

## GLOBALIZATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN INDONESIA

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### Abstract

This essay discusses the processes of globalization in English language teaching in Indonesia. First, it addresses the status of English language in the world and how English plays its position in Indonesian context within its diverse linguistic background. Second, from the historical perspectives, it discusses the processes of globalization in Indonesian ELT education and curriculum policies both in language pedagogies and teaching materials and how issues and concerns occur. Then, it discusses how the presence of technological advancement in any form facilitates ELT in Indonesia. All parties in Indonesia including policy makers, educationists, and teachers should take the most benefits from globalization through maximizing ELT partnership programs both nationally and internationally such as trainings, workshops, and scholarships for further studies. Similarly, the present development of information technology needs to be taken into account for better ELT in Indonesia by providing sufficient funding, particularly from Indonesian government (both central and local) spent for both sustainable ELT human resources development and their supporting facilities. These efforts are very important to enable students to succeed in achieving their communicative competencies in English to be able to survive in global competitiveness.

**Key words:** *English language teaching, globalization, technology*

### INTRODUCTION

Globalization, along with its elements and dynamics to a great extent has affected any nation state in the world (Beck, 2000; Giddens, 1990 & 1999; Holton, 1998; Lauder, et al., 2006; Schech & Haggis, 2000; Stiglitz, 2002; Wadham, Pudsey & Boyd, 2007), unexceptionally including Indonesia. In Indonesia, such effects of globalization emerge in various aspects of people lives. The practice of democracy in politics, which is originally the common practice in western countries especially in the US now has flourished since the fall of Soeharto regime, and been implemented in any level of Indonesian political structure such as presidential election, provincial governors election, district regents, and even heads of villages elections. The McDonaldization and Coca colanization (Holton, 1998; Wadham et al., 2007) apparently exist not only in big cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Medan, but also in a small city such as Ternate in eastern part of Indonesia that the writer has lived for years. Weda Bay Nickel - a French nickel company and Nusa Halmahera minerals - an Australian gold mining company, both in North Maluku of Indonesia are among the examples of the international players of economy in Indonesia. Even, when economic crisis hit Indonesia in 1990s followed by political crisis with the fall of Soeharto regime the World Bank and IMF assisted to recover Indonesian economy, but in fact in exchange with the tightest requirements which in turn more severely affected Indonesian people lives economically. The processes of globalization also have affected education system (Lauder, et al., 2006; Olssen, 2004; Schech & Haggis, 2000; Stromquist & Monkman, 2000; Wadham et al., 2007) in Indonesia in various forms.

This essay discusses the processes of globalization in education with a particular focus on English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia. First, it discusses the status of English language in the world, and then proceeds to how English plays its position in Indonesian context within diverse linguistic background. Second, from the historical perspectives, it discusses the processes of

globalization in Indonesian ELT education and curriculum policies both in language pedagogies and teaching materials and how issues and concerns occur. Then, it discusses how the presence of technological advancement in any form facilitates ELT in Indonesia. Finally, it summarizes the major issues and challenges for policy makers and teachers of English in Indonesia.

## DISCUSSION

As part of culture, any language, including English language which represents systems of symbols and meanings to communicate thoughts, concepts, ideas, and feelings (Schech & Haggins, 2000: 17; Wadham et al., 2007: 6) is closely connected with politics, economy and social change (Schech & Haggins, 2000). In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, English was the language of colonists, of economic power, and imperialism in North America (Alatis, 2005: 27). Today, English language is undoubtedly used globally in almost all fields of human lives such as in international commerce and trade, science, technology, medicine, engineering, journalism, and education (Alatis, 2005: 30). Even, English language is not only used as a means of international communication both among native speakers and non-native speakers, but also as a major language teaching enterprise in the US after World War II (Alatis, 2005: 27).

