

BAHASA INDONESIA FOR BEGINNERS. Books 1 and 2. By Poerwanto Danoesoegondo. Australia: Sydney University Press, 1966 and 1967. Pp. 166 and 162.

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Anyone writing a language textbook is always confronted with two alternatives, namely, he must decide whether to write it for students or for reviewers. Poerwanto made the right choice when he decided to write it for the former. The way he did it was by presenting each sentence structure in the simplest possible manner, ignoring all other related structures and possible options until such time as their introduction facilitated the learning process.

Bahasa Indonesia for Beginners (henceforth BIB) consists of two volumes. Due to the different degrees of complexity involved in these two books, they will be reviewed separately.

BIB Book 1. This volume is intended for "students in the last years of high-school and the first years of university" (Introduction, vi). It aims at "helping the student establish a sound foundation for further study of Bahasa Indonesia" (Introduction, v). The language style chosen is the formal conversational.

Book 1 begins with a pronunciation and spelling guide presenting individual phonemes and their spellings, followed by a brief section on word and sentence stress. The thirteen grammar lessons come next each starting with a dialogue containing the sentence structures for study. Exercises, a short reading passage with questions and a vocabulary list follow. Examples of common mistakes and notes are given at the end of each lesson. Comments on structures are given initially in English, but then mixed with Indonesian. Indonesian-English and English-Indonesian glossaries make up the last section of the book with about 1200 entries.

1.1 *Phonology.* Despite the claim that "language is basically a set of sounds" (Introduction, v), Poerwanto's handling of pronunciation does not lend itself to what he believes in. The section on phonology only mentions the number and kind of phonemes (he uses the term "sound"), how they are spelled, and how they are approximately pronounced by giving the English equivalents. There are no practice exercises. The most we can find is a reminder that a certain sound is to be pronounced in this or that manner. This is unfortunate because he seems to de-emphasize the role of phonetic distinctions in language learning.

His claim that an interrogative sentence in Indonesian always has a rising intonation has recently been challenged. By using Mingographic tracings, Halim¹ argues that "there is no evidence in support of assertions of such scholars as Alisjahbana that the intonation pattern of BI interrogative sentences is rising rather than falling." (p. 183). My own speech seems to agree with what Halim has demonstrated.

¹Amran Halim. "Intonation in Relation to Syntax in Bahasa Indonesia." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1969.

1.2 *Syntax*. The author presents the structures systematically on the basis of a principle which I will term "the principle of pretended ignorance". The presentation of the equative sentence type as consisting of an NP followed by another NP is one example. For a reviewer, this formula is clearly inaccurate, especially if the first, the second, or both NPs are long, in which case, the insertion of *adalah* is more normal. But must we go into that detail in Lesson 1? Poerwanto's answer is, very correctly, "no", although he does use the word *adalah* in his reading passage (p.8).

When presenting the negativizers *tidak* and *bukan*, he makes a firm statement that *bukan* is used to "negate nouns and nouns only." (p. 3), and *tidak* elsewhere. He pretends not to know the fact that *bukan* can also occur with non-nouns, but this should not be counted against his statement above since it is primarily directed toward beginning students. On the contrary, he should be praised for his selective presentation and "pretended ignorance". This is especially justified after we read Book 2 where the use of *bukan* with non-nouns is picked up again in the form of *bukannya* (p. 75).

Indonesian is noted for its large number of classifiers. There are approximately sixty classifiers in the language. Most of them are not in current use, but there are three which are now emerging as the neutralized forms: *seorang*, for humans, *seekor* for animals, and *sebuah* for indefinite shapes. Poerwanto introduced only these three in Book 1.

Unlike many other textbooks that I have seen,² BIB is truly intended for students. The author does not avoid complex structures to make the students feel they can learn the language easily; he just postpones them for later lessons. It is unfortunate that some structures are not picked up again. The placement of *tidak* before the special verbs *boleh* 'may', *harus* 'must', *dapat* 'can', etc. (p. 65) is not followed anywhere in Book 1, giving the students the impression that *boleh tidak*, *harus tidak*, and *dapat tidak* do not occur in the language. In actuality, they are in significant semantic contrast with *tidak boleh*, *tidak harus*, and *tidak dapat* respectively.

