberal linguistic governance’, where “communicative competence and critical literacy” and “21st-century skills” (Table 1) create new disciplinary powers that are masked as empowerment.

Nationalism, National Identity, and Linguistic Subjectification

Nationalism operates as an ideological project that seeks to create the imagined political community (Anderson, 1991), whereas national identity refers to the subjective identification processes by which the individual understands their membership to the imagined community. Language education is the main process through which the nationalist discourse is mediated into the processes of identity formation. The genealogical analysis shows that there are different types of nationalist discourses in different periods. Colonial nationalism involved the formation of national identity in language education through what is called in Table 1 as the “early development of Malay literature as cultural resistance”. The First Indonesian Language Congress of 1938, initiated by the Budi Utomo’s chairman, Raden Mas Soedirdjo Tjokrosisworo, argued that “*bahasa Indonesia belum dipakai secara luas dan tidak adanya pedoman yang baik bagi para pemakai bahasa*” (Indonesian has not been widely used and lacks good guidelines for language users) (Imran, 2006). This conference discussed the principles of “*pengembangan peristilahan ilmiah*” (development of scientific terminology) and decided to “*mengambil kata-kata asing untuk ilmu pengetahuan dengan hati-hati*” (carefully adopt foreign words for science) (Kridalaksana, 2010).

Revolutionary nationalism (1942–1966) saw Indonesian language as a ‘pure’ anti-colonial struggle, as evident in the transition between the language policy during the

Japanese occupation to the independence era. The post-independence government under the first Education Minister Ki Hadjar Dewantara issued a general guideline to “*menghapuskan indoktrinasi Jepang yang selama masa penjajahan Jepang ditanamkan kepada rakyat Indonesia*” (to remove Japanese indoctrination that has been instilled in the Indonesian people during the period of Japanese occupation) (Hidayat & Nurbaity, 2018). Law on Education of 1954 stated explicitly that “*hal yang lebih penting lagi, yang menyatakan betul sifat nasional pendidikan di negara kita ialah menjadinya bahasa Indonesia bahasa pengantar disemua sekolah-sekolah*” (what is more important, which truly shows the national character of education in our country, is making Indonesian as the medium of instruction in all schools).

Developmentalist nationalism under Soeharto turned language education into what Billig (2010) calls ‘banal nationalism’, in which the nation is reproduced in ordinary and routine educational practices. Language expert Burhan (1976), for instance, argued that “*bahasa Indonesia jelas harus mulai diajarkan sejak kelas satu SD dan berlangsung terus sampai perguruan tinggi*” (Indonesian must clearly be taught from grade one of elementary school and continue up to university), and further added that “*memberikan pelajaran bahasa Indonesia di semua jenis dan tingkatan sekolah mulai sejak kelas I sekolah dasar bukan saja sangat diperlukan untuk keperluan bahasa Indonesia sebagai bahasa pengantar, akan tetapi juga sangat berguna bagi usaha-usaha penstandaran bahasa*” (providing Indonesian language instruction at all types and levels of schools from first grade elementary school is not only mandatory for Indonesian as the medium of instruction, but also highly useful for language standardization efforts). S. Takdir Alisjahbana’s influential formulation of the nationalist discourse in language education read that “*tata bahasa normatif itu tak boleh tidak merupakan suatu konstruksi yang diciptakan berdasarkan pengetahuan tentang masa yang silam, analisa tentang masa sekarang, dan harapan tentang masa yang akan datang*” (normative grammar must inevitably be a construction that is created based on knowledge of the past, analysis of the present, and hopes for the future), and positioned Indonesian as “*bahasa modern yang menjelmakan kebudayaan modern di Indonesia*” (modern language that embodies modern culture in Indonesia) (Alisjahbana, 1976).

