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Kristian Tamtomo

Department of Sociology, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta, kristian_tamtomo@staff.uajy.ac.id

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The compartmentalization of languages and identities among nationalist youth in Semarang

KRISTIAN TAMTOMO

ABSTRACT

Contemporary mainstream discourse on youths in Indonesia tends to define it in terms of the popular-culture-oriented notion of youth. This article seeks to show that certain state-formed youth groups, particularly in institutional settings, continue to promote the state-oriented *pemuda* or nationalist youth identity. By looking at an example of a *Paskibra* group (*Pasukan Pengibar Bendera* – the Flag-Raising Troop) from a state vocational high school in Semarang, Central Java, the article seeks to highlight the way in which these youths combine language and symbolic behaviours to present this nationalist identity. Concurrently, these youths also appropriate elements of popular culture in order to present a compartmentalized or separate *remaja* identity that complements their core nationalist identity. While not prominently visible in Indonesian popular culture, nationalist forms of youth identity, such as the *Paskibra*, continue to have currency in various state and institutional sectors.

KEYWORDS

Language ideology; youth culture; social identity; erasure; compartmentalization.

INTRODUCTION: INSTITUTIONAL AND NATIONALIST YOUTH

In studies of youths in general and youths in Indonesia in particular, the focus tends to be on aspects of their participation in popular culture or in lifestyles beyond the confines of formal institutions such as schools. Since James Siegel's (1986) pioneering study, which touches upon youth magazines and the *remaja* or 'teenager' social type, many studies have focused on the social life of youths. These studies view them as indicative of social change, language shift, and

KRISTIAN TAMTOMO is a lecturer at the Department of Sociology, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta. His research interests are multilingualism, language ideology, youth studies, and media. His most recent publications are "Institution and market; Orders of multiple languages in Indonesian vocational education", *Multilingua* (April 2018), and "The push and pull of languages; Youth written communication across a range of texts in Central Java", *Nusa* 58 (2015). He can be contacted at: kristian_tamtomo@staff.uajy.ac.id/kristian.tamtomo@gmail.com.

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the rise of the Indonesian middle class, consumer culture, and lifestyles (see for example Kiem 1993; Nilan 2003; Smith-Hefner 2007, 2009a; Djenar 2008, 2012; Slama 2010; Parker and Nilan 2013).

The focus on social life and lifestyle in Indonesian youth studies connects it to the youth culture perspective that emerged as a reaction to the mainstream perspective on youth, which views youth as a psychologically problematic period (Griffin 2004; Wynn and White 1997; Bucholtz 2002). As Naafs and White (2012: 4) have noted, studies of youths in Indonesia have followed the general pattern and trend of youth studies by focusing on urban youths and showing interest in “youth cultures and lifestyles”. Of course, this focus has been of benefit, especially as it provides more insight into the social life of youths and as a counter to the moral panic and blaming of youth and their socio-cultural practices as a source of risk, moral danger, disorder, and social problems (Parker 2014; Djenar 2012; Parker and Nilan 2013).

However, Indonesian youths, especially adolescents, are often still part of adult-led and state-backed institutions, particularly formal schools. Consequently, these institutions still constitute sites that form and foster youth groups, activities and identities, especially those oriented towards the nationalist formulation of youths or *pemuda*. As others have noted, the notion of youths as the activist, revolutionary, and nationalist *pemuda* dates from the period of “national awakening” and pre-independence revolution, in which a class of educated young adults emerged as an organizational force in forming the idea of Indonesia as a nation (Foulcher 2000; Parker and Nilan 2013). While there have been various expressions of this *pemuda* identity in subsequent generations,¹ it is important to note that the New Order administration made visible efforts to control the formulation and expression of this identity. Of particular relevance here is the creation of various state-sanctioned youth organizations, whether within schools (such as OSIS or the Intra-School Student Organization, the *Paskibra*, and the *Pramuka* or ‘Scouts’), within communities (such as the *Karang Taruna*), or at the state level (such as the KNPI, *Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia* or ‘National Committee of Indonesian Youth’). Officially, these organizations aim to facilitate youth participation in national development, although in practice they functioned more to generate cadres (*kaderisasi*) of nationalist and state-supporting youths (Kiem 1993: 170; Semedi 2011).

Parker and Nilan (2013) argue that the discourse on Indonesian youths has lately largely shifted towards the notion of *remaja* or *anak muda*. Whereas the notion of *pemuda* points to the idea of youths that have a shared sense of consciousness and political purpose, the notion of *remaja* points to an idea of youths as a generation in themselves, more apolitical and concerned with their own self-interests (Parker and Nilan 2013: 34-35). The discourse around *remaja* associates it with aspects of popular culture, consumer culture, the

¹ Parker and Nilan (2013: 18-19) identify five distinct *pemuda* generations: the 1908 generation, the 1928 generation, the 1945 generation, the 1966 generation, and the 1998 generation; each associated with particular moments of social change in Indonesia.

emerging middle class, and the dynamics of late-modernity. This is readily visible from Siegel's pioneering study, in which he notes the "emergence of a new social type, the *remaja*, perhaps best translated as 'teenager,' perhaps as 'adolescent,' on the Indonesian scene" (1986: 203). He thus defines *remaja* as a youth identity based on specific tastes and oriented towards non-traditional cultural items such as popular music and fashion. Furthermore, Parker and Nilan (2013) argue that, through a combination of education, employment, popular culture, and lifestyle, contemporary *remaja* are oriented, both by their own definition and by the government,² towards personal achievement and socio-economic success. However, Indonesian adults and authorities have tended to view the *remaja* identity with a caution bordering on alarm and moral panic, particularly in relation to the perceived dangers of "free socializing" (*pergaulan bebas*), youth sexuality, and the effects of media and capitalist consumption (see Smith-Hefner 2009b; Parker and Nilan 2013: Chapter 6; Parker 2014). Even youth language can represent the often uncontrolled or "unbridled" behaviour of contemporary *remaja* or their loss of tradition (Djenar 2012). Hence, in the eyes of the local public, the *remaja* identity is often closer to the idea of youth and adolescence as a problematic period, standing in stark contrast to the nationalist *pemuda* identity.

