

# Language Policy and the Construction of National and Ethnic Identities in Indonesia

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The rapid spread of English has brought about socio-political, economic, and cultural impacts on non-English-speaking countries. Although a myth, the international status of English has impacted on identity practices in these countries. However, these practices simultaneously create worries that English will displace local languages and cultural identities. In the multilingual and multicultural context of Indonesia, this paradox exists. The spread of Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia (BI)) has produced bilingualism throughout the Indonesian archipelago, while creating controversies over its harmful effects on the maintenance of local vernaculars in the country. The emergence of English further outspreads the multilingual repertoire, exemplifying the articulation of multiple language competencies. Demand for English increases because of its role in global communication and socio-economic development, making it an essential tool with a special status as a first foreign language. Despite English being necessary for the nation, policy makers are worried about the negative influence English may have on national culture and identity. This globalization paradox triggers questions of what roles English, BI, and vernaculars play within language policy frameworks and how these languages are intermingled in multilingual practices in Indonesia. This article explores how the need for English, the diffusion of BI, and the maintenance of local languages and cultures relate to one another and how this relates to multiple identity practices in Indonesia. The author did this through reference to current language policy frameworks which can provide insights into policy maker ideologies about the interplay between national, local, and international languages in the construction of national and ethnic identities of Indonesians. Within the paradox of preserving national and ethnic identities and promoting a foreign language that embodies different values, further research needs to explore how globalization, language policy, and language learning influence the construction of identities of particular ethnic groups in multilingual settings of the country.

*Keywords:* globalization, language policy, language maintenance, multilingualism, national, ethnic identity

## Introduction

Along with globalization, English has been cutting across borders and stretching out the world with constantly growing motion: Some observers say imperialistically (Phillipson, 1992; 2008); some state democratically or with huge variation and autonomy (Bolton, 2000; Gupta, 1998; Kachru, 2005); and others observe no longer focus given to the Western English, preferring to market a promising global English community (Jenkins, 2007; Lamb, 2004; 2009; Ryan, 2006). The rapid spread of English throughout the world in this globalization era has brought about its socio-political, economic, and cultural impacts on

non-English-speaking countries. Canagarajah (2005) has identified two major developments that affect language policy and education in the world: (a) a change in the ownership of English worldwide; and (b) a new trend of life marked with general fluidity and mixing in languages, cultures, and identities. Canagarajah (2005) asserted that the number of people who speak English as an additional language in the world has currently surpassed that of those who traditionally speak it as their “native language” (i.e., those of British ancestry). The local cultures and identities of many communities in the world are now influenced by cultural values and practices associated with English or the Western civilization (Canagarajah, 2005). With the international status of English myth, acts of English identification are widely practiced to enact, invent, and (re)fashion identities across a wide range of life domains (Pennycook, 2007). At the same time, however, there appears a worry that the spread of English will lead to the displacement of local languages and cultural identities (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007).

With regard to language policy in the context of Southeast Asian countries, which Indonesia belongs to, Tsui and Tollefson (2007) asked a number of questions including: 1. The ways in which the countries have responded to globalization, and what roles their language policies have played; 2. What language ideologies and stances these policies promote (e.g., whether these policies foster multilingualism and multiculturalism, or they legitimate the hegemony of English over other languages); 3. How the government in each of the countries resolves the paradox of preserving or building national cultural identities and promoting a foreign language that embodies different values, cultures, and traditions; and 4. The relationship between the emergence of English with language and national cultural identities, and what roles language policy plays. In the context of education, Tollefson (2013) asked similar questions, such as how language policy and programs in language education are influenced by global processes as well as how language policy impacts the preservation of language minorities. Within the context of educational language policy in Indonesia, the following question is worth asking, “What is the relationship between the emergence of English with the rapid diffusion of Bahasa Indonesia (BI) and with the maintenance of local language and culture?”. This article will explore language policy in Indonesia and the status and roles of BI, local vernaculars, and English as an international language to see the interplay between national, local, and international languages.