Post-reform democratic nationalism attempts to unify the national identity and multicultural recognition are evident in the focus on “communicative competence and critical literacy” with “recognition of multilingual resources” (see Table 1). Contemporary policy recognizes the multiple roles of Indonesian as “*lambang kebanggaan nasional*”, “*lambang identitas nasional*”, “*alat pemersatu berbagai kelompok etnik*”, and “*alat perhubungan antarbudaya serta antardaerah*” (a symbol of national pride, a symbol of national identity, a tool to unite different ethnic groups, and a tool to communication between cultures and regions) (Alwi & Sugono, 2011). However, this also creates tensions between local autonomy and national standardization that remain unresolved.

Teaching Practices as Disciplinary Technologies and Pedagogical Control

Foucault discusses teaching practices as ‘disciplinary technologies’, techniques for producing docile, productive subjects for the state. The shift from “traditional grammar methods based on Greek-Latin models” to “communicative and contextual approaches” discussed above (see Table 1) was not about progress and freeing teaching from restrictive control, but rather about changing the forms of disciplinary power. Colonial disciplinary practices operated through exclusion and hierarchical differentiation, such as “limited access to Dutch education” and “ethnic segregation in schooling” (Table 1). The colonial system was, in the words of Groeneboer (1998), a paradox where Dutch education became the means for the indigenous intelligentsia to critique colonialism: “*bahasa Belanda bukan hanya jalan untuk memperoleh pengetahuan Barat, tetapi sekaligus sebuah jalan yang memungkinkan untuk menjauhkan diri dari masyarakat ‘tradisional’ mereka sendiri dan menilainya dari luar*” (Dutch was not only a path to Western knowledge, but simultaneously a path that enabled distancing oneself from their own ‘traditional’ society and evaluating it from outside).

The Japanese occupation introduced more mass disciplinary techniques, such as “massive translation projects from Dutch to Indonesian”, “uniform textbook distribution through *Bunkyo Kyoku*” (see Table 1) and documents, showing a systematic and concerted effort to transform language: “*semua buku yang berbahasa Belanda diganti dengan buku-buku terjemahan yang dalam waktu singkat dikeluarkan oleh Kantor Pengajaran (Bunkyo Kyoku)*” (all Dutch language books were replaced with translated books quickly produced by the Education Office) (Makmur et al., 1993). This was the period when Indonesian was expanded into new roles: “*bahasa Indonesia mendapat peranan penting*” (Indonesian gained an important role), and where the Japanese standardized terms across domains of schooling. New Order disciplinary practices perfected what might be called the “pedagogical panopticon”: techniques of pedagogical control (Table 1) including “standardised national examinations”, “ideological screening of texts” and “uniform textbook system” that constructed self-regulating educational subjects. The structural linguistic approach with “rote memorisation of canonical texts” produced what Foucault calls ‘docile bodies’ (Donzelot, 2008; O’Farrell, 2002; Taylor, 2016).

Language policy expert Halim (1976) articulated the disciplinary point of schooling: “*menjadikan anak didik kita manusia susila Indonesia yang memiliki kepercayaan akan dasar dan filsafat negaranya, serta kebanggaan atas bahasa dan sastra nasionalnya*” (making our students into moral Indonesian humans who possess confidence in their nation’s foundation and philosophy, as well as pride in their national language and literature). The 1980s emphasis on “*bahasa Indonesia yang baku*” (i.e., standard Indonesian) was a governmental technology: “*pengembangan pengajaran bahasa Indonesia hendaklah seirama dengan pembakuan dan pengembangan bahasa Indonesia itu sendiri*” (development of Indonesian language teaching should be in harmony with the standardisation and development of the Indonesian language itself) (Halim, 1976).

However, the 1988 Indonesian Language Congress revealed that Indonesian language skills among elementary and high school graduates apparently do not meet the minimum requirements for the use of the Indonesian language: “*keterampilan berbahasa Indonesia di kalangan tamatan sekolah dasar dan sekolah lanjutan ternyata belum memenuhi syarat minimum bagi penggunaan bahasa Indonesia*” (Indonesian language skills among elementary and secondary school graduates apparently do not meet minimum requirements for Indonesian language use) (Depdikbud, 1991). Contemporary disciplinary practices operate through more subtle governmental technologies, such as ‘project-based learning’ and ‘integration of technology’ that appear to empower the learner but in fact subject them to continuous evaluation and self-monitoring (see Table 1). The shift to ‘communicative and contextual approaches’ conceals new forms of standardization pressure, in line with global competency frameworks and international assessment regimes.