Despite the shift in the discourse on youths, the various state-formed youth organizations from the New Order era continue to exist, especially in schools. As such, they continue to be sites that form an institutional *pemuda* identity, particularly one which is nationalist and oriented towards the state. My main objective here is to describe how an institutional youth group's public performances constitute ways in which its members seek to continue to present a nationalist *pemuda* identity, yet one that also appropriates elements of the popular-culture-oriented *remaja* identity.

In this case, I will look at an example of a *Paskibra* (*Pasukan Pengibar Bendera* – the Flag-Raising Troop) youth group from a state vocational high school in Semarang, Central Java, and the way its members perform in a number of inter-high school competitions. As a high school-based extra-curricular group, the main public role of the *Paskibra* is to function as the flag-bearers in the Flag Ceremony (*Upacara Bendera*). The Flag Ceremony is the national ritual of raising and saluting the national flag accompanied by the reading of the Proclamation of Independence, the *Pancasila* state ideology, and the singing of the national anthem, all conducted in military formation. The *Paskibra* members play the central role as flag-bearers not only in school. They can also perform at the city/regency, provincial, and even at national level in the Independence Day Flag Ceremony held at the Presidential Palace, depending on selection. While the military often plays the key role as the participants and organizers at these broader public ceremonies, youths still play the role as flag-bearers.

At the high-school level, membership of the *Paskibra* is usually open to first- and second-year students of both genders. Within the *Paskibra* group,

² Through the Law on Youth No. 40, 2009 or *Undang-Undang* 2009 (see Parker and Nilan 2013: 35).

at least in the school that I observed, there is no clear differentiation of roles between the genders. Both male and female members can perform as flag-bearers, student trainers, commanders, and group organizers. During my fieldwork, a female second-year student was the leader of the *Paskibra* group. However, as a technical vocational high school, the school traditionally has more male students and the *Paskibra* composition reflects this. During practices, members of both genders wear the same style of outfit: T-shirt, school hat, and training pants. Differences in clothing only appear in public performances in the form of pants for the male and skirts for the female members, although we should note that this difference is also present in the Indonesian national high school uniform.

I argue that the two different events which make up the *Paskibra* competitions project different aspects of the *Paskibra* youth identity: the first event presents the core military-inspired and nationalist *pemuda* identity, while the second event presents an identity that adopts elements of popular youth culture and regional ethnic culture, albeit still within a *Paskibra* presentation. The separation of performances enables the two aspects of the *Paskibra* identity to not contradict each other and enables the maintenance of the hierarchy of the two aspects of this group identity.

LANGUAGE, SOCIAL INDEXICALITY, AND INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY

My analytical framework adopts the emphasis on the social indexicality of language in linguistic anthropology and interactional sociolinguistics. The notion of indexicality functions as the foundational concept since it focuses on the social meaning that arises from the association between language and its social context of use (Kroskrity 2004). Therefore, indexicality means that language forms can point to (index) various additional non-referential social meaning, depending on or in relation to the social context of use (Silverstein 2003). Indexicality becomes the link to various forms of the social meanings of language, such as language ideologies (Kroskrity 2004), in which language use can be related to “ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (Irvine 1989), and the connection between language and identity (Bucholtz and Hall 2004, 2005).

The connection between language and its social context of use implies that there are social and ideological rules of language use and social conduct in certain contexts of communication; what Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck (2005) call “interactional” or “language regimes”. The way these regimes regulate the use of language also reflect certain orders of indexicality (Blommaert 2007) that point to a hierarchy in the social evaluation of pragmatically meaningful patterns of language, in which people can consider some language forms to be better or more powerful than others. Furthermore, Irvine and Gal (2000) argue that the connection between social meaning and language can become naturalized through certain semiotic processes of language ideology, particularly iconization and erasure. Iconization refers to the way certain languages or varieties become iconic in displaying a social

group's inherent essence or nature (Irvine and Gal 2000: 37). Erasure refers to the process by which language ideology renders language forms and practices that are inconsistent with the main iconic variety invisible (Irvine and Gal 2000: 38). Tomlinson (2017), in his discussion of the "monologic imagination", further elaborates that erasure often also works with discursive techniques of control so as to create a performance that unifies the audience to recognize only one single voice or opinion. This can partly be achieved through the selection of participants or the controlled selection of dialogic or diverse elements so that they do not contradict or are not inconsistent with the main iconic voice.

Turning to the *Paskibra* performance, I intend to argue that this process of erasure and control works through compartmentalization and the selective appropriation of popular culture elements. By compartmentalization, I mean the way the *Paskibra* competition creates two separate events, with each event showing different aspects of the youths' linguistic and cultural repertoire, as well as their respective associated social identity. In this way, the connection and contrast between the two aspects of their repertoire and identity become masked or "put under erasure". I will show that this compartmentalization helps to maintain the iconicity of the *Paskibra*'s nationalist *pemuda* identity through the performance of the first event. The second event becomes the site of the controlled appropriation and performance of popular culture elements that are symbolic of the *remaja* social identity. The separation and controlled selection of these popular-culture elements allow them to become a secondary yet complementary (non-contrastive) identity to the iconic nationalist *pemuda* identity. In a way, this compartmentalization is structurally similar to the state-controlled public performances of "unity in diversity", which present diverse yet stable and reified "ethnolocalities" (Boellstorff 2002), all subsumed under a unifying Indonesian state (Schefold 1998), as shown in school textbooks, the *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah* theme park, and the National Independence Day Flag-raising ceremony.

Finally, the naturalized connection between symbolic practice (language and social action) and social meaning, including identity, emerges through the process of "enregisterment" in which "diverse behavioural signs (whether linguistic, non-linguistic, or both) are functionally re-analysed as cultural modes of action [...] indexing stereotypic characteristics of incumbents of particular interactional roles" (Agha 2007: 55). Consequently, I view the *Paskibra* performances in these competitions as instances of enregisterment. In the eyes of the *Paskibra* members, the preparation process constitutes the process in which they functionally analyse that they can perform two differing representations of their social identity; each based on connecting the use of certain language forms with certain forms of collaborative bodily practice. For the audience and other *Paskibra* troops, the performances underline the stereotypic indexicality of the different performative events to the two facets of social identity of the *Paskibra*. The competition's compartmentalized presentation also socializes the audience to a *Paskibra* social identity that contains a hierarchical yet complementary constellation of *pemuda* and *remaja*

notions of youth.