### **Language Policy**

A number of scholars have asked a question about what language policy is (Huebner, 1999; Kam & Wong, 2004; Spolsky, 2004; 2009; Tollefson, 2013; Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). Huebner (1999) presented two definitions of language policy according to James Crawford (<http://www.JWCrawford.com>):

1. What the government does officially—through legislation, court decisions, executive actions, or other means—to:
  - (a) determine how languages are used in public contexts; (b) cultivate language skills needed to meet national priorities; or (c) establish the rights of individuals or groups of individuals to learn, use, and maintain languages;
2. Government regulation of its own language use, including steps to facilitate clear communication, train and recruit personnel, guarantee due process, foster political participation, and provide access to public services, proceedings, and documents. (Crawford, 1992, as cited in Huebner, 1999, pp. 2-3)

According to Huebner (1999), these definitions assume the monolithic notion of “government” while there are branches of governments at federal level alone and different levels of government along the way from federal to local authority, such as school districts or individual schools. Also, there are interest groups including private enterprises from small business and multinational corporations, the media, publishing houses,

professional and religious organizations, foundations, think tanks, and other civil society that influence language policy (Huebner, 1999).

Another definition by Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) (as cited in Kam & Wong, 2004) reads, “Language policy is a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the society, group or system” (p. 203). The main issues in this macro-level stage of policy involve the choice of a language or languages as the national or official language(s), the teaching of these languages, codification and setting of norms, and making sure that people of that particular country have easy access to that language or the languages they want to learn (Kam & Wong, 2004). In addition, Spolsky (2004) defined language policy as the formulation and proclamation of an explicit plan or policy, usually but not necessarily written in a formal document, about language use. According to Spolsky (2004), the explicit policy can be easily recognized through the explicit statements in official documents, such as a national constitution, a language law, a cabinet document, or an administrative regulation.

All of the above definitions seem to fit well with the context of language policy in Indonesia. For example, Crawford’s definitions, which assume monolithic notion of government, parallel the centralized decision of language policy making in Indonesia. Another, to implement language policy as a body of ideas aimed at language change in the society, Indonesia, through nationalist movements, fought for the imposition of Indonesian (BI) as the language of unity throughout the country. As an explicit plan, language policy in Indonesia is stipulated in the country’s 1945 Constitution, in which the status of BI as a national and official language and the vernacular languages being recognized was clearly stated and elaborated. As the heart of Indonesia’s language policy, the 1945 Constitution, Chapter XV, provides a guideline for linguistic unity through the adoption of BI as the only national and official language, and linguistic diversity via the maintenance of the diverse local languages (Renandya, 2004). From this constitutional perspective, language policy in Indonesia reflects the efforts to promote multilingualism and multiculturalism based on the idea that language diversity is a resource for national development. However, further elaboration on this constitutional mandate, which will be further discussed at later pages, seems to foster the use of BI while paying little attention to the cultivation of the vernaculars as reflected through successive language planning and regulations officially made by a special language agency under the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Indonesia.

In order to explain the relationship between local, national, and foreign languages in particular settings, like in Indonesia, Haugen (1971) and C. Voegelin and F. Voegelin (1964) used a metaphor of linguistic ecology, i.e., interactions between any given language and its environment. In linguistic ecology, the analysis of the interactions begins not with a particular language, but with a particular area. Thus, talking about linguistic ecology of Indonesia entails the talk about Indonesia as a territory where people and societies are considered an environment, followed with the discussion of its language repertoire, and possibly end up with a policy or plan to maintain its linguistic diversity. Within a framework of linguistic ecology, Spolsky (2004; 2009) argued that language and language policy both exist in highly complex, interactive, and dynamic contexts, so the alteration of any part of which may have correlated effects on any other part. In the context of Indonesia, its geography, archipelago, many ethnic groups, national history, global spread and hegemony of English, religious-related use of Arabic, and so on account for the language policy.

### **The History of Language Policy and Nationalism in Indonesia**

Language policy in Indonesia originated from the nationalist movement with BI being one of the pillars of

nationalist expression and an important source of unity for the diverse ethnic groups that lived in the archipelago (Bertrand, 2003) of over 17,000 islands formerly ruled by the Dutch. Along with the emergence of the Indonesian nationalist movement in the early 20th century, Malay soon became the language of unity against the Dutch. It gained its increasingly importance as nationalist newspapers began to publish in the language, as did some local writers (Bertrand, 2003). Inspired by the spirit of nationalism, the local writers during the time of *Siti Nurbaya*<sup>1</sup> in the 1920s and *Pujangga Baru*<sup>2</sup> in the 1930s, two exponents that have been considered milestones of the history of Indonesian literary works, produced most of their literary works in BI (then Malay language) and a few in local languages. With further significant progress being made particularly in the domain of the written word, marked in part with the introduction of Romanized spelling system of Malay by a Dutchman, Charles van Ophujsen, the presence of Malay language in the archipelago became more forceful (Simpson, 2007).

