

Indonesia – The Land of Languages and Religions

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The Republic of Indonesia (RI) is a heavenly archipelago situated in the equator, between Asia and Australia continents, and becomes the border between Indian and Pacific Oceans. It is the largest island country in the world. RI consists of about 17,000 islands inhabited by about 265 million people. Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Papua are the five most populated islands. The world's most populous island, Java, is the home to more than half of the country's population. The size of the country, the very different cultural background and traditions along with the geographical, ethnic variety of the people makes the issue of language and religion extremely important and may have a role to support unity in this multifaceted heterogeneity.

Indonesia has about 300 ethnic groups and 742 native languages (Radjaban, 2013), each with their own cultural identities developed over centuries, and influenced by Indian, Arabic, Chinese, and European sources. Traditional Javanese and Balinese dances, for example, contain aspects of Hindu culture and mythology. Five main religions, namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Protestantism, Catholicism, and Islam enrich the construction of the nation. Indonesian history also noted specific contributions of the religions to the diversity of Indonesia in its actual form. Interrelationship among religions, language and culture that shape this huge archipelago is always an interesting issue to explore since it not only contributes to strengthen the unity of the nation but also provides potentials for national disharmony. This short article shares some facts about Indonesia with two dominant identities, languages and religions, and experiences of the nation to maintain the two critical yet problematic identities that uniquely shape Indonesia as a heavenly huge archipelago country in the heart of the globe. When viewed on the globe, Indonesian archipelagos are situated on the equator, which figuratively becomes the center of the globe.

1. Indonesian languages

It is identified that there are more than 700 regional languages spoken in Indonesia's numerous islands (Sudarsa, 2013). Since the native people of Indonesia are Austronesian, most of the languages spoken in about 13,000 islands typologically belong to the Austronesian language family (Soepomo, 1998). As a huge archipelago country, different dialects of the same language family spoken in different islands grow sharper. Since different groups of people living in different islands have a lower intensity of contact, differences of phonology, morphology and syntax become much more extreme and end up forming different languages. This makes different groups of people living in certain islands develop their own dialects which other groups of people do not understand.

Based on this fact, most of Indonesian regional languages belong to the Austronesian language family, with a few Papuan languages also spoken in the island of Papua. National consensus, however, decides that the official language of the country is Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language), a variant of Malay, which was already used in the archipelago. It borrows heavily from local languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, Minangkabau, etc. Indonesian is primarily used in commerce, administration, education, and the media, but most Indonesians speak other languages, such as Javanese, as their first language. Almost all Indonesians are bilingual by nature. They speak both their own native languages and Indonesian language.

Indonesian is based on the prestige dialect of Malay, that of the Johor-Riau Sultanate, which for centuries had been the lingua franca of the archipelago. Johor, which is now one of the Malaysian states, and Riau, which is one of the Indonesian provinces, once belonged to the territory of Pagaruyung Kingdom which became the strong ruler promoting a prestige dialect of Malay to become the lingua franca of the territory. Indonesian is universally taught in schools and is consequently spoken by nearly every Indonesian. It is the language of business, politics, national media, education, and academia. It was promoted by Indonesian nationalists in the 1920s, and declared the official language under the name Bahasa Indonesia in the proclamation of independence in 1945. Fisher (1952, p. 32) claimed that most Indonesians speak at least one of several hundred local languages and dialects, often as their first language. In comparison, Papua has over 339 indigenous Papuan and Austronesian languages, in a region of about 2.7 million people. Javanese is the most widely spoken local language, as it is the language of the largest ethnic group. It was identified that the island of Sumatra has about 35 local languages, Java 4, Borneo 144, Sulawesi 148, while Bali

and Nusa Tenggara have 78 local languages (Radjaban, 2013). This huge diversity is expressed by Indonesia's national motto, "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" (Unity in Diversity), which literally means "many, yet one" (Sudarsa, 2013). The motto, "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*", was written in *Pararaton*, an ancient manuscript written by Empu Tantular about the history of *Nusantara*, the kingdom of Indonesia between the 6th and the 13th century A.D.. This motto was then introduced by Soekarno, the Indonesian Proclamator and first President, in the opening board meeting of the preparation of the Indonesian Independence in 1945.

