



# The Threat to Linguistic Diversity from National and Global Languages? The Case of Indonesia

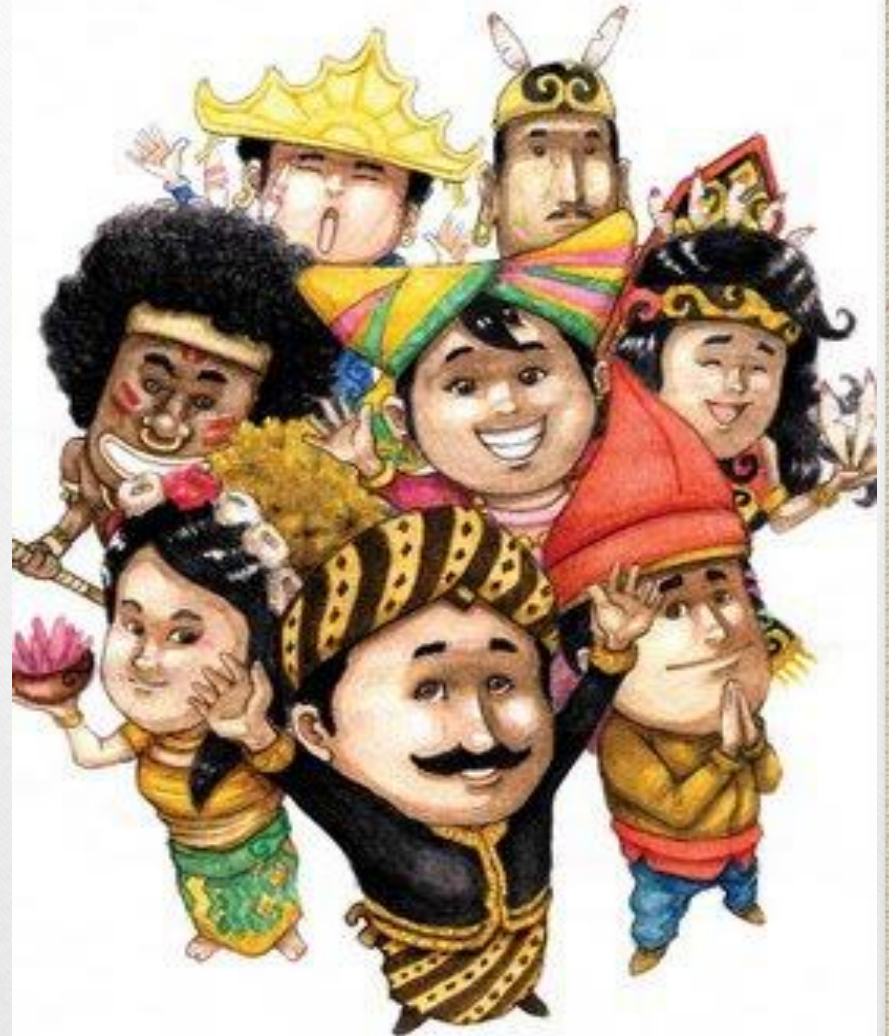
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The University of Manchester



Bring It Back Home, Manchester Institute of Education, 2015



# Who am I?

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Fitri

Of Javanese Ethnic Group  
Speaking Javanese, Madurese,  
Bahasa Indonesia, English  
From a small village in Java,  
Indonesia



About 240 millions people  
 17,504 Islands  
 More than 1300 Ethnic groups  
 726 Vernacular Languages,  
 Bahasa Indonesia as the National Language  
 (Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010)