In 1928, the momentum of the nationalist movement led on to a historic declaration of commitment to new unity and co-operation toward the development of an Indonesian nation. Thousands of young people gathered in Jakarta (then Batavia) at the second Youth Congress, pledged an oath of allegiance to “Indonesia”, sang a new national anthem, and raised a new national flag (Simpson, 2007). The central assertion of the pledge, widely known as “Sumpah Pemuda” (Youth Pledge) with the brief of “one land, one nation, and one language” (Paauw, 2009), was set to become widely invoked, “almost like a mantra” (Emmerson, 2006, p. 17). The pledge used to be recited during the weekly flag raising ceremony on Monday mornings in schools during the 1980s, and the whole minutes of the declaration are typically recited during the official flag ceremony to commemorate the event on October 28th every year. The moment of Youth Pledge has been recognized as a milestone not only in the establishment of the Indonesian language, but also in the national history of the country.

Later, during the Japanese occupation in the 1940s, the position of BI in the archipelago was further strengthened. Japan administration did not allow the use of Dutch as a way to eliminate the Dutch influence in the country. At the same time, there were few people who could speak Japanese that BI became the most reasonable language to make use of in virtual walks of life (Paauw, 2009). When Indonesia proclaimed independence on August 17, 1945, it adopted BI as its sole official language (Bertrand, 2003) and it has remained so ever since. This proclamation, a culmination of struggles for independence from the Dutch, has become the milestone of the history of the language policy in Indonesia since one day after the proclamation, Indonesian founding leaders made a consensus about a national constitution, in which the status of BI and local languages was stipulated.

Further milestone of the development of language policy in Indonesia which strengthened the roles and status of BI happened during the Old Era regime of President Sukarno between 1959 and 1966. During this period (known as guided democracy era), the basic tenets of Indonesia’s language policy were established and implemented gradually to replace the Dutch after most Dutch-language schools were closed as a part of nationalization agenda in the early 1950s. In line with the incline of Dutch language use in schools, the role of BI became more dominant in education setting. However, local languages were still maintained in the development of official policy during the period of liberal democracy (Bertrand, 2003) as they deserve a protection from the state constitution.

<sup>1</sup> An Indonesian novel by Marah Rusli. It was published by Balai Pustaka, the state-owned publisher and literary bureau of the Dutch East Indies, in 1922.

<sup>2</sup> An Indonesian avant-garde literary magazine published from July 1933 to February 1942.

The establishment of New Order regime under President Suharto with one of its top priorities to strengthen the integration of national territory impacted the spread of BI. Among the major policies on language during this regime were the standardization of the spelling system in 1972, the standardization of terms, the publication of standardized dictionary, the cultivation of BI through mass media, etc.. During the regime under President Suharto, there were four successive educational curricula, including the curriculum for BI instruction, introduced—the 1968, the 1975, the 1984, and the 1994 curricula (Jazadi, 2008). The most current debates (e.g., *Asia Educationnews*, 2012; Whitehead, 2013) over the issue of foreign, national, and vernacular language teaching in the newly implemented educational curriculum of 2013 in July last year, may inform the centrality of language planning and policy within national educational discourse in the country.

