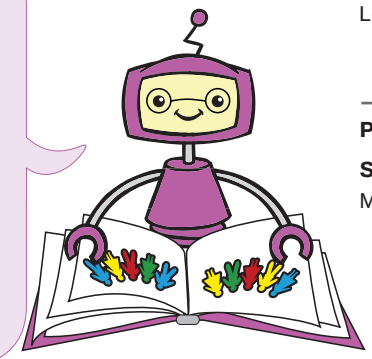
MODULE 15: WORK SHEET 2

From thee to you

Have you ever thought about where different languages come from, how they evolve or where they're headed? Languages are dynamic, constantly evolving systems for communicating. Let's find out more about how languages change and develop ...



LINKS TO:
Stage 3, Module 15
Learning Object 2: *Giving speeches*

PRIOR LEARNING:

Stage 2
Module 16 Work Sheet 1: *Tales of a bygone era*

1 Living languages

All languages change over time. Languages, like plants and animals, are sometimes categorised according to their state of health. A language can be defined as living, endangered, dead or even extinct.

Australian languages

Incredibly, at the end of the 18th century, Australia was home to up to 750 languages, not including English. These languages were used daily by the many different language groups of Australian Indigenous peoples.

Only 150 of the languages that were once spoken in Australia have survived into the 21st century, and 130 of them are endangered.

According to professional linguists (people who study languages), each language provides a unique way of relating to and understanding the world and each other. Whenever a language dies, or becomes extinct, that way of knowing dies too.

A short history of English

Modern Australian English is a dialect of English. Some of the other English dialects include American English, Canadian English and South African English. English was brought to Australia during the early colonial period by settlers and convicts, and eventually developed its own nuances as Australian English.

Because different languages evolve from the same or similar 'roots', languages can often be understood as having something like a family tree: a series of ancestor languages from which they developed. A language 'tree' maps the relationships between languages.

English is part of a group of languages known as Germanic languages. The early forms of this language were brought to the British Isles during the Anglo-Saxon invasion of the fifth century. Most of the original inhabitants took on the new language along with new foods, clothing, laws and so on.

English then developed, as languages often do, in fits and starts. Dramatic changes in the language were often a result of wars and invasions, such as the Nordic raids and colonisation of northern England in the 10th and 11th centuries. From the Norse, English adopted words such as anger, bag, hit, leg, skill, sky and take.

English also incorporated many Latin words as a result of the introduction of Christianity in the late sixth century, including words such as paper, priest and school.

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After the Norman conquest of 1066, many of the English nobles at court spoke an early form of French known as Anglo-Norman. Many of the words adopted from Anglo-Norman reflect the politics and social structure of the time, such as liege, vassal, homage, chivalry, villain, peasant, parliament, mayor and chancellor.

As you can see, although English has its roots in the Germanic languages of those early invaders, it has adopted many of the features of the languages of later invaders and friends.

2 Shakespeare's English

Although many of the dramatic shifts in English occurred as a result of wars and invasions, language was also affected by less violent changes.

Sometimes new languages or ways of speaking enter a language through new forms of literature or the innovations of particular individuals.

Did you know, for example, that the playwright William Shakespeare is said to have created thousands of new words in the process of writing his plays. Just a handful that you might know include: whirligig, vulnerable, discontent, accommodation and bump!

Sometimes, changes in a language happen over a long period of time. The differences between Australian and American English, for example, are largely the result of slow, organic shifts in intonation, phrasing and word choices.

At other times, the invention of new technology leads to the coining of new words to describe objects, actions and ideas.

- Have you **googled** something lately?
- Do you own a **computer**?
- Do you wash your dirty plates in a **dishwasher**?
- Do you do up your sweater with a **zipper**?
- Have you ever been asked to **de-train**?
- Have you **uploaded** anything to the **Internet** today?

All of the bold words in these questions entered the English language as a result of changes in technology and new inventions, which subsequently required the invention of new vocabulary to describe them.

Just imagine what words and expressions will be required in the future!