MULTIPLE LANGUAGES IN INDONESIAN EDUCATION

In formal secondary education, including vocational high schools, the Indonesian language plays a central institutional role as the main language of instruction. This position is reinforced not only by the Indonesian Constitution, but also by Law no. 20, 2003 on National Education and Law no. 24, 2009 on the Flag, Language, National Seal, and National Anthem. The official position of Indonesian also reflects the broader language ideology associated with it. According to some scholars, the Indonesian state positions the Indonesian language as both a transparent language of efficient communication and as an overarching language of unity that transcends the particularities of local languages (Errington 1998a: 62, 1998b: 275, 2000: 210; Boellstorff 2002: 32; Kuipers 2008: 317). The notion of Indonesian as a unifying language, of course, has its history in the foundational event of the national consciousness: the Second Youth Congress of 1928, in which the Congress declared the famous youth oath of being one nation (Indonesia) unified by one language (Indonesian, although at that moment, technically still standard Malay). Furthermore, the position of Indonesian in schooling posits it as a language with cognitive and instrumental functions, which schools view as key to the transfer of knowledge and ensuring access to economic opportunities (Nababan 1991: 122; Darjowidjojo 1998: 45).

Since schools emphasize the transfer of knowledge, especially related to science and technology, English has also become an important language in formal education. Educators view English as an important foreign language since it functions as an instrumental language for the transfer of modern science and technology from developed countries in the West (Darjowidjojo 1998: 45; Nababan 1991: 123). The recent prominence of the “discourse of globalism” (Fairclough 2006) in Indonesian education, whose administrators tend to define globalization as the threat of global market competition (see Coleman 2011) also helps to bolster the importance of English, since administrators view it as a global language. Educators also view that learning English can help students to “broaden their views of the cosmopolitan nature of the modern world” (Nababan 1991: 123). This cosmopolitan evaluation of English means that people view it as indexing social difference or exemplary status for its Indonesian users (Errington 2000; Sneddon 2003: 173-177); differentiating them from the regional or national masses (Luvaas 2009).

Indonesian schools position local languages, which in Central Java would be Javanese, as playing the distinct role as the language of familial relations and ethnic tradition (Darjowidjojo 1998: 45). This perspective on local language is also often based on a prestigious language form or variety that presents a privileged sense of local identity (Kuipers 2008). Nonetheless, within the framework of national education and language policy, the state still positions local languages and regional ethnic identity as a standardized “sub-world” that functions as an “exoteric emblem” of “indigenous-national ethnicity and

a symbolic role as a neo-traditional source of legitimacy” for the Indonesian state (Errington 1998b: 279).

Consequently, the language ideologies associated with these three types of languages display clear structures in social meaning or order of indexicality (Blommaert 2007). While languages such as English and the local language are important to youths as part of their education, Indonesian occupies the position of being the dominant and most socially significant language that they need to learn and use in schools. Alternatively, while youths must learn other languages outside of Indonesian, they remain secondary or at least do not supplant the primacy of Indonesian as the language of formal schooling, formal public life, and Indonesian unity, partly due to their perceived differing social functions and evaluation.³ I intend to show that the various events of the *Paskibra* competition, through the use of languages and forms of activities, seek to reinforce these distinctions and their indexical connection to differing aspects of Indonesian youth identity.

RESEARCH LOCATION AND METHODOLOGY

The data and discussion I present in this article come from a broader dissertation study on youth language, which I conducted from mid-2012 to mid-2013 (Tamtomo 2016). The *Paskibra* group I discuss here comes from a state vocational high school (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Negeri, SMKN) in central Semarang, SMKN Pandanaran. The school is located in the centre of Semarang, nearby the provincial parliament complex and the governor’s office. It is also close to the *Simpang Lima*, the ‘five intersections’ area, which functions as the social and commercial centre of Semarang. SMKN Pandanaran is one of the oldest vocational high schools in the city. First established in 1952 as a technological teacher’s college (Sekolah Guru Pendidikan Teknik, SGPT) until 1975, when it became a vocational high school. The school has seven competency programmes generally in the technical specialization (Newhouse and Suryadarma 2011), namely: (1) Architectural Drawing, (2) Industrial Electronics, (3) Electronic Appliances, (4) Mechanical Engineering, (5) Automotive Engineering, (6) Audio Visual Technology, and (7) Multimedia and Animation. Semarang residents consider the school a favourite or “magnet” vocational high school, exemplified by its selection into the nationwide RSBI (Rintisan Sekolah Berstandar Internasional, ‘International Level School programme’), which ended in 2013.

The teachers at SMKN Pandanaran consider the *Paskibra* the most prestigious extra-curricular group in the school due to its history of winning various *Paskibra* competitions at either the city, provincial, and even

³ Goebel (2010) presents a similar argument, in which he identifies different types of “semiotic registers” (following Agha 2007) in neighbourhood language use in Semarang, Central Java, and in the Indonesian public spheres (media, education, and policy) in general. Of particular relevance is his distinction between a semiotic register that corresponds to the use of Indonesian, associated with much formal public life, and a semiotic register that corresponds to the use of local languages other than Indonesian (see Goebel 2010: 13-19).

national level. The *Paskibra* group also routinely performs in the annual city Independence Day flag ceremony by sending representatives to be part of the flag troop that performs at city hall. Their performances at these various public events have formed the group's reputation and public image.

I conducted ethnographic research with the *Paskibra* group from early to mid-2013. During my fieldwork, I was able to accompany the *Paskibra* and observe their participation in two provincial-level competitions, one held at a local state high school in April 2013 and one held at the Naval Sciences Polytechnic in May 2013. The main foundation of the analysis and discussion in this article comes from recordings and field notes I collected at these two competitions and during the *Paskibra's* preparation.

