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## **Producing the local: Javanese performance on Indonesian television**

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### **Citation**

Bogaerts, E. M. (2017, December 20). *Producing the local: Javanese performance on Indonesian television*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/58689>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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Cover Page



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**Title:** Producing the local: Javanese performance on Indonesian television

**Issue Date:** 2017-12-20

## 2 Norms and standards: Debating local language

It is naive to think that the teaching of regional languages at school, the spelling of road signs in regional scripts and the regular staging of regional performing arts genres using regional vernaculars will prevent these vernaculars from shifting.  
(Asim Gunarwan, *Kompas* 24 July 2002)<sup>22</sup>

Studying the televising of Javanese-ness, views on and attitudes towards language use – one of the constitutive aspects of Javanese-ness – require special attention. These views and attitudes are part of the ‘common cultural-linguistic competence, shared knowledges and understandings’ (Scannell 1995:13) that conflate to form a shared competence among the people involved in the mediation process. The existence of this shared competence is a prerequisite for common ground, a notion that I introduced in the previous chapter, making mediation meaningful.

Visions on language and culture that were prevalent in official government discourse and the perceptions of practitioners of and participants in Javanese culture will feature prominently in this chapter. The relationship between regional and national languages, literatures and cultures had been part of heated debates in the 1930s. In 1945 they had become one of the main concerns of the committee convened to draw up the Indonesian Constitution (Yampolsky 1995:700-701). After initially having given priority to the building of a national culture and the use of Indonesian as a national language (in the framework of the building of the nation-state and the stimulating of economic development), since 1973 the government displayed a systematic concern for regional cultures (Yampolsky 1995:707). It facilitated platforms in the form of projects and congresses that focused on ‘regional’ – in this case Javanese – culture and language and on policy regarding these topics.

I shall begin my argumentation with a discussion of the Javanese Language Congresses. As an extension of national government policy, these congresses offer an interesting insight into the ways Javanese officials handle the split between two loyalties: that of being Indonesian and that of being Javanese, and into the different language and culture ideologies in contemporary Indonesia. Language and culture preservation is one of the dominant themes of these congresses. In the section about the centres in the region, I shall give brief introductions to groups and organizations that, through discussions, poetry readings and performances, and the publication of research results and/or of journals and magazines have joined the discourse on the use, study and development of Javanese. The bulk of this chapter will explore the main issues presented by these institutions, organizations and groups and raised at the congresses.

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<sup>22</sup> ‘Jangan sampai ada pandangan bahwa dengan mengajarkan suatu bahasa daerah di sekolah, dengan menggunakan aksara daerah untuk penamaan jalan-jalan, dan dengan terus dipentaskannya acara-acara kesenian daerah yang menggunakan bahasa daerah, maka bahasa daerah akan tidak mengalami pergeseran. Ini adalah pandangan naif,’ kata Asim Gunarwan.

My point is that there are parallel epistemologies about Javaneseness that are determined by mindsets concerning the presence, use, role and function of the Javanese vernacular in contemporary Javanese society. Prominent are two views that have persisted for a long time in ideologies and practices, and that have both been given a platform in the media. The one view centres on the discourse of loss, viewing the Javanese language as part of a tradition that has to be preserved, if not by natural means, then by recourse to government policy. It promotes the use of the standard Javanese, the dialects of Yogyakarta and Surakarta. The tackling of what is perceived to be the nub of the problem, the loss of Javanese as a regional language and the countering of the diminution by means of a government regulation can be seen as an extension of New Order policy. Within the paradigm of the discourse of loss, the Javanese language is thought to belong to a refined and elevated (*adiluhung*) cultural heritage, characterizing Javaneseness. What is perceived as the deterioration of Javanese is more than just the loss of the language, it is also a loss of competence, namely: the ability to use the various speech levels properly, a skill invariably accompanied by being adept in the corresponding etiquette and customs. Adherents of this mindset prefer the use of the correct speech styles, in particular the polite *basa*, and advocate a homogeneous, conservative and static view on language use. Their starting-point is the perception, prevalent in the New Order period, that ethnicity and language are confined to a specific geographical area, the region, and that the use of regional languages in a global era needs to be regulated by local governments.

The counter-view consists of those voices who do not agree with this preservation rhetoric. In their work and performances and at cultural festivals, literary authors writing in Javanese and local performing artists both highlight the active use and abundant presence of Javanese in multiple styles and forms. In their opinion, the Javanese language is a means by which to express emotions and should be used for all kinds of creative purposes. It considers Javanese a language of modernity and pays due attention to its linguistic and cultural diversity, and dismisses the idea that it is just a cultural heritage in need of preservation. The vernacular is seen as part of living and thriving cultures, (re)presenting Javaneseness. It enables the speakers, writers and performing artists to use all kinds of dialects and sociolects, not just the (dialect that had become the) standard language, as its point of departure is the idea of diversification. It gives free rein to all speech styles, from the very formal and polite to far more colloquial and familiar forms. It is based on a contemporary view of language use and the potentials of a language in motion. The parallel existence of these two mindsets about the presence, use, role and function of Javanese, although not entirely comparable, may remind us of the approach to classical and colloquial Arabic in Egypt, for which Armbrust (1996:37-62) coined the term ‘split vernacular’.

A look at the fora and the centres in the region that had Javanese language, literature and culture on their agenda in the period 1988-2008 exposes the purport of these opposing stances. In their discussions of norms and standards, these fora and centres framed the role and position of the Javanese language, literature and culture, and set the tone for a long period that has extended up to the moment of writing. Discourse on Javanese performance in the electronic media is related to and/or has inevitably been influenced by these views and

discussions. On the other hand, and this is my second point, the electronic media have contributed to changing perceptions of the use of local languages. As I shall tackle this point throughout my dissertation, two examples should suffice here. The Indosiar broadcasts of Javanese dramatic genres since 1995 have lent a new impetus to the discussions and put them in a new perspective (see Chapters 6 and 7). The second example concerns the bill introducing Regional Autonomy in 1999. Its purpose was to decentralize the government and this had a large impact on representations of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural character of Indonesia. The resulting choices of the local media concerning audiences address changed visions on language use in media productions.