1.1. Political roles of Indonesian language

In the history of the Indonesian independence, Indonesian language became one of the spiritualities for Indonesian tribes to be bound as one nation. When struggling for independence, different tribes from various geographical locations fought the invaders sporadically as small traditional troops. Therefore, they were easily defeated. It happened for hundreds of years. It was then in October 1928, an idea to unite the power denotatively and politically existed. It was then known as the Indonesian National Awakening. In that national awakening, Indonesian warriors from all different tribes gathered together and made a pledge to unite their powers in order to form a nation with "one motherland, one nation, and one language"; it has become Indonesia. Indonesian language was newly created with Malay language as its main core (Alieva, 1991). Since then, Indonesian language has become a key element of national identity for the whole Indonesian archipelago. Indonesian founding fathers like Dr. Soepomo, Ir. Soekarno, supported by the leaders of Indonesian Students Organizations (PPPI) aggressively promoted the use of Indonesian language for all their formal and informal communication. In the first Indonesian Youth Congress in Jakarta the 27th and 28th of October 1928, Indonesian language was declared the national uniting language. In this congress, the Indonesian National Anthem, *Indonesia Raya*, composed by W.R. Supratman was introduced.

Alieva (1991) further argued that since the Indonesian Independence, the Indonesian language has formerly become the Indonesian National Language. It has become the language of all formal Indonesian documents like the Indonesian constitution, laws, and all governmental decrees and written policies. The Indonesian language has also become the language for all formal speeches in all governmental occasions and educational instructions. Besides Indonesian language as the national language, some areas still use local languages as the second language on special cultural

occasions like Javanese in Yogyakarta, Central and East Java Provinces, Sundanese in West Java Province, Balinese in Bali, and some other languages for other islands of Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Papua, Timor, Flores, and Lombok.

1.2. Problems of Indonesian language as the national language

Since Indonesian language was “newly created”, it develops and accommodates various local languages from their different levels – morphology and also syntax (Alieva, 1991). Its development results in different dialects that need standardizing. Efforts to standardize Indonesian language has been a challenging work for Indonesian linguists since the efforts started relatively long after it had developed. Pros and cons on the efforts always become a hot issue among linguists of different schools which have different ideas of how the standardized Indonesian language should look like. Most of Indonesian people’s fossilized non-standard Indonesian language makes them resistant to the “new” standardized forms. This seems to be another obstacle for establishing the final standardized Indonesian. The establishment of the standardized Indonesian is under the authority of Indonesian Language Board. This Board belongs to the authority of the Indonesian Government the authority of which is based on the Indonesian Constitution. Linguists in this Board are assigned to formulate the standardized Indonesian language based on their researches. Research findings on the efforts to standardize Indonesian language are presented and discussed in national conferences. Linguistic researches in the level of phonology, morphology, and syntax contribute significantly to the effort of standardizing Indonesian language. Based on the research results, the Indonesian Language Board proposed the final state of the Indonesian language to the House.

The decision to make Indonesian language a national one seems to be one of the significant factors for the extinction of some local indigenous languages of Indonesia. When becoming a national language, Indonesian language grows dominant. Everyone from different local language communities makes Indonesian language their priority to master. Families from different language backgrounds condition their children to master Indonesian language. They put their children from very early infancy into a new language context that is Indonesian language. It then makes young Indonesians leave their local languages behind. Most young Indonesians do not speak their local languages any more. It then causes the extinction of some local languages. About 10 percent (70 out of 742) of Indonesian indigenous languages are already extinct and more than 65 percent have been endangered (Radjaban, 2013). To preserve these indigenous languages, the Indonesian government obliges all primary and

secondary levels of education to make local languages a part of the curriculum in schools. However, since languages need regular practice and local language contexts get decreasing in quantity, this way of preserving local languages seems to be less effective.

