



Internationalization of Educational Human Resources in Indonesia from Foreign Language Policy Perspective: A Historical Review

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Abstract: The internationalization of education is necessary for today's rapid development of the information technology era. The liberalization and privatization of higher education institutions support the connectivity and cooperation between countries. It is, in particular, encouraging the reorientation of its targets and goals towards a more market-oriented approach. In the Indonesian context, efforts to open the education system for outward mobilization or inward absorption of the international segmentation have been slow. One of the causes is the lack of mastery of international languages, especially English, in society. Through a literature review, this article intends to look at the obstacles experienced in the internationalization process of higher education in Indonesia from the cultural aspect, namely, the foreign language attainment policy. Based on the review, there is an indication that a cultural policy of populism has prevented the higher education system from massively adopting English as a medium for acquiring knowledge.

Keywords: language policy, cultural policy, educational internationalization



Introduction

Interdependence and interconnectedness of modern institutions imply a flow of goods, services, and people (Held & McGrew, 2000). The progress achieved throughout the 20th century is increasingly being accumulated in the 21st century, marked by the era of advanced, complex, and fast-paced information technology known as the Industrial Revolution 4.0, and so on. This very rapid change also occurs in education, where the connection between fields, institutions, and institutions and at the personal level is inevitable. These changes can provide positive opportunities for the advancement of human life. However, like a revolution, many who cannot keep up with these dynamics will be left out. In the context of a nation being left behind in readiness to face the era of globalization, a borderless society will be a disaster for a generation vulnerable to hateful political exploitation: racism, xenophobia, and other primordialism forms. Life in the 21st century emphasizes communication as a medium for collaboration and networking, covering the surrounding environment and the much wider environment, namely the world community.

Connectivity needs a common medium beyond the national education system to serve international demands, adopting international language (Kokhuis, 1992; Gribbon, 1994; Knight, 2008; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The connection between people in education is the key to successful knowledge transfer. Pedagogy has devoted attention to studying how an immaterial wealth of a society can be passed down from generation to generation through planned, structured, and measurable efforts. Media Language is one of the keys that is often associated with psycholinguistics, neuroscience, neuro-pedagogic, and other fields. The existence of shared language as a transfer medium has been a practice since the past. Science is a universal wealth of humankind, not belonging to a particular group, nation, or organization. In history, we see that science's mastery moves from one hemisphere to another when a civilization is ready to manage it, even the language used as an intermediary medium. The Greco-Roman civilization brought Greek and Latin as the language of knowledge before as a religious symbol. Arabic was once a symbol of intellectuality when Europe was shrouded in the dark ages; even eastern languages such as Mandarin and its characters influenced the intellectual culture of East to Southeast Asia.

In the era of globalization, internationalization in education once again calls for a common medium of communication. English inevitably becomes the



language readiest to play this role because it has been recognized as an international language by the United Nations and several other languages. The intellectual power and cultural hegemony in North America plus England and the Anglophone world make it exist in a position as a *lingua franca* or liaison language, including in education. English has become the most global language, academically, socially, and culturally (Johnson, 1996; Yang, 2002; Hughes, 2008; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2016). For the academic world, a basic understanding of communicating in English is now a must; as the German philosopher Johan Wolfgang von Goethe once said, "Those who know nothing about foreign languages, they have nothing about their own." His words imply how critical foreign languages are as a means of global communication. The problem is, English as a cultural product also gets resistance, especially for its attachment to colonialism-imperialism in the past. In countries born because of the direct impact of European oppression, nationalism tends to grow into a tool to hate something foreign, at least to put aside it and accentuate its own identity.

A country forming its identity also carries out language management, namely how linguistic behavior is regulated legally and formally from planning, formulating to implementation. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) said: "A language policy is a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules, and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the societies, groups or systems." McCarthy (2011) defines language policy as "a complex sociocultural process [and as] modes of human interaction, negotiation, and production mediated by relations of power." Meanwhile, Johnson (2013) expands the reach of the terminology as "a policy mechanism that impacts the structure, function, use, or acquisition of language and includes: 1. Official regulations; 2. Unofficial, covert, de facto, and implicit mechanisms connected to language beliefs and practices, 3. The processes driven by a diversity of language policy agents; 4. Policy texts and discourses across multiple contexts and layers of policy activity. So, according to Johnson, language policy includes unofficial mechanisms related to ideology and belief. It is often different or even the opposite of the authority's official documents, statements, or programs.