As English is the most influential language in the world after World War II in which the US as the center of global development in the 1940s, since independence in 1945 until today English remains stated as the first foreign language taught as a compulsory subject in Indonesian secondary schools and universities. Other foreign languages such as Arabic, Chinese, French, German, and Japanese are also taught at Indonesian schools. In Indonesia, a country of huge diverse in approximately 500 local languages spread across approximately 3000 islands, some local languages are taught at schools and Bahasa Indonesia as the national language is also taught and used as a means of instruction at schools and as a lingua franca among speakers of different local language background (Dardjowidjojo, 2000). Incorporating English language as a subject into Indonesian educational policy means that the Indonesian educational system can be considered as trying to connect with the global development in the sense that students are hoped to be able not only to communicate in English with people around the world, but at the same time to grasp science and technology, which are mainly conveyed in English. This is as the first stage to show that internationalization of Indonesia through curriculum policy of English as the first language taught at schools was just started to take place.

Later, globalization through its element of international aids has affected ELT in Indonesia with the involvement of international institutions in strengthening English language teachers of Indonesia. In 1950s the Ford Foundation helped secondary school teachers of English with trainings on theoretical knowledge and skills in ELT methodologies and on developing teaching material. The British Council assisted university lecturers in upgrading their knowledge and skill in ELT. Australia and New Zealand through Colombo Plan provided Indonesian students with non degree trainings held in either Australia or New Zealand. In 1990s, the World Bank funded Indonesia to produce English textbooks (Dardjowidjojo, 2000).

Considering the importance of English in the transfer of science and technology for the advancement of national development of Indonesia, the spread and intense of ELT exist in various levels of institutions involving more diverse ages of language learners and for various purposes. In Junior high schools, English is taught for 2 x 90 minutes a week. In senior high schools, English is taught for 2 x 90 minutes in non-language majors and 4 x 90 minutes in language majors. In university level, English is taught as an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) subject in non-major programs for 100 minutes a week in 2 credit semesters, and 3 – 7 hours a day in major studies in bachelor, master, and doctoral programs. Since the late 1990s, English has been taught at

elementary schools and is offered in 80 minutes a week. Extending the ELT to younger learners in this case to elementary school students can be considered as a response to globalization arguing that the younger the learners are learning English may be quicker for them to communicate in global language 'English' well and eventually grasp science and technology, although this is not always the case (Myer-Scotton, 2006).

Moreover, many Indonesian parents of middle and high social class want their children to be educated in schools with more English language exposure such as in initiated-internationally accredited junior and senior high schools and international schools. In initiated-internationally accredited schools, English is used to teach not only English subject but also as a means of instruction for natural science subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology. In international schools with international curriculum content, English is used as a means of instruction for all subjects and no religion subject. Even, parents have to pay more expensive tuition fees to have their children to be exposed to international schools with international education atmosphere because the parents want their children to become creative, innovative, open minded and critical individuals, certainly with fluent English communication, and to be able to survive in global competition. In this example, the hegemony of English language and commodification of English has emerged as a consequence of market orientation. However, Indonesian parents are worried about the impact of such international education because the values incorporated in the international school programs are primarily characterized as secular and lack of or no actualization for religious values especially Islam, which Said (1978) called it orientalism as predominantly the case in Indonesian cultural values. This is a concern of universalism – particularism in Indonesian education system meaning that both secularism and orientalism (relating to the practices of religion) aspects of education should be combined in Indonesian curriculum

At a later stage, greater commodification of ELT has taken place in Indonesia as more and more younger children and adults are motivated to learn English outside of formal education. This commodification as one characteristics of globalization (Wadham, 2007) in which more and more private institutions both in small and big scales offer various English language courses for various purposes. Small scale institutions mainly offer English conversational classes or simply provide learners remedials for their English lessons from schools. National scale English course institutions such as *Lembaga Bahasa LIA*, and several international institutions such as International Development Program (IDP), IALF (Indonesia Australia Language Foundation, and Cambridge exist in big cities in Indonesia. These institutions offer various English programs such as conversational English, English for Academic Purposes and TOEFL and IELTS training for students intending to pursue further study both in home country and overseas. The TOEFL and IELTS are typical of a gate keeper of international standard assessment of language for non English speaking students pursuing their study in English speaking countries. This indicates that although English is still considered as a foreign language, the wide spread and intense of ELT in Indonesia both in formal and non formal education showing how English as symbol of western culture and modernization have deeply penetrated into Indonesian society and becomes an integral part in Indonesian education system.