Up to this point, language policy in Indonesia has reflected the spirit of nationalism which can be traced back to as early as the colonial era, in which language policy was made to support the nationalist movement for the country's independence from the Dutch. During the Japanese period, language policy was dictated by the Dai Nippon regime, which was aimed at eliminating existing policy inherited from or linked to the European colonials. BI took an advantage of the political transition to gain in popularity as in this short period as the Japanese prohibited the use of the Dutch in the administration while Japanese was relative strange, leaving only BI and vernaculars as the possible choice for use. Nationalism during the era of President Sukarno was expressed by way of closing Dutch schools and nationalization of Dutch corporates operating in Indonesia, providing more space for BI and vernaculars to grow. Strong commitment to national integrity under the regime of President Suharto strengthened the spread of BI through multi-modal, intensive disseminations, the efforts that have begun since independence. In line with the bolstering of BI, a massive adoption of Javanese terms and philosophies into the national language took place during this period along with the Javanization of public spheres, such as military, education, politics, and public administration. This situation triggered underground persistence accumulating into massive protests that toppled down President Suharto that marked the end of New Order regime and the beginning of a so-called Reformation Era. This contemporary era is marked by extensive demands for decentralization of power and wider regional or local autonomy leading to the recognition of local leaders and promotion of regional or local cultural identities. With the revitalization of local wisdom and cultural events, vernaculars become more instrumental as media of expression. However, the excessive euphoria of localism, particularly in political arena, brings about a worry that the spirit of nationalism becomes eroded, and overridden by primordial ideology. In a number of cases, ethnic groups in the country have asked for more autonomous administrative areas by splitting up from current provinces or regencies. "Language-linked identities have come to the fore in diverse struggles for ethnic autonomy, as images of 'pure' forms of native languages figure in nativist narratives of primordial ethnic origins" (Errington, 1998, p. 271).

The above examples may also support Wright's (2000) idea that language is a central organizing principle of nationalism. Wright (2000) presented various theories of nationalism on the function of language in the processes of nation building, including four main schools of thought: ethno-linguistic nationalism, the perennialists, the modernists, and the post-modernists. Ethno-linguistic nationalism makes language an imaginary and spiritual unifier; thus, only those who share the linguistic world view can partake in the nation (Wright, 2000). Wright (2000) asserted that language has been crucial in two important ways, namely, (a) as a means of mobilizing a proto-national group and the ancestral language as carriers of the authenticity of the group; and (b) as a means of ensuring a community of communication, a requirement of all nationalist projects. In conjunction with this, Gungwu (2007) argued that the relationship between language, nation, and

development is neither automatic nor natural, but of the three languages is the most essential. The nations in Southeast Asia are the products of people's aspiration to free themselves from colonial control in order to build up their national identity (Gungwu, 2007). Gungwu reminded, however, that language can be sacrificed for the sake of nation-building, and the national calls for development would place individuals and institutions under ever-greater compression. In Indonesia, during President Suharto's New Order Era, development rationalized expansive top-down governmental resolutions, many with enormously disturbing effects on local communities. As part of development, language policy in the country has long been framed within the scopes of modernization, and issues of BI management are regularly framed as issues in language development tied to the "politics of the national language" (Errington, 1998).

### **The Role of BI and Local Vernaculars**

Indonesia, almost alone among post-colonial nations, has been successful at endorsing an indigenous language as its national language (Paauw, 2009). Among similar Asian countries in Southeast Asia, Indonesia has achieved comparative success in the development, public acceptance, and diffusion of its national language (Dardjowidjojo, 1998; Lee & Suryadinata, 2007; Lo Bianco, 2012). Dardjowidjojo (1998) compared Indonesia's success in national language planning to the experience in other post-colonial nations, such as India, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, and concluded that "Indonesian is perhaps the only language that has achieved the status of a national language in its true sense" (p. 36). The succeeding process of diffusion throughout the country in its official roles as a national language emanates through a lengthy and constant process of deliberate language planning. Consecutive state agencies have been founded since the independence to develop the national language and the vernaculars, beginning with the Balai Bahasa (Language Center) in 1948, the Lembaga Bahasa dan Budaya (Institute of Language and Culture) in 1952, the Komisi Istilah (Committee on Terminology), the Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa (National Center for Language Development), and the Pusat Bahasa (Language Center), along the way down to the current Badan Bahasa (Language Board), all of which have operated directly under the Ministry of Education.

As a result of a remarkable national language policy and the growing investment in state-sponsored for language development, BI expands rapidly as a national language and its speakers increase tremendously. Also, the diffusion process of BI has produced a spreading bilingualism throughout the country's many islands, resulting in multiple language competences, with a three and four language knowledge combination, i.e., BI with one or more vernaculars (Lo Bianco, 2012). The rapid dissemination of BI creates an issue dealing with whether and to what extent the country's language policy exerts harmful effects on the development and maintenance of local vernaculars. Several linguists (e.g., Poedjosoedarmo, 1981; Alisjahbana, 1984) worried that the development of BI would endanger the vernaculars. A recent study of the census of Indonesia by Suryadinata, Arifin, and Ananta (2003) suggested that national development has strengthened certain languages and weakened others; while BI as the national language is crucial to the nation-building process, the greater part of the society do not speak the language naturally as it does not belong to their primary language. These findings contrast previous data from Alwi (2000) that the number of speakers of major local languages observed was stable over a period between 1980 and 1990, leading to plausible claim that the increasing use of the national language has not significantly weakened the use of the vernaculars. The fact that there is no significant change in the number of speakers of major language during the decade supports the claim that local languages still function to express the ethnic identities of their speakers even in urban settings where BI serves