My main method of data collection was composed of observation and participant observation of the *Paskibra's* routine activities. I observed and took field notes during their weekly practice sessions, as well as during their preparation for the *Paskibra* competitions. I also recorded conversations between *Paskibra* members during these sessions and also their commands and chants, much of which I transcribed. At the competitions, I took photographs and recorded video and audio of the *Paskibra* platoon's performances. Near the end of my fieldwork, I also conducted a group interview with the *Paskibra* members, principally with the senior members of the group.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PASKIBRA COMPETITION

In general, organizers structure their *Paskibra* competitions based on two key competitive events: the *Peraturan Baris-Berbaris* (PBB or 'marching in formation') and the *Variasi Formasi* (*VarFor* or 'formation variations'). The organizers hold the competition in their main school field or courtyard, dividing it into two areas, one for the PBB event and the other for the *VarFor* event. The contestants perform one troop at a time: they begin by performing their PBB routine in the first area then they march into the second area to perform their *VarFor* routine. As a result, there is a continuous flow of contestant groups in the field, since the competitions tend to only last for one day. There are also separate judges for each event of the competition and the organizers position them on opposite sides of the field. The organizers also source these judges from army personnel from the regional military office.

The PBB event centres on the standard rules of marching in formation (the afore-mentioned *Peraturan Baris-Berbaris*), which organizers base on the basic military training of the Indonesian army.⁴ The PBB event involves the *Paskibra* group executing roughly fifty standard marching positions and manoeuvres in response to the commands of their group commander. These range from basic drill movements such as standing at attention (*siap di tempat*), standing at ease (*istirahat di tempat*), and saluting (*hormat*), to more complex manoeuvres such as marching, various turns, and lining up in formation, which the troop members have to execute in synchrony. When done properly by a trained

⁴ The competition organizers refer to the rules of marching as outlined by the *SK Pangab No. 611/X/1985* (Decree of the Chief of Armed Forces No. 611/X/1985).

group of *Paskibra*, it is an impressive sight, with the synchronic beat of their shoes pounding the ground as they march, punctuating their co-ordinated movements. The competing *Paskibra* troops also wear special competition uniforms, some with tassels and feathered caps, which help accentuate their movements as they go through their positions and formation.

The PBB event is itself the core event of the *Paskibra* competition, since these standard manoeuvres constitute the basic skills that the *Paskibra* must master. In a way, the PBB defines the *Paskibra*. While the term *Paskibra* literally refers to their roles as the flag-raising troop in the Indonesian flag ceremony, they can only carry out this role by using these PBB manoeuvres. Much of the training and preparation of the *Paskibra* members revolve around continuous drills to instil these marching formations and manoeuvres into the troop's muscle memory. This helps the troop members to execute the PBB flawlessly in the *Paskibra*'s various public performances. By implication, the central role of the militaristic PBB manoeuvres as a defining feature of the flag ceremony reflects the dominant position and role of the Indonesian military in shaping this image of a nationalist performance (see Crouch 1988 on the military's broader socio-political influence in Indonesia).

Since the PBB rules descend from the nationwide standard set by the Indonesian military, it follows that all of the commands are in Indonesian. This is, of course, congruent with the nationalistic image portrayed by the *Paskibra* as bearers of the flag in the flag-raising ceremony. Thus, the commands to carry out the manoeuvres crucial to the proper execution of the ceremony are all in the national, unifying, and state official language of Indonesian.

The *VarFor* event, which the *Paskibra* troops perform directly after their PBB routine, still follows some aspects of the PBB in terms of order, precision, and synchronicity. The event consists of the *Paskibra* still marching collectively in a particular formation. However, it does not require the use of the standard PBB commands or manoeuvres. Instead, the *Paskibra* are free to create or incorporate any group manoeuvres or moves into their formation and routine for the *VarFor* event. In contrast to the PBB event, the *VarFor* encourages the *Paskibra* to choreograph their own formations, emphasizing aesthetics and creativity, instead of just following a standard set of compulsory commands.

This freedom of choreography leads to many *Paskibra* troops, including that of SMKN Pandanaran, to look for various sources of inspiration to create their *VarFor*. These include, for example, popular music dance routines, traditional Javanese dance, martial arts moves, as well as the variation formations of other *Paskibra* troops and even the military.

Corresponding to this freedom of choreography, the language regime of the *VarFor* also allows for the use of a broader range of languages other than Indonesian although of course within the boundaries of etiquette and politeness. As such, the *Paskibra* troop of SMKN Pandanaran, just as the troops from other schools in Central Java, uses not only Indonesian but also English and Javanese in the various "yells"⁵ that they incorporate into their *VarFor*

⁵ The *Paskibra* and other youth groups I studied, use the Indonesian reduplication *yel-yel*

choreography.

The structure of the *Paskibra* competition thus highlights the way in which two differing forms of performance and language practice can co-exist as part of the way the youths actually perform their group identity as *Paskibra* troops. The competition accommodates the dual aspects of the *Paskibra*'s youth identity, as both nationalist youth (*pemuda*) and as popular-culture-oriented teenagers (*remaja*).

LANGUAGE USE IN *PASKIBRA* PRACTICE AND PREPARATION

In general, the SMKN Pandanaran *Paskibra* practice sessions feature an asymmetric pattern of language use and language choice between senior (second year or grade XI and final year or grade XII) and junior members (from the first year or grade X). In the practice sessions, the senior members usually play the role of trainers, who teach and drill the various forms of marching in formation and the manoeuvres of the PBB to the junior members. The seniors usually give the PBB commands in Indonesian, but they can also make comments, give reprimands, and make jokes in a mixture of Ngoko Javanese⁶ and Indonesian. In contrast, junior members have very restricted rights in their communication with the seniors and among themselves, especially when in formation. When in formation, juniors can only speak when seniors address them or when seniors give them permission to speak. Juniors also tend to use Indonesian when speaking to seniors.

The asymmetry in communication rights and language choice reflects the general hierarchy of status between senior and junior members. This is readily observable in the interaction between members during the practice sessions. Juniors spend most of their time standing in formation, following the seniors' PBB commands, being corrected on their form or execution, doing physical sanctions (such as push-ups), and only resting when seniors give them permission. In short, the seniors control much of the social activity and interaction that occurs during practice sessions. The asymmetry in interaction is similar to the pattern of interaction that occurs in the formalized rank and seniority-based hierarchy of the Indonesian military. In fact, the pattern of interaction, core set of activities (especially PBB), as well as their use of certain organizational terms such as *peleton* (platoon) and *danpleton* (*komandan peleton* 'platoon commander') indicate that the *Paskibra* group model themselves after the Indonesian military.

as a label for these "yells", which they shout during various forms of inter-school student competitions. Yells can be considered similar to cheers in American cheerleading or chants in various spectator sports in the US and Europe. In the case of the *VarFor*, the *Paskibra* shout out these "yells" at certain points in their performance to punctuate the choreography.

