

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This research is intended to investigate language attitudes of former pilot international standard senior secondary schools (R-SMA-BI) students in Pekanbaru, Indonesia. It aims to explore the reflection of the status of English as an international language and its effects on the students' language attitudes at the time Indonesia positions English, not only as the first foreign language and as a compulsory school subject, but also as the language of instruction for other school subjects. The first section of this chapter discusses the status of English in Indonesia and its relationship to students' language attitudes as the orientations why this study needs to be done. Departing from this issue, the next parts turn to research questions followed by the objectives of the research, significance of the research, scope of the research, definition of terminologies, and organization of this dissertation.

### 1.1 Background

The status of English as an international language (Crystal, 2003a; Dehbozorgi, 2012) has spread widely and had the significant influence on language policy-making and practices (Nunan, 2003). The global spread of English is also probably more influential in shaping language attitudes (Ricento, 2006) in countries where English is not the first language, such as Indonesia. It is reasonable since English has a dominant position in science, technology, medicine, and computers; in research, books, periodicals, and software; in transnational business, trade, shipping and aviation; in diplomacy and international organizations; in mass media entertainment, news agencies and journalism; in youth culture and sport; and in educational systems, as the most widely learnt foreign language (Phillipson, 1992).

In Indonesia, English is widely recognized as an important language (Lauder, 2008). Thus, since 1955 the Indonesian government has stipulated that English is the first foreign language in Indonesia (Musthafa, 2002; Hamied, 2003; Hamied, 2012), chosen from among other foreign languages such as Arabic, Japanese, German, Mandarin, etc. (Huda, 2003).

On the basis of its prominent position and functions among other foreign languages in Indonesia, English then, has been chosen as a compulsory subject in secondary schools and university (Hamied, 2003; Sneddon, 2003) and even as a local content subject in particular elementary schools and kindergartens (Musthafa, 2002; Kasihani, 2000 as cited in Emilia, 2005). As a compulsory school subject in Indonesia, there should be clear orientations in the teaching English as a foreign language. The orientations are the important measure because as stated in Alwasilah (1997), the continued dominance of languages such as English is a form of post-colonial imperialism that needs to be countered by bolstering feelings of nationalism expressed through the use of the national language. Besides, promoting English for obtaining technology will sully or pollute the Indonesian culture as the result of exposure escalation to western cultural values. This argument is in line with research finding conducted by Gunarwan (1998 cited in Alwi & Sugono, 2003) in which English was found to be the more prestigious language than Bahasa Indonesia. Therefore, Alwasilah (1993) remarks that the teaching of a foreign language in Indonesia should be aiming to develop science and technology, and oriented at improving language skills for international communication by considering social, political and economic aspects affecting it.

The growth of the global economy has also taken part in strengthening the position of English as the language of commerce, science, culture and education (Phillipson, 2003). The tremendous power and prestige of English in the global market (Coleman, 2009) has impacted the status of English in Indonesian schools in which English is not only as a school subject but also used as a medium of instruction. For this reason, in 2006, the Indonesian government developed international standard schools or *Sekolah Berstandar Internasional* (SBI) through the enactment of Education Law No. 20/2003. By Law, every province and every district are required to establish pilot project schools with international standards or *Rintisan Sekolah Berstandar Internasional* (RSBI) for each stratum, i.e. primary, junior high and senior high schools. An important feature of these schools is the use of English as the language of instruction in some selected subject matters (Suyanto, 2008) such as Science and Math (Hamied, 2012). In other words, these schools employ both *Bahasa Indonesia* and

English as the instructional languages, and therefore known as bilingual education program (see Anderson and Boyer, 1970).