1.3. Prospects of indigenous language researches

The dominance of Indonesian language also results in various aspects that finally increase the number of endangered local languages of Indonesia. One of them is the political will of the Indonesian government to give priority to the preservation of local languages. The national budget for researches on local languages is very little. It is less than 0.2 percent of the total budget. This condition results in low interest of local linguists to do researches on local languages. It then causes lacks of linguistic documentations on indigenous languages which are basically needed for their preservation (Fisher, 1952). This was also confirmed by the findings of researches conducted by Chaer in 1994 and Mahsun in 2005.

As we all know, one of the effective efforts to preserve a language is by establishing the linguistic documentations. This offers a great opportunity for linguists all over the world to do research and to make linguistic documentations on more than 450 indigenous languages which are available all over the Indonesian archipelago. The big amount of local languages with no basic linguistic documentations offers long term research prospects for linguists and related experts on ethnolinguistic, ethnography and anthropology (Whorf, 1993). It is worth noting that field researches on indigenous languages also involve ethnographical and anthropological researches since a language is always embedded in a given language community with its unique cultural language background. For this kind of research, the author of this article has an experience and therefore access to do field researches that will help much maintain the realization of the joint researches since he has a well-planned list of local language researches in the area of North Borneo. Besides the financial schemes in the forms of grants provided by the Indonesian government, UNESCO also provides financial aids for research projects on indigenous languages because since 2010 UNESCO considers indigenous languages as being part of the world heritage.

1.4. Additional notes on Indonesian dialect differences

Indonesian language has only very recently become the official national language of Indonesia. However, in 1945 the Indonesian language was already officially stated as the formal Indonesian language in the constitution. It meant that Indonesian language which was originally developed from Riau Malay (Fisher, 1952) was actually only one of the hundred indigenous languages spoken in Indonesia. Like the other languages, this language was only spoken by certain groups of people living around the area of Riau. Based on the number of its speakers, the language was not dominant. In 1940 only around 4 percent of the population spoke Malay as their first language, and the vast majority did not speak the language at all. The language however is prominent in trading activities, especially on major trading ports all over Sumatra, Java, Bali, and Sulawesi (Arago, 2015). Besides having been used in most trading activities, the reason to choose Riau Malay language as the main core of the national Indonesian language was somewhat political: to avoid political jealousy when choosing one of the dominant languages since at that time Indonesia needed a language which had the political power to unite nations in their fight against the colonial rulers. In this way, no dominant language speakers felt superior or inferior. For the sake of national unity, this was the way which proved to be effective.

Politically and officially the language has become the core of the national identity. Since national unity was a priority for the Indonesian people, the choice of Indonesian language as a ground for national identity was warmly accepted by all Indonesian people from all different language backgrounds. Consequently, all Indonesian people from different language areas must use the language which was then named Indonesian language to replace Malay language. Since most of Indonesians master Indonesian language after they acquire their own mother tongues, which for most of them are completely different in terms of phonology, morphology and syntax, they start speaking Indonesian language with their own dialects. This is why the Indonesian language shows dialect differences. Different language backgrounds of Indonesian users also result in the linguistic enrichment of the Indonesian language. Some local languages with politically dominant speakers, like Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese, make important contributions to the Indonesian vocabulary. From the origin of Riau Malay, it can be summed up that Indonesian language today is a mixture of different languages which sounds completely different from the core, Riau Malay (Farmer, 2014). It is then more acceptable to say that Indonesian was a newly created language having Riau Malay as its core. It is not only the name that makes Indonesian language a newly created language but the form definitely proves it to be a new one. It is worth to note that some areas with dominant local languages like Borneo, Sulawesi,

Ambon, Lombok, Sumba, Flores, Timor and Papua, speak Indonesian language with such extremely different dialects which make them sound like non-Indonesian languages. Some Indonesian speakers talking to people speaking Indonesian with one of these dialects will definitely have some difficulties to understand what is being said.

