

## **An Applied Linguist's Critique of Bahasa Indonesia in Australian Education**

The objects of this paper are:

- (i) to provide a brief overview of the development of Bahasa Indonesia programs in Australian schools and universities,
- (ii) to examine (from an applied linguistics framework) the nature of the Bahasa Indonesia texts and programs, and
- (iii) to assess the current situation regarding Indonesian teacher supply and teacher training.

In Western Australia Indonesian is one of the three major languages taught in over 200 schools both primary (years 1-7) and secondary (8-12). It has been taught in schools since 1966 (and before that for a few years unofficially) and from the late 1950s in Universities.

This paper reviews the language and culture in the texts, the use of spoken language in the classroom, the impact of native speakers in the schools setting, and in-country visits. It comments on pronunciation, grammar and lexicon and raises issues of dialect and varieties (including Bahasa Gaul).

It also assesses the teacher training programs, including the instruction in second language teaching methodology and awareness of research into second language learning, particularly of Indonesian.

The issues relating to Bahasa Indonesia in Australian education are significant for Australia and Indonesia in cultural and political terms, but underlying these is the need to establish clear directions for action consistent with well-researched sociolinguistic and applied linguistic research.

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He was one of the five teachers to start teaching Indonesian in Australian High Schools in 1966 (in Sydney), and introduced the Indonesian program at Curtin University in 1967. He was the chief examiner in Indonesian for the Public Examinations Board of WA from 1968 to 1973 and has been involved in Language Teacher Education programs at Curtin since 1980.