as the most likely medium of inter-ethnic communication (Lowenberg, 1991; Renandya, 2004). The contradictory views of the effect of widespread use of BI on the maintenance of local vernaculars require updated surveys to see the drift through longer periods of time.

Looking into education as a cornerstone of the government's language policy, in which BI is considered the sole language of instruction, the heightened worry about the extinction of minor vernaculars finds its rationale. The sole language of instruction from primary school to university has been BI, with exceptions being made for the first three grades of elementary school, where local languages can be used in areas where students lack a good command of Indonesian (Dardjowidjojo, 1998). In these cases, local languages are considered transitional media of instruction. With the rapid dissemination of BI through educational institutions and its intensive use through mass media and popular entertainments supported by the extensive use of hand phones and digital social networks all over the country, people have become more exposed to BI. While vernaculars are locally used within decreasing domains, an increasing number of monolingual speakers of vernaculars are now moving all the way through bilingual BI-vernacular toward monolingual speakers of BI.

With the success of Indonesia in establishing a single language as the national and official language in socio-linguistically pluralistic society, the relationship between BI and local vernaculars becomes diglossic. In typical diglossic situation, BI is usually used for "high" speech functions, such as official communication and instruction in schools and universities, while the vernacular languages are employed for "low" speech functions, such as in conversation with family and friends. This diglossic view of the relationship between BI and the vernacular languages is true in most parts, and it is certainly arguable in some places. As a bilingual speaker of Bimanese and BI, the researcher of this paper found that types of relationship between BI and vernaculars are complementary to each other; BI is mostly used in formal settings and inter-ethnic communication, while vernaculars in informal settings and intra-ethnic communication. In certain contexts, however, vernaculars are preferably used to mark the "higher" function. A number of speakers intentionally use the vernacular to represent the notion of "highness" instead of using BI. For a number of Sasak (Lombok) speakers of BI, the use of "tiang" ("I" or "me", first person, in Sasak language) is preferable than "saya" ("I" or "me" in BI), suggesting that certain elements in the stratified vernaculars are considered higher than the elements in BI.

To sum up, the process of diffusion of BI emanates through a lengthy process of deliberate language planning, yielding a spreading bilingualism throughout the country and resulting in multiple language competences, with a combination of BI with one or more vernacular languages. A key issue regarding the speedy dissemination of BI is concerned with whether and to what extent the country's language policy causes harmful effects on the development and maintenance of local languages. So far, local languages still function to express the ethnic identities of their speakers even in urban settings where BI serves as a vital tool of inter-ethnic communication. Like that of BI, the position of vernacular languages in Indonesia is safeguarded by the constitution, which affirms that the vernaculars are assured their right to existence and development, although their domains of use in the society are restricted (Nababan, 1991). Despite the restriction, the rapid spread of Indonesian has not been viewed as a threat to the maintenance of the vernaculars (Nababan, 1985). However, only a few large regional languages in the western part of the nation, such as Javanese and Sundanese, have better prospects for language maintenance; the many more small languages in the east are endangered and are in an urgent need for maintenance (Musgrave, 2008). Many local languages in Indonesia, especially the minor ones, have received scant attention from both local and central governments. A few dialects, like Sanggar, Kolo, and Tarlawi in Bima, are dying because their speakers have shifted to use Bimanese and BI,

while there is little attempt of the younger speakers to learn those dialects. The same is true of Bimanese, despite recent initiative to teach it in elementary school across the region, there is little attempt to document this language that leads to its relegation. Before late, language planning and policy that support the empowerment of minority communities to preserve or revitalize the uses and roles of their languages need to be made.