In Indonesia, the primary foreign language taught as a compulsory subject in secondary and higher education is English. Apart from the role of English in particular and other academic foreign languages, the political position of foreign languages in Indonesia is still somewhat ambiguous. Learning English

is made at a minimum to give students the ability to read textbooks in related fields. Despite the efforts made to improve its quality, the achievements in the field are still unsatisfactory (Sadtono, 1976; Djwandono, 1983; Danifil, 1985). The low standard in a long term will impact the student's ability to access global education. As a guest: student needs to fulfill the minimum requirement to communicate socially and academically in international language/study program language (Hughes, 2008; Johnson, 2013; Spolsky, 2017).

First, high-quality educational programs require fluency in English. If someone plans to study abroad, the most common requirement is an English test score, except for countries with strong national characteristics such as Japan, Germany, and France. Second, English is a communication medium for scientists or researchers internationally. Almost all academic conferences in the world use English as the medium of instruction. In 2010, about 80-90% of all papers published in scientific journals were written in English. Not only that, there are more than a billion web pages in English. As a host: the communication skill of society in an international language is critical to intl. Student sociocultural adjustment is crucial to their study (Kerklaan et al., 2008; Hapsari & Hamamah, 2019). This paper wants to see how the history of Indonesia has colored the politics of the state language policy related to foreign languages (English) and its impact on internationalization efforts in the world of education, significantly higher education.

Therefore, this study will look into the history to see what are the obstacles experienced in the internationalization process of higher education in Indonesia from the foreign language attainment policy perspective.

Methods

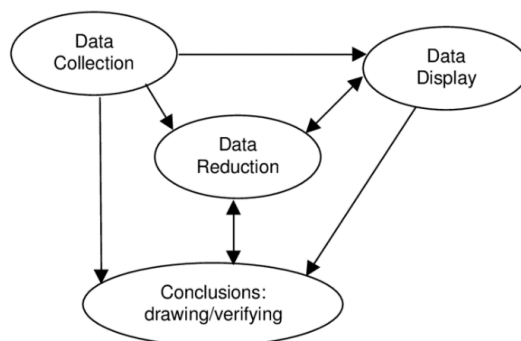


Figure 1. Diagram of Data Analysis Technique from Miles and Huberman (1994)



This paper uses literature study method of descriptive qualitative as the operational tool. The data obtained are journals, books, monographs, and mass media report. The data analysis technique uses the Miles and Huberman (1994) approach, which consists of three stages in four activities: 1) Data Collection, 2) Data Display, and 3) Conclusion, while the evaluation and interpretation of the data is going on during the entire period of study.

Findings and Discussion

Language policy in education. Awuor (2019) defines language policy in education as policy dictates the language used in disseminating knowledge at varying levels. Generally, there are three interrelated components in language policy, as Spolsky (2017) argues, and in education, it means 1) practices – what is the "normal" or "practiced" language behavior of the community in different sociolinguistic domains; 2) beliefs and ideologies – what do members of the community or society think is appropriate or desirable language behavior; and the last 3) management – how do interested parties attempt to influence the practices or beliefs of the community. In theory, there is a paradigm known as the Whole Language Approach in language learning. This approach views the success of language acquisition – being a mother tongue or native, or as a foreign language, logical, chronological, and communicative elements are necessary processes that cannot be separated. Phonology (phonemes, pronunciations, intonations, sounds of language), morphology (words), syntax (phrases, clauses, sentences), and semantics (sentence meanings) are all taught consciously or unconsciously in daily processes. The whole language approach is based on constructivism which states that children/students form their knowledge through their active role and integrate learning. This view also applies in the language of instruction or a foreign language. In theory, language learning that is selective in one aspect, whether grammar or just spoken language, will result in imperfect acquisitions or failure. There is a space between *das solen* and *das sein* from the bottom of the language pyramid as a means of socialization and socialization as language acquisition.