Meanwhile, globalization in Indonesian ELT curricula can be seen in the adoption of the language pedagogies, which are much influenced by the history of the development of educational philosophies of English language teaching in the west. For instance, grammar translation method was adopted in Indonesian ELT in 1945, oral approach in 1968, audiolingual approach in 1975, and communicative approach in 1984 and 1994 (Dardjowidjojo, 2000). In addition, the learning principles with a focus on learners as the active participants and teachers main role as the learning

facilitators, which is basically the common practice in the western education has been introduced in Indonesian education system, including the ELT since the late 1970s (Kemdiknas, 2010). Since 2004 English language teaching in Indonesia has adopted the so called competency based curriculum. In this curriculum, competencies primarily refer to students' communicative competencies (Depdiknas, 2007).

The adoption of competency based curriculum in ELT can argued as the reorientation of Indonesian education policy with "western ideoscapes" (Appadurai, 1996) that apparently leads to globalization economy in which Indonesian graduates with their "comparative advantage" (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000: viii) of communicative competencies are hoped to be able to compete in labour market both nationally and globally (Lauder, 2006). However, the 2004 curriculum raised criticisms because the stated competencies to be achieved are primarily set out by the central government of Indonesia with no involvement of local stake holders, and in practice the competencies are hard to achieve because of different localities. Therefore, the competency based curriculum, including for the ELT, then has shifted its name to 'Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan' (KTSP-school based curriculum) since 2006. While the standard competencies set out by the central government remain, it is up to the local stake holders particularly the schools to determine the contents of competencies, including the ELT materials that suit the needs of local context and local resources. This is an issue of centrality – decentrality in the reorientation of Indonesian education policies in that adapting education policies to global interest is emphasized without losing local and national aspiration and support.

Glocalization as a combination of global cultures and local cultures exists in ELT materials in Indonesia. In the KTSP curriculum, local cultural issues are proportionally incorporated in the ELT materials, along with international issues such as environment, technology, sustainable development. Topics such as "The Cendrawasih is the beautiful bird" – a unique bird living in Papua of eastern Indonesia - in an English listening activity and the use of typical Indonesian names such as "Joko", "Ucok", and "Tengku" in a speaking activity are now mentioned in Indonesian ELT textbooks (Doddy et al., 2008: 1-4). Nowadays, such local cultural contents, including the typical Indonesian names become more explicit in ELT textbooks based on 2013 curriculum. For tens of years especially in the periods of 1950 to 1980s, the ELT materials are of another main concern among educationists and Indonesian ELT experts. As the ELT textbooks designed involved foreign consultants and experts, the contents of the textbooks were strongly western cultural oriented. Although arguing that it becomes easier for Indonesian learners to make sense in their language learning because they are fully exposed to the teaching materials containing the target language culture, on the contrary, Indonesian learners become more alienated with their local cultures and the materials are also strange to the students because many of the materials may not be useful in their daily life.

In practice, challenges related to the ELT with the application of communicative approach, even now with the scientific approach based on 2013 curriculum (Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan, 2014) and the active learning principles which theoretically promote students' use of English appropriately usually exist. In remote areas, it seems hard for many teachers of English to actualize these approaches and principles because of lack of teachers' language knowledge and skills in ELT methodologies, lack of teaching facilities, and of large classes. However, a number of schools in cosmopolitan cities, including international schools have succeeded in applying both the communicative approach and the active learning principles because the teachers are supported with sufficient training and supplied with adequate facilities. This shows that the dynamics of cultural globalization of ELT in terms of its pedagogies can be 'coca colonized' for good reasons, although resistance of cultural globalization in ELT pedagogies occurs in many schools especially in remote

areas because of local cultural factors. In order to minimize the resistance it is important for the policy makers to take into account how to overcome local cultural barriers, which are commonly structural such as by providing sustainable training and supports of teaching facilities so that teachers and students can maximize their teaching and learning of English.