Although Indonesian language policy (Law no. 24/ 2009) provides an opportunity for studying English and choosing English as the language of instruction, the use of English as a medium of instruction has been a controversial issue. Supporting bilingual program, Suherdi (2012) states that bilingual education program is viewed as an important program for Indonesian students because to be bilinguals, the students can access broader information and knowledge, and work around the world. Though the weaknesses of the bilingual program were found in international standard schools and pilot international standard schools, he argues that there is an effective way known as *MPDLS (Model Program Dwibahasa Empat Lapis Sinergetic)* to overcome the problems (Suherdi, 2012). On the other hands, the opponents criticize the implementation of the bilingual program in Indonesia. One of the criticisms is related to the view that it decreases the sense of nationalism among Indonesian students (Kompas, 08/11/2010a) and weakens the role of Bahasa Indonesia (Kompas, 08/11/2010b) as national identity (Alawiyah, 2013). They also claim that declining students' competence in the national language (Bahasa Indonesia) is related to the program (Coleman, 2009). As the impact of this controversy, the issue concerning students' preferences for English over Bahasa Indonesia has turned into the decision to discontinue the implementation of English as a medium of instruction and abolishing the status of RSBI by the Indonesian Constitutional Court (*Mahkamah Konstitusi*) in early 2013.

The phenomena discussed above become an interesting issue which requires in-depth exploration of insiders' perspectives (e.g. such as students and teachers) (Canagarajah, 2006) on the status of English as a global language, as a compulsory subject, and as a medium of instruction in describing the effects of the global spread of English and responding to the government education policy. Exploration of this issue can be done by examining language attitudes of students and teachers (Baker, 2006).

Pertaining to the issue of students' language attitudes, there are a number of studies in the various aspects of language attitudes such as attitudes toward English varieties (e.g. Crismore, Ngeow & Soo, 1996; Frederich, 2000; McKenzie, 2006; Pishghadam & Sabouri, 2011; Bernaish, 2012; Parveen & Mehmood, 2013; Pilus, 2013; Kaur, 2014; Khojastehrad, Rafik-Galea & Abdullah, 2015), attitudes toward the English

language (e.g. Abd Aziz, 1994; Karahan, 2007; Larsson & Olsson, 2008; Hussein, Demirok & Uzunboylua, 2009; Al-Tamimi & Suib, 2009; Abu-Ghazaleh & Hijazi, 2011; Sonda, 2011; Mamun, Rahman, Rahman, Hossain; Khoshsaligheh, Jamali, Seedian, 2014; Boruah, 2014; Tanni, 2015; Kesgin & Arslan, 2015), attitudes toward learning English (e.g. Abd Aziz, 1994; Layafe & Tsuda, 2002; Seki T., 2004; Savara, 2009; East, 2009; Zainol Abidin, Pour-Muhammadi, & Alzwari, 2012; Durer & Sayar, 2013; Ahmed, 2015; Cho & Teo, 2015; Eshghinejad, 2016), and attitudes toward English as a medium of instruction (e.g. Dalvit, 2004; Young, 2006; Wu, 2006; Joanna, 2006; Aziakpono, 2007; Sua, 2007; Vizconde, 2006; Emily, 2003; Ngidi, 2007; Yahya, et.al, 2009; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Shahzad, Sajjad, Ahmed, & Asghar, 2013, Muthanna & Miao, 2015). The bulk of these studies were conducted at the university level and used matched-guise and closed-ended questionnaire in eliciting the data. It seems that there is insufficient studies concerning with sociocultural factors and using the interview or open-ended questionnaire in exploring the students' language attitudes.

Similarly, in Indonesia context, a numerous studies have been conducted related to students' attitudes toward English varieties (e.g. Kwary & Chasanah, 2005; Adityarini, Wijayanto & Masykuroh, 2009; Wulandari, 2009; Siregar, 2010; Dharma & Rudianto, 2013), the English language (e.g. Budiawan, 2008; Sumarto, 2009; Liando, 2012; Timo, 2012; Sultan, Borland & Eckersley, 2012; Khoir, 2014; Novianti, 2015), learning English (e.g. Maesaroh, 2014; Primadi, Setiyadi, & Kadaryanto, 2014; Royani & Sinar, 2016; Kusuma Adnyani, 2016, Adhi, 2016; Setiyadi, Sukirlan, 2016), and English as a medium of instruction (e.g. Hemiadi, 2006; Margana, 2008; Pranoto, 2009; Kurniawati, 2012; Haryanto & Mukminin, 2012; Mutiarawati, 2013; Tina, Zaim & Syafei, 2013; Sari, Hamzah & Refnalsi, 2013; Sehiling & Setiawan, 2014, Setyaningrum, 2015; Haryanto, Sulistyoy & Wulan, 2016). From a variety of these studies, most of them employed the students of secondary schools as respondents. Some of them were conducted at International standard schools and pilot international standard schools students at primary level (R-SD-BI) (Kurniawati, 2012), junior secondary level (R-SMP-BI) (Sultan, Borland, & Eckersley, 2012; Liando, 2012; Mutiarawati, 2013; Tina, Zaim & Syafei, 2013), and senior secondary level (R-SMA-BI) (Pranoto, 2009; Haryanto & Mukminin, 2012; Sari, Hamzah, Refnaldi, 2013).