Another remark on Indonesian language as a newly "created" language would be the missing of norms and values of the native speakers. Whorf (1993, p. 25) in his language relativity theory argues that not only native speakers shape the language they use, but, on the other hand, the language itself also shapes the speakers. In the way language shapes the speakers, it accommodates the norms and values of the native speakers as the reflections of the mind and then the norms and values shape the grammars of the language. This cause-effect procedure did not happen in the reconstruction of the Indonesian language since Indonesian language was constructed through a pidginization process that it developed from a lingua franca spoken by people with different language backgrounds. At the time when the lingua franca was pidginized, it did not have the native speakers. It was developed from the lingua franca spoken, mostly in trading speech events the norms and values involved of which were rather pragmatic than philosophical. In its further reconstruction, moreover, Indonesian language was developed rather on the table by researches than in actual or everyday conversations.

One example of its missing values is politeness. Indonesian language to a certain extent does not accommodate politeness either morphologically or syntactically. To some Indonesian speakers with certain language backgrounds in which politeness is paramount, Indonesian language often sounds rude when used in certain contexts, for example when addressing the second person. Indonesian language has "anda" to address the second person and it is also applied to address more respected people, like ministers or even the president, and used in everyday conversations with ordinary people in general. To some speakers, like Javanese people, to address more respected people using "anda" sounds rude. Javanese people and some other ethnic groups with different mother tongues feel the need to find another lexeme which sounds more polite when addressing more respected people. This is why most Javanese people switch code to Javanese "panjenengan" when addressing more respected people rather than using "anda" (Sarwanti, 2006).

It is worth to be noted that Javanese people as well as some other language communities in Java, Bali, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Flores, Papua, and Timor have certain systemic linguistic properties on the level of phonology, morphology, and syntax to express politeness in their respective languages. Some languages,

like Javanese, apply different forms for conversations based on levels of politeness. Javanese has three forms of politeness: *Ngoko* Javanese is used between people with same social levels, *Kromo Madyo* Javanese is used by Javanese people to address higher social level people, while *Kromo Inggil* Javanese is applied between noble people in the kingdom. These different levels of politeness are not expressed by the Indonesian language. Therefore, when Javanese people, as well as members of other communities, use Indonesian to address more respected people, they definitely apply politeness norms which are only accommodated in their own local languages and it is done by code-switching.

As a “newly reconstructed” language, Indonesian still needs some more improvements to reach the most ideally-final construct of a national language. There are some grammatical elements in the level of phonology, morphology and syntax which need to be further developed. A lot of work is still ahead of Indonesian or other linguists who are called to share their expertise on reconstructing a language in which more positive values and norms of the speaker can be accommodated not only in terms of morphology but also in terms of syntax. Regular conferences for initiatives to accommodate indigenous norms and values are annually held by the Indonesian Language Board in every October. In these events, proposals of linguistic research findings to promote norms and values to be accommodated in Indonesian language are presented. The improvement, however, seems to be somewhat slow since some linguists resist to accept new changes. If language relativity works well, the idealized Indonesian language will make its users, the Indonesian people, to embrace better norms and values at least in terms of politeness and aesthetics.

2. Religions in Indonesia

While ¹² religious freedom is stipulated in the Indonesian constitution, only six religions ³ are officially recognized by the government: Islam, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Indonesia is the world’s most ¹⁰ populous Muslim-majority country, at 87.2 percent in 2010, with the majority being Sunni Muslims (99 percent). The Shias and Ahmadis ⁵ respectively constitute 0.5 percent and 0.2 percent of the Muslim population (Fisher, 1952). These facts seem to be similar to the data published by the Indonesian Bureau of Statistics in 2015.