In the fast advancement in technology development as another element of globalization (Schech & Haggis, 2000; Wadham et al., 2007), the use of computers as well as internet in ELT has started to increase. Teachers and learners of English now are easily able to access any authentic English teaching and learning material from the internet, such as authentic reading text from online newspaper articles, academic articles, and e-mail for both reading and writing skills activities, or videos of TV news for both listening and speaking skills activities. Such readily available authentic materials greatly help teachers and students to vary their teaching and learning activities so that students can maximize their English learning potentials in the success of English learning. There are of course concerns raised especially for teachers and students in remote areas. The concerns are related to no or lack of electricity sources, providers of internet, no prior teachers and students knowledge of using of internet. While, there are some internet cafes available around their schools, the teachers and students need to pay for their access and printing of the teaching materials. The internet data quota package assistance provided the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Affairs for teachers and students at all levels of education (Kemendibuditek, 2021) really helps them access the internet to support their online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, including in English learning.

There are several organizations of EFL teachers in Indonesia, such as ‘Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran’ (MGMP) available in every province and district and TEFLIN in a central headquarter in Java of Indonesia to allow teachers of English to share their thoughts, ideas, experiences, concerns, innovation, and suggestions through discussions, trainings, workshops, writing in journals and conferences. However, these organizations are not yet fully functional to help teachers because of classic reason, that is insufficient funding to sustain their support for teachers of English. The involvement of other parties such as universities may help MGMP to run professional development for teachers of English. For example, some teachers of English of Universitas Khairun through a community service program in cooperation with MGMP of English Language in Ternate City recently held a training on using technological applications on English language learning for teachers of English (Malut Post, 2021). Such training really helps the teachers under MGMP in integrating appropriate technological applications into their classrooms to create innovative and enjoyable English language learning activities for their students. During this Covid-19 pandemic, some free webinars organized by British Council Indonesia in cooperation with TEFLIN also help update teachers’ horizons in English language learning and teaching.

There are also concerns among parents, educationists, and teachers made in public debates such as discussions and seminar if their children’s thoughts, ways of thinking, and actions are influenced too much from the impact of globalization because it becomes easier for children to expose or interact with western cultures via mediascapes (Wadham, 2007; Schech & Haggins, 2000) such as internet, western TV programs, western musics, or western films. They are worried that sooner or later the students may lose their cultural and national identity of Indonesia. In reaction to these concerns, Indonesian government recently has announced a program called national culture and character education. The policy is already set up and ready in place at academic year 2012/2013. This national character education equips students with survival life principles to enable them to adapt with global challenges. The principles taught enable the students to become individuals who are religious, hardworking and tolerant, and have the entrepreneurship spirit such as risk taking, originality, leadership, and future orientation (Kemdiknas, 2010). The

principles stated in the national culture and character education, however, contain some sort of western cultural values, such as toleration and entrepreneurship principles as originally come from the enlightenment period (Schech & Haggis, 2000; Wadham et al., 2007). This shows that western cultural values as embedded in the national culture and character education of Indonesia are considered as hegemony of ideologies because these western cultures are in touch with local cultures and finally accepted in local Indonesian contexts. This is exactly stated by Beare (2001) as illustrating Angelica as a future individual living in global cultures.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, as Indonesia is culturally diverse and geographically stretched in thousands of islands and strategic, ELT curriculum policies in Indonesia can be argued to be on the appropriate tract of adopting a combination of global and local perspectives in terms of the methodology and materials along with the principles of centralization and decentralization in contents and power sharings. The challenges, however, lie in how these ELT curriculum policies can be successfully put into practice. With the various modes to strengthen ELT processes for teachers and students, it is important for Indonesian policy makers, educationists, and teachers to get the most benefits from globalization through maximizing ELT partnership programs both nationally and internationally such as trainings, workshops, and sholarships for further studies. More importantly, with the present development of information technology for better ELT in Indonesia needs to be taken into account by providing sufficient funding, particularly from Indonesian government (both central and local) spent for both sustainable ELT human resources development and their supporting facilities to enable students to succeed in achieving their communicative competencies to be able to survive in global competitiveness as expected by all stake holders of education in Indonesia.

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