Despite some studies have been conducted at international standard school and pilot international standard school in Indonesian context, to date there is a lack of studies focusing on the exploration of students' language attitudes. The studies mainly involved one school and concerned with the description of using English as a medium of instruction, its relationship to learning outcomes and teachers' and students' perception. None of these studies focused primarily on language attitudes or only a few included language attitudes, but more as a complementary part of the study. Besides, the absence of sociocultural factors and interconnection of various types of language attitudes in the previous studies has turned to the conclusion that the holistic picture of former pilot international standard senior secondary schools students' language attitudes has not been investigated. A summary of the above studies is presented in the following table:

**Table 1.1 Research on language attitudes among the students of RSBI or SBI in Indonesia**

Author/ Year	RQ(s)/ Focus(es)	Level	Participants	Research Design	Instrument	Data analysis
Pranoto (2009)	To portray the process of the use of English in sciences and math class, and the students' and the science and math teachers' perception on the use of English as a medium of instruction in teaching and learning science and math.	A R-MA-BI in Pekanbaru Riau	3 science teachers, 1 math teachers, and 76 students	Mixed method	Observation, questionnaire, interview	Content analysis
Haryanto (2012)	The socio-personal characteristics of the student, students' perception of teaching methods and techniques, the students' attitudes toward English, and the students' achievement in English, math, and the science subjects.	One SMA-BI in Jambi	190 students in Grades 10 and 11	Quantitative	Survey questionnaire, focus group discussion, documentation	Statistical analysis
Sultan, Borland & Eckersley (2012)	The implementation of English medium of instruction (EMI) in a foreign language context, and the relationship between student language use, attitudes and motivation and the student's FL outcomes.	3 SMP-BI in south Sulawesi	Grade 9 students, Maths & science teachers	Multiple case study	Document of national exam, questionnaire, and interview	Statistical analysis, content analysis
Liando (2012)	To investigate the relationship between the students' attitudes towards English and their English achievements in bilingual and regular classes and investigating the differences.	a R-SMP-BI in Manado	30 students in a bilingual class and 30 in a regular class	Quantitative	Questionnaire, documentation	Pearson product moment
Kurniawati (2012)	To investigate the practice in teaching mathematics through English to young learners in EFL setting	a private SD-BI in Cianjur	a class teacher and her students	Qualitative	Observation, questionnaire, interview	Content analysis
Mutiawati (2013)	To examine how English implemented as medium instruction in teaching mathematics at RSBI and how its influence towards learners' achievement.	a R-SMP-BI in Bandung	A class of eight grade students	Mixed method	Observation, questionnaire, test	Content analysis, statistical analysis
Tina, Zaim & Syafei (2013)	To know the students perception on the use of English in bilingual class and causes why they have good or bad perception	A R-SMP-BI in Padang	74 students of bilingual class	Descriptive research	Questionnaire likert scale, interview	Statistical analysis, content analysis
Sari, Hamzah, Refaldi (2013)	To know perception of students on code-switching phenomena in bilingual class	A R-SMA-BI in Padang	Students	Qualitative	Questionnaire, interview	Statistical analysis, content analysis

The table above shows that research focusing on language attitudes is still relatively sparse, particularly in the context of Indonesia. The inadequacy of studies on

**Bukhori, 2017**

**EXPLORING LANGUAGE ATTITUDES OF INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS**

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

language attitudes of students within former R-SMA-BI schools is an unfortunate situation as it neglects the importance of documenting the students' voice in shaping language policies and English language teaching practices in Indonesia. Though some studies have provided information on the students' language attitudes, how different characteristics of schools (boarding vs non-boarding, public vs private, Islamic vs secular) as the sociocultural factor affecting students' language attitudes are relatively unknown to the academic communities both inside and outside Indonesia. Unavailability of empirical evidence regarding this issue implies an inability to maintain the currency of studies on psychological aspects of English language learning and teaching in the country. Thus, studies that promote the provision of any empirical evidence in this area is urgently required as reflections on the significant role of language attitudes in supporting better language learning (Gardner, 1985), language policy (Baker, 2006), and language maintenance and shift (Giles & Coupland, 1991 in Sachdev & Hanlon, 2001).