### **English Language Teaching and the Roles of English and Other Foreign Languages**

In the era of globalized communication, the national language of Indonesia and vernacular languages are not considered sufficient to catch up with the rapidly developing world (Paauw, 2009). Instead, global languages, especially English, become keys to the gate of scientific and modern technology as well as other world civilizations (Montolalu & Suryadinata, 2007). Along with BI and vernaculars, several foreign languages have been used in Indonesia, including Dutch, German, French, and Japanese, with English being the most popular in schools and tourism and Arabic in religious affair. English was officially chosen as the language of wider communication immediately after Indonesia gained its independence, and has since been a compulsory language taught in public schools throughout successive curricula. At the same time, Arabic has been maintained in Islamic schools, such as *madrasah* (Arabic, formal school) and *pesantren* (traditional boarding school). Other than these two languages, which are taught as early as junior high school and even as early as elementary school for Arabic, foreign languages are not taught until senior high school or university (Nababan, 1991; Bertrand, 2003). Having current status as the first foreign language, English as well as other foreign languages is utilized for a number of important purposes: international communication, the transfer and the acquisition of science and technology, and as source for developing and modernizing BI (Dardjowidjojo, 1996). The rapid expansion of English in recent years, removing the international communication functions previously held by Dutch (Groeneboer, 1993), further outspread the multilingual repertoire among the society, embodying the formula of subnational-national-supranational language competencies, which consists of local and regional vernaculars, BI, and English. As the influence of English on modern-day BI is so remarkable, it may be more suitable to categorize the status of English as an additional rather than simply a foreign language (Lowenberg, 1991; Renandya, 2004). This claim might be true as English has been that profound in many urban settings, but in the much larger areas, especially in small towns and rural villages, English remains a foreign language.

Indonesia's language policy has assigned English as a foreign language and an optional source after the vernaculars for the enrichment of the lexicon of BI. However, the actual sociolinguistic dynamic does not always follow the direction or policy initiatives set forth. A diversified society with multiple languages and cultures poses a big challenge for the implementation of language policy and planning for English use in Indonesia. With its current status, role, or function in the execution of the nation and in education in particular, English must be seen against the milieu of where it comes to pass in the third of three main categories, BI, the regional vernaculars, and foreign languages (Lauder, 2008). Lauder (2008) argued that since the early conception of Indonesia's national language policy, the role of foreign languages, English in particular, in Indonesia's national language policy, has been outlined since early on using the metaphor of English as a tool (*alat*), which has to be used to bring in selective information, knowledge, and technology that would speed up development. Within the frame of development, which is nationalistic and patriotic in nature, English is essential, but the role that it is allowed to play is limited to its practical value that can support economic growth (Lauder, 2008), as can be read from the following paragraph.

Commentators and scholars (e.g., Dardjowidjojo, 2003; Huda, 2000; Renandya, 2000; Simatupang, 1999),

who have done research on the use of English in Indonesia, have seen the language as potentially accomplishing a number of important purposes:

- (a) As a means of international communication in practically all fields or walks of life;
- (b) As a medium through which scientific knowledge and new technologies can be accessed and implemented with a view to succeeding in the global marketplace;
- (c) As a source of vocabulary for the development and modernization of Indonesian;
- (d) As a way to get to know native speakers of English, their language, culture, and literature, or as a means of expanding one's intellectual horizons (Lauder, 2008, pp. 12-13).

In line with the purposes, English has been taught as a compulsory subject in three-year junior high school and another three-year senior high through successive educational curricula since the independence of Indonesia in 1945, with the main aim to provide learners with sufficient skill to read science-related texts written in English (Huda, 2000; Jazadi, 2008). For that purpose, at least 225-minute contact time a week is allocated for English instruction in senior secondary schools with students majoring in language stream receiving about double the time allocated for students of other streams, such as science and social studies (Renandya, 2004). A number of schools provide extra lessons after school, especially prior to national exams, while some students voluntarily organize extracurricular activities through English or debate club to learn a little bit more. Even now English instruction expands to elementary school, in which it is taught as a local content in a number of urban primary schools. To support the instruction, teachers are refreshingly trained to keep up with best practices and knowledge of English pedagogy. Subject teacher consulting groups (or Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP)) are formed as local forums for teachers to discuss instructional issues and disseminate updated information regarding their job. These indicate the strong efforts to extend the scope or domain and improve the quality of English instruction in schools in the country.