Literary Discourse as Sites of Control and Resistance

Far from being merely external to the subject, a genealogical reading reveals how literature operates simultaneously as a disciplinary technology and a resource for counter-hegemonic meaning-making and resistance. Literature study has functioned as what Althusser calls an “ideological state apparatus” to socialize students into formal national identity, while also creating spaces for alternative readings and resistance. During the Sukarno period, the emphasis on “literature as tool of struggle” (see Table 1) put the canonical works in the service of promoting revolutionary and nationalist ideals. However, early independence-era policies also sought to eliminate colonial cultural influence. Ki Hadjar Dewantara considered that “*bahasa Belanda yang masih umum tersebar di dalam kebudayaan kita mesti ditekan perkembangannya*” (Dutch language that is still widely spread in our culture must have its development restricted), and that government should undertake the “*penerjemahan buku-buku berbahasa Belanda ke dalam Bahasa Indonesia*” (translation of Dutch-language books to Indonesian) rather than perpetuating Dutch as the language of instruction (Kemendikbud, 2017).

The tension between internationalism and nationalism in the choice of texts represented broader ideological struggles. Ki Hadjar was indeed “very clear in his attitude against the continuation of the Dutch language”, but yet “he also realized that learning foreign languages was natural and necessary for national development” (Kemendikbud, 2017). This opens up the internal dialectics between anti-colonial resistance and cosmopolitan education which would continue in the post independence periods. The Soeharto-period literary policies reflect what Bourdieu called ‘consecration’ – the official legitimization of certain forms of cultural practice (Bourdieu, 1993). The emphasis on “works emphasizing social harmony and traditional values” with the synchronous rejection of “works considered too critical or subversive” (Table 1) created a mechanism of systematic exclusion. The 1988 Congress of Language pointed out that “*pelajaran sastra belum merupakan mata pelajaran yang mandiri. Sastra diajarkan sebagai sambilan dalam pelajaran bahasa Indonesia*” (literature lessons have not yet become an independent subject. Literature is taught as a side activity in Indonesian language les-

sons) (Depdikbud, 1991). The subordination of literature to language instruction reflects governmental efforts to limit the critical potential of literature.

However, the period also produced what Heryanto (1995) refers to as an aesthetics of resistance, i.e., indirect codes of opposition and subtle readings of the text by ‘trained’ readers through which authors encoded forms of dissent. Writers in the period developed sophisticated strategies to inscribe unofficial critique within officially acceptable forms, forming what Scott (2008) terms the hidden transcript that could be read by a sympathetic reader, but otherwise remain invisible to the censor. The post-reform inclusion of “more diverse and critical works” (see Table 1) is indicative not of simple democratization but managed diversity.

The present-day processes of canon formation through programs such as the “*Literature in the Curriculum*” launched by the Ministry of Education reveal the ongoing struggle over cultural authority and meaning. However, the recent instances of book purges targeting novels for their ‘politically sensitive’ nature clearly show that the mechanisms of censorship will continue to operate, while using language of educational quality and prudence. A genealogical reading of the pedagogical practices surrounding the teaching of literature reveals that literary education is a site where the device of state is continuously playing out against different forms of resistance. Every selection of texts, the method of interpretation and classroom practice is equally both a governmental technology producing identity, subjectivity and ideology, and a resource for alternative meaning-making.