## 1 Javanese Language Congresses: ‘Using correct Javanese’

### *The first congress*

A major forum in discussions of language use and language policy have been the Javanese language congresses.<sup>23</sup> Since 1991, every five years a *Kongres Bahasa Jawa* has been organized alternately in the provinces of Central and East Java, and in Yogyakarta, the capital of the Special Region of Yogyakarta.<sup>24</sup>

When viewed from a wider perspective within the national Indonesian context the Javanese congresses are not unique. They are comparable to congresses on Sundanese or Balinese language and culture, for example. They showcase the efforts made by officials and cultural practitioners representing specific ethnic groups in Indonesia to support, control and protect their vernaculars and cultures on the one hand, and the efforts of the national government to formalize and bureaucratize the development and preservation of these languages and cultures on the other. Even in a larger historical context, the Javanese language congresses are not unique; language and culture congresses are a legacy of colonial times. The Javanese language congress in 1991, presented as the first one of its kind, established a link with its predecessors, the innumerable congresses, seminars and conferences on matters Javanese, in an overview in the congress proceedings (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:4-7; Darusuprpto 1993:48-9, 50-2, 61). The list differentiates between activities that have taken place before and since Independence and begins with the Congress for Javanese Culture Development (Congres voor Javaansche Cultuurontwikkeling), held in the Mangkunegaran Palace in Surakarta from 5 to 7 July 1918, and the First Congress of Linguistics, Geography and Ethnology (Eerste Congres voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde), that was organized to coincide with the foundation of the Java Institute in Surakarta, from 24 to 26 December 1919. The study of Javanese, Balinese and Madurese languages and cultures was the main focus of this scholarly institute. The last

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<sup>23</sup> Both Bonneff (1997) and I have based our findings on the congress proceedings, the congress papers and our personal observations during the congress(es). I have also used congress reviews and newspaper articles. Although we had different aims and have foregrounded different topics (while pointing to the same issues), our writings on these congresses do show an overlap.

<sup>24</sup> In Semarang on 15-20 July 1991 and 10-14 September 2006; in Batu, a resort in the vicinity of Malang on 22-26 October 1996, and Surabaya on 27-30 November 2011; in Yogyakarta on 15-20 July 2001 and 8-12 November 2016.

congress of the Java Institute took place in 1930; the publishing of its journal, *Djâwâ*, continued until 1941. In June 1943 Sultan Hamengkubuwana IX took the initiative of convening a 'congress or conference' (*kongres atau musyawarah*) on the Javanese language and script in Yogyakarta (Suwarno 1991). Ten years later, in November 1953, the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Teaching and Culture resumed the meetings when it organized the Javanese Language Conference (*Pasarasehan Bahasa Djawa*) in Yogyakarta. In the 1980s, the government established several research projects as instruments by which to study Javanese culture and language as part of the national culture and to contribute to its development (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:4). Therefore, the 1991 congress held in Semarang was actually not the first such gathering, but rather, following Fishman's conclusion on the phenomenon of the 'First Congress', 'the foremost or the most important among the first' (Fishman 1993:333). The fact that 'even the reference to *language* does not seem to be entirely unambiguous' (Fishman 1993:333) is also true of the Javanese Language Congresses, whose focus is not confined to language but encompass Javanese literature and culture as well. The congress itself was even called a cultural event, that also paid attention to cultural knowledge, cultural behaviour and artefacts (Panitia Kongres Bahasa Jawa III 2001:7). Finally, a first Javanese Culture Congress (*Kongres Kebudayaan Jawa*) was convened in Surakarta in November 2014 ((fri-43) 2014).

#### *Building the nation, fostering regional languages and cultures*

The 1991 congress was a state-instigated and state-dominated initiative. It was the first to be organized collectively by the governments of Central and East Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta on such a large scale with subsidies from the central national government. Its concept, organization, format and even topics were inspired by and grafted onto New Order 'congressing' in general and more specifically on the many Indonesian language congresses. Large numbers of state representatives attended the opening and closing ceremonies. The papers were replete with New Order rhetoric and offered guidance for and developing perspectives on (*pembinaan dan pengembangan*) the topics discussed. Several speakers voiced great confidence in the ability of the government to protect and 'save' the Javanese language, literature and culture from deterioration and/or extinction.

Although it was presented as a congress from a national point of view, it was also unquestionably a display of a particular kind of Javaneseness. Several of the opening speeches at the 1991 congress made explicit reference to the 1945 Constitution, stating that Indonesian is the national language and that regional languages that have been carefully preserved by the community will be respected and protected by the national government.<sup>25</sup> Pertinently, the 1988 Principal Outlines for State Policy (Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara, GBHN) were used as another legitimizing source for the congress, mentioning that regional languages have to be preserved in order to offer a voice to the people's culture, aimed at supporting cultural diversity as a source of the creativity and strength of the Indonesian people (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:3). Although the GBHN does tend to allocate the Indonesian people an active role in

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<sup>25</sup> UUD 1945 Bab XV pasal 36; UUD 1945 penjelasan pada Bab XV pasal 36.

the development of national culture and states that they should be able to enjoy its results, it also cautions against narrow feudal and regional attitudes and against negative influences from abroad (Santoso 1993:174; GBHN 1988 in Aziz 1994:244).<sup>26</sup> Despite the fact care was taken at all times to emphasize the national context of the event, the symbols used during the opening and closing ceremonies were utterly and completely Javanese and contained references to rituals, objects and performances that are perceived to belong to Javanese tradition, including a Javanese *surya sengkala*, a chronogram indicating the year 1991 in the congress logo, the cutting of a *tumpeng*, a ritual rice cone, by the governor of Central Java and performances of classical dances by the four centres of 'high' Javanese culture, the courts of Surakarta, Yogyakarta, Mangkunegara and Pakualam. On the last day of the congress two trees were planted: a white banyan tree (*beringin putih*) and a fragrant champaka tree, a *kanthil*. The entire congress was framed like a shadow puppet theatre, beginning with the lighting of the *blencong*, a Javanese oil lamp, representing the hope that Javanese language and literature would become a torch to illuminate the world (KBJ I Buku I:19), ending with the snuffing of the *blencong* and the planting of a tree-like property, the *tancep kayon*, symbolizing the official end of the event.

The purpose behind the organizing of the congress was threefold: the perceived decline in Javanese language and culture; the contribution of Javanese to Indonesian, the national language, as one among the many regional languages; and the growing attention Javanese had been receiving in academic centres abroad (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:3). The aim of the congress was 'to monitor the Javanese language and literature and their research in order to design policies and operational formats aimed at preserving and developing them within the national context'. It was hoped that the congress would create a model that would serve to guide and develop Javanese language and literature both at school and in society in the framework of building and developing a national culture (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:4).

Government officials, teachers of Javanese language, literature and culture, poets and literary authors and academics attended the congresses. The 2006 congress organization categorized the participants into practitioners, theoreticians, policy makers, conservators, publishers and representatives of research, education and teaching institutions, including those involved in language guidance, preservation and dissemination, and the royal courts. Radio and television broadcasters were placed in the category of publishers, alongside those in charge of print media.<sup>27</sup> Quite a number of non-Javanese and non-Indonesian academics participated, lending the congresses an international aura, besides emphasizing the presence of and the attention paid to Javanese elsewhere in the world. In 2001, the Surinamese minister of Social Affairs and Public Housing, Paul Salam Somohardjo, whose ancestors are said to have originated from Magelang and Solo ((San/Rsv)-z 2001), attended the congress. He wanted to preserve the customs, etiquette and culture of the Javanese in Suriname ((San/Rsv)-z 2001),<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ketetapan MPR RI No. II/MPR/1988.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.jawatengah.go.id/konjawa/pemakalah.htm> [Last accessed 21 July 2008].