According to Starks & Paltridge (1996), attitudes towards a language are closely related to language learning because language attitudes are one of the factors determining students' success in learning a foreign language (Smith, 1971; Gardner, 1985; Prince, 1987), and in influencing how the teachers deal with pupils (Freder & Lambert, 1973; Seligman, Tucker, & Lambert, 1972 as cited in Fasold, 1984). Some studies (e.g. Ismail, 1988; Ferguson, Perez-Lantada, & Plo, 2011; Perez & Fernandez, 2013; Tran & Duong, 2013; Al Samadi & Ibnian, 2015; Mustafa, Rashid, Atmowardoyo & Dollah, 2015; Khodadad & Kaur, 2016) found a significant relationship between students' language attitudes and their language achievement. It seems obvious that the problems of low English proficiency among Indonesian students as reported by some researchers (e.g. Ross, 1999 in Hadriana, Ismail & Mahdum, 2013; Suyuti et.al., 1985, Samad, 1989, Sri Lestari, 2007 in Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011; Handoyo, 2010; Moedjito & Harumi, 2008; Sugiharto, 2005) might be overcome through more comprehensive and extensive studies of language attitudes.

Regarding language policy, language attitudes become the description of a community's thoughts and beliefs, preferences, and desires and social indicators of the success in policy implementation (Baker, 2006). Specifically, Lewis (1981 as cited in Baker, 1992: p. 9 and Baker, 2006: p. 211) states:

**Bukhori, 2017**

***EXPLORING LANGUAGE ATTITUDES OF INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS***

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

Any policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take account of the attitudes of those likely to be affected. In the long run, no policy will succeed which does not do one of three things: conform to the expressed attitudes of those involved; persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy; or seek to remove the causes of the disagreement. In any case knowledge about attitudes is fundamental to the formulation of a policy as well as to success in its implementation.

Furthermore, the deficiency of evidence on the role of sociocultural aspect in the previous study also indicates the urgency of this study. This is because language attitudes, as a part of social psychology and sociolinguistics, cannot be examined in isolation. It is intricately bound to its sociocultural context (Ting, 2003). In this case, Gardner (1985: p. 109) emphasizes that sociocultural aspects are crucial package embedding to language attitudes since the socio-cultural milieu is important not only for the development of attitudinal/ motivational characteristics but also for the role played by attitudes, motivation and language aptitude in second language learning. Additionally, the overall cultural context provides a set of assumptions and salient “facts” which determine the attitudes (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005: 173). Supporting this notion, Giles, Katz, & Myers (2006) assert:

... individuals’ attitudes and behaviors are not just affected by interpersonal relationships, available media and institutional resources, and local community features; the local context is also affected by changes that individuals can effect on their local space and interpersonal ties. Language attitudes, therefore, should not be understood as statically passed down through socialization processes, but, rather, as an ongoing (re) negotiation that occurs inter and intra-individually, against a backdrop of local features and resources.

The aforementioned condition offers an opportunity for further research on this issue in the Indonesian context. To fill the gap, therefore, the present study aims to depict the students’ language attitudes, covering attitudes toward the English language, learning English and English as a medium of instruction in the context of pilot international standard senior secondary schools (R-SMA-BI) which consist of public boarding school, private Islamic boarding school, public school and private school. Besides, this study also explores the underlying reasons behind their language attitudes and examines the reflection of demographic profiles in their language attitudes.

## 1.2 Research Questions

Referring to the problems stated in the background, the following research questions were formulated to guide the implementation of this research:

1. What are the language attitudes and orientations of students of former pilot international standard senior secondary schools (R-SMA-BI) toward the English language, learning English and English as a medium of instruction?
2. Are students' demographic profiles reflected in their language attitudes?
3. How are the students' attitudes toward the English language, learning English and English as a medium of instruction interconnected in educational contexts?