Number of languages found : 146

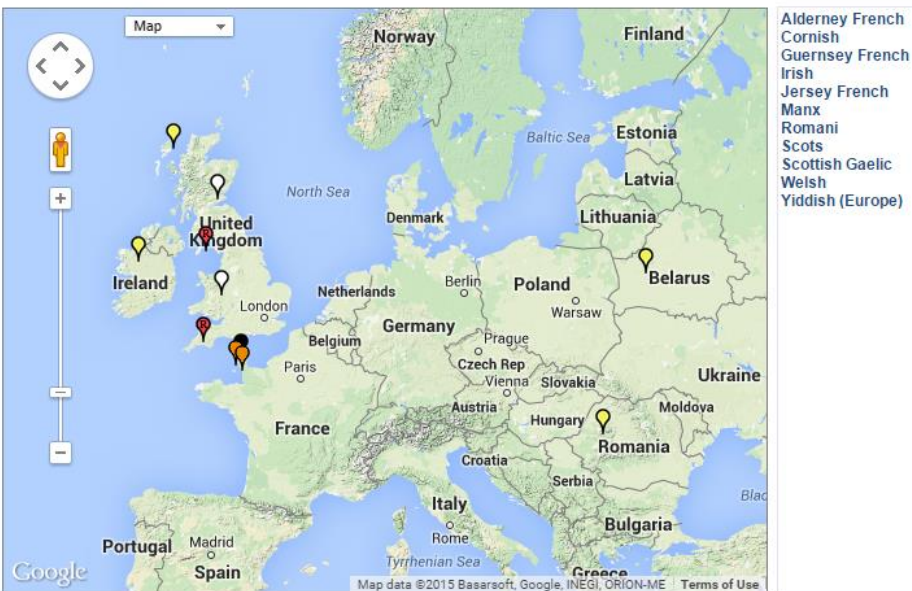


Alune  
Amahai  
Ampibabo Lauje  
Andio  
Anus  
Aputai  
Arguni  
As  
Auye  
Awer  
Awyi  
Bahonsuai  
Baleasang  
Baras  
Bedoanas  
Benggoi  
Besoa  
Biak  
Boano  
Bonerif  
Bonggo  
Budong-Budong  
Burate  
Busoa  
Dabra  
Dakka  
Damal  
Dampelas  
Dampelas  
Demisa  
Dondo  
Doutai

Degree of endangerment	Intergenerational Language Transmission
safe	language is spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted >> not included in the Atlas
vulnerable	most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)
definitely endangered	children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home
severely endangered	language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves
critically endangered	the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently
extinct	there are no speakers left >> included in the Atlas if presumably extinct since the 1950s