As already mentioned, idealistic written policy is often different from its real intentions or agendas. Something behind, intentionally or unintentionally, the beliefs or ideology of the regime, people reshaped the actual direction of the policy. In this case, the Indonesian government-mandated foreign language as an essential part of national education, but they seem to reduce its central role from the system in practice. For the first fifty years of the independence era,



the government stuck with the low standard in English, although for 30+ years New Order regime was tied closely to Western World. English adoption in secondary school for bilingual learning, especially after new Law No 30 of 2003 on the National Education System, was annulled by the constitutional court. It is seen as a "threat" to national identity. The last one was in 2019 when the current government decided to end the National Exam, which English became one component of it since 2003. Compared to neighboring South East Asian countries, Indonesian is also not good in English proficiency. The annual ranking from EF English Proficiency Index shows Indonesia positioned at fifth below Vietnam at fourth, and just above Thailand at sixth.

The trend of internationalization in education also shows the lack of preparation of Indonesia's higher education institutions in terms of linguistic capacity. They are struggling to attract international students as a host country while the number of Indonesian students abroad lags behind neighboring SEA countries from year to year. Only a few state universities in Indonesia are ready to carry out internationalization due to limited human resources, including lecturers who are fluent in English, publications in international languages, and global networks. The orientation to compete in the domestic market is still a mindset that hinders internationalization efforts. If we understand the success of language acquisition as the impact of language policy, then something is not quite right with the Indonesian government's policies. What might be the cause? Technical limitations such as funding sources and opportunities also, of course, play a role, but is there something more fundamental?

Political Populism. Popular policies in politics are always easy to gain support from the people, but the impact of this populism, in general, is not. This concept of political populism can be defined as political ideas and activities intended to support ordinary people by giving them what they want (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). The problem is that what the public wants is not always correct and ideal. The populist regime indeed believes in the sovereignty of the neglected people in the political process, as Abts & Rummens (2007) stated. When policymakers blindly follow the grassroots sentiment without any balance, then some other groups will be made scapegoats for the failure of their regime, or they will be confronted from the start with their support base. Commoners vs. elites and this elitist can be anyone. People are also seen as having similar spirits and homogeneous, which



often results in the exclusion of 'people' [or value] that is inconsistent with their views (Abts & Rummens, 2007).

Maybe this is meant by elite groups that can be "an anti-science/scientism," with a hostile attitude ranging from apathy to rejection or public persecution (Mietzner, 2020). Maoist policies can be viewed as populism in the name of the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976; intellectuals and technocrats, business people and doctors, were openly abused. According to Hara (2018), there is no dominant spectrum for politics. It can emerge from the camp of (1) radical left-wing populism that is mainly developed in Latin America and Asia with a strong socialist ideology; (2) radical right-wing populism dominantly in Europe and North America; and also (3) Islamic-populism movement in the Islamic world (the Middle East and then to SE Asia). They often combine the struggle of the marginalized, left-behind group with the ultra-nationalism view and, as an impact, reject foreign symbols or manifest in the form of xenophobia and violence.

Language Policy in Historical Timeline. Language policy can be divided into three eras in Indonesia's pre-independence history. First, the era of Dutch colonialism; second, the development of national ideas in the form of the Youth Congress in 1928; and third, the Japanese occupation of Indonesia. At the time of Dutch colonialism, the language used was Malay. It acts as a means and medium of communication among the community. The Netherlands belatedly introduced universal education in its Dutch East Indies colonies in the early 20th century. Previously, they only focused on exploiting natural resources and transmitting as little cultural influence possible. The Malay language has been succeeded in becoming a lingua franca for hundreds of ethnic groups in the archipelago. The status was achieved due to the influence of the Malacca Malay kingdom in the 16th century in controlling the trade in the strait. It was widely known as "Bazaar Malay" (Nababan, 1991; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2007; Ricklefs, 2008). This variant is different from the court Malay language, which developed in a style that was also elitist within the nobility. The Dutch then chose it to be the everyday language of communication. The Dutch language was introduced on a limited basis to the local aristocrats. As an effect, the language is seen as a symbol of the elite. So, that even European-Indonesian brethren encourage the use of Malay in their interactions with each other. The role of the Chinese mass media, merchant groups brought in by the



Dutch also contributed to spreading Malay in their publications. They promoted goods and services or reported the news in that language.