Despite strong efforts to expand and improve the instruction, the general picture of formal English instruction is rather unfavorable. Practitioners, language experts, and policy makers alike accept that English instruction in Indonesian schools has been measured unsuccessful (Dardjowidjojo, 1996) evidence in the majority of high schools, graduates are hardly able to comprehend even simple English texts, let alone communicate with it effectively (Renandya, 2004). In spite of the fact that English has been taught in Indonesia's secondary schools for decades, the achievement standard is still considered lower than expected (Montolalu & Suryadinata, 2007). Even though knowledge of this language is considered a symbol of modern identity and mark of being highly educated, a majority of people remain hindered by their poor mastery of English knowledge and skills (Lauder, 2008). Competence in English among the speakers remains stratified across areas and social status, with the young, educated, and urban being the most salient (Lo Bianco, 2012). Even highly educated intellectuals often make a poor impression when giving presentations in English or find themselves difficult to access academic articles in English, thus confined to publications in Indonesian (Dardjowidjojo, 1996; 2003). All these facts display a great barrier and messages that English development policy is relatively fruitless, contrast to the policy for the development of BI.

In order to understand the English development policy in Indonesia to date, it is necessary to track down its historical, political, socio-cultural, and linguistic circumstances that have fashioned its status and functions over the last century. Lauder (2008) identified three problems of English instruction and development in Indonesia, namely, problems of status, culture, and variety. First, the use of English in Indonesia has developed in the context of post-colonial educational competency building, and more recently the need to support

development—in particular its role in state education. As it was previously mentioned, English in education is used as a medium through which scientific knowledge and new technologies can be accessed and implemented for the sake of succeeding in the global marketplace. Second, attitudes of some policy makers and commentators towards the language have frequently been in two minds, expressing fears of its power to put forth negative cultural influences. They especially fear of westernization despite the process of westernization has not been wholly coercive. Finally, carrying the special status as a global language with many conceivable varieties that might sit for models for Indonesia, English also prompts the question of which one would be appropriate for the country. Adopting a variety, whether it is American, Australian, British, or other, creates a new dilemma for language policy makers as English used in Indonesia today is not originated from a single source.

To conclude, along with globalization, the need for English as a language of wider communication increases because this role cannot be fulfilled by the national and local languages alike (Paauw, 2009). The presence of English has been considered essential as a tool or medium that can be used for certain purposes that support national development. Language policy makers in Indonesia have assigned special status of this language as a first foreign language, but they are ambivalent, worrying about the negative influence it may cause to the national culture and identity, despite dissenting the opinion that adopting Western ideas is not only legitimate but also necessary and desirable for the nation (Heryanto, 2007). Consequently, in response to globalization, Indonesia implements policies that simultaneously aim to secure a national identity while keeping up with rapidly internationalizing education standards on the one hand, and implements language policies that rhetorically aim to overcome the Herderian “one nation-one language” ideology (Zentz, 2012).

### **Ethnicity and Multiple, Overlapping Identities**

Garcia (2012) linked ethnic identity to the three components of language policy—language practices, language beliefs, and language management. According to Garcia (2012), ethnicity refers to a cluster of features or practices that are claimed by individuals or groups or assigned to them by other actors in a specific socio-historical, socio-political, and socio-economic context. It is a product of self-perceptions or a result of outsiders’ perspectives and actions, whether other laypersons or more authoritative persons (Fishman, 2010), and it is often the basis for socio-cultural organization (Makihara, 2010). It is phenomenological, situational, and contextual that there is no such thing as “true” identity, but just more effective or less effective identities, and more salient or less salient identities (Fishman, 1999; 2010). Additionally, there are assumed identities and imposed identities, but there are also negotiable identities (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Garcia, 2012).

Drawing on Fishman (1977) and Bakhtin (1986), Garcia (2012) asserted that language fits the symbol of ethnic identity “par excellence” because language is more than symbolic of ethnic identity; language becomes the top ethnic identity feature or practice in and of itself. Language exists from a person’s need to express himself/herself and to objectify himself/herself, and if language also functions as a communication tool, this is a secondary function that has nothing to do with its essence. With that, Garcia (2012) suggested the centrality of heritage, indigenous, or vernacular languages for individuals and/or ethnic groups. In the context of Indonesia, ethnicity becomes hybrid identities through the process of “glocalization”, migration, and transnationalism owing to the dissemination of BI and English throughout the islands. This hybridity or complex identity formation serves as a living mosaic of multiple languages and cultures (Anzaldúa, 1987). Identity based on this view is always seen as shifting, inconsistency, conflict, and yet also a potentially rich and

enriching resource (Davis, 2009; Norton, 2000). For this reason, Davis (2009) called on policy makers to consider these splendid situated practices in devising policies that “become what we are” by acknowledging linguistic and ethnic diversity and “become what we can be” in promoting educational and social equity.