⁶ I follow Errington's (1998a) and Siegel's (1986) distinction of Javanese into two broad "speech levels," based on the expression of politeness or deference to an interactional other. Ngoko is the basic speech level, which express minimal deference and speakers often use it among peers, intimates, or social equals. Krama or *basa* expresses deference and speakers use it when speaking to others with superior social status. Other scholars (for instance Poedjosoedarmo 1968; Wolff and Poedjosoedarmo 1982) provide a more detailed differentiation of speech levels.

The preparations for the *Paskibra* competition, also require a junior member to act as a platoon commander. The platoon commander is responsible for shouting the manoeuvre commands for the platoon to follow in both the PBB and the *VarFor* events. This means that in this section of the competition, the platoon commander has a higher rank than the regular junior members, despite belonging to the same cohort. During the practice sessions, the platoon commander has to liaise with the seniors, both to report the progress of the troops in executing the manoeuvres and to plan the *VarFor* formations.

As a result, the conversations between the seniors and the junior platoon commander are less asymmetric compared to the general pattern of communication between senior and junior members. The junior platoon commander is able to follow and interact, using the broader language choices of the senior members, albeit in a limited manner. An example of this is shown in Extract 1 below.⁷ AD, a male senior *Paskibra* member and lead trainer of the platoon selected for the competition, is conversing with TC, the junior platoon commander.

Extract 1

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) | <i>AD: Digawé jadi bentuk M tapi lima lapis. Maksudku ngéné: satu, dua, tiga, empat, lima.</i> | 1) | AD: Form it into an M shape but five layers . I mean like this: one, two, three, four, five . |
| 2) | <i>TC: Dari tiga bersaf jadi M? Nèk jajar genjang gini. Jadi yang ini=</i> | 2) | TC: From three layers to an M? If rectangle like this. So this one= |
| 3) | <i>AD: =rak kètak selang-selingé tō.</i> | 3) | AD: =not visible, the alternation. |
| 4) | <i>TC: Ya... ya kètak tō kak.</i> | 4) | TC: Yes... yes [its] visible, kak . |
| 5) | <i>AD: Ha?</i> | 5) | AD: Ha? |
| 6) | <i>TC: Kètak tō malahan tō kak.</i> | 6) | TC: [Its] actually visible, kak . |
| 7) | <i>AD: Lho, bentukmu maksudé kayo belah ketupat tō?</i> | 7) | AD: Lho, your shape you mean like half a square , right? |
| 8) | <i>TC: He'eh.</i> | 8) | TC: Yeah. |
| 9) | <i>AD: Lha sing belakang?</i> | 9) | AD: What about at the rear ? |
| 10) | <i>TC: Ben dilihat ning belakang.</i> | 10) | TC: Just viewed from the rear . |

⁷ I use the following transcription notations, following Goebel (for example 2007 and 2010): however for this article I use italic text for Ngoko Javanese, *underlined italic* for high Javanese or Krama, **bold italic** for Indonesian, underlined for the translation of Krama and **bold** for the translation of the Indonesian. In addition, following Errington (1998a) though with slight modification, I use the following set of phonetic symbols to refer to certain vowel sounds in Javanese: /é/ is the tense, mid, front unrounded vowel; /è/ is the lax, mid, front, unrounded vowel; and /o/ is the low back unrounded vowel.

- 11) AD: *Tapi kan maksudé ngéné lho. Kesané ya. Walaupun ndak serapi itu kan maksudé nèk dilihat dari depan kan padhò karo sing di belakang itu ndak keliatan tò? Kan nèk dilihat dari depan gerakané sama. Lha nèk misalkan kəyò iki mau kan, ənə sing ngéné, ənə sing ngéné...* 11) AD: **But the point** is this. The **impression, yes. Although it's not as neat**, the **point** is, if **seen from the front** it's the same as those **at the back are not visible**, right? Because if seen from the front the **movement's the same**. But if, **for example**, like this just now **right**, there is like this, there is like this...
- 12) TC: *Sék, sék, sék. Gini, nèk... eh, ambil satu waé wés. Ndak usah belah ketupat, bentuk V. Bentuk V kayak tadi wés, kayak yang tadi.* 12) TC: Wait, wait, wait. **Like this**, if... eh, just take one then. **Doesn't have to be rectangle, V form. V form like that then, like the one before.**
- 13) AD: *Dəwə:: wəlu lapis.* 13) AD: Too long. Eight layers.
- 14) TC: *Yə ndak. Dibuat separoné tə kak. Kan gini, V. Nèk V kan nèk satu thək...lapan. Jadi gini, yang pojok-pojok ini mulai...* 14) TC: Well **no. Make it half then, kak. Because like this, V. If V then if just one... eight. So like this, those at these corners start...**
- 15) AD: *Ngéné. Sekə M ki mau kan. Awalé kan madhep semua sini. Kan bentuké M, M tá? Ənə sing madhep ngarep, ənə sing madhep mburi. Setiap lapis bédə arah hadapané.* 15) AD: Here. From this **M right**. Initially **all** faced **here**. **The shape** is M, M right? Some are facing front, some are facing rear. **Every layer** differ [in] their **facing direction**.