Poerwanto also follows a principle known as the principle of "frequency of usefulness."³ The choice of *seorang*, *seekor*, and *sebuah* mentioned above is a case in point; that is, why should we introduce all the classifiers in the language, if we can get away with just three? The introduction of *apakah* as a question marker early in the book is another example. We know that there are at least three ways of forming a question sentence, namely, by using only a question intonation, reversing the predicate or part of the predicate plus the marker *-kah*, or simply by using the question marker *apakah*. Among these three the last is the most general. No matter what the internal structure of the declarative is, the addition of *apakah* at the beginning of a sentence makes the sentence interrogative. Obviously, there is a disadvantage here since in language teaching we have to take into account not only the production, but also the recognition levels, the former requiring the frequency of usefulness and the latter the frequency of occurrence. The choice of limiting the students to the frequency of usefulness and postponing the frequency of occurrence in a beginner's textbook is a correct decision. Unfortunately again here, the author does

²One example would be Elinor Horne's *Beginning Javanese*, Yale University Press, 1961, where each chapter contains more grammatical analyses, many of which are unnecessarily too detailed, than exercises which students need most.

³Charles C. Fries. *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*. University of Michigan Press, 1945.

not follow it through. In introducing the degrees of comparison of adjectives (p. 84), he chose the prefix *ter-* instead of *paling* for the superlative degree. This choice is unfortunate because the level of generality of the former is much lower than the latter. By choosing *ter-* for production level, he makes the students unable to generate a superlative degree for adjectival words such as *berguna* 'useful,' *menarik* 'interesting,' and *menyenangkan* 'pleasing,' since **terberguna*, **termenarik*, and **termenyenangkan* do not occur in the language, whereas *paling berguna*, *paling menarik*, and *paling menyenangkan* do.

Perhaps one of the trickiest structure for students to learn and for the teacher to teach is the problem of the existensive *ada*. Poerwanto presents it with the meaning 'there + to be' and 'to be.' He gave the examples (p.55)

- (1) Ada andjing di halaman muka. 'There is a dog in the front yard.'
 be dog at yard front
- (2) Buku saudara ada di rak-buku saja. 'Your book is on my bookshelf.'
 book your be at bookshelf my

The explanation given for (1) is that "*ada* occupies the same sentence position as *there is* . . .," and for (2) *ada* occurs after the subject. There are two crucial points which are not given here. First, *ada* in (1) is obligatory, even if the locative is permuted to the front as in

- (3) Di halaman muka ada andjing

whereas *ada* in (2) is optional which thus makes (4) acceptable and has the same meaning as (2)

- (4) Buku saudara di rak-buku saja.

The failure to mention this fact increases the possibility on the part of the students of not knowing when *ada* is obligatory and when it is not. This is especially true since more and more English speakers now accept English sentences such as "A dog is in the front yard" as an alternate form of "There is a dog in the front yard."

Secondly, even if the concept of language universals is still inconclusive, the Indonesian existensive sentence does show a syntactic constraint which seems to be universal. This appears in the form of an indefinite, therefore unmarked, subject. Sentences such as

- (5) Ada pentjuri di luar rumah. 'There is a thief outside the house.'
 be thief at out house

are acceptable, but not

- (6) Ada pentjuri *itu* di luar rumah.⁴

although (7) below is perfectly well-formed

- (7) Pentjuri itu ada di luar rumah.

Not mentioning this constraint in BIB causes the students to wonder if (6) is acceptable or not, especially because in English there is a sentence such as "There is this thief in Washington" where *there is* is followed by a definite NP.

Related to *ada* is the contrast between *ada* and *adalah*. Since both words are phonologically similar and can have the same meaning 'to be,' students are bound to become

⁴*Ada* is not stressed here, and there is no pause between it and *pentjuri*.

confused, if they are not told how they differ syntactically and, therefore, might generate unacceptable sentences such as

(8) *Kota kami itu ada Los Angeles.

(9) *Di sini adalah banyak makanan

for the correct forms *Kota kami adalah Los Angeles* 'Our city is Los Angeles' and *Di sini ada banyak makanan* 'There is plenty of food here' respectively.

It has been argued that contrastive analysis, which partly underlies BIB, does not do what it claims to do.⁵ At one point it was suggested that contrastive analysis be abandoned, and that we should teach a foreign language on the basis of its internal structures. While this suggestion is perhaps somewhat premature, there are indeed cases where internal structural contrasts are desirable. *Ada* and *adalah* above are one good example. It is not enough to mention them in a passing manner the way Poerwanto does. The treatment of *ketika* and *kapan*, both glossed as 'when,' under Miscellaneous Column (p. 117) is also unfortunate. These words require an explicit explanation and extensive drills. This is more so, if we include, which Poerwanto does not, the conjunction *kalau* 'if/when' which complicates the matter further, for now students have to make the English conditional 'if' and the temporal 'when' coalesce into *kalau* in addition to having to contrast *kalau* with *ketika* and *kapan*.