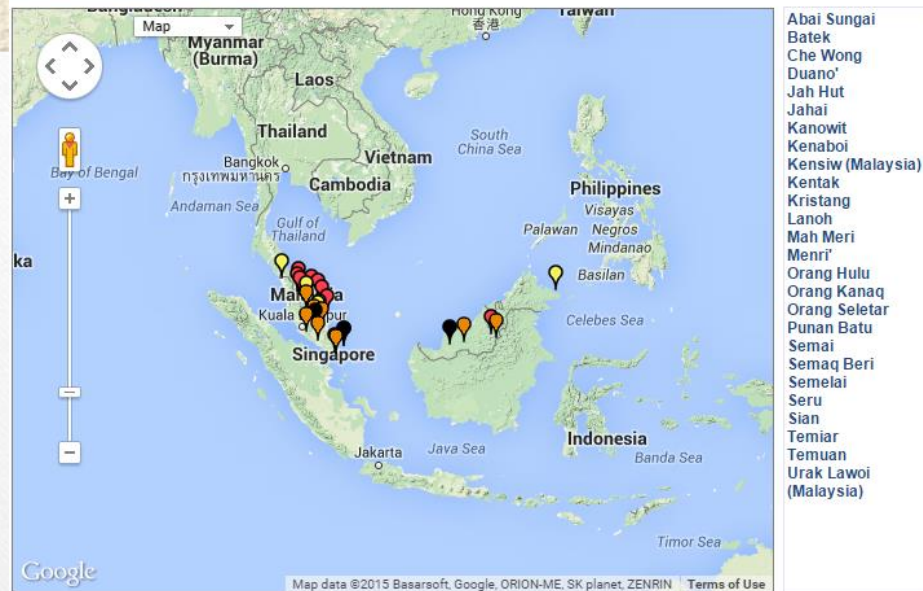


Number of languages found : 11



## GB and Northern Ireland

Number of languages found : 26



## Malaysia

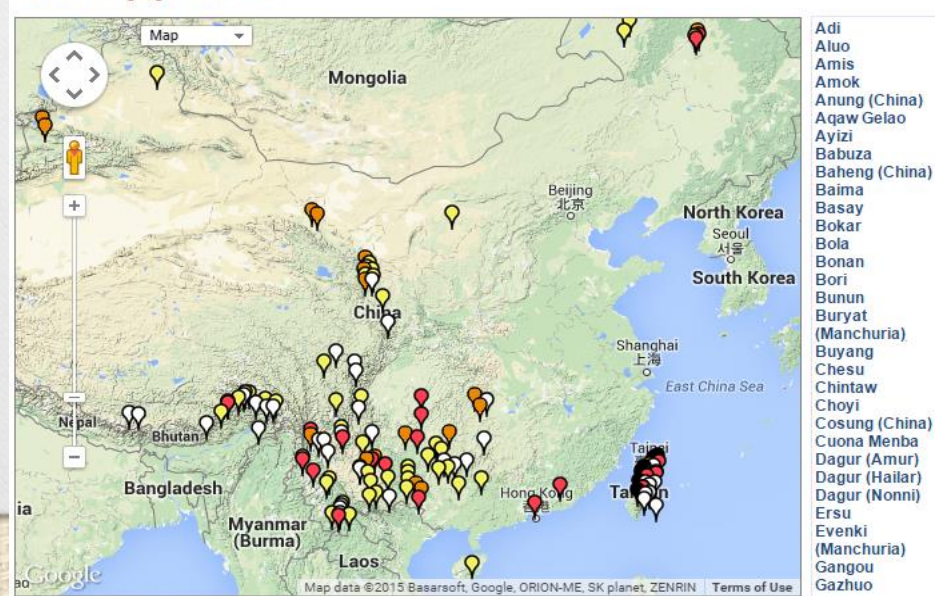
## Turkey

## China

Number of languages found : 18



Number of languages found : 144





# How can it happen? (The Case of Indonesia)

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This process is neither  
inevitable nor irreversible  
(Unesco, 2009-2014)

# Vernacular Languages at Schools

- 1951 – 1956 the language of Instruction of year 1-3
- 1957 – 2013 Local Content (Primary and Secondary Schools)
- 2013 – to date Integrated in Art, Culture, and Crafts Lesson





# The increasing significance and popularity of English and other foreign languages

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- English as the working language of ASEAN, in which Indonesia is a part of.
- English is one of prominent requirement for employment, career development, and study and academic purposes.
- English as a medium of Instruction at schools



# Foreign Language-medium Schools in Indonesia

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International School (Private)

Franchise International School (Private)

National Plus School (Private)

International Standard School (Public - now cancelled)





# Bahasa Indonesia and English in Media

- TV
- Internet and social media
- Movies
- Magazines, Newspapers





# Implications

## Language and Social Status

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Foreign Language → High class  
National Language → Middle class  
Vernacular Language → Lower Class

Each language had a social rank. If you spoke Javanese, for example, you were below. If you spoke Indonesian, you were a bit above. If you spoke Dutch, you were at the top.’ (Rachman in Onishi, 2010). And now English has become the new Dutch.’  
(Onishi, 2010)

For some Indonesians, as mastery of English has become increasingly tied to social standing, Indonesian has been relegated to second-class status. In extreme cases, people take pride in speaking Indonesian poorly. (Onishi, 2010) “Sometimes the parents even ask the baby sitters not to speak in Indonesian but in English,” (Ariani in Onishi, 2010)



# Implications

## Language and Prestige

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Foreign Language → Educated and modern  
National Language → Quite Educated and modern  
Vernacular Language → Uneducated and primordial

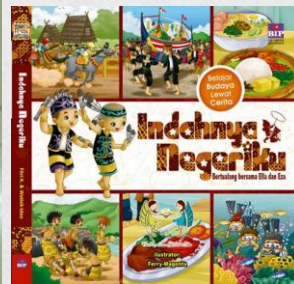
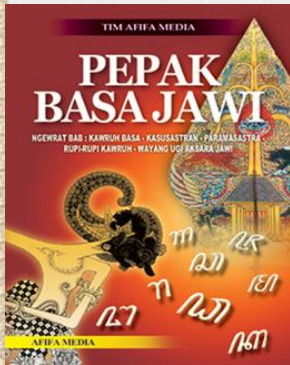
Vernacular language is often seen as having low status, as being ancient, as related to poverty and stupidity. ( Darwis, 2011)

‘I feel that in the long run we [in the International Standard School] are more proud to speak English...I feel that gradually our love to our own language will be fading...’ (*Dhona, a Science Teacher- Interview November, 2013*)



# Possible Solutions

- Reintroduction of Vernacular Language as the language of instructions
- Vernacular languages at children books and magazine
- Vernacular languages at festivals
- Vernacular language at media (TV, Newspaper, etc)
- Emphasis on Intercultural Awareness and Intercultural Communication in Bahasa Indonesia and English Lessons





# Why we have to preserve Vernacular Languages?

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Language diversity is essential to the human heritage. Each and every language embodies the unique cultural wisdom of a people. The loss of any language is thus a loss for all humanity.' (UNESCO, 2013: p1)

Though approximately six thousand languages still exist, many are under threat. There is an imperative need for language documentation, new policy initiatives, and new materials to enhance the vitality of these languages. (UNESCO, 2013: p.1)



# Conclusion

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The threat to vernacular languages, which is a global phenomenon, is indeed unstoppable and inevitable as the world is becoming 'smaller and smaller'. However, systematic and serious efforts to preserve them may help the language to survive further.

Other context may be different - Let's learn and share from one another.





***Matur Nuwun ...  
Terimakasih  
Thank You ☺***

***Any Questions?***



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