Sud ¹³ minto (1991, p. 12) summed up that in 2010, Christians accounted for almost 10 percent of the ⁵ population (among them 7 percent were Protestant, 2.9 percent Roman Catholic), 1.7 percent were Hindu, and 0.9 percent were Buddhist or other.

Most Hindu-Indonesians are Balinese, and most Buddhists in modern-day Indonesia are ethnic Chinese. Even though Hinduism and Buddhism are minority religions, they keep having a decisive influence on the Indonesian culture. Islam was first adopted by Indonesians in northern Sumatra in the 13th century, through the influence of traders, and has become the country's dominant religion by the 16th century. Roman Catholicism was brought to Indonesia by early Portuguese colonialists and missionaries, and the presence of Protestant denominations are largely a result of Dutch Reformed and Lutheran missionary efforts during the country's colonial period. A large proportion of Indonesians – such as the Javanese Abangan, Balinese Hindus, and Dayak Christians – practice a less orthodox, syncretic form of their religion, which also draws on local customs and beliefs (Laver, 1997). In addition, some Indonesian tribal traditions in Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, Maluku and Papua still practice their own indigenous religious rituals, like “Kejawen” in Central and East Java, “Aluk Todolo” in Toraja, “Parmalim” in Batak, “Kaharingan” in Borneo, “Wetu Telu” in Lombok, and “Naurus” in Maluku and Papua. These tribal traditions are based on local “religions” indigenously practiced by the people and inherited from their ancestors. These local religions are animism-based, meaning that they believe in God represented in certain natural existences like mountains, lakes, stones, and animals.

2.1. Preconditions of religious harmony

Indonesia is so far a good role model of religious tolerance. Although the six religions differ greatly from one another, they still manage to coexist. In some issues, they can even work hand in hand. People in the world might be curious about the religious harmony of Indonesia. How can people of this big archipelago country with huge socio-cultural diversity and different religions live in harmony? The answer is to be found in the history of Indonesian independence. After a very long period of colonization, 350 years under Dutch and 4.5 years under Japanese rule, Indonesian people just wanted one shared ideal, freedom. Indonesian independence was set as a top priority for Indonesia's people. They put aside any differences which can weaken their efforts to gain their independence. This was proved during their struggles against the colonizers, Portuguese in 1511, Spanish in 1527, Dutch from 1602 up to 1942 and against the Japanese from the 8th of March 1942 up to the 17th of August 1945.

People from different socio-cultural background were united as one nation to regain freedom from their colonizers. In 1511, Fatahillah with his troops successfully drove away Portuguese from Sunda Kelapa, now Jakarta. In 1527, Kings of Ternate and

Tidore worked together to fight against Spanish troops and successfully took over the fortress from the latter in Tidore Sulawesi. A lot of national warriors from all over Aceh, Borneo, Java, Bali, Lombok, Nusa Tenggara, Sulawesi, and Papua from 1942 up to 1945 with their united troops fought against the Dutch for one goal: freedom. Indonesian history in the era of colonization between 1509 and 1945 presented various struggles of the local people to get their freedom back from the colonizers (Sudirman, 2014). Since their arrival, different groups of people fought against the Portuguese troops: the Aceh people between 1514 and 1629, and Malukuan people between 1511 and 1574. In the Spanish era, seven big battles against the Spanish were noted in history. It was well-known as Minahasa people's fights between 1651 and 1664. The longest battle took place in the VOC (*Verenigde Oost Indische Compagnie: Dutch Government Representation in Indonesia from 1596-1942*) era. The fights of people all over Indonesia started in 1598 in Aceh and ended in 1942 in Java. The battle against Dutch colonizers lasted for about 344 years. Within the 4.5 years from 1942 up to 1945, national leaders supported by all their followers with different socio-cultural and religious backgrounds sacrificed their lives to fight against Japanese for the Indonesian independence, declared on the 17th of August 1945. In this long history of the Indonesian struggles for its independence, the heterogeneous Indonesian people shared a single mission: to become an independent nation. Since then, there has been nothing more important for Indonesian people than being united as one independent nation, Indonesia.