3 *Bahasa Indonesia*

The Indonesian language, or *Bahasa Indonesia*, was first adopted as Indonesia's national language at the *Kongres Pemuda* or Youth Nationalist Congress on 28 November 1928. The result of that congress was a declaration of three ideals: one motherland, one nation and one language.

The language belongs to the family of Austronesian languages. It is also known as 'old Malay'. The language originated around the Riau islands in the Malacca Straits. It is believed that, as early as the first century, the basis of this language was used among traders and missionaries in the Indonesian archipelago.

The earliest written evidence of Indonesian is from around 7th century and found at sites in Sumatra. Originally, the language was written in the Pallawa script. With the arrival of Islam it was written in the Arabic script, and later the Dutch introduced the use of Romanised script and Dutch spelling. *Bahasa Indonesia* has undergone many changes over time. The original spelling system, known as the *Van Ophuijzen* system, was established in 1901. It was changed to the *Soewandi* system in 1947 and finally, in 1972, it was changed to the *Ejaan Yang Disempurnakan* (EYD: Improved Spelling) system.

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The multitude of regional languages and dialects, as well as contacts with Hindu Indians, Muslim Arabs, the Chinese and Europeans have enriched the vocabulary of Indonesian. The Sanskrit influence from India is found mostly in religion, literature, architecture and philosophy, whereas the Arabic influence is most noticeable in religion and law. The Chinese vocabulary is found mostly around food. Many words that describe things introduced by the Europeans are Portuguese in origin, and the Dutch introduced a great deal of administrative and educational terminology.

The influence of English is also found, particularly in contemporary technical and electronic terminology.

Presently, Indonesian is spoken in several countries other than the Republic of Indonesia. It is also spoken in East Timor, in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, some parts of the southern Philippines and the southern part of Thailand, in the Australian territory of Christmas Island and in the Cocos Islands.

References:

George Quinn, *The Learner's Dictionary of Today's Indonesian*. Sydney, Allen & Unwin 2001.

Kozok, Dr Uli. *Bahasa Kita: Indonesian Online Language Resource*. Available online. Accessed October 2012.

4 Words and culture

Particular words, phrases, expressions and grammatical properties are unique to particular languages. There can be particular ways of addressing or speaking about people, animals or things that are unique or unusual.

For example, in Yanyuwa, which is an Australian Indigenous language, there are 16 different noun classes, including arboreal nouns (nouns related to trees). In Yanyuwa culture, therefore, it is important to distinguish between a broader range of types of nouns than it is in most other languages. In Yanyuwa culture, people's understanding of and ways of relating to things (objects and ideas) is more precise and particular than in many other cultures.

The fact that Yanyuwa has a specific class of arboreal nouns reflects the importance of trees in the culture and language of the Yanyuwa people. The existence of this class of nouns suggests that the Yanyuwa people have a unique way of speaking about trees, and of relating to them, that is not possible in other languages.

Language and culture have a symbiotic relationship.

Note:

When you reach Exercise 2.2, the information in this block may prove useful as a model for your answer.

Exercises

Exercise 1

The following text is in Old Malay. Unlike the other texts you have been introduced to in *New Land, New Language*, the text does not use contemporary language but an earlier form of Indonesian.

You will probably find this much harder to understand than other texts you have read in Indonesian. Try reading it slowly and identifying words or phrases that you do know, or that look or are spelled in a similar way to contemporary Indonesian.

This text is from a short story taken from an anthology of short stories about life in Sumatra in the early 1900s, titled *Djagoan Ketjil*. It was written by B. Sampono Chatib. The story itself is titled 'Berdjualan'. It is not clear when the story was first written, but the anthology was first published in 1912. The protagonist in this story is Usman and the setting is the market where he meets his friend, Hamid.

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Read the text, using all the reading strategies you have already learned in Stages 1 and 2.

Hint! In the EYD spelling system the following have been changed:

- dj becomes j
- tj becomes c
- j becomes y
- oe becomes u

'Man, mari sebentar, koebisikkan padamoe!' kata si Hamid.

Oesman keloear dari tempat semboenjinja, datang mendapatkan Hamid.

'Kaoe ada menampak si Djahap Balai Tjatjang?'

'Tadi ada; ia ber-sama2 maknja jang mendjoeal reboes oebi.'