The harmful impression of imperialism-colonialism in the Dutch language gave rise to resistance among the younger generation of educated natives whom the Dutch themselves educated. The nationalist figures, although proficient in Dutch, were more willing to symbolize themselves as a movement of the ordinary people who certainly did not understand the Dutch language at all. The Second Youth Congress in 1928 gave birth to the so-called "Youth Pledge." The contents of the youth oath are declarations about the future vision of Indonesian cultural identity: 1) We, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, acknowledge that we have one blood, the homeland of Indonesia. 2) We, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, claim to be the Indonesian nation. 3) We, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, uphold the language of unity, the Indonesian language. One Homeland, One Nations, One National Language of Indonesia (Ricklefs, 2008). Indeed, this revolutionary cultural idea was an anti-colonialism statement. It rejected the concept of integration into the Dutch cultural framework, including daily usage of the Dutch language. The rising national identity and symbol of rejection towards Dutch elitism became stronger among youth and the educated elite class. The language agreed upon at the forum is no longer Malay but uses Indonesian to symbolize the grand political project of a new nation in the SEA archipelago (Nababan, 1991; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2007).

During World War II, Japan implemented anti-Western politics, including banning the European language. They tried to install Japanese as a lingua franca for Greater East Asian community. This policy was based on Japan's goal as a ruler in the Asian region in the future. In addition, the Japanese were also allowed and promoted by Indonesian in the transitional period to gain support among nationalists. The compromise was also based on the reality; not many Indonesians can speak Japanese other than for political purposes to get public support in times of war. The short period of 1942-1945 instilled the status of Indonesian as the collective identity of the lower class people, which was indeed almost the entire population at that time. Japan handed over its war propaganda agency to nationalists, who then used colonial media to promote Indonesian identity and anti-colonialism (the West) (Nababan, 1991; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2007, Setiabudi, 2017).

After Japan's defeat in 1945, the declaration of independence faced severe challenges for at least the first four years. The national revolution between 1945 and 1949 saw the Netherlands and its allies attempt to re-occupy their former colony. Bloodshed and political divisions, including the communist revolution in 1948, the radical Islamic revolution in 1947, and the federation experiment promoted by the Dutch from 1949 to 1950, did not hinder Indonesianization. The Indonesian language is a symbol of ordinary people. All involved in the revolution of independence put aside their ethnic ego and used the language as a tool of the revolution. The first de jure period of sovereignty between 1950 and 1959 was the period of Liberal Democracy. At that time, the government carried out early national language promotion via primary education across the archipelago. Schools were established even though they were modest. Van Ophuijsen's Dutch spelling was nationalized with the Suwandi spelling of 1947 (Ricklefs, 2008). However, the nine years of parliamentary political turmoil since the abandonment of the federalism, had hampered many development and policy efforts, including language.