The idea to be a united independent nation has become a crucial spiritual issue for the Indonesian people in reconstructing the country. This inspired national leaders, Soekarno, Hatta, and others to shape this country as a united nation of Republic of Indonesia with a national spirituality "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika", which means "Unity in Diversity". It means that Indonesia is a republic which is constructed from diversity to be a united nation. Indonesia is a religious country but not based on one single religion since Indonesia has different religions. The national motto also means that Indonesian people put an emphasis on the crucial need for Indonesians with huge diversity to be a unity. This spirituality is the soul of the Constitution of Indonesia. All chapters and articles in the constitution reflect the Indonesian people's "unity in diversity". With this national constitution, Indonesian leaders wanted the further generations to always remember the crucial importance of being united as a single nation, putting aside their own particular identities. It is true that the Indonesian people realized that they have different identities but they also feel bound to each other as all being Indonesians. It is common for Indonesian people to say: "We are Moslems, Catholics, Protestants, Hindus, Buddhists, but we are all Indonesians". On another occasion, people might say, "We are Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese, Dayic, Torajan,

Papuan, but we are all Indonesians". This is possible and supposed to be a must as a nation with huge diversity because the Indonesian people has realized through its history the need for being an independent and united nation. This spirituality seems to be the answer to the question why Indonesian people with multi-ethnic and different religious backgrounds live in harmony as a united nation. Throughout the history of the nation, conflicts either on ethnic or on religious basis arose quite often in the era of Indonesian kingdoms, like the *Singasari War* and *Mataram War*, *Paregreg War* between Javanese and Sundanese (Sasongko, 2015). In the Indonesian national era, some ethnic wars broke out in Sumatra, *Paderi War* between *Minang* and *Padang War*, in Borneo "Red War" among the Dayak tribes (Alfian, 2014). The last tribal conflict broke out lately between Dayic and Madurese tribes in 1996-1997 in Sanggau South Borneo (Indra Achmadi, 2013). It is worth noting that no global conflicts between the followers of different religions have ever broken out, these were rather more local conflicts like those between Moslems and Christians in Papua, Hindus and Moslems in Bali and some other minor conflicts in Central and West Java. These facts, anyway, are a true potential that might be serious obstacles for the harmony of the nation. The spirituality of becoming a united nation proves to be powerful enough to preserve the harmony of the nation.

2.2. The meaning of religions for Indonesians

Indonesians have been well-known for being religious people. It can be easily seen from either symbolic materials existing throughout the areas of Indonesia or formal policies of the Indonesian government in the form of laws and regulations which seem to be obviously religion-based phenomena (Laver, 1997). It is well-known that Borobudur, the biggest Buddhist temple in the world can be found in Central Java in Indonesia. The country also has hundreds of smaller Buddhist and Hindu temples which are mostly found in Sumatra and Java. In addition to this, Indonesia also has thousands of mosques most of which have become landmarks of the cities, hundreds of churches and Confucian shrines which are scattered across Indonesia from Sumatra in the West to Papua in the East. Based on these religious rites, it can be clearly seen that religions play an important role in the construction of the nation. Moreover, Indonesian pre-independence history could also be told based on religions. The Indonesian pre-independence era was an era of kingdoms, which include Hindu-Buddhist Kingdoms between the 5th and 15th centuries covering the areas of Sumatra, Java and Kalimantan, Islam kingdoms between 1267 and 1903 in Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Java, and Christian kingdoms between 1600 and 1904 only in East Nusa Tenggara. The locations and the dates of the rites obviously confirm the existence of

these kingdoms (Sudirman, 2014). The contribution of each religion of the kingdoms to the construction of the nation are varied yet crucial. Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms which have very rich rituals gave rituals to most of Indonesians to practice up to now, while the Islam exerts a significant influence on national laws and Indonesian language, and Christianity has introduced health and education systems to the country. These typical influences definitely enrich the diversity of Indonesia.

