Intellectual Discourse

CONTENTS

Book Reviews

Language Policy and Practices in Indonesian Higher Education Institutions

Maskanah Mohammad Lotfie*and Hartono**

Abstract: English in Indonesia has foreign language status. Nevertheless, the language is greatly significant to the country due to its numerous regional and global appeals. The current language policy of Indonesia ensures that the language is taught to children from junior high school level. However, as a reflection of a language that has not been prioritised in school curriculum, school leavers largely have limited grasp of the language by the time they enrol into university programmes. This study attempts to highlight institutional practices in student enrolment into and graduation from English programmes. It is also concerned with issues that are perceived to have derived from the policy. Based on interviews with 23 academics from five universities in Central Java, the majority of whom are administrators, policy-related issues of the English language are identified in this paper. Findings include communication skill difficulties faced by English majors and the juxtaposition of state and private universities in terms of student recruitment. The findings are significant in informing stakeholders such as policy makers, administrators, language instructors, and other practitioners about the impact of language policy and planning on practices in higher education institutions in Central Java and in assisting future decision-making processes whereby the consequences are far-reaching.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, English programmes in Central Java, Javanese speakers of English, language policy

---

**Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. Email: maskanah@iium.edu.my

**Dean, Faculty of Languages and Communication Studies, Sultan Agung Islamic University, Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. Email: hartono@ unissula@ac.id

Abstrak: Bahasa Inggeris di Indonesia berstatus bahasa luar. Walaubagaimanapun, bahasa tersebut sangat penting di negara itu kerana ia banyak tarikan serantau dan global. Polisi bahasa di Indonesia memastikan bahasa tersebut diajar kepada kanak-kanak dari tahap sekolah menengah rendah. Dalam pada itu, sebagai refleksi suatu bahasa yang tidak diutamakan dalam kurikulum sekolah, bila tiba masanya untuk lepasan sekolah mendaftar program di peringkat universiti, mereka rata-ratanya mempunyai penguasaan terhad bahasa tersebut. Kajian ini cuba menyorot amalan di institusi bagi pelajar yang berdaftar dan yang bergraduasi dari program ijazah Bahasa Inggeris. Ia juga bertumpu pada isu-isu yang dipercayai disebabkan oleh polisi tersebut. Berasaskan interview dengan 23 ahli akademik dari lima universiti di Jawa Tengah yang kebanyakan mereka adalah pentadbir, isu-isu berkaitan dengan polisi bahasa dikenalpasti dalam artikel ini. Dapatan kajian termasuk kesukaran menguasai skil berkomunikasi yang dihadapi pelajar program Bahasa Inggeris dan perbezaan universiti kerajaan dan swasta dalam hal pengambilan pelajar. Dapatan-dapatan tersebut penting untuk memaklumkan pihak berkepentingan seperti pengolah polisi, pentadbir, guru bahasa, dan pengamal lain tentang kesan perancangan dan polisi bahasa ke atas amalan-amalan di institut pengajian tinggi di Jawa Tengah dan untuk membantu proses membuat keputusan yang akibatnya memberi kesan yang lama.

Introduction:

Rapid globalisation necessitates the use of a language that ensures effective communication among the world's citizens. In Southeast Asia where the different countries are tremendously rich in cultural and historical diversity, the variety of mother tongues spoken in the region dictates a need for a common language. Over the years, English has emerged as the lingua franca and its usage is doubly prominent with its adoption as the only working language of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Kirkpatrick, 2011, 2012). In Indonesia, Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia* or *Bahasa)* is the lingua franca amongst its population, used in all aspects of communication by its citizens of varied mother tongues. Though English is the country's most important foreign language (Pasassung, 2003), its usage comes after Indonesian, and in Central Java where this study took place, it is the third language after Javanese and Indonesian, thus reflecting its status as a foreign language making its usage indubitably limited outside formal instructional sessions and thus impacting the level of proficiency school leavers have upon enrolment into universities or

higher education institutions (HEIs). Low competence may be caused by the lack of motivation to acquire the language as entry to HEIs, though requiring passing the final senior high exam, does not entail a specific English language proficiency requirement. In what seems like a vicious circle, language policy and planning, students' motivation to learn the language, and teachers' competence, create a situation where school leavers who become English majors tend to be those that still greatly need to improve competence in the language.