<sup>28</sup> Suprihipun bangsa Jawa ing Suriname menika boten ical adate, tatacarane, langkung-langkung kabudayanipun.

with the help of the Indonesian Javanese, especially Sri Sultan HB X, Governor of Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, and teachers and practitioners of Javanese language and culture, he said (*Suriname butuh* 2001). The other reason he was visiting Java was more explicitly political: representing the political party Partai Percaya Luhur, Somohardjo said he had returned to his roots (*bangsul ing oyode*) ((San/Rsv)-z 2001).

### *Counter voices*

Prestigious though these congresses were, copiously covered in local and national media, they also received their fair share of criticism and generated counter initiatives. Although many Javanese literary authors attended the first congress, in later years those who did not feel represented by or that they had been given a fair hearing at the Kongres Bahasa Jawa (KBJ) gathered at counter congresses, convened separately from the KBJ. A few days before the third KBJ in 2001, for example, authors spontaneously organized a Javanese Writers Congress (*Kongres Sastrawan Jawa* (KSJ)) in Taman Budaya Surakarta sponsored by the Studio for Javanese Literature, the Sanggar Sastra Jawa Yogyakarta (*Merasa tidak dilibatkan* 2001). This congress was not meant to be competition for the KBJ and should be seen as a forum in which literary authors could discuss the destiny of Javanese literature (*Merasa tidak dilibatkan* 2001). The participants disagreed with the overall setup of the official Javanese Language Congress in which, they said, almost no attention was paid to literary authors and their works, modern Javanese literature in particular. Most of the KBJ papers focused on language, although in point of fact the literary authors were the people who actually preserved Javanese literature, the organizers claimed (*Kurang perhatian* 2001).

Counter voices were aired in other fora too, especially in the print media. In his very critical article in the Yogyakarta newspaper *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana launched a fierce discussion that questioned the relevance of regional cultures to the development of the Indonesian people in the modern world. He said all the energy poured into nostalgia was futile (Alisjahbana 1991). In his criticism, Alisjahbana was actually remaining faithful to the convictions he had expressed during the Culture Polemic (Polemik Kebudayaan) of the 1930s. Alisjahbana was then one of the ‘nationalist-minded artists and intellectuals [who] had engaged in a vigorous series of cultural polemics on the nature and direction of a national culture in and around the pages of the journal *Pujangga Baru*’ (Foulcher 1986:13).<sup>29</sup>

The fact that the language of communication was Indonesian, the national language, and only a few papers had been written and presented in Javanese (some of them by non-Javanese participants), was a cause for comment from the very first congress. Therefore, at the opening ceremony of the second congress, all speakers were requested to deliver their speeches in ‘standard Javanese in the Central Javanese style’; English translations would be available for foreign participants (*Kongres Bahasa Jawa II* 1996). Nevertheless, during the 2006 congress only six of the more than fifty papers were presented in Javanese, the majority were still in Indonesian, a foreign language not mastered by the participants from Suriname (Herdjoko

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<sup>29</sup> On Polemik Kebudayaan, see also Achdiat Mihardja 1986, Holt 1967, Teeuw 1979:35-38, and Jurriëns (2004:39-42).

2006b). Of the government officials only Mardiyanto, governor of Central Java, presented his paper in Javanese.<sup>30</sup> Why did the Sultan of Yogyakarta of all people read his speech in Indonesian, journalist Herdjoko wondered, especially since – because of his function as a monarch – he is seen as the fount of Javanese culture and language (Herdjoko 2006b). Pertinently, why was the journal launched during the congress written in Indonesian (Herdjoko 2006a and b)? In his article entitled ‘Loved abroad, discarded at home’ (Herdjoko 2006b), the journalist juxtaposes this attitude to the enthusiasm exhibited by delegates from East Kalimantan and Suriname when they talked about their Javanese radio and television broadcasts for the local Javanese population groups.

The conclusions, decisions and resolutions of the congresses raised numerous questions, especially since their implementation remained invisible to the eyes of many. In what he himself calls a cynical comment, Javanese lecturer Sucipto Hadi Purnomo has seen each congress generating its successor, but without any results having been achieved (Purnomo 2006). The fact that none of the resolutions had had a follow-up as no task force, Badan Pekerja Kongres, was ever actually established to realize the recommendations and resolutions, was deemed a lost opportunity, all the more so when the high cost of the congresses was taken into account (Permana 2006; Herdjoko 2006a and b).<sup>31</sup> In 2001 this situation was characterized as *jarkoni* (*Isa ngujari ning ora isa nglakoni*), having good intentions, without implementing them (*Di balik Kongres* 2001). It is a reflection of the paralyzing effect of government policy on practices affecting the use of local languages. The actual speakers of the language expected the government, not they themselves, to solve the problems.

## 2 The ‘centres’ in the region

Diverse groups and organizations, called *badan*, *balai*, *sanggar* or *yayasan* (committees, institutes, studios or foundations) have indubitably been active in the writing, performance, studying and promoting of Javanese language, literature and culture. They have held conferences, seminars, poetry readings, theatre performances and rituals, and published literature and articles about Javanese literature and culture (TIM MS 1997). Such literary magazines as *Djaka Lodhang*, *Mekar Sari*, *Panjebar Semangat* and *Jaya Baya* have played an important role in the publishing and dissemination of Javanese literature that would otherwise have only been available in live or mediated oral presentations, and in articles about Javanese culture.<sup>32</sup>

Besides the official academic branches, the national government established several organizations whose purpose was to study and develop Javanese culture. The Javanese Language Institutes (Balai Bahasa Jawa) in Semarang, Surabaya and Yogyakarta, founded as

<sup>30</sup> Entitled ‘Basa Jawi prelu nut ing jaman kalakone’ (Javanese language should keep pace with the developments of the epoch).

<sup>31</sup> Achiar Permana (2006) mentions a budget of ‘Rp 4,25 miliar’.

<sup>32</sup> On Javanese-language magazines and literature in this magazines, see Ras 1979; Quinn 1992; Bonneff 1997:46-47.

sub-branches of the Centre for Language Cultivation and Development (Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa),<sup>33</sup> implemented and oversaw the carrying out of the policies and tasks that had been developed on the national level (Quinn 2012:68, 79). In a similar vein, the Taman Budaya (Cultural Centres) repeated the national government discourse on the development of local cultures for the benefit of the national culture. Among the activities they organized, Jones (2013:212) lists seminars (to discuss problems and disseminate information about the arts) and workshops (to give guidance and technical instructions about art works and techniques).