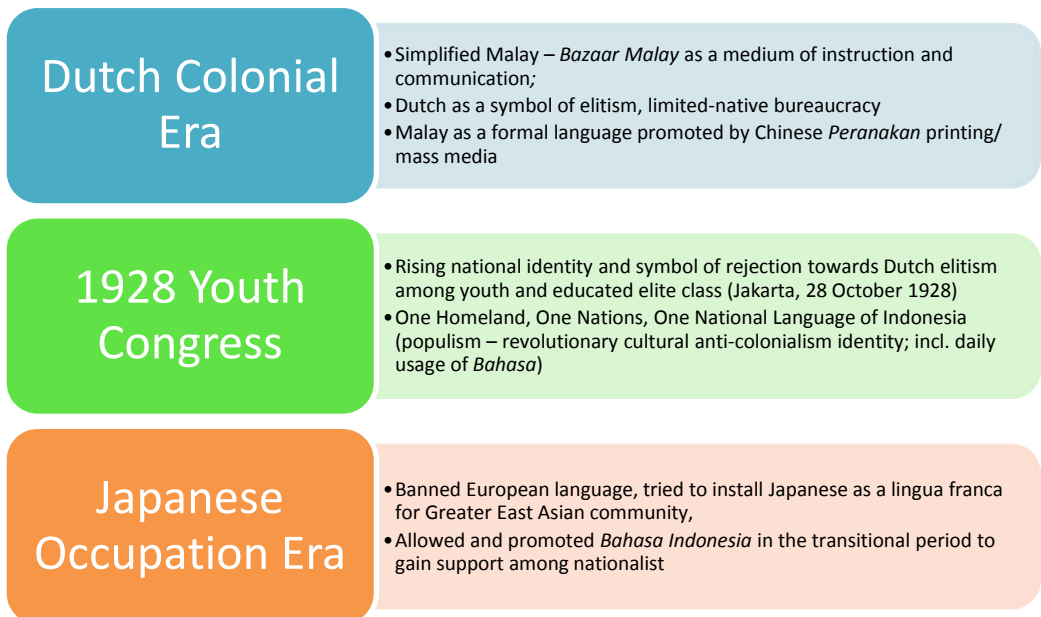


Figure 2. Three periods of Language Policy in Pre-Independence Indonesia

The failed communist revolution of 1965 brought General Suharto to become President. 1959-1965 was a period of Guided Democracy. At that time, the domination of communism encouraged a national language as a symbol of proletarians; class-struggle anti-western & elitism even Islam and Arabic as

"foreign products" although implicitly. The Indonesian Communist Party, under the patronage of President Sukarno, carried out many literary promotions through its arts institution, the People's Arts Organization (Lekra) (Rickelfs, 2008). At that time, Indonesia's foreign policy was also increasingly aggressive with confrontations with neighboring Malaysia over the decolonization issue in North Kalimantan, which brought Indonesia out of the United Nations. 1965-1998 was the New Order era. At this time, the Indonesian language was promoted in a hybrid way, namely enrichment by internalizing the local language (primarily Javanese) into the vocabulary. Standardization of national language became the national project that includes speaking correctly in public. Indonesian is the language of urban areas, civilization, and intellectual, modernity, while most of the population still lives in rural areas, far from this modernity.