English in Indonesia: Status and Language Policy

Historically, Indonesian was declared in 1928 to be used as a unifying language by the then leaders of Indonesia (Paauw, 2009). Since 1945, as stipulated in Article 36 of the Constitution, Indonesian has been made the national language of the country and it functions as the medium used in education as well as media broadcast and is essentially used for all purposes and transactions (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2011; Montolalu & Suryadinata, 2007; Simpson, 2007). Its status shapes the policy of language medium and instruction in Indonesia and impacts the manner in which a language like English is perceived and taught in school. In Kachru's (1985) Three Concentric Circle Model of Englishes, Indonesia is placed in the Expanding Circle and therefore English has a foreign language status (Bolton, 2006) and this is evident in the way that English is only largely used in the classroom. Indonesia's national language policy has indisputably been effective in uniting the vast nation, creating a strong national identity and promoting education and literacy. The only area in which Indonesia's policy can be seen to have come up short is in terms of participatory function, in that Indonesia has yet to have a language which enables it to engage more effectively on world stage. This limitation can be overcome with improved foreign language education, without necessitating sacrifices on the impressive achievements of Indonesia's national language policy (Paauw, 2009).

In Indonesia, the mastering of English by Indonesians wishing to access international communication and strive for rapid economic development is critical. The ability to communicate in English is also a catalytic factor in determining employability of school leavers and HEI graduates (Zein, 2012; Gropello, 2013). Competence in the English language considerably enhances the possibility of securing favourable

positions and remunerations in the labour market and the importance of the language is signalled by advertisements listing job seekers' good command of English as one of the top requirements (Lie, 2007). Of great concern is employability of graduates in Indonesia and that employers are finding that skills of graduates do not match the ever-changing needs of industries. Gropello's study on employers' perspective on Indonesian employees highlights that the skill profile of the Indonesian workforce has not evolved in tandem with the demands of the labour market and that there is a need to address the unsatisfactory quality and lack of relevance of formal education. Gropello recommends, among others, a need to enhance employees' ability to communicate and this includes the ability to interact in English.

Apart from the foreign language status of English in Indonesia where it is taught and learnt in a non-English speaking environment, one crucial factor affecting acquisition is the policies that are in place nationally and in HEIs. The status of a language and the language policies of a country inevitably affect language planning, specifically, language-related implementation of teaching and learning practices, the management of resources and the nature of graduates each level of education has. Indonesia has gone through a number of educational curricula and those affecting English vary in their approaches (Bire, 2010; Lie, 2007). The latest education policy presented in the 2013 curriculum calls for English to be taught to students in junior and senior high schools while at elementary level, the language is referred to as a local content subject whereby the decision of its inclusion in a school's curriculum autonomously lies with individual school's authority (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013, 2014). The teaching and learning of the language also face stiff competition from other subjects, specifically the national language, Indonesian, and in the case of Java, the mother tongue of the majority of children there, Javanese and thus, Indonesian children generally have limited exposure to English with only two to four hours scheduled for it weekly (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). While unification goals and ethnic diversity in Indonesia may have geared the national curriculum towards this, the policy affects the amount of formal instruction exposure of the language, the breadth and depth of instruction, and depending on students' background, how much of an effective user of the language they become at the end of their school years. As an important extension, this policy determines

the English language proficiency of school leavers who apply to HEIs and specifically, the type of applicants who become English language majors in those institutions in the country.

English language proficiency, teacher training programmes and Indonesian students abroad

The language policy of Indonesia that is translated into curriculum in schools could quite accurately reflect the English language proficiency of those who exit the school system and enter HEIs. Competence in English among high school and university graduates is observed to be generally low (Lie, 2007). In 2017, Indonesia was ranked 39th out of 80 countries in the English Proficiency Index (EPI). Close to Indonesia was Vietnam which ranked 40th, while another ASEAN country, Singapore, ranked 5th (EF Education First, 2017). There are also studies such as Fuziati (2011) and Reisky (2013) that report perpetual difficulties in acquiring the language by Indonesian school children.

Of interest to the current study is the command of English by English majors, especially those who are enrolled in English Literary and English Education Studies programmes. Of concern is that, since English Education Studies are teacher training programmes, the majority of the graduates will become teachers of English in schools, either public or private (Juangsih, 2014), and that the quality of teacher training, of which in Indonesia includes courses to improve English proficiency, will influence their ability to teach. Depending on that quality of teacher training in English, devotion to improving own English skills and confidence level, English teachers may struggle with doubts over their ability to teach the language (Waterworth, 2016). Waterworth's study on challenges faced by teachers of English in ASEAN countries indicates that while their roles and responsibilities are undoubtedly very important as they provide access for their students to the Asian region and the world, Indonesian teachers have lower skill levels compared to teachers from other countries such as the Philippines and Brunei Darussalam. It is also found that all teachers from ASEAN countries strongly felt the need to study English further and Indonesian teachers felt the need the most.