'Kawan-kawannja ada kaoeperhatikan?'

'Kawan-kawannja tak ada tampak hanja ia berdoea dengan maknja sadja.'

'Kamid Biawak ada tampak?'

'Pagi-pagi tadi saja tengok ia membawa lemboe kepekan; di Laboehbaroe akoe bertemoe dengan dia.'

'Ia?'

'Betoel Mid! Mengapa kaoetanjakan?'

'Tidak; tapi tjoba kaoetengok lagi, masih adakah ia disana bersama maknja?'

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Si Oesman menengok kiri kanan matjam orang memandang apa-apa; kemoedian iapoen pergi ketempat Djahap. Hamid menoenggoe ditempat orang mendjoeal saboen ditengah pasar. Djahap masih tegak dekat maknja, menengok kiri menengok kanan, matanja bagai mentjari apa-apa. Agaknja ia sangat takoet.

Oesman balik mendapatkan Hamid.

'Masih ada, Mid!'

'Ada?'

'Ja, dia tak bergerak-gerak dari sisi maknja.'

'Man!' kata si Hamid, 'mari doeloe kita berdjalan-djalan.'

'Kemana?'

'Toeroet sadjalah!'

Si Hamid membawa si Oesman ketempat orang mendjoeal satai.

'Ambil olehmoe setjotjok Man! Satainja ataoe ketoepatnja kaoe soeka?'

Oesman menimbang-nimbang. 'Kalaoe akoe ambil ketoepatnja, peroet kenjang, tapi akoe baroe makan tapai oebi. Elok satainja sadja akoe ambil!' pikirnja dalam hati. Tangannja didjangkaoekannja mengambil satai setjotjok jang telah masak; ditjeloepkannja doeloe kedalam koeahnja dalam perioek, baroe digigitnja satoe-satoe. Dikoenjahnja lama-lama, sampai poetih roepanja dalam moeloetnja, baroe ditelannja. Tengah makan itoe Oesman berpikir: 'Langkah baik sehari ini. Oeangkoe sekepengpoen beloem oesak, tapai oebi dan satai soedah koemakan.'

‘Man!’ kata si Hamid poela. ‘Lihat-lihatkan si Djahap itoe kemana ia pergi, ja! Akoe akan pergi berdjadja sebentar, api-apikoe tinggal 2 boeah lagi.’ Hamidpoen pergi.

Glossary

menampak = melihat

pekan = pasar

setjotjok = sebatang

sekepeng = uang dari jaman VOC yang berlubang di tengahnya

berdjadja = berjualan

First, let’s look at how well you understood the text. Keep in mind that because the language in the text is related to, but not the same as, contemporary Indonesian, you should not expect to understand as much of the meaning as usual.

1.1 What are the main ideas in the text? Summarise, in English, the main idea or ideas in the text.

1.2 What words or phrases, if any, are familiar to you from your understanding of contemporary Indonesian?

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1.3 What words or phrases are unfamiliar to you, but are similar to words or phrases you already know?

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Hint! Think about the emotive content of these descriptors. How do you feel when you hear that a language is 'endangered' or 'dead'? How would you feel if the language you speak was 'endangered'?

1.4 Hamid's behaviour is very strange and suspicious. Do you think he intended to do something to Djahap Balai Tjatjang? Give reasons for your answer, using quotations from the text if possible.

Exercise 2

Critical thinking

In this work sheet you have been introduced to some of the history of both English and Indonesian. The following questions invite you to think critically about the politics and processes of language.

Answer these questions in English.

2.1 In this work sheet, you have learned that languages are sometimes defined as either living, endangered, dead or extinct.

Why do you think these terms are used?
Give reasons for your answer.

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2.2 This work sheet, in Block 1, includes the following statement:

> … each language provides a unique way of relating to and understanding the world and each other. Whenever a language dies or becomes extinct, that way of knowing dies too.

Hint! Refer to Block 4 in this work sheet to help you with your answer.

Examine this statement critically in terms of what you know about Indonesian. In what ways does Indonesian provide 'a unique way of relating to and understanding the world and each other'? Give reasons for your answer.

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