In this conversation, both speakers are using Indonesian but often in alternation or in combination with Javanese, particularly Ngoko. There are a number of features in this conversation from which we can take note. First, a number of alternations between the two languages occur in an intra-sentential manner or within the same clause (Woolard 2004). Second, these intra-sentential alternations also feature combinations of Javanese affixes and discourse particles with largely Indonesian lexical items. For example, we can see that the senior student, AD, can either answer TC's questions entirely in Javanese (turns 3 and 13) or he can employ combinations and alternations between the two languages (turn 11 and 15). In various parts of the conversation, both speakers also combine Indonesian lexical items with Javanese affixes (mainly the *-é* definitive or possessive suffix). Turns 9 and 10 show examples in which the speakers combine Javanese prepositions (*sing, ning*) with adjectives of place (*belakang*, 'back, rear'). As a result, a number of studies (such as Errington 1998a and Goebel 2007) have viewed this form of language alternation and combination as not indexing outright code-switching, in the sense of Gumperz's (1982) definition of situational code-switching in which alternation of languages signals changes in the instructional event. Errington (1998a) argues that the way speakers combine Javanese affixes and discourse particles with Indonesian lexical items (or vice-versa) makes use of

the structural similarity between the languages as well as various cognates and bivalent lexical items (Woolard 1999). In doing so, speakers perform “an interactionally integrated and emergent repertoire of syncretic elements” (Errington 1998a: 107). Similarly, Goebel (2007), following Gafaranga and Torras’s (2002) notion that speakers prefer to speak in the same medium that can include multiple languages or codes, considers this form of alternation and combination between Javanese and Indonesian as a “bilingual medium”, basically meaning that the combined use of these languages in this way constitutes a single communicative code.⁸ As Errington notes, his Javanese informants from south Central Java commonly label this form of bilingual alternation and combination *bahasa gadho-gadho* or ‘language salad’ (1998a: 98).

In this conversation, the junior *Paskibra* member (TC) can also use the bilingual combination pattern, although in a more limited manner and with a tendency of mirroring the direction taken by AD, the senior *Paskibra* member. While TC can also alternate into Javanese, his utterances lean more to Indonesian (including using the address term *kak*, short for *kakak* ‘elder sibling’). For example, his use of Javanese is limited to a number of grammatical items per utterance, such as conjunctions or prepositions (*nèk* ‘if’, *néng* ‘at’, *bèn* ‘so’), discourse markers (*tò*, *wés*, *sék*, *lha*, *lho*, *waé*), and suffixes (the Javanese possessive or nominative *-é*). In fact, other than these items, TC only uses two Javanese lexical items, *kétak* (‘visible’, turn 4 and 6) and *separo* (‘half’, turn 14).

The main point in discussing this pattern of “language salad” is to illustrate that within the overtly nationalist group identity, strict hierarchy, and structured interaction of *Paskibra* practice, youths can still interact using patterns of bilingual combination that blur the boundaries of national and local language. The extract above illustrates that this can happen even between youths of different cohorts, in which the hierarchy of interaction is supposed to be the strongest. This means that the various cohorts of *Paskibra* youth, at least in the SMKN Pandanaran group, share a common repertoire that includes the shared ability to combine Indonesian and Javanese into a bilingual medium.

Nevertheless, within the *Paskibra*, there is an interactional regime (Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck 2005) that prescribes the use of languages in different communicative situations. In the formal activities of the *Paskibra* practice sessions, there is an interactional regime of hierarchical and asymmetrical use of language and communicative rights. Within the cohorts, also in some instances of informal communication between cohorts, youths can combine Javanese and Indonesian as a form of bilingual medium of conversation.

The point of understanding these interactional regimes is that they reflect the layering and hierarchy of social meaning and social identity associated with language use (Blommaert’s 2007 notion of orders of indexicality). The use of Indonesian and asymmetrical interaction in the practice sessions becomes the most visible and defining layer of the *Paskibra*’s interactional social identity: as

⁸ See also similar concepts such as Auer’s (1995) “code alternation as the medium” and Meeuwis and Blommaert’s (1998) notion of “monolectal code-switching.”

a disciplined and hierarchical group of youths who interact using the national language. They also display this linguistic and interactional practice in their public performances as *Paskibra*. On the other hand, the more informal and mixed language instances of interaction become a second less visible and less public layer of interaction and social identity. This also happens to reflect the notion that language ideologies tend to be totalizing (Kroskrity 2000), with one form of language practice becoming the iconic form that represents the inherent nature or essence of a group's social identity (Irvine and Gal 2000). As I will show, this layering of orders of indexicality is congruent with the layering of social identity in the *Paskibra* competition. The PBB event represents the public performance of the iconic nationalist group identity, while the *VarFor* event shows a secondary yet complementary identity through the controlled appropriation of language forms and behaviours associated with popular culture notions of youth.

THE *PASKIBRA* PERFORMANCE IN THE COMPETITION

As I have noted above, the PBB event in the *Paskibra* competition demands the monolingual use of Indonesian because it is based on a standardized nationwide set of commands. The *VarFor* event, however, does not. Hence, the *VarFor* enables contestants to use multiple languages, just as it enables them to use various sources of formation and choreography. Consequently, the *Paskibra* competition combines the demand for a strict monolingual performance in Indonesian, and on the other hand, an openness for the use of multiple languages. The competition achieves this through the compartmentalization of these two modes of language use into two separate events. I will show that the use of languages and forms of physical performance in these two separate events also correspond to the way in which the *Paskibra* seeks to accommodate two forms of youth identity. The PBB event represents a performance of a standard form of nationalist youth identity along the lines of the *pemuda* ideal. At the same time, the *VarFor* event represents an attempt to accommodate a more flexible (but still nationalist) popular-culture-oriented youth identity that is more attuned to the notion of *remaja*.

The first event that the *Paskibra* contestants perform is the PBB event. The platoon from SMKN Pandanaran performs by going through all the required manoeuvres in the set order. All the commands are the same for all contestants since the organizers base the commands on the standards set by the Indonesian military. As a result, the language regime of this event specifies that all the commands are in Indonesian and Extract 2 below shows some examples. The platoon commander shouts the order for each manoeuvre, with the imperative *grak* (a clipping of *gerak* 'move') to complete the command. The correct form is for the platoon to execute the command after the commander utters the imperative *grak*.