Nguyen's (2011) research on Thai, Vietnamese, and Indonesian students studying in Australia is also relevant to the current investigation. These students, of which approximately 20,000 were Indonesians, had

to go through preparatory English courses prior to starting their degree programmes. Nguyen explored difficulties the students faced in learning English and how they overcame those difficulties. Analysed participant reflection data indicate that learning English in the three countries commonly emphasised grammar while other skills like speaking or pronunciation were not prioritised.

Another study on Indonesian students in Australia by Novera (2004) finds that the participants' difficulties with English possibly derive in part from insufficient exposure to English in the Indonesian education system, given that English is taught as a foreign language, with limited hours per week. Novera's study suggests that the preparatory courses in English provided to Indonesian students prior to enrolling in their degree programmes are insufficient to compensate for what is considered the weakness in English language instruction in Indonesia. Twenty-three out of the 25 participants reported at least some difficulties in the use of English in academic situations and the difficulties were most often faced in making oral presentations and writing essays. It can be deduced from analysed data that the specific difficulties are shaped not just by unfamiliarity with English *per se* but by the linguistic character of the Indonesian language, the approach to English instruction in Indonesia, and what happens when the two different pedagogical and linguistic traditions intersect. Although both English and Indonesian use the same script, there are differences particularly in their grammatical and syntactical structures. Grammatical mistakes are almost inevitable, and this is a source of frustration for some students, especially in relation to writing tasks.

There are other studies that are relevant to this current one and one of it concerns the use of the first language (L1) in the classroom. Zacharias (2003) investigated pedagogical principles in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesia. The study examined issues that were part of the belief system of teachers and the extent to which they impacted actual classroom practice. Data were collated from 100 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors teaching the language in universities in Central Java. The majority of the respondents believed in principle the use of students' mother tongue in class. They opined that the L1 is necessary for various purposes, especially for providing explanations for lexical and grammar items.

In a study on an English education programme at a state-owned university in Indonesia, Sulistiyo (2015) collected information about the programme with the purpose of improving it. Recent teacher graduates' and beginner teachers' perceptions on their experiences as pre-service teachers in the EFL teacher education programme were obtained. Information from school principals and teacher educators was also gathered. Sulistiyo found that a number of school principals perceived that the language teaching skills and language knowledge of new teachers were inadequate for the teaching profession and that English language education policy and the teacher education programme in the university needed to be reformed to improve the quality of programme delivery and outcomes. Recommendations included programme curriculum reform for developing language knowledge and language teaching skills. In addition, improving the programme's teaching practicum, teacher educator professional development, and teaching and learning resources were said to be crucial to the programme's quality.

Objectives of the study:

With the background issues previously raised and findings reported in the abovementioned studies, this study aims to identify English language requirements for English Education Studies and English Literature programmes in selected universities in Central Java and examine how they are reflective of Indonesian and institutional language policies. Another objective of this study is to ascertain the perception of academics on impacts of language policies on institutional practices in selected Javanese universities that offer English programmes.

Methods:

This study primarily involved descriptive analysis of data from interviews. Data were collated from academics from five universities of different backgrounds in Central Java. The universities consist of one state and four private ones and of the four private universities, three have religious orientations while one is an institution specializing in economics and entrepreneurship programmes. The varying backgrounds ensure that the data, as much as possible, are reflective of the types of universities in Central Java. All universities offer both or one of the following undergraduate degrees: English Education Studies and English Literature. The first refers to a programme that trains undergraduates to become language teachers or instructors. English

Literature programmes in Central Java would entail students enrolling in both literature and linguistic courses. In this study, English programmes refer to both abovementioned first degree programmes. English majors refer to undergraduate students of the universities who are enrolled in English programmes.

Names of participants and their institutional affiliations are kept anonymous in keeping with ethical conduct in administering research (Creswell, 2014). Altogether, data were collated from 23 academics who taught a combination of subjects from the fields of linguistics, literature, pedagogy and English proficiency. They were experienced academics who had been teaching for over five years with the most experienced having taught for 42 years. Seventeen of the participants were academics holding administrative positions. Their input was crucial for this study that investigates language policy and planning. Seventeen of the academics were Master's degree holders while four possessed doctoral degrees.