Davis (2009) mentioned two opposing views regarding this issue of ethnic language maintenance. The opponents of the maintenance policy see no reason to worry about language loss since it is a natural process that when new cultures arise, the old ones are dying, and language maintenance decision should be left to those speakers of the endangered languages (Lagefoged, 1992). In contrast, Dorian (1993) argued that since language shift and loss are about power and politics rather than some sort of natural process, applied linguists should be involved in supporting the maintenance of indigenous languages. Similarly, Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo (1999) saw the relegation, proscription, and disappearance of minority ethnic languages in complex societies reflect the silencing of opposition and alternative cultural perspectives. In fact, the maintenance of vernaculars or indigenous languages is important to survive the cultural values and identities of their speakers (Agar, 1994). Based on proponents’ perspectives, local language maintenance should have been a great concern of any groups and individuals considering the fact that language shift and loss keep occurring all over the world.

In Indonesia, the language shift and loss take place in both natural and structural processes. With the constant removal of geographical isolation and growing inter-group contacts, people decided to learn major language(s) while drifting from their own language. This process has been accelerated by the implementation of national language policy, especially through schools and official use of Indonesia in the administration. This allows a very crucial role of BI in uniting the diverse ethno-linguistic groups scattered along the great many islands of the country and in creating a unified symbol of identity for the nation. It is fortunate that the founding fathers reached a consensus that Indonesia should be composed of all the ethnic groups inhabiting the territory, that the country’s national identity should not be based on any notion of existing ethnicity but rather shared cohabitation of the land of Indonesia, and that it should have the BI as its core link and symbol of shared identity among the population (Simpson, 2007). This consensus has resulted in multiple and overlapping identities among the people. Speakers of different vernacular languages identify themselves with their ethno-linguistic groups and proudly distinguish the local languages or dialects from the national language, and in doing so, ethnic groups can maintain their local languages while they are learning and using Indonesian (Bertrand, 2003). It may enrich linguistic repertoire while maintaining linguistic and cultural diversity among the nations.

### **Conclusion and Follow Ups**

Along with globalization, English has been cutting across borders and stretching out the world with tremendous speed through different processes of diffusion: through imperialism (Phillipson, 1992; 2008), democracy and autonomy (Bolton, 2000; Gupta, 1998; Kachru, 2005), and global market and community (Crystal, 2003; Jenkins, 2007; Lamb, 2004; 2009; Ryan, 2006). There is a possibility that all three processes of English spread exist simultaneously in Indonesia at present (Zentz, 2012), sparking a few major questions regarding the way it spreads in Indonesia and the ways it relates to state language policy, multiculturalism, and cultural identities of the Indonesians. In Indonesia, the need for English as a language of wider communication increases because this role cannot be fulfilled by the national and local languages alike. English has been considered essential as a tool or medium, and it has been given a special status as a first foreign language, but

policy makers are ambivalent, worrying about the negative influence it may cause to the culture and identity of Indonesia. The role or function of English is nestled within the contested environments of where it comes to pass in the third of three main categories, national (BI), local vernaculars, and foreign languages (Lauder, 2008).

Within the paradox of preserving or building national and ethnic identities and promoting a foreign language that embodies different values, cultures, and traditions, further research needs to focus on how the Indonesian government resolves the paradox. In the context of language education in the country, further research needs to see how globalization, language policy, and language learning influence the construction of learners' identities. Particular attention may need to be given to the issue of how national language policy and ideology in Indonesia affects English language teaching and learning in a particular ethnic group in the country, and how the instruction influences learners' ideology and identities. In relation to the maintenance of local languages and cultures, potential research contributions may include corpus planning, development of immersion programs, and description of vernacular language situations and programs (Davis, 1999). Following Davis, researchers interested in language policy in Indonesia can make use of an ethnographic approach to language policy and planning based on historical-structural principles, or use ethnologies, or cross-case comparisons, to build language policy and planning theory on local languages or communities.

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