Extract 2: Examples of PBB commands

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1) <i>Sikap sempurna</i> | 1) Perfect posture (standing at attention) |
| 2) <i>Istirahat di tempat</i> | 2) At ease |
| 3) <i>Hormat</i> | 3) Salute |
| 4) <i>Hadap kiri</i> | 4) Face left |
| 5) <i>Hadap kanan</i> | 5) Face right |
| 6) <i>Balik kanan</i> | 6) About turn, right |
| 7) <i>Tiga langkah ke depan</i> | 7) Three steps forward |
| 8) <i>Buka tutup barisan</i> | 8) Open and close ranks |
| 9) <i>Maju jalan</i> | 9) Walk forward |
| 10) <i>Lari maju</i> | 10) Run forward |

The PBB manoeuvres themselves are rigid, uniform, and dominated by linear movement. The *Paskibra* platoon generally maintains its rectangular formation throughout its PBB performance, as Figure 1 below illustrates.



Figure 1. The *Paskibra* platoon performing the PBB event (photograph by the author, 2013).

The second event, the *VarFor*, comes straight after the *Paskibra* platoon finishes performing the PBB event. As I have mentioned earlier, the *VarFor* event features unique movements and manoeuvres from each competing platoon. The *Paskibra* platoon from SMKN Pandanaran, for example, presents a *VarFor* featuring various moves incorporated from popular music video

dance routines, traditional Javanese dance, and martial arts, in addition to the basic marching PBB movements. As a result, although it still features the organized, synchronic, and rigid basic movements from the PBB (such as marching, walking in place, and so on), some sections of the *VarFor* also feature circular formations and smooth flowing movements, often with different members performing different moves simultaneously. For example, Figure 2 below shows a section of the SMKN Pandanaran's *VarFor* that features a radial pattern and movements sourced from martial arts, or at least based on their portrayals in comics, video games, and motion pictures.



Figure 2. A section of the SMKN Pandanaran's *VarFor* (photograph by the author, 2013).

While many of the commands for the *VarFor* are still in Indonesian, the yells that the *Paskibra* incorporate into their *VarFor* feature the use of other languages such as English and Javanese. Extract 3 below shows examples of various yells that the SMKN Pandanaran platoon use in its *VarFor* performances. As we can see, some of the yells feature the alternation or combination of Indonesian and English, such as lines 2, 4 and 6. On the other hand, line 9 features the alternation from Javanese to Indonesian. Some yells are in the polite or high Javanese speech level of *krama*, such as line 1 and 8. Another pattern, shown in line 10, combines all three languages: Javanese (*matur suwun* 'thank you'), English (yes) and Indonesian (*sukses*).⁹

Extract 3

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1) <i>Sumənggə mirsani</i> | 1) Please watch |
| 2) Get new spirit of <i>Paskibra</i> | 2) Get new spirit of Paskibra |

⁹ We can also consider the word *sukses* as being bivalent (Woolard 1999), in the sense that it can belong or index more than one language at the same time. In addition to Indonesian, we can also recognize and trace that *sukses* is a borrowing or loanword, from either Dutch or English.

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3) | <i>Satu tekad, satu tujuan, satu harapan, satu nusa, satu bangsa</i> | 3) | One will, one goal, one hope, one homeland, one nation. |
| 4) | Keep spirit, keep enjoy, <i>Paskibra</i> . | 4) | Keep spirit, keep enjoy, Paskibra . |
| 5) | <i>S-Pandanaran, sak joss é</i> | 5) | S-Pandanaran , the best |
| 6) | <i>Kami Paskibra bersama slamanya...</i> you and me together forever | 6) | We Paskibra together forever... you and me together forever |
| 7) | <i>Jiwa kami, semangat kami, membara.</i> | 7) | Our spirit, our passion, smoulders. |
| 8) | <i>Ing ngarsə sung tuladhə, ing madyə mangun karsə, tut wuri handayani</i> | 8) | <u>Those in front lead by example, those in the middle provide effort, those in the rear provide support.</u> |
| 9) | <i>Ḍətət kawat balung wesi, SMK Pandanaran wani mati. Bela negara, pasti!</i> | 9) | Muscles like iron cable, bones of steel, SMK Pandanaran does not fear death. Defend the nation, always! |
| 10) | <i>Matur suwun, yes. Sukses!</i> | 10) | <u>Thank you</u> , yes. Success! |

There does not seem to be any clear discursive or interactional purpose to the alternation of languages in these yells. However, some of these yells are common or stock phrases and clichés in either Indonesian or Javanese. For example, in line 3, the phrase *satu nusa satu bangsa* is a common nationalist slogan and forms part of the lyrics of a well-known nationalist song.¹⁰ The Javanese phrase in line 8 is a famous utterance of Ki Hajar Dewantara, a national hero considered as the father of Indonesian national education. Some English phrases, like that in line 2, are phrases that the *Paskibra* of SMKN Pandanaran uses regularly in its weekly practices. The combination of languages and use of stock phrases also point to a playful use of multiple languages in order to present a youthful identity and sociability, something which studies have found to be common among youths in general (see the articles in Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou 2003) and youths in Indonesia (Smith-Hefner 2007; Djenar, Ewing, and Manns 2018: Chapter 6).

We can consider the two events of the PBB and *VarFor* in these *Paskibra* competitions as representations of the two sides of the *Paskibra*'s youth identity. The PBB event represents the identity of *Paskibra* as nationalist youths (*pemuda*) and 'defenders of the nation' (*bela negara*): a fit, trained, and disciplined cadre of youths ready to serve the nation as its flag-bearers in the nationalistic ritual of the flag-raising ceremony. The primary use of Indonesian, the official language of national state unity, is of course essential in this event. One should also note the military influence in the form of the physical practices and formations that define this event. Conversely, the *VarFor* event represents the *Paskibra*'s way of accommodating other aspects of youth identity, in which *Paskibra* members are also teenagers (*remaja*) who

¹⁰ *Satu nusa satu bangsa*, composed by Liberty Manik, 1947.

are interested in popular youth culture, shown by their use of certain forms of choreography and their use of the socially prestigious English. The *VarFor* event also enables the expression of local ethnolinguistic identity, through the use of Javanese, as an accommodated and supporting part of an overarching nationalist Indonesian identity (Errington 1998b, 2000). The *Paskibra* (or at least their supervisors), however, often carefully control and select the elements (both language forms and behaviour) that the troop perform in the *VarFor*. The local language and popular-culture elements are often forms that do not contrast with or contradict the nationalist identity. As the SMKN Pandanaran *VarFor* performance shows, they are not too risqué, nor do they emphasize too much on leisure and consumption practices. Instead, they show the importance of *esprit-de-corps* and an orientation towards nationalism, personal strength, and success. This controlled selection and performance enable the *Paskibra* to show that although the *VarFor* presents elements that diverge from the nationalist PBB identity, they nonetheless still present the same unifying monologic voice and message (compare with Tomlinson 2017).