The instrument used in collecting data was a semi-structured interview protocol. Each academic participated in one-on-one interview that took place between 20 to 40 minutes resulting in rich transcribed data of more than 63,000 words. It should be mentioned that the current study is part of a larger research that includes data from English majors from the same participating universities. The following table shows the study's research questions, data collection and data analysis techniques:

Table 1. Summary of research design

	Research Questions	Data Collection Technique	Data Analysis
1	How are the English language requirements for English programmes in Javanese universities/HEIs a reflection of Indonesia's language policy?	Interviews of academics and academic administrators	Textual analysis of interviews
2	What do academics perceive as impacts of language policies on institutional practices of selected Javanese HEIs running English programmes?		

Findings and discussion:

In the following sections, excerpts from interviews are reproduced with no changes made to them. Translated Indonesian are placed in parentheses.

English programmes language requirements and how they reflect Indonesian language policy

The analysed data provide three main themes and they are high school certificate and entrance examination, English proficiency exit test, and recruitment challenge.

High School Certificate and Entrance Examination

Applicants to English programmes in all five universities are required to pass senior high school and this annual national level assessment is carried out across the country. Analysed data indicate that universities administer selection or entrance exams but these exams do not contain specific items measuring English language proficiency of prospective English majors. A participant mentioned the following:

> AA03: *To apply, students need to pass high school. There is a general test upon entrance but not specifically on English.*

Academics were also asked about their institutions' plans to have specific entrance tests for English programme applicants. A few academics such as the following mentioned the test.

> AA12: *We have planned for years but it doesn't look like it's going to happen. So, that's why we have problems for some students here.*

Even though the entrance tests have been planned, universities have not had the chance develop and implement them due to possible reasons such as limited resources and manpower.

English Proficiency Exit Test

Universities in Indonesia make autonomous decisions on their language policy. The universities envision becoming world-class educational institutions (Royono & Rahwidiati, 2013) and so English has become increasingly important and is included in the curriculum. All five universities request students to sit for an institutionalised English

proficiency test at graduation point. This test is modelled after the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the required score for a pass differ slightly from one institution to another. The five universities require the minimum score of either 450 or 500 for graduating English majors. Test results need to be available prior to the evaluation of students' undergraduate thesis, referred to as *skripsi.*

> AA04: *They have to show to us the certificate of the test so they can join Sidang Skripsi (oral defence of theses).*

Graduating students are expected to pass the exit English test and it has gradually become an established practice in the universities.

> AA01: *Actually, it is not included in our curriculum but it is university policy to require the students to pass TOEFL-like exam, yes, but like 450.*

A concerned participant mentioned that:

> AA03: *500 is a lot for TOEFL.*

The practice of requiring graduating students to sit for English test is in place; however, some participants like the above opined that students face difficulty in fulfilling this requirement when the cut-off point for passing the test is rather high.

Recruitment challenge

Related to English programme enrolment and the minimal university entry requirement is the public-private university conundrum where state universities are essentially favoured. An academic from a state university mentioned that it is common for his/her department to receive approximately 7,000 applications for a new programme cohort, but would only be able to offer 250 places. The academic said:

> AA12: *English is the second most favourite department here. We only open for 250 students and the applicants can be more than 7,000.*

State universities are favoured essentially due to government funding which naturally means easier access to infrastructure, teaching and learning resources, etc. On the contrary, funding for private universities depends very much on fee-paying students. With the general preference for state universities, private universities often have to accept applicants

who have been filtered out by the former, and as a consequent do not have the luxury of choosing students who are highly proficient in English. In addition, not only is there competition between state and private universities, there is also competition amongst the latter. As a participant pointed out:

> AA03: *Actually we have a very tight competition among universities. In this city we have a lot of universities offering English programmes. We are competitive in terms of recruiting students.*

It must be pointed out that there are participants who felt that their currently enrolled students do have better grasp of English than those from previous cohorts. The following is an example of such observation:

> AA01: *Nowadays, we have better qualified students, of course. But five years ago private universities will have lower standard of students. Although they have the same experience from senior high school, they have different qualifications.*

Most participants, though hopeful for change, acknowledged that it is unlikely to occur soon. There is need for English majors to have good command of the English language and the level of command is reflected by exit test scores. But, not only will the requirement remain a graduation rule, participants believed that the score will not be increased soon. One experienced academic mentioned rather resignedly:

> AA03: *Maybe not. Not yet this time. Later. Not in the near future.*

Indonesia is a nation where English is spoken as a foreign language or to use Kachru's (1985) model, it is placed in the expanding circle. The multi-ethnic and multi-lingual ecology of Indonesia together helped in moulding its educational language policy. There have been policy changes and amendments but the requirement for English is clear in that it is only compulsory from junior high school level where two periods of English are offered weekly and therefore, it is not surprising that the minimum requirement for enrolling into university English programmes is passing high school. The entry and exit requirements are rather low compared to other institutions that run similar programmes in the Southeast Asian region. Most universities including those in Brunei Darussalam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and other ASEAN

countries require International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Band 6.5 or TOEFL score of 550 at entry rather than exit point. Nevertheless, English has a different status in each of those countries and among ASEAN countries only Indonesia does not implement the compulsory teaching and learning of English at the elementary or primary school level (Kirkpatrick, 2012). Thus, the requirement in the universities in Central Java is a reflection of the foreign language status of English and the language policy of Indonesia at school level. To expect more, in terms of entry point level of English from applicants would be unrealistic and unfair. Universities can attempt to obtain students whose command of the English language is better by imposing higher entry proficiency levels, but the number of qualified applicants would be considerably fewer.

It can be deduced that to have an English entry level prerequisite for English programmes is extremely difficult as students come from a background where English is a foreign language. However, equipping students with language proficiency prior to starting a degree programme is a possibility and not totally unprecedented. For instance, a university has started teaching Indonesian to its international students. A participant who answered to the question whether English majors can undergo English proficiency courses first, prior to joining the programme mentioned the following:

> AA07: *It's already happening now. For the Engineering Faculty, we have two students from Jordan. I guess they already start studying Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing (Indonesian for Foreign Speakers) with us because next academic year they will join the study in Indonesian. So they have to join a kind of matriculation before.*

It is to be inferred that a similar preparatory course can be arranged for English too.

Impacts of Language Policies: Institutional Practices of Universities Offering English Programmes

Analysed interview data for impacts that academics perceived to have resulted from language policies can be divided into three. The first area of concern is English majors' skills to communicate; second, the use of mother tongue in class; and third, problems in furthering studies abroad.

Communication Skills

The academics, apart from teaching pedagogy, linguistic and literature courses, also teach English proficiency courses to the students. Concurring with the earlier mentioned findings from studies by Fuziati (2011), Lie (2007) and Reisky (2013), the academics generally expressed difficulties in teaching the students because English is the third language after Javanese and Indonesian (*Bahasa)*. An academic mentioned that:

> AA22: *Here English is their third language so the first one would be Javanese and then*

Bahasa so sometimes we find some difficulties in teaching English.

In particular, the majority of the participants stated that their students face difficulties in writing and speaking as well as communicating in English with grammatical accuracy. In speaking, a participant expressed his/her concern as follows:

> AA04: *It's very difficult to ask them to speak English. Sangat bangat perlu dibantu dan itu yang tidak mudah. (They greatly need help and that is not easy).*

Students are found to devise strategies to cope with tasks when verbal communication is unavoidable. They agree on mutual cooperation and this could occur during micro-teaching sessions to elude inability to respond to questions spontaneously. A participant mentioned:

> AA04: *Junior or senior students, so, when they have to practise teaching in front of their friends, iya begitu jadi kayaknya sudah ada kongkalikong, sudah ada kerjasama (yes, they cooperate with each other). So, okay, "You have to read this." and then, "You have to ask me this question and I would like to prepare my answer."*

Similarly, in fulfilling a programme requirement, students find it challenging to present and defend final year projects or theses before a panel of evaluators. A lecturer made this observation:

> AA04: *When they have Sidang Skripsi (undergraduate thesis defence) they have to explain in English but sometimes in the middle of the explanation they tend to say, "Miss, can I speak in Indonesian because I have to tell about this one, this one, this one, and I do not know how to speak in English?"*

In a state university where its two English programmes receive an overwhelmingly large number of applicants each year, the best students enrol there so the majority of them speak English well. However, the students still face problems in writing. A participant pointed out:

> AA12: *Around 85 per cent of the students are very good in speaking but, if they are doing final projects in English, they are good in producing utterances but are rather weak in producing written language, even the best debaters. That's the problem.*

An academic from a private university mentioned that:

> AA01: *I find they still face difficulty in writing. They go through a gradual process from sentence base, paragraph, yes, and so on.*

The English majors' level of mastery of English grammar can be observed in their written output. Participants felt that ensuring English majors' written accuracy of *skripsi* is also challenging. As one participant said:

> AA06: *When we try to train the students to be grammatically correct in writing, it is very tricky. Students in the last semester have to write a report as a requirement in graduating from this programme. Yes, it's very challenging for the supervisor. The sentences are very far from being correct.*

It can be concluded from the participants' observations that the English majors face problems in demonstrating their language skills. One participant aptly summarised:

> AA04: *They also have difficulty in mastering grammar and also writing. Gayanya semua. (All, actually).*

Use of the Mother Tongue and the National Language

The most important source of English language input in a foreign language environment is the teachers or lecturers. Nevertheless, similar to the findings by Zacharias (2003), all interviewed academics agreed that they cannot possibly use English in its entirety in class. Switching to Javanese or Indonesian is a necessity that would avoid students from not understanding course content.

> AA19: *I'm afraid that it's not going to be applicable if my teaching is conducted a hundred per cent in English. They*

> *are asked to learn and I cannot be selfish and fully speak in*
> *English. But, I can say that it's around 70 to 80 per cent in*
> *English, and 20 per cent is Indonesian. This is not because*
> *I do not want to speak English but because I would like to*
> *make sure that my students will fully understand.*

Lecturers are aware of their important role to model the target language for their students. A participant maintained that students' mother tongue is not used in skills course, but only in core courses.

> AA20: *I usually try to fully speak in English, but for literary*
> *criticism, social psychology, theory of literature, sometimes*
> *I mix with Indonesian because some of the students still*
> *couldn't catch the meanings, or my explanations of a theory.*

On their usage of Javanese or Indonesian, a participant's practice is in contrast to AA20's in that for him/her, the use of English is needed in teaching grammar.

> A23: *Twenty-five per cent, mostly just English, because when*
> *I teach grammar, the transfer of knowledge about grammar*
> *will be understood by the students sometimes in Indonesian.*

It is not uncommon, for various reasons that students speak in their LI in an English class. The same happens with the participants' students too. Consequently, the students have to be forced to speak the language they are majoring in. A participant mentioned the following:

> AA19: *I commonly force them to speak English. I myself, you*
> *know, are allowed to speak a little bit of Bahasa Indonesia*
> *but you (the students) have to speak English. Types of*
> *Applicants to English Programmes*

Of great concern and a recurring issue brought up by the participants is the kind of students that they accept into their undergraduate English programmes. Language policy may greatly determine most school leavers' level of English language proficiency but the choice to become an English major is not up to policymakers. There are students who, despite lack of interest and low English proficiency, become English majors not by choice but by parental preference.

> AA20: *...some students, they don't like English. But when I*
> *ask them, "Then why did you choose this programme?"*
> *Yes, because of their parents.*

Another recruitment issue is when students enrol in a programme because of the assurance of scholarship offers from universities. This is acknowledged by the participants who said that:

> AA07: *Our students are not really at the first time keen to join our university. Some of them, they join this uni because of the scholarships. So the one who got scholarship they don't really actually want this programme.*

The greater worry, however, is in terms of student qualifications. A participant pointed out:

> AA19: *People who come to our department are commonly from the second layer in education. The qualification, their proficiency of English, is just sometimes zero. They know nothing but they would like to learn English, they go to us.*

Another opined that:

> AA18: *And from my perspective the quality of teaching and learning English during their SMA was unstandardized. Some students are really good, but there are those who are still poor. Sometimes we have to start from the beginning again.*

Academics, especially from the private institutions lamented the fact that they have make do with whatever is available to them. That alone sets the tone for the students' journey as English majors and one that can perhaps only be drastically changed by an equally drastic amendment in the language policy.

Studying abroad

Relevant also to the issue of how language policies impact English majors is their journey in pursuing graduate studies abroad. In their studies, both Nguyen (2011) and Novera (2004) observe the difficulty Indonesian students face in adjusting to English language requirements when studying abroad. This is another observation of the current study where it was mentioned that graduates from the universities planning to pursue masters or doctoral degrees abroad are not normally accepted directly into the programmes of their choice. They have to spend some time attending English preparatory courses. A participant, an experienced academic administrator, mentioned that:

> AA10: *Somehow our graduates, when they study overseas, are not directly accepted. This is unlike those who graduated from universities in Thailand and the Philippines where they can directly do their masters and then continue with their doctorates.*

The delay in enrolling into graduate programmes will not only have the potential to create anxiety, but will also add to the financial burden, among other myriad of possible problems to the students.