Another example of a government-instigated initiative is the so called Proyek Javanologi, the Javanology Project. In June 1982, the Project for the Research and Development of Javanese Culture (Proyek Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kebudayaan Jawa), later called the Project for the Research and Teaching of the Javanese Branch of Indonesian Culture (Proyek Penelitian dan Pengkajian Kebudayaan Nusantara bagian Jawa (Javanologi), was established in Yogyakarta under the auspices of the Department of Education and Culture (KBJ I Buku I:6). The aims of the Yogyakarta Proyek Javanologi were idealistic, high flown and weighty: the creation of a dynamic cultural life that would underpin both the regional and the national culture. The principal goal was to strengthen the identity of the nation, boost national self-esteem and pride while heightening mutual understanding between the Indonesian people; its ultimate goal being to foster the unity of the nation (Karkono 1992-1993:293). A detailed description of the tasks reveals the ways thought necessary to achieve these goals and create the circumstances ideal for a developing nation: researching, making inventories, protecting, guiding, continuing, digging, developing, storing, preserving, creating and so on (Karkono 1992-1993:294-5). The series of active verbs is an indication of the dynamic view of the work to be done.<sup>34</sup> A similar rhetoric was used during the Javanese Language Congresses and it recurred in metadiscussions in the print media and on radio and television.

The project was meant to be a five-year pilot and, should success ensue, the formula would be applied to the study of other regional cultures in the country. However, because the Javanology Project rapidly led to assumptions that it was favouring the ethnic Javanese and this might lead to inter-ethnic tensions in Indonesia, after less than two years the ministry under a new (Javanese) minister had already hastened to take steps to set up an umbrella organization with centres focusing on various other ethnic cultures like Baliology and Sundanology, and on the cultures of the Minangkabau, Melayu, Batak and South Sulawesi. In a reaction to this decision, the next year a newly established foundation, the Yayasan Ilmu Pengetahuan Kebudayaan Panunggalan, consisting of the Javanology Project's former head and some of his staff who had left the government project formed an independent centre, the Javanology Institute (Lembaga Javanologi) in Yogyakarta (Quinn 1992:280-281). They claimed that this bid for independence was essential if it were to operate in a dynamic way, beyond the reach of the tentacles of bureaucracy. The Lembaga Javanologi studied Javanese culture, not for its own sake, but, again, to amplify the growth and the development of the

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<sup>33</sup> Hereafter Language Centre (Pusat Bahasa, as it usually is referred to in Indonesia).

<sup>34</sup> Meneliti, menginventarisasi, memelihara, membina, meneruskan, menggali, mengembangkan, menyimpan, memantapkan, menciptakan [...].

national culture (Karkono 1992-1993:297). Nothing new under the sun in fact, but at least the ways the goals were to be achieved and the topics to be studied had assumed a far more concrete shape (Karkono 1992-1993:298-300). The activities were carried out by the Institute itself and in co-operation with other groups and institutions, including the Yogyakarta branch of the Balai Kajian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional (the Research Centres for the Study of History and Traditional Values),<sup>35</sup> that fell under the Education and Culture Department. An example of one of its activities was the *ruwatan* (cleansing) ceremony featuring a special wayang kulit performance of the Murwakala story on 6 July 2003 ((SIG) 2003). In a reaction to the changing circumstances and the decline in cultural expressions, in July 1991 the Yayasan Ilmu Pengetahuan Kebudayaan Panunggalan broadened its scope by establishing the Institute for the Preservation of Culture (Lembaga Pelestarian Budaya).

In any discussion of Javanese cultural centres, the role of the Central Javanese courts should not be overlooked; for ideological reasons, their prestige in Javanese cultural matters remained high. As cultural institutions, they represented tradition (Bonneff 1997:35). Importantly, a number of cultural festivals drew attention to Javanese culture, especially to the performing arts and literature. Among these was the Yogyakarta Art Festival (the Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta (FKY)). The FKY organized performances and published several edited anthologies of Javanese short stories and poetry. Very popular in the nineteen-nineties and important to the dissemination of and discussion on expressions of Javanese culture were the broadcasts by local RRI and private radio stations (Mardianto and Darmanto 2001), the national TVRI station and the regional TVRI stations broadcasting from Yogyakarta and Surabaya. This dynamic cultural scene represents the second epistemology to do with Javanese culture that I introduced at the beginning of this chapter.

### 3 Issues

The topics that recurred are part of a more general discourse in Javanese society at large as well as among members of literary and cultural institutions, and they also appear in print and audiovisual media. Most of them are not new; they stem from earlier periods in history, some of them going back to the nineteenth and the early twentieth century. They all touch upon language, literature and culture maintenance, preservation, development or loss.

During the closing ceremony of the first Javanese Language Congress, the governor of Central Java, Ismail, stated that the congress had been held at exactly the right time. Ten years earlier, the Indonesian people had still been preoccupied with national aims and actively involved in strengthening the unity and union of the nation. However, had the congress been organized ten years later, the governor feared 'we would have lost our precious fortune, Javanese language and literature, while our generation has already forgotten about its proper

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<sup>35</sup> On this institute, see Jones (2013: 242 ff.). In September 2006 its name was changed into Balai Pelestarian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional Yogyakarta. Recent information on the organization, now called Balai Pelestarian Nilai Budaya Yogyakarta, can be found at <http://www.bpn-b-jogja.info/main/> [Last accessed 27 October 2016].

culture because of the influences of globalization and modernization' (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:100). Ismail's speech touches upon several important issues that were thoroughly discussed at this and the following congresses: the negotiation between national and regional cultures, the fear of the fragmentation of the nation's unity and separatism of the largest ethnic group in Indonesia, the (negative) influences of globalization and modernization, the possible loss of Javanese language and culture, and the need to preserve them as national asset and as belonging to the 'high points of regional cultures' (*puncak-puncak kebudayaan daerah*) (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:100), thereby ensuring that future generations would not reproach the present generation accusing them of neglecting its duty.

### *Between two loyalties: national and regional*

The discussions at the conferences clearly show the continuous juggling between the strengthening of the national culture and language on the one and the preserving of the Javanese ethnic culture and corresponding vernacular on the other hand. Finding an equilibrium between the two seems to have been experienced as a difficult dilemma, especially as the Orde Baru national government had been doing its utmost to see that the nation-building proceeded as quickly and as trouble-free as possible. Complicating the picture, it seems there was a dichotomy in Javanese society itself between two extremes. At one pole were those who thought that Javanese should continue to play a significant role as symbol of regional pride and identity, as the language of intra-ethnic communication and the tool to develop and support regional culture (Soewandi 1993:21) and consequently championed the need to preserve it; at the other end of the scale were those who wanted to follow the trend and go with the contemporary globalizing flow and accept all the consequences this entailed.