The two aspects of youth identity represented in the *Paskibra* competition do not necessarily stand in contrast to one another. One reason for this is that the separation of the performance into two events helps to compartmentalize the differing aspects of youth identity that the *Paskibra* display. The position of the PBB as the first event the *Paskibra* performs also helps to underscore the fact that it remains their primary activity and that the social identity they perform in this event is their iconic identity as a youth group. The youth identity portrayed in the *VarFor* event becomes a secondary identity, especially since the *Paskibra* only performs the *VarFor* in competitions and not in their iconic role in the flag ceremony. Furthermore, while the *VarFor* enables the *Paskibra* youth to make use of sources from local and popular culture, these elements are nonetheless presented within a broader *Paskibra* formation and marching activity. Therefore the compartmentalization of the two different aspects of youth identity associated with these events thus enables a certain form of erasure (Irvine and Gal 2000), in which the popular-culture-oriented practices of the *VarFor* do not replace or contest the dominant nationalist practice of the PBB event.

The compartmentalization of these two aspects of Indonesian youth identity also illustrates the way in which an institutional and state-backed youth group accommodates and also aligns alternative youth identities with their dominant notion of *pemuda* nationalist youth. The result is thus the appropriation of elements of both *remaja* popular culture and local ethnolinguistic identity, elements which the *Paskibra* then present within their broader marching in formation framework of activity. Subsequently, the *Paskibra* competition projects an ideal and inclusive nationalist identity in which the members are primarily nationalist youth (*pemuda*) who also happen to be *remaja* interested in elements of popular and local culture, though of course those which support the core nationalist identity.

From a perspective that views language use as connected to social meaning

and identity, the language practices of the *Paskibra* in these events (together with its physical performance) constitute a form of enregisterment (Agha 2007), in which language forms and practices become associated with certain social identities. The PBB performance associates (“enregisters”) Indonesian language with the *Paskibra*’s hierarchical, military-disciplined practice of social organization, presenting it as an ideal form of nationalist youth identity: of *pemuda* as defenders of the nation. Meanwhile, the *VarFor* performance illustrates that even local ethnic identity and the popular-culture practices of *remaja* can be subsumed into this nationalist youth identity.

The pattern of enregisterment in the *Paskibra* events is also not new. It is part of a broader structure present in public education, governance, and public events (including the iconic flag-raising ceremony); a legacy of the overarching centralized national and ideological framework of the thirty years of the New Order regime. Even in the post-Reformation era, this pattern of enregisterment and education, in which national language and nationalist values are associated with military-style discipline and practice, continues to be of practical relevance to Indonesian policy makers.¹¹ Finally, part of this relevance derives from the practical employment potential that the *Paskibra*’s form of institutional and interactional practice offers its youth members. The pattern of rigid hierarchical interaction, military-style discipline, and chain of command lends itself well to preparing high school youths who are interested in joining the military or the police force, or in attending certain types of higher-education institutions of government service (*perguruan tinggi kedinasan*),¹² in which these forms of practices continue. Hence, the interactional and communicative practice of the *Paskibra* is not limited only to high schools but also continues to be present in various contexts of public and state institutions.

CONCLUSION

This article has illustrated, using the example of a *Paskibra* group in Semarang, the way in which a state-formed institutional youth group perpetuates a nationalist *pemuda* youth identity. The two events in the *Paskibra* competition enable them to present different aspects of their group identity. The PBB event presents their iconic identity, which links the use of standard Indonesian commands with symbolic behaviour of military discipline and organization

¹¹ A recent example is the *Bela Negara* (National Defence) programme of the Indonesian Ministry of Defence, which also targets youths in secondary and tertiary education (see www.kemhan.go.id/belanegara/).

¹² Various government departments and ministries generally operate these government service higher-education institutions. Many of them promise government employment after graduation, which many Indonesian still consider as the most secure form of employment. Some examples are: the Institute of Domestic Governance (*Institute Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri* -IPDN) under the Ministry of Home Affairs; the Naval Sciences Polytechnic (*Politeknik Ilmu Pelayaran*) and the School for Naval Sciences (*Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran*) under the Ministry of Transportation; the Academy of Correctional Sciences (*Akademi Ilmu Pemasyarakatan*) and the Immigration Polytechnic under the Ministry of Law and Human Rights.

in order to produce a nationalist and state-oriented *pemuda* identity, whose purpose is to produce cadres for national defence. Meanwhile, the *VarFor* event presents a secondary and complementary identity of nationalist youths who are also *remaja*, conversant with popular culture and regional ethnic culture. Despite notions that the *pemuda* and *remaja* constitute contrasting aspects of social youth identity (Nilan 2004: 190; Parker and Nilan 2013), the *Paskibra* are able to reconcile these different aspects of their group identity, or at least render them as being complementary. Firstly, they do this through a compartmentalization of these two aspects of youth identity, enabled by their separate performance in each competition event. This helps mask or put under erasure any contradiction between the two aspects of group identity. Secondly, the *Paskibra* also selectively appropriate elements of popular culture and integrate them into a marching-in-formation form of public performance. These practices highlight the fact that nationalist youths, just like their popular-culture peers, are simultaneously attending to competing discourses of youth identity (see Parker and Nilan 2013: 38). Finally, the *Paskibra*'s public performances also constitute processes in which their language use and symbolic behaviour become enregistered as identifiable expressions of nationalist social identity.

My discussion also reveals that although mainstream discourse tends to define Indonesian youth based on the notion of *remaja*, the nationalist *pemuda* identity continues to exist, particularly in state-sanctioned youth groups within formal institutions. Furthermore, the type of military-inspired symbolic behaviour iconic of these nationalist youth is not only present in educational contexts, but is also widely found in various government-run institutions. Hence, while they might not necessarily be prominently visible in contemporary popular culture, the type of nationalist youth identity represented by the *Paskibra* continues to have currency within various state-run institutional frameworks.

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