The above section presents the findings on impacts of language policy as perceived by the academics from the five universities. They include difficulties in using language skills detrimental to English majors' academic pursuits, without which they face acute limitations in being effective students, accomplishing the necessary objectives of their study domains and developing to the fullest their youthful potential. The academics also explained the need for L1 and L2 usage to ensure students' comprehension of courses. Although understandable, the use of languages with English majors deprives them even more of the exposure of English that they gravely need from their lecturers. The findings also include an infrequently mentioned concern but of no less significance that is the impact of language policy on graduates studying abroad.

This study's findings on state versus private universities are thought provoking. More than ten universities offer English programmes in the city where this study was conducted and only two are fully state-funded institutions. Private universities are largely students' second choice after state universities so the competition is stiff for the institutions to recruit students and this could be one of their reasons for not having any requirements on applicants' level of English proficiency. It is unlikely that public funding for higher education in Indonesia will increase significantly in the future (Royono & Rahwidiati, 2013) so non-state universities especially, will have to continue to largely rely on student fees for operating expenditure. As a result, such universities could not hope to compete in terms of the kind of students they accept at enrolment point. Private universities with a means to provide scholarship to students, however, still have the advantage of recruiting the number of English majors they need and the kind of students that they prefer. Even so, the academics interviewed mentioned the cases where English

majors choose the field for scholarship availability, not for their deep interest in the programmes.

While the rest of the universities have to compromise on quality, the state university has the envious opportunity to select the best English majors. As a state university has a huge surplus of applications, change can perhaps start gradually with it whereby English graduating requirements can be changed to an entry requirement. This improvement will ensure that English majors are of considerable proficiency at entry level, will not spend lengthy periods in proficiency enhancement classes, and will be more effective in programme courses and activities. The benefit of that can be translated into having more highly qualified graduates, some of whom will join the workforce as teachers/lecturers. It would be great if English programme graduates can be confident teachers who will not need further English language proficiency training unlike those mentioned by Waterworth (2016).

Conclusion:

This study is concerned with the language policy of Indonesia, the teaching of English in schools and its perceived impacts on English Literature and English Education Studies programmes in selected universities in Central Java. Analysed interviews of academics establish that a pass in high school certificate is the requirement for students applying for the English programmes. The findings also indicate that the universities have English language graduation requirements in place for their English majors. The participants' perspective on various issues or problems that can be traced back to language policy include the English majors' communication skills, L1 and *Bahasa* usage, as well as applicant types. An essential way of helping English majors to perform better in their programmes that require mastery of the language is to change relevant policies, but policy change, anywhere in the world, is not an inconsequential challenge, what more in Indonesia where the total number of population is over 260 million people (Spillan & Virzi, 2017).

Indonesia, without a doubt, has been forward thinking and successful in making Indonesian the language of national unification and coherence. The monumental task of creating national identity through a shared language ensures peace and harmony in the vast region. This current study though, concerns current global English

use and the need for Indonesia to equip its youth to become effective communicators with the world at large. The academics who are the participants in this study believe English is needed in the youth's future because it is the language of survival in a globalised world. The English language then, should be embraced not because of English's sake but because the students need to understand that it is part of their survival strategies. In terms of sequential far-reaching impacts, an excellent grasp of the English language can play an important role in securing employment (Gropello, 2013; Lie, 2007; Zein, 2012) and for those who make teaching English their profession, their contribution to the nation would last for generations to come.The current policy concerning the teaching of English at school level does not seem to favour the needs of school leavers who are potential English majors.

Sulistiyo (2015) has also recommended change including programme curriculum reform for developing language knowledge and language teaching skills. It has also been aptly advocated that sustained quality teaching policies require long-term, non-linear efforts and thus call for a permanent institutional commitment from the top-leadership of an institution (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012). Thus, national level change of language policy is the ideal trajectory forward but its implementation is predictably unfeasible. As desirable as change is, the educational resources needed for it are not abundantly available and accessible. Making English compulsory to be taught at an earlier level would be ideal, but such a huge change requires large financial resources in terms of infrastructure and manpower and therefore not attainable, yet. It is perhaps more realistic to gradually amend policies at university level involving changing exit exam to entry requirement, and from a lower passing cut-off point to a higher one but such decisions must be strongly and valiantly supported by the university as such requirements, at least initially, put a burden on the universities and the students.