In their papers, quite a few participants referred to the Clauses 32 and 36 of the 1945 Constitution. These articles deal with the use of Indonesian as the national language as propagated by the Indonesian government, the position of regional languages versus the national language, the role of regional cultures in the framework of the national culture and the active involvement of the state in respecting and protecting those regional languages that were properly nurtured by the people inhabiting the regions in which these languages were spoken. Quoting and repeating these articles as a formula, almost reciting them as a mantra, seemed to legitimize the attention they devoted to Javanese language and culture and their research into it, but simultaneously they appeared to ward off all possible imputations of a tendency towards Javanization, ethnic chauvinism, regionalism (*jawanisasi, sukuisme, daerahisme*) or even separatism; the last eventuality to be avoided at all costs. During the fourth congress this very sensitive issue was paid special attention as it was linked to regional autonomy and the need to strengthen the unity of this multi-ethnic society (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*), a requirement that would mean discarding narrow ethnicism and regionalism (*kesukuan dan kedaerahan yang sempit*) (Pendahuluan 2006). Although thereby avoiding any ideas that might have lead to a potential threat to the national unity, the importance of the Javanese language and culture in the building of the national culture was addressed in many papers. One example that is regularly quoted is the Javanese contribution to Indonesian vocabulary.

*The discourse of loss – ‘Javanese on the threshold of extinction’*<sup>36</sup>

One of the topics that has received its fair share of attention is the decline (*kemerosotan dan kemunduran*) of the Javanese language and culture. This discourse of loss even emerged as one of the *raisons d’être* of the 1991 conference and was explicitly stated in the congress aims (Sudaryanto et al. 1992b:3). ‘Decline’ is interpreted in several ways: mistakes in the use of *basa*; loss of the knowledge of *basa*, the very symbol of the refined (*adiluhung*) character of Javanese; a poor command of the language etiquette (*tata krama* and *unggah-ungguh*); the influence of Indonesian and the pressure to Indonesianize (Sudaryanto 1993:8); the mixing of Javanese and Indonesian, and even of English (code-switching, interference). Expressions used to describe the situation assumed a dramatic undertone: Javanese is in ruins (see Quinn 1992:264, 267), the Javanese have lost their Javanese identity and the Javanese are no longer Javanese (KBJ I Buku V:58) are just a few examples.<sup>37</sup> In newspapers and journals, authors often offer a dichotomic view on this topic: one of the counterviews to ‘Javanese is in ruins’ is the observation that Javanese language and culture have been evolving and that this process does not necessarily mean decline, deterioration or loss.

Various reasons were given for the decline: the concentration of the Jakarta-based Language Centre (*Pusat Bahasa*) on the Indonesian language, the lack of or the poor teaching of Javanese since Javanese has been given the status of a foreign language, and the focus in the programmes of the Indonesian government’s Five-Year Development Plans (*Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun, Repelita*) on economic development (Sudaryanto 1993:5-7). The lack of interest shown by young ethnic Javanese is a recurring theme that is exacerbated by the tendency to abandon the use of Javanese not only in discursive practices with fellow youngsters, but also in family circles. Other causes put forward are urbanization and the rustic or conservative (*ndesa* or *kolot*) image with which Javanese is saddled; the influences of foreign cultures that are imported by the television industry and the (negative) impact of the mass media on the popularity of traditional regional performing arts. The perceptions that learning regional languages has no added value and that Javanese is not a democratic language are mentioned as other reasons (Pradipta 1993:209-16). Referring to the poor command of the Javanese language etiquette, Errington (1998:279) remarks that

Much attention at the conference was given to the complex system of Javanese verbal etiquette, the correct forms of which (several paper givers argued) are disappearing from use by younger speakers. Largely ignored by such arguments is the fact that control of these most refined forms of usage has never extended widely beyond traditional elite circles.

The concern about language corruption and decline has been a persistent theme since the colonial period. Sudaryanto (1992a) says that already by the beginning of the twentieth century speakers of Javanese were not able to use the speech levels properly. Uhlenbeck (1964:69-70) points out that in the course of the twentieth century

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<sup>36</sup> Bahasa Jawa di ambang kepunahan (ICH/Teguh et al. 2006).

<sup>37</sup> Basa Jawi sampun risak; wong Jawa ilang Jawane; wong Jawa wis ora Jawa.

the phenomenon of the special vocabularies became a hotly debated issue. Many Dutch-educated Javanese intellectuals had lost the ability to use the subtle distinctions of their mother-tongue with any sort of confidence. Moreover the important social changes in Java sometimes made it an extremely difficult matter to define the social position of one's speech-partner in relation to one's own, while this is an absolute prerequisite for the correct choice of lexical items, forms of address etc.

### *The adiluhung concept*

The discourse on language deterioration and loss and the need for language protection is inextricably related to the *adiluhung* concept and the idea that Javanese language and literature are part of a cultural heritage that should be nurtured for future generations. The reasoning behind this idea is the frame of reference that is used to evaluate the quality of contemporary Javanese language and literature, namely: the Javanese used by nineteenth-century court poets and in the elite circles of the Javanese courts and aristocracy. Often mentioned is the Surakartan *zaman keemasan*, the golden age of Javanese literature, represented by the masters of the literary art,<sup>38</sup> the *pujangga* Yasadipura and Ranggawarsita, and by Mangkunagara IV (Tjokrowinoto, 1996:9), 'the' norm referred to when discussing the application of 'good Javanese', elegant literature and a correct Javanese attitude.

Why does this nineteenth-century *adiluhung* literature remain such a strong frame of reference, even at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century? One indication is given by Koentjaraningrat who claims that 'whenever a culture or sub-culture in a particular class of the society concerned has an established ancient tradition and therefore a vested interest in protecting the great tradition, it will show greater resistance towards change than cultures or sub-cultures with few such traditions' (Koentjaraningrat 1989:462). The primacy of the written Javanese of the nineteenth-century that had become the norm has influenced the perception of the language as used in later periods. The ideal language employed in textual traditions from the past came to be perceived as the real language – a phenomenon not restricted to Javanese. Van der Horst's analysis of the emergence of standard languages in Europe shows how also there written, idealized forms of the languages were used as the main criterium (Van der Horst 2008:175).

Errington (1998:278-9) reintroduces the topic into the discourse about the relationship between national and regional, when he states that

Suharto's fond hope and the institutional logic of the conference presuppose, rather, that Javanese stands in need not of development like Indonesian but rehabilitation and preservation as an exemplary ethnic tradition. This appropriative focus on traditionally prestigious, ostensibly moribund forms of 'high' Javanese is part of the ongoing construction by the New Order of a newly invented Javanese tradition – well described by Florida (1987) as a lofty, monolithic, ineffable 'noble sublime' (*adiluhung*) – of which the state is itself custodian.

