

Dear L■■■■,

How nice to be writing to you after a day of business phone calls, writing proposals for courses and dashing off in-house memos.

With you I have to just respond freely to one person, without needing to think cunningly, as you have to in business contexts.

Yes, L■■■■, I do think the written channel is quite different from the oral one. When I write to you I am with you but we are not together at the same time. I have no feedback from you as my words reach your eyes. I also know that my text may appear one way to you on first reading and another way on second reading. There may be another reading when you find this letter among yellowing old papers in 1999, who knows? In other words, a letter can have a permanency.

I like your example of the Malays and the Batakese goping about harvesting. From F■■■■ I get a feeling of Indonesia as a whole, from you I get a feeling of it as a sum of its parts.

UK:

When a country calls itself UNITED KINGDOM it is calling attention to its actual disunity.

2000 years ago Britain was populated by Celts who spoke a language that later split up into Welsh, Gaelic and Ers. This people covered the whole archipelago.

The Romans came and conquered most of the islands (they could not hold Scotland and so built a great Wall to keep the Scots out.

They ruled the Celts until around 350 AD ( 300 before the Hegira ) and then withdrew as the Roman Empire across Europe crumbled.

Rough Germanic tribes, the Angles and the Saxons, invaded from Germany and took all the rich lands of England and South Scotland. They drove the Celts into Cymru ( Wales ) where it was mountainous and poor. The Angles and Saxons were the forebears of the English- Anglo-Saxon gradually transformed into English.

In 1066 ( about 350 after Mohamet ) the Norman French invaded and conquered the lands of England. In the 13th century they invaded Wales and subjugated the Welsh. Ever since those years the Welsh have been trying to protect their culture, their beautiful Celtic language, their land against the inroads of the English.

You only had the Dutch for 3 centuries with their boots on your necks. The Welsh have been resisting the English

for 7 long centuries. The Dutch were few and far away.  
The English were and are right on the Wales's doorstep.

All over Europe the ethnic minorities are beginning to demand their rights as the nation state is weakened by the creation of a United States of Europe.

The minorities include the Lapps in Finland and Norway, the Friesians in Holland and Germany, the Turks in Germany, the North Africans in France, the Basques in Spain, the Albanians in Serbia (Kosovo ) and in South Italy..... the list is a long one.

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Linguistics would only dare to define a standard language descriptively- who really can presume to impose a standard prescriptively?

You can try to make a river to flow along a bed you lay out, but the spirit of the river will rise in anger and flood beyond the bed you have laid out.

How Indonesian develops will mostly depend on its leading users' natural speech, I mean folk like politicians, TV announcers, journalists etc...  
Guidelines produced by committees will only be followed if they are going the way the language river already wants to go.

I really enjoyed your letter.

Please write again.

Mario,

ps: did you see that programme last night in Myanmar(Burma) with its suppression of the opposition and its tolerance of foreign companies using slave labour on big projects. The program painted a grim picture. The leader of the opposition has an English husband who lives in Oxford.