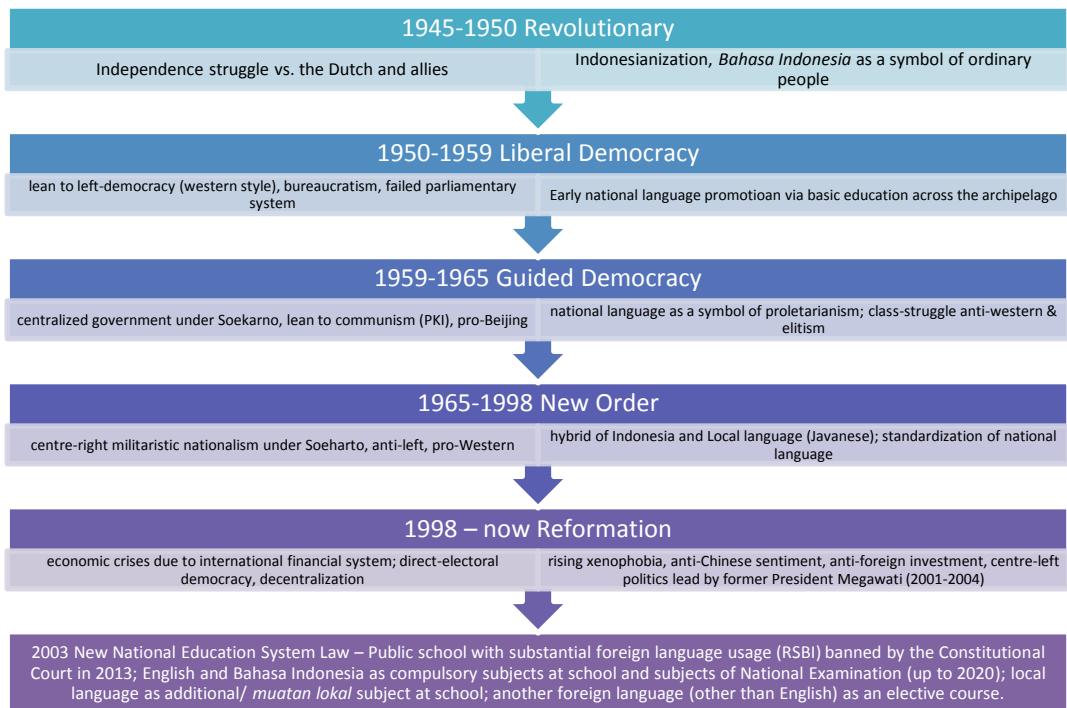


Figure 3. Language Policy in the Post-Independence Indonesia

Military dualistic bureaucracy called the Dwi Fungsi of ABRI: military as a national defense function and political corps. The 1997 monetary crisis caused the New Order to fall in 1998, known as the Reformation era. Since then, the national solidity that the New Order was proud of began to be seen with the



increasing issues of ethnicity, race, and religion. Xenophobia is increasing, including minority groups such as anti-Chinese sentiment, anti-foreign investment, and religious intolerance. Center-left politics led by former President Megawati (2001-2004), the daughter of first President Sukarno, tried to reform the education system. In 2003 a new Law of the National Education System was passed. However, there are many criticisms of this effort. With the new approach, a public school with substantial foreign language usage (RSBI) was banned by the Constitutional Court in 2013; English and Indonesian as compulsory subjects at school and subjects of National Examination; local language as additional/ local content subject at school; another foreign language (other than English) as an elective course (Mietzner, 2006, 2020).

Educational Function \ Language Category	Indonesian Language	Vernacular Language	Foreign Language
Cognitive	+	-	-
Integrative	+	+	-
Instrumental	+	-	+
Cultural	+	+	(+)

Figure 4. The function of language during the first fifty years of Indonesian independence era, all focused on nationalization efforts (Nababan, 1991)

Conclusion

In the span of history, populism in Indonesia can be categorized into three:

- (1) Sukarno-style Marhaenism – proletarian/socialism-national. Sukarno's socio-nationalism, known as Marhaenism, was developed during his study year in Bandung. He synthesized personal property and collectivism in the form of a cooperative economy while embracing the concept of national union, national cooperation (gotong royong) as the pillars of the future of Indonesia. This stance and his evident charismatic leadership from 1945-1965 made the country closer to the Left-block during the Cold War. The nationalization effort in the 1960s deteriorated Indonesian relations with Western-block.



- (2) Suharto-style of right-nationalism, militaristic, democratic centralism, although Suharto is often regarded as a leader who has an authoritarian leadership style, it must be admitted that his services and leadership ideas for this nation are very dominant. He prioritizes stability, sacrificing democracy for the sake of state development. During the 30 years of the New Order leadership, the elitism and bureaucratization of society grew more vigorous. Indonesia has also become a symbol of a new style of elitism. In such situations, populism develops as a resistance movement. Megawati's most potent symbol is the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI). He declared his party to be the party of *wong cilik* or the ordinary people. President SBY's more liberal regime followed the short period of Megawati's presidency.

- (3) Center-left rule in the early reform era No. 20 Law of National Education System 2003 followed by a more liberal policy in the last 18 years. The 2003 National Education System Law revised the previous law, namely Law no. 2 of 1989, as the first law to regulate national education as a whole. The nature of the 1989 National Education System Law is very nationally oriented, such as the appreciation and cultivation of the national ideology of Pancasila and the sovereignty of the Indonesian language. After ten years of SBY's rule, the 2014 election saw two candidates who share a populist approach: Prabowo with Right-Islamic populism and Jokowi with secular-left populism. The victory of Jokowi, a former Mayor of Surakarta and governor of Jakarta, opened a new era called by Mietzner (2020) as "technocratic populism," namely policies favored by the lower people without being frontal to the upper classes, including the educated and the high economy.

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