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the research question, the main objective of this study is to explore former pilot international standard students' language attitudes. However, in the details, the purposes of the study are stated as follows:

1. To describe former pilot international standard senior secondary schools (R-SMA-BI) students' attitudes toward the English language, learning English and English as a medium of instruction and their orientations.
2. To examine the reflection of students' demographic profiles in their language attitudes.
3. To discover how the students' attitudes toward the English language, learning English and English as a medium of instruction are interconnected in educational contexts.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

The result of this study attempted to contribute to the knowledge already established in the area of language learning theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of language attitudes, theories of foreign language, especially in the Indonesian context. Practically, this study is expected to offer fundamental consideration for the government or policy makers in deciding language policy in Indonesia by evaluating and reviewing the current language policy. In this case, the results of the study can be viewed together by the policy makers, practitioners, students, teachers and the parents provide one viewpoint to this whole complex issue of the status of English in Indonesia. Finally, the result of this

Bukhori, 2017

*EXPLORING LANGUAGE ATTITUDES OF INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS*

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu



study is useful for EFL students and teachers to develop their positive attitudes toward foreign language since language attitudes are the crucial factor in language learning.

### 1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on mapping three types of language attitudes: (1) attitudes toward the English language, (2) attitudes toward learning English, (3) and attitudes toward English as a medium of instruction. Exploration of these issues is important as it provides the opportunity to look closer at students' responses to Indonesian language policy dealing with the status of English in Indonesia. Hence, students' reasons behind their attitudes toward English also take a part in this study. In addition, students' demographic characteristics such as gender, age, grade, ethnicity, attending private English course and school background were also examined proportionally as determining factors of students' language attitudes.

In eliciting rich description of what is discussed above, this study involves all former pilot international standard senior secondary schools (R-SMA-BI) in Pekanbaru, which are of different school system (boarding vs non-boarding, public vs private, Islamic vs secular) with three characteristics of students: (1) language attitudes of students who attended the program for three semesters, (2) language attitude of students who attended the program for one semester, and (3) language attitudes of students who did not attend the program. The school system and students' characteristics were important parts of this study since they constitute the factors influencing students' language attitudes.

### 1.6 Definitions of Terminologies

The following section explains two key terminologies that relate to this exploration about language attitudes. The two terms are defined as follows:

**Language attitudes** are the part of attitudes studies specifically about language (Fasold, 1984). It is an umbrella term for a variety of specific attitudes such as attitudes toward specific language, attitudes toward language lesson, and attitudes toward the use of a specific language (Baker, 1992). Attitudes are defined as the psychological tendencies to evaluate an entity (object of attitudes) with some degrees of favor or disfavor, ordinarily expressed in cognitive, affective and behavioral response (Schwarz & Bohner, 2001; Kruglanski & Stroebe, 2005). For this study, language attitudes can be

Bukhori, 2017

*EXPLORING LANGUAGE ATTITUDES OF INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS*

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

defined as psychological tendencies to evaluate the language expressed through cognitive, affective and behavioral response comprising attitudes toward the English language, attitudes toward learning English, and attitudes toward English as a medium of instruction.

**RSBI** (*Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional*) or pilot international standard schools are state or private, secular or Islamic schools which have been granted special status and additional funding to enable them to work toward achieving international quality (Coleman, 2009) by choosing English as language of instruction for a number selected subject matter (Hamied, 2012). Since RSBI covered three levels: elementary, junior and senior high schools, this study only focuses on former R-SMA-BI or the senior secondary school level.

### **1.7 Organization of Dissertation**

This dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter I, *Introduction*, presents the general background information on the study, the research problem, the purpose of the study, hypothesis or research questions, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the dissertation. Chapter II, *Literature Review*, presents a general review of relevant literature and previous research related to this study. This chapter discusses general concepts of attitudes and language attitudes. It also discusses the concept of English as a medium of instruction. Chapter III, *Methodology*, presents the arguments and justification of the selection of research design, methods of data collection, research instrument, participants and location of the research, and data analyses. Chapter IV, *Result and Discussion*, devotes to presentation and discussion of the study's findings. Chapter V, *Conclusion*, delineates on restatement of results, limitation of the study and implication for future research.