In her analysis of the *adiluhung* concept, that Florida translates as 'the beautiful sublime' (1987:2 and 1995:32), the author brings in the role of literature. She argues

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<sup>38</sup> Robson and Wibisono 2002:602.

[i]n late twentieth-century Indonesia, ‘Traditional Javanese Literature’ is popularly understood as a particular genre of beautiful writing, a genre of elite (royal) writing characterized by difficult or esoteric texts of great refinement and philosophical depth: that is, *Literature* with a capital L. (Florida 1995:22)

She calls this a ‘generic misunderstanding’. The author traces the origins of the *adiluhung* literary canon back to ‘nineteenth century Dutch colonial philology’ (Florida 1995:22-3) and describes how historical events led to an ‘ideological construct’ of traditional Javanese culture (Florida 1995:24). She links the ‘cult of the *adiluhung*’ (Florida 1995:32) that began at the beginning of the twentieth century and ‘was repeated and intensified’ in the New Order ‘*adiluhung* rhetoric’ to ‘the late colonial voice’ (Florida 1995:33). Also Arps points out the influence of Dutch scholars on the standardization of literary norms in his analysis of Jacob Kats’s ‘attempt to synthesize Javanese practice and European ideas’ when codifying Javanese poetics (Arps 2000:115). Furthermore, two other factors were as important to what Arps calls the ‘regulation of beauty’, namely: ‘the reorientation [by Javanese nationalists] towards the literary heritage, and the campaign to change literary ideas and ideals’ (Arps 2000:115), both because of historical circumstances. Therefore neither Florida nor Arps attributes the canonization of Javanese literature to Dutch efforts alone, but each acknowledges the active role of the Javanese, identified either as ‘conservative *priyayi*’ (Florida 1995:32) or as Javanese nationalists, for whom ‘[h]istorical awareness included awareness of the literary canon’ (Arps 2000:120).

The *adiluhung* ideology had (and still has) a direct influence on actual language use. Anxious about making mistakes (*wedi kleru*), a number of participants at the fifth Javanese Language Congress chose to present their papers in Indonesian. Therefore I do not agree with Heryanto’s claim that, ‘Now failure in performing the proper *bahasa* as an indication of not yet being an ideal Javanese, or Malay, hardly hold its validity. Every Javanese and Malay is now taught to view and define her/his identities and others’ within the modern Western frame of view: all are indiscriminately and universally “human beings” (1995:33). It is not a matter of adopting either a Javanese or modern/Western inclination, but it is both, in conjunction with the Indonesian frame. In the requirements it sets for pupils to master the Javanese speech style system, formal education sets the bar too high and curbs the enthusiasm of pupils and young interlocutors to speak the language (Prasetyo 2011). Another frequent implication of the *wedi kleru* attitude is that Javanese often acknowledge that they do not speak Javanese, meaning they have not mastered the *adiluhung* etiquette (but nevertheless all the while communicate in the *ngoko* speech style, and in Javanese dialects and/or sociolects). The use of Indonesian rather than Javanese by guests in Javanese talk shows is one glaring outcome of this *wedi kleru* stance.

The term *adiluhung* was also applied to the categorization of artistic performance genres. Whereas in the 1980s it was still confined to traditional Javanese court arts (Lindsay 1985:44), by the 1990s commercial performance genres like kethoprak were also defined as *adiluhung*, thereby classicizing this genre (see Chapter 4). The link is probably preservation discourse: the perception that art forms that need be preserved belong in the *adiluhung* category.

To conclude, in one way the *adiluhung* ideology can be perceived to be disconnected from both the reality of daily life in contemporary Indonesia and from cultural practices in which a livelier and continuously developing Javanese is used, especially in oral types of communication. Nevertheless, the practice of reciting literature belonging to the *adiluhung* canon and the correct use of the language etiquette still does continue in certain circles.

### *Modernization and democratization*

In spite of its many adherents, during the Javanese Language Congresses the *adiluhung* ideology met resistance. Counter voices to the purist aspects of the ideology consider *adiluhung* Javanese to be feudal in character and no longer applicable in contemporary communication. They promote the modernization and democratization of the language as an adaptation to changing circumstances.

As early as the beginning of the twentieth century several movements, like the Samin and the Djawa Dipa Movements, the latter with the support of Sarekat Islam, the Islamic Union and the newspaper *Oetoesan Hindia* (Soewandi 1993:25; Anderson 1990:214-218), were already trying to simplify Javanese. During the Japanese occupation Sultan Hamengku Buwana IX proposed that only one level of Javanese, *bahasa Bagongan*, a Javanese court dialect, be used so as to jettison perceived feudal aspects and facilitate the mastery of Javanese. In the 1950s pleas to simplify the language system were again heard, as no Javanese was able to implement the complex language etiquette system with the requisite adroitness, as said in a poem published in *Medan Bahasa* (1952:7), quoted by Soenardji (1993:58-59). The author of the poem suggests that Javanese be reduced to two speech styles: *ngoko*, the speech style used to think and to reflect, and *basa*. After the Second World War, the use of *ngoko* in magazines and newspapers increased (Soewandi 1993:22). The preference for *ngoko* over *basa* in literature and story-telling mirrored a democratic, practical and social society, and this choice has therefore become increasingly popular (Hutomo 1993:321). The urge to modernize Javanese is an important issue, since the Orde Baru government had tried to relegate regional cultures ‘to the domain of “tradition” and thus disposed of its political meanings’ (Asnan et al. 2006:155).

The problem is that not many authors define what they mean by ‘modern Javanese’. According to Soeprapto, it is the language developed in contemporary Javanese language press, the Javanese that is used in the electronic media, by educated urban and rural speakers, and that ‘though showing shortcomings, [...] can be called modern Javanese’ (Soeprapto 1993:594).

### *Language preservation: Cultivating, developing and preserving*<sup>39</sup>

One of the consequences of the *adiluhung* ideology is that Javanese language and culture – perceived as a cultural heritage – should be nurtured, developed and preserved. The proponents of this view, who include high-ranking bureaucrats, however often do not go into the practicalities of why, what and how. This attitude is reflected in the papers presented at

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<sup>39</sup> Pembinaan, pengembangan dan pelestarian.

consecutive KBJ. Generally speaking, congress participants point to formal education and government institutions as environments that should concentrate on the topic. Only a few participants have offered specific solutions to tackling the cultivation, development and preservation of Javanese language and culture. One of them is Budya Pradipta. As a check on where and how Javanese is still taken care of properly by the people – referring to the often quoted clarification of Clause 36 of the 1945 Constitution – , Pradipta gives an impressive overview of the circles in which Javanese language and culture are still alive (Pradipta 1993:220-25). He lists traditional performance genres (both live and broadcast on the radio), the print press, traditional ceremonies and the reading of Javanese books on private radio stations. He mentions occasions and social events, locations and centres in which people communicate in Javanese.