The contrast between *siapa* 'who/that,' *bahwa* 'that,' and *jang* 'who/whom/that' (p. 109) needs also more emphasis because they are in certain constructions parallel to the English word 'that.' Without clear explanation and contrastive exercises, students will generate unacceptable sentences such as

(10) *Orang siapa datang itu teman saja.

(11) *Dia berkata jang dia akan datang besok.

(12) *Tjerita bahwa saja tjeritakan kemarin itu benar sekali.

where *siapa*, *jang*, and *bahwa* are used instead of *jang*, *bahwa*, and *jang* respectively.

1.3 *Minor Points.* When a non-native speaker writes a language textbook, there are occasionally errors which are culturally bound due to lack of cross-checking with native informants. This is not true of a textbook written by a native speaker. I would, therefore, suspect that it must have been due to an editorial error, although done twice, when Poerwanto still lets *Selamat djalan* 'Goodbye expressed by those who stay' and *Selamat tinggal* 'Goodbye expressed by those who leave' remain in the dialogues (p. 10 and 29) where the situation does not permit their usage. As far as my native intuition is concerned, which I am sure Poerwanto agrees with, these expressions are used only when the parting is for a relatively long time and distance, and never in a situation in which one is leaving for school or late for a class as these dialogues imply.

Most of the exercises are oriented toward oral production. They are well presented and graded.

2.1 *Conclusion.* Despite a few points which I have unfavorably raised, I must say that BIB Book 1 is a good textbook in terms of its approach and method of presentation.

⁵William C. Ritchie, "Some Implications of Generative Grammar for the Constructions of Courses in English as a Foreign Language," in *Language Learning*, July, 1971. A more moderate position is taken by Ronald Wardhaugh in his "The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis," in *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1970.

It describes the structure systematically in a step by step procedure with the author **keeping** all other related and alternative structures for himself for later presentations. This **is** radically different from many other Asian language textbooks in which the authors “show off” their knowledge about the languages which then makes the books suitable more for linguists than for students.

The exercises are well graded and directed toward oral mastery, although perhaps a few more direct drills are needed. No translation is given as the author correctly believes that translation is disastrous in its pedagogic consequences.

BIB Book 1, however, lacks explicitness in some areas discussed above. Also missing in this book are contrasts of internal structures where they are vitally needed.

BIB Book 2. Book 2 contains mainly the affixes which make up the bulk of the Indonesian morphology, the alternative constructions, and the complex sentence structures. Unlike Book 1, Book 2 allows translation. It has also glossaries containing approximately 1100 words. Since the main subject covered in this volume is morphology, I would like to concentrate my review on this part.

3.1 *Morphophonemics.* Book 2 begins with a set of morphophonemic rules governing the *meN*-verb derivation (p. 13). Most of these rules are accurate with very few minor discrepancies, such as, the omission of the rules for monosyllabic words, which are not many in the language, which can cause the students to believe that the verb for ‘to paint’ is only *mentjat* as given on page 15, and never *mengetjat*, the latter being as acceptable as the former.

The only serious points to raise here is that these rules are one-directional so that students are able to derive a verb from any given bases accurately, but not *vice versa*. This situation arises out of the fact that any *meN*-verb whose phoneme after the morphophoneme is a vowel has at least three possible bases, namely, (i) if the verb begins with *mem-*, the base can start with *p*, *m*, or the *mem-* is itself part of the base; (ii) if the verb begins with *men-*, the base can begin with *t*, *n*, or *men-*; and (iii) if the verb begins with *meng-*, the initial letter of the base can be *k*, *ng*, a vowel, or *meng-*.

While I do understand that there is no way of telling the students exactly what to do here, we can at least give them some statistical probabilities⁶ so that students will be able to guess with some accuracy every time they have to look up the base of a *meN*-verb in a dictionary. Otherwise, they will spend too much time in figuring out whether, say, the base for *memutuskan* ‘to decide’ is to be looked up under *p*, *mu-* or *mem-*, and *mengirim* ‘to send’ under *k*, *ngi-*, *i*, or *meng-*.

3.2 *The Verbs.* Verbs in Indonesian are of two kinds: simple and derived. Derived verbs are composed of one or two prefixes, a base, with or without a suffix. The prefixes are *beR-*, *di-*, *meN-*, *peR-*, and *ter-*. The suffixes are *-kan* and *-i*.