People's daily activities are organized around religious rituals all over Indonesia, even in big cities like the capital city of Jakarta (Sudarminto, 1991). Religious practices are the real reflections of Indonesian life orientations. For Indonesian people religious life is a top priority. In their everyday life, Indonesian people live for the afterworld. It implies that accumulating goodness in today's life is a top priority since they think that life after death is more important than the life they are living. Consequently, accumulating materials, money, assets, and careers are needed only if they affect their afterworld in a positive way. This paradigm seems to make Indonesian people live a happy but slow life. Probably Indonesian people tend to be less aggressive in profane business. This is clearly reflected in some mottos of life which are very popular among Indonesian people. One of them says that "life is short, while afterworld is never-ending". Accordingly, another motto says that "it is good to search for a living but it is even better to enjoy life in God".

Sociologically, this paradigm makes Indonesian people live a peaceful life. Competitions, explorations, and aggressivity are not their typical characteristics. They prefer slow movements, social events, and harmony. On the other hand, this modern life needs badly competitions, explorations, and aggressivity in order to seize the opportunity life offers.

The Indonesian way of life is clearly reflected in the way they walk. It is obvious that when Indonesian people walk, they literally walk, which is slow and full of enjoyment, whereas people in other countries do not walk but run. Modern people in big cities tend to "walk in a hurry", if it is not "running". It is true since modern life, full of competitions, in a lot of aspects of life requires fast motions. Therefore, efficiency both in time and energy is a priority. This is why in modern big cities everybody runs and no one walks. In contrast, people living in small cities and other parts of Indonesia tend to focus on "living". They pay much more attention to how they interact with others and nature. This slows them down, makes them patient and peaceful, whereas people in the city tend to be more aggressive and competitive.

Politically, religious life of Indonesian people seems to be full of difficulties. This situation requires the ruler to be attentive to the nation's well-being. It is worth noting that most Indonesians have stronger devotion to religious than to political leaders. When involving religious leaders, this situation often plays very significant roles in the success of the governmental programs that involve people's participation, like family planning programs, health care insurance, and national census on economy, politics, and socio-cultural issues (Martinich, 1996). When the Indonesian government introduced a family planning program in 1972, it was hard for the people to accept it, but the active intervention of religious leaders made most of the people change their minds and accept the program. A similar situation to this also happened when in 2015 the government introduced a national health care insurance program. Most of Indonesian people listened to their religious leaders who supported the program. This situation tends to be a typical socio-political communication pattern between the government and the people. Therefore, the socio-political role of the religious leaders in Indonesia is paramount. This is also one of the reasons why some Indonesian political parties are based on religion and have religious followers. To maintain religious leader's participation, the Indonesian government has a permanent ministerial department, headed by a minister, that accommodates the roles of religions of the country. The existence of this department is somewhat unique since Indonesia is not a religion based country, but it helps maintain the harmony of the country with a socio-culturally diverse background.

2.3. Pancasila as the bond of national unity

It is obvious that organizing and managing a big country with huge differences like Indonesia is not an easy task. Composed of a large number of different ethnics with their unique cultures, habits, traditions and characteristics plus different religions, Indonesia definitely needs a powerful bond which can tie all differences to live together in harmony. Realizing these critical differences, Indonesian founding fathers formulated five principles as a basis for national management and organization. National consensus formulated in five principles called "Pancasila" seems to be the magic potion to maintain the harmony of this huge multi-ethnic country.

"Pancasila" (derived from Sanskrit words "panca", which means five, and "sila" meaning principles) was agreed to be the highest reference for all national laws. Pancasila, which consists of *Believing in God, Humanism, Nationalism, Democracy, and Social Welfare*, is formulated in the preamble of the Indonesian Constitution. This means that all chapters and articles of the constitution are based on those five principles.