Even as this genealogy shows how the quest for an Indonesian national identity became a governmental technology, the contemporary educational reform efforts demonstrate standardizing pressures from global competency frameworks. Rather than the passing of the Indonesian culture, the post-1998 emphasis on ‘21st century skills’ and ‘communicative competence’ shows Indonesian alignment with the international educational standards. This is a double bind, with the need to preserve national cultural identity while, at the same time, catering to standardized globalized measurement regimes that often sideline local knowledge forms. The tension is no longer just between nationalism versus local diversity, but, instead, among the push and pull of multiple standardizing forces, national, regional, and global, as they vie for educational authority. In this context, *Merdeka Curriculum*’s “student-centered learning” is a smokescreen for a new form of international standardization that is potentially more totalizing than any previous nationalist projects.

Conclusion

This genealogy challenges the still dominant postcolonial educational discourse of the Indonesian Language and Literature serving as epistemically neutral vehicles for the formation of the nation and the transmission of cultural values. Rather than accepting this taken-for-granted assumption, the genealogy demonstrates how the apparently natural function of the Indonesian Language and Literature as the medium through which the nation and culture are transmitted masked the complex power/knowledge relations

that were historically constructed by particular discursive formations. The genealogical evidence demonstrates that the moral regime of the Indonesian Language and Literature, which positions prospective teachers as agents to ‘teach’ character education values through literature, is the product of the power/knowledge configurations that were established through four historical periods.

Each period contributed its particular sedimentation, namely: the colonial linguistic hierarchy which established Malay as the inferior practical language; the epistemic rupture of the Japanese Occupation which positioned Indonesian as a tool for national mobilization and Dutch as a forbidden language; the revolutionary nationalism of the Soekarno era which integrated literature with ideological selectivity to the writers of the Pujangga Baru and Angkatan ‘45; and, finally, the New Order’s standardization through a centralized curriculum that systematically excluded the works of the Lekra and other political literary works. The genealogical evidence demonstrates how the three mechanisms of power/knowledge construction: the disciplinary normalization through the standardized curriculum and the examination system, the ideological interpellation through the selection of the literary canon, and the governmentality self-regulation through teacher training that produce prospective teachers as moral agents to instill character education values, are simultaneously at work in the current moral regime of character education in the Indonesian Language and Literature. This moral regime marginalizes not only other possible discourses about subject positioning but also other possible ways of seeing the social, political, historical, and cultural world.

The genealogical evidence demonstrates how particular forms of language and literature teaching became natural because other ways of teaching were discarded and ignored, and *not* because of their inherent pedagogical superiority. The postreform discourse of democratic education centered on communicative competence, and critical literacy turned out to be a new governance technology that exerts the pressure of standardization and appears to be empowering. The most significant finding of the genealogy challenges the foundation of the dominant educational paradigm of the Indonesian Language and Literature as a transparent medium for the transmission of predetermined cultural values. On the contrary, the genealogical evidence demonstrates that the moral regime of the Indonesian Language and Literature functions as the ideological state apparatus and as a site of contestation where other meanings are continually produced through the resistance of the reader. This genealogical evidence demonstrates that the reform of the education of the Indonesian Language and Literature is riddled with contradictions.

On the one hand, the rhetoric of current educational reforms in Indonesia is centered on student-centered learning and the development of students’ critical thinking. On the other hand, the underlying moral regime still operates through subtle disciplinary technologies that produce self-regulating subjects who are aligned with the state-sanctioned cultural ideologies. The tension between the state-sanctioned nationalism and the standardization of the language and multilingual diversity has not been resolved, as seen in the discursive struggle over the formation of the literary canon and the pedagogy of

literature. This genealogy shows that the teaching of the Indonesian Language and Literature has never been a politically neutral medium of transmission, but rather a terrain of contestation among a multiplicity of governmental technologies – colonial, nationalist, developmentalist, and now global. The challenge is no longer simply the choice between the nationalist state and the local diversity but, instead, the complex intersections of national identity construction and global standardization. Understanding that the teaching of language and literature is inherently political opens the possibility of pedagogical counter-conduct against the twin threats of nationalist orthodoxy and global standardization, thereby creating genuine spaces of critical thinking and cultural difference.

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