Poerwanto presents these affixes in a gradual manner throughout the book. Since most of the problems with these affixes are centered around the suffixes *-kan* and *-i*, I will limit my discussion only to these items and their combinations with the prefix *meN-*. Poerwanto made the most useful generalization when he said that any verb ending in *-i* (p. 36) or *-kan* (p. 48) is always transitive, irrespective of the kind of base this verb is

⁶John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily in *An Indonesian-English Dictionary*, Cornell University Press, 1961, suggest that we look under *p*, *m*, and *mem* in that order for case (i); under *t*, *n*, and *men* for case (ii); and under *k*, the vowel, *ng*, and *meng* for case (iii).

Even here the explanation given — that *meN-kan* verbs emphasize the actor and *meN-i* the acted upon — is very misleading as we have seen in (13–17). I must also point out here that there must be a typographical error on page 47 line 7 where he says that *-kan* makes the object *undergo* what the base implies. What he must have meant must be *perform* whatever the base implies as he later says on the same page line 26.

3.3 *The Nouns.* The problem with the noun formation in Indonesian is similar to that of the verb. If we consider the suffix *-an* as the universal set U of the derived nouns, and *ke-an*, *peN-an*, and *peR-an* as three sets intersecting within U, we then have seven subsets each disjoint from the other in terms of their individual lexical bases.⁸ The best way to present these derivations, as Poerwanto has demonstrated, is by relating these nouns to their corresponding verbs. His approach could have been better, however, if he had also contrasted those derived nouns which share the same bases so that students would have a better picture of, say, the difference in meaning between *kebesaran* vs *pembesaran*, *perbuatan* vs *pembuatan*, *perpindahan* vs *pemindahan* vs *kepindahan*, etc.

3.4 *The Syntax.* From some of the grammatical comments that Poerwanto gives, I notice that in several cases the most essential part that makes a structure what it is is either given inaccurately, or not given at all. The rule for the Imperative sentence (p. 26), for instance, reads “A direct order is simply a verb base and the appropriate intonation.” From the examples given, this rule is intended only for *meN-*verb sentences. The formulation of the rule is misleading in two ways. First, whether or not the prefix *meN-* is to be deleted from the verb in a direct order depends on the transitivity of the verb. The rule is true if, and only if, the verb is transitive. In fact Poerwanto himself gives an example of an Imperative sentence where the prefix *meN-* is still retained (*mengasolah* ‘please take a rest,’ p. 27). In some cases we still even have to go further to see if the transitive verb implies the presence of an object or not. Thus the verb *membatja* ‘to read,’ for instance, can have two imperative forms *batjalah* and *membatjalah* depending on whether it is being used transitively or intransitively as in

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|-------------------------------|------------------|
| (18) Batjalah dengan baik! | “Read (X) well.” |
| read with good | |
| (19) Membatjalah dengan baik! | ‘Read well.’ |
| read with good | |

where (18) implies the presence of something to be read, whereas (19) emphasizes the act of reading itself.

Secondly, the word *base* in the rule implies that any suffix is to be deleted. If this is done, two consequences result: (i) the transformation does not preserve the original meaning intended, and (ii) it may generate ungrammatical sentences. Given sentences (20) for case (i) and (21) for case (ii)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| (20) Kamu memandikan anak itu. | ‘You bathe the child.’ |
| you bath child the | |
| (21) Kamu mengerdjakan soal ini. | ‘You do this problem.’ |
| you do case this | |

we have

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| (22) Mandilah anak itu. | ‘The child takes a bath.’ |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|

⁸It seems that the problem is more complex than given here, because we do have nouns derived from *ke-* and *peN-* alone without *-an*. On the other hand we also have no form with *peR-* alone.

(23) *Kerdjalah soal ini.

We see here that the deletion of *-kan* in (22) brings about a meaning different from that of (20). If this operation is performed on (21), the resultant construction (23) is not grammatical. It is now clear that his rule above must be elaborated to prevent the undesired.

When dealing with the emphatic sentence in which *alangkah* (and others) is used (p. 84), he does not indicate whether the "clitic" *-nja* attached to the adjective is obligatory or not. He treats it in the same way as he treats *-nja* of the sentence negator *bukannja* (p. 75) without any indication that *-nja* is indispensable in the emphatic sentence, but not in the negated one. Without being told how *-nja* functions in these cases, students will not know whether the following sentences are acceptable or not.

(24) Bukan dia tidak tjinta, tetapi . . . 'Not that he does not love (her), but . . .'
not he not love but

(25) *Alangkah tinggi orang itu.

3.5 *Conclusion.* I am much happier with Book 1 than with Book 2. The latter seems lacking both in theoretical analysis of the target language as well as in classroom testing. The exercises are only minimally oriented toward oral-aural mastery. Also missing again here is the contrastive analysis of the structures within the target language itself — very crucial at this stage more than in Book 1.