From the five principles, it can be clearly inferred that Indonesia is not a secular state, nor a country based on a specific religion. There is no dominant religion which would become the source of national law. From the second principle, it can be clearly seen that Indonesia sets humanism as a priority. Nationalism, the third principle, guides the nation to become united in its diversity. From the fourth principle it is obvious that people have high political roles to decide the lives of the country to achieve national social welfare as the national goal defined by the last principle. It can be recalled that in the first board meeting of the Indonesian Independence Preparation Committee, Ir. Soekarno proposed these five principles to be the national foundation of the state. Long, tough and difficult discussions successfully led to the final formulation of the principles which have been included in the introduction of the constitution as the ultimate ideal of the state.

Pancasila proved to be effective in maintaining the harmony in this heterogeneous state. If people ask how it was possible, the answer should refer to the fact that formal national norms and values are based on the five principles that are conventionally grounded on a particular religion, usually solely accepted by its followers and refused by others. Since national norms and values are not based on a particular religion, all ethnic groups with their diversity feel that everybody practices their own principles. Everybody feels that they need to obey the rules developed from their own traditions and identities. Within this framework, all Indonesian citizens have equal positions. None of the ethnic groups is superior or inferior to others despite the fact that they all have their unique identities.

Another reason why preserving harmony in this multi-ethnic country turned out to be possible is to be found in basic characteristics of Indonesian people who seek to be adaptive and flexible. The native people of Indonesia would rather receive new influences from external world than refusing them. However, Indonesian people never used them to replace the indigenous identities but have kept the original roots and have adapted the new influences to their actual needs. It happened to all kinds of influences, even to those of religions. Indonesia has received and transformed the religions that came from different civilizations. In the case of national language, local people with their own local languages accepted Bahasa Indonesia as their new language while still adapting it in terms of morphology and syntax to their basic needs. In this way, Indonesian people have never totally replaced their own previous identities with new influences coming from the external world. Keraf (1984) mentions that more than 60 percent of Indonesian words are adopted from local languages and 40 percent of its structures also come from local languages. Other linguists like Chaer (2003), Kridalaksana (1988 & 1989), Mahsun (1998), Sudaryanto (1990, & 1993) have

different calculations, but they all agree that most of the lexemes and structures are the results of adaptations and modifications of the local languages.

2.4. Inter-faith dialogue

Every religion, like any common religious paradigm, always has instruments to make its believers remain solid. This often results in intolerance. This is, in fact, another problematic point that must be wisely treated. If not, this might become a real problem that will disturb national harmony and unity in this huge archipelago country. Researches on inter-faith dialogue need to be intensified since results will potentially help authorities to “Unity in Diversity”, also expressed in the national motto. This offers great opportunity for inter-faith researchers to do the researches in Indonesia since Indonesia has really complex contexts of religious practices. Data on intolerance violence index in Indonesia show the dynamic of intolerance based on religions. National Board of Statistics shows that the escalation seems to follow the dynamics of intolerance that happens in the world (Kompas, 2016). It proves that religions have crucial contribution to national as well as global religious intolerance. The fact that Indonesian people have successfully managed to maintain the unity so far can be an example for inter-faith tolerance in the world that seems to have similar contexts.

3. Conclusions

Indonesia as a big archipelago country which has various ethnic groups needs a strong will to maintain its unity. A single national language is an important ingredient to the magic potion helping to manage this diversity. As history testifies, the Indonesian language has held the nation together successfully. Religious diversity, however, is another potential problem in Indonesia’s effort to effectively manage and maintain its diversity. Pancasila or The Five Principles become the national consensus that help preserve the harmony of the nations of Indonesia. These phenomena can be interesting for researchers since they both provide problematic potentials which require treatments based on the finding and results of academic researches.

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