The policies governing the use of good and correct Indonesian, as advocated by the Language Centre (*Pusat Bahasa*) (Heryanto 1995:38) were adopted and applied to Javanese: good and correct Javanese was ‘Javanese which was free from writing and speaking errors’.<sup>40</sup> Hence, the tasks of the centre were reflected in the KBJ papers. The need for the development and cultivation of Javanese implied that this had to be done in a controlled way by specific institutions and people (governmental bureaucrats and/or academic linguists) and with specific aims, rather than letting speakers go their own way in a natural process. However, the official fostering of Javanese as a regional language was important only insofar as this exercise would assist in developing and enriching Indonesian vocabulary and the riches of national culture as part of the identity of the nation (GBHN 1993 in Aziz 1994:125).<sup>41</sup>

The term preserving, *melestarikan*, already fashionable in the 1980s (Heryanto 1995:45), promoted the idea of making the nation’s culture *lestari*, everlasting. The discourse on the need for the preservation of culture as heritage continued in the 1990s. The private TV station Indosiar used it in the slogan ‘fostering the culture of the nation’ (*melestarikan budaya bangsa*) (see Chapter 7). This urgency to preserve language and culture is related to the discourse of loss.

While the younger generations were severely castigated for their so called negligence towards things Javanese, Soeprapto stressed the need to involve young people in the cultivation and development of Javanese for the following reasons: 75 percent of the authors of Javanese literature were younger than forty years old, young people were already involved in the matter through Javanese programmes broadcast by RRI and private radio stations, and their attitude towards Javanese at the time was very positive (Soeprapto 1993:597).

During the congresses, Javanese performing arts were paid ample attention, both in paper presentations and in actual performances. It is striking, however, that little attention was paid to Javanese language, literature and culture in the electronic mass media, and to the 1997

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<sup>40</sup> ‘Basa Jawi ingkang leres punika basa Jawi ingkang mboten lepat ing panyerat lan pangucapipun’, a quote of Mbah Guno (KRT Soesanto Guno Prawiro, famous Yogyakarta comedian) in an interview with *Bernas* (17 July 2001).

<sup>41</sup> Pembinaan bahasa daerah perlu terus dilanjutkan dalam rangka mengembangkan serta memperkaya perbendaharaan bahasa Indonesia dan khazanah kebudayaan nasional sebagai salah satu unsur jati diri dan kepribadian bangsa. Perlu ditingkatkan penelitian, pengkajian dan pengembangan bahasa dan sastra daerah serta penyebarannya melalui berbagai media (Ketetapan MPR RI No. II/MPR/1993).

Broadcasting Act that regulated language use in these media. When the mass media were discussed, they were often interpreted as print media only – journals, magazines and newspapers – making use of written language, whereas in the 1990s Javanese actually occurred much more frequently in orally oriented media like radio and television, cassettes and CDs. Nevertheless, at every congress a few papers at least were dedicated to electronic media, the majority focusing on radio, only some on television. With a few exceptions, most papers were in line with New Order policies and rhetoric and focused on the role mass media could play in fostering and preserving the Javanese language, culture and media literature; in developing the language and culture; and in disseminating traditional genres as an alternative way to achieve the same aims.

If the tasks of development and preservation of the language were to be pursued, a standard (*baku*) form of the language was felt to be necessary.

*Standards or standardizing? 'Between registering, standardizing and fossilizing'*<sup>42</sup>

At the second Javanese Language Congress when the participants were asked to deliver their presentations in Javanese, the request was specified: the speakers were asked to make use of standard Javanese in the style of Central Java. This type of Javanese had been the standard for a long time. In the mid-nineteenth century Dutch linguists began codifying the language (Bonneff 1997:52). In 1893 the colonial government had decided that the Javanese to be taught at school should be the dialect of Surakarta, 'being considered by the Javanese themselves as the language in its purest and richest form' (Uhlenbeck 1964:65).

One of the main aims of the first Javanese Language Congress was the publication of a Standard Javanese Grammar (*Tata bahasa baku bahasa Jawa* (TBBBJ )) and an Indonesian-Javanese Dictionary (*Kamus Indonesia-Jawa*); both were launched at the congress. The projects had been supported by local government institutions: they were realized with sponsorship from the Central Javanese Regional Development Planning Board (Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah, BAPPEDA). The head of the Balai Penelitian Bahasa (Centre for Language Research) in Yogyakarta, Sudaryanto, also editor-in-chief of both projects, was responsible for the research and the compilation of the two volumes.

In a paper presented during the second Javanese Language Congress, Sudaryanto analyses the meaning of the term standard (*baku*) to legitimize the urgency for compiling a prescriptive grammar of Javanese. It was introduced by the Jakartan Language Centre (Pusat Bahasa) from the time of its establishment in 1975 and was perpetuated thereafter in the term *bahasa baku* (standard language) (Sudaryanto 1996:1). The term is closely connected to the ideas of *baik* (good) and *benar* (correct), qualifying the Indonesian one was supposed to speak. If the term *baku* is to be understood as in *bahasa baku*, standard language, then any grammar of the standard language (*tata bahasa baku*) must approach a purely prescriptive grammar. It should be the product of objective and thorough research into a certain type of language that could be designated prestigious (Sudaryanto 1996:6). Precisely because of the prestigious character of

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<sup>42</sup> 'Antara membukukan dengan membakukan dan membekukan' (Sudaryanto 1992a:1).

the language, this kind of grammar should become a manual, just as in the case of prescriptive grammars in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, he argues.<sup>43</sup>

Whereas Sudaryanto used colonial publications to defend his approach and give his project added prestige, taking the opposite tack Governor Ismail referred to the past to decolonize Javanese studies. In his word of welcome to the grammar book, he puts it in the perspective of the interest of the Dutch in Javanese. Javanese as a language with high linguistic and philosophical values (Sudaryanto et al. 1992a:xi) has been appreciated not only by Indonesians but also by the Dutch, writes Ismail. Their deep knowledge of the Javanese language and literature, and therefore also of the culture, enabled them to keep a firm grip on Java and on Indonesia as a whole – a topic that was also touched upon in several congress papers. Therefore Ismail welcomed the publication of the TBBBJ as a entirely Javanese project.

Several papers, either directly or indirectly, question the idea of the use of the standard language as ‘the’ norm and the view on Javanese as a homogeneous vernacular. Suripan Sadi Hutomo, for instance, discusses the use of Javanese dialects. At the time and in particular in the context of the Javanese Language Congresses, his views were revolutionary. Therefore I shall highlight his paper. At the time of writing, Hutomo’s ideas about the use of Javanese dialects were becoming more generally accepted and applied. He tackles the teaching of Javanese at school in which pupils were taught that good Javanese was the language used in the area of Solo (Surakarta) and Yogyakarta. This meant that the dialects of Solo and Yogyakarta have been defined as or are considered to be standard dialects (*dialek baku*). The upshot of this view, a colonial heritage, resulted in the understanding that all literature, either written or told in other dialects, was considered to be of a lesser quality (*tidak bermutu*) or not refined (*kasar*). This evaluation, that he qualifies as very severe (*kejam*) and biased (*berat sebelah*), meant that people had lost sight of the fact that in the coastal areas Javanese literature also developed, in the form of (handwritten) manuscripts and in the oral traditions of local performance genres, usually written down by folk literati (*pujangga rakyat*) from an Islamic background.

Hutomo emphasizes that both language and dialect are tools of communication, and claims that the criteria ‘refined’ and ‘not refined’ do not stem from language itself but are extra-linguistic. Only the number of speakers would make any difference between the two. To correct preconceptions about the absence of non-standard dialects in modern Javanese literature, he gives several examples from 1935 onwards (Hutomo 1993:324-5). He calls the literature written in Javanese dialects, if it is perceived from the point of view of the development of Javanese aesthetics, an experiment. Such an experiment does not differ sharply between written and oral literature. Not least because of the increasing mobility of the people and the expanding reach of mass media, communication has intensified. In the wake of these developments, standard Javanese and dialects have been mixed with each other, depending on the social and geographical setting of the story (Hutomo 1993:326).

Suripan Sadi Hutomo was a pioneer in advocating the use of Javanese dialects rather than keeping to an idealized standard language. In the twenty-first century, views on regional

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<sup>43</sup> On such grammars, see Uhlenbeck 1964.

languages in certain circles have shifted, with an ever-growing support for the use of dialects and sociolects. Unquestionably local television has played a role in this democratization of the language. In the 1990s, this adjustment in the standards was not yet apparent. Arswendo Atmowiloto and Suparto Brata's effort to publish the magazine *Praba*, in which 'modern Javanese truly suitable to modern society'<sup>44</sup> would be used failed (Soeprapto 1993:591-592).

## Conclusions

The cultivation, development and preservation of language and culture featured prominently on the New Order agenda and, as concepts, they were typical for Orde Baru rhetoric. New Order policy can be characterized as prescriptive and top-down, relying on the active involvement of national and local governments, and a uniformity of purpose in the tackling of problems. The following chapters will testify to the fact that the development and preservation discourse recur in discussions about televised Javanese performance.

The development of the Javanese language has received ample attention, both positive and negative, often evoking emotions and lacking a solid basis in research and/or evidence, when it focuses on a fixed image of the language rather than on the actual language use. The frame of reference applied was the Javanese used in a specific kind of literature in the past. What Florida has called 'a peculiar kind of absence' (Florida 1995:22), implying that nowadays the *adiluhung* Javanese literature is almost unread, precisely by its 'absence' it has won itself a strong presence in discussions and emotions. Pertinently, in its relationship to the discourse of loss, this *adiluhung* discourse has also been continued in discussions about Javanese performance on television. The comments on the loss of mastering the speech levels correctly not only affect language. They go much further, as they imply that one is no longer thoroughly conversant with the attitude concomitant with the correct use of the language etiquette, the philosophy, literature and so on; in fact, that one is no longer Javanese. This stance has been vehemently countered by Javanese arts practitioners during the Javanese Language Congresses. Locally famous artists like the *campursari* musicians and singers Manthous and Anik Sunyahni ('happy to be born as a singer since it allows me to preserve Javanese language and culture') ((cr10/lis) 2001),<sup>45</sup> and wayang kulit puppeteer Ki Enthus Susmono claimed they were agents who were actually fostering Javanese language and culture in an active, creative and artistic way. They pointed out the overall presence of Javanese in the performing arts at that time. Apparently, art offered natural routes by which to escape government and academic paternalism.

Although the criticism of the poor condition of the Javanese language and its decline was not new, the growing competition between Javanese and Indonesian since independence had added a new dimension to the discussions. The discourse of loss is closely interwoven with a vision of language and culture that is static and an idealization of a past language and culture stratum. Nostalgia 'for the glorious past within an orientalist-inspired frame of

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<sup>44</sup> Bentuk bahasa Jawa modern yang pas betul dengan masyarakat Jawa modern.

<sup>45</sup> I personally witnessed the interviews with these artists at the 2001 Congress.

reference' (Arps 2000:124) has been a determining factor here. The idea of the *adiluhung* has expanded, and is now applied to artistic expressions other than court performances.

An often heard criticism, uttered during the Kongres Bahasa Jawa is that nothing has been done to ward off the decline, not even as a follow-up to the congress resolutions. Positive views, on the contrary, favour the inevitable development of the language and culture. Also the lively scene animated by the individuals, groups and institutes involved in the study, writing and performance of Javanese language, literature and cultural expressions in the 1990s, offers positive proof of the dynamics at work and the self-developing and preserving mechanisms. As the examples have demonstrated, parallel mindsets about Javanese as a language of communication and art exist, depending on whether one represents a speaker of Javanese as a colloquial in everyday communication, an artist using Javanese in artistic expressions on stage and in the media, or a bureaucrat having to cope with language legislation, education and preservation, an advocate of the use of 'pure' and 'elevated' language and etiquette, or a speaker favouring adaptation to altering circumstances. It is by no means an exception that these paradoxical views are advocated by one and the same person, depending on the function and ideology this person represents and the multiple loyalties he or she might hold, juggling between the 'national' and the 'regional', or between advocating the preservation of a 'perfect' Javanese of past times (hence seeing the 1990s developments of the language as a decline and/or loss) and simultaneously speaking a modern and democratized variant of Javanese in daily life (thereby advocating the natural process of language dynamics).

Looking ahead to the last chapter of this dissertation, interesting shifts have taken place since the 1990s and the early 2000s. The attitude towards language in Indonesia has changed. Whereas Indonesian had been foregrounded since independence, the openness towards the multiethnic and multilingual character of the country in the twenty-first century has led to a new interest in regional languages and cultures. The other shift is related to language and ideology: from foregrounding written Javanese and high and refined language use, etiquette and polite speech style and a focus on (and striving for) an ideal derived from the past, attention has shifted to spoken Javanese and familiar speech styles, representing modernity and contemporaneity, and oral expressions rather than written. The use of Javanese in performance (live and mediatized) has also been paid more attention. This change in emphasis has led to a different view of artisticity, that is slowly but surely dislodging the *wedi kleru* (scared to make mistakes) attitude.