Some academics interviewed in this study do not believe it is necessary to ensure high English proficiency prior to enrolling into an English programme. They believe that the system is good enough i.e. students do have English proficiency courses offered and that there are prerequisites for certain content courses. The academics also positively believe that success as an English major is not determined by competence in English at entry level; it is their attitude in facing challenges that determines their academic outcome. Universities may

not have the luxury of getting English majors of high proficiency, but they try hard to compensate for that in many ways through courses and activities created for students.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of producing English programme graduates who are globally competitive, the challenges faced by Indonesian students are numerous. Globalisation requires Indonesia's attention on foreign languages (Montolalu & Suryadinata, 2007), and the country needs English to be an active member of ASEAN and thus embracing English from now is inevitable for the sake of the students/ graduates if they are to be competitive in the job market and contribute positively to their great nation.

Bibliography:

Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa. (2011). *Undang-undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 24 Tahun 2009 tentang bendera, bahasa, dan lambang negara, serta lagu kebangsaan.* Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.

Bire, J. (2010). Mismatch English education in Indonesia. *Linguistika, 17*(32). Retrieved 29th November 2015 from http://ojs.unud.ac.id/index.php/ linguistika/article/view/335

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative, and qualitative research.* (4th ed.). Essex: Pearson.

EF Education First. (2017). *EF EPI English Proficiency Index.* (7th ed.). Retrieved 31st January 2018 from https://www.ef.com/epi/

Fuziati, E. (2011). Interlanguage and error fossilization: A study of Indonesian students learning English as a foreign language. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 1*(1) 25-40.

Gropello, E. D. (2013). Role of the education and training sector in addressing skill mismatch in Indonesia. In D. Suryadarma & G. W. Jones. (Eds.). *Education in Indonesia* (pp. 236 – 266). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Hénard, F. & Roseveare, D. (2012). *Fostering quality teaching in higher education: Policies and practices: An imhe guide for higher education institutions.* OECD. Retrieved 12th November 2016 from http://www.oecd. org/edu/imhe/QT%20policies%20and%20practices.pdf

Juangsih, J. (2014). Peran LPTK dalam menghasilkan guru yang professional. *Wahana Didaktika*, *12*(2) 72-83.

Kirkpatrick, A. (2011). English as an Asian Lingua Franca and Multilingual Model of ELT. *Language Teaching, 44*(2) 212-224.

Kirkpatrick, A. (2012). English in ASEAN: Implications for Regional Multilingualism. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 33*(4), 331-344.

Lie, A. (2007). Education policy and EFL curriculum in Indonesia: Between the commitment to competence and the quest for higher test scores. *TEFLIN Journal, 18*(1), 1-14.

Ministry of Education and Culture. (2013). *The Decree of Minister of Education and Culture No. 69/2013 on the Framework and Structure of High School Curriculum.* Jakarta: Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia.

Ministry of Education and Culture. (2014). *The Decree of Minister of Education and Culture No. 79/2014 on Local Content of Curriculum 2013.* Jakarta: Ministry of Education Culture, Indonesia.

Montolalu, L. R. & Suryadinata, L. (2007). National language and nation-building: The case of Bahasa Indonesia. In H. G. Lee & L., Suryadinata. (Eds). *Language, Nation and Development in Southeast Asia* (pp. 39-50). Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.

Nguyen, C. T. (2011). Challenges of learning English in Australia towards students coming from selected Southeast Asian countries: Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia. *International Education Studies*, *4*(1), 13-20.

Novera, I. A. (2004). Indonesian Postgraduate Students studying in Australia: An Examination of their Academic, Social and Cultural Experiences. *International Education Journal, 5*(4), 475-487.

Paauw, S. (2009). One land, one nation, one language: An analysis of Indonesia's national language policy. In H. Lehnert-LeHouillier & A. B. Fine (Eds.), University of Rochester Working Papers in the Language Sciences, *5*(1), 2-16. Retrieved 31st January 2017 from https://www.rochester.edu/college/cls/assets/pdf/working/Paauw.pdf

Reisky. (2013). How English student teachers deal with teaching difficulties in their teaching practicum. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 2*(2), 250-261.

Royono, R. & Rahwidiati, D. (2013). Beating the odds: Locally relevant alternatives to world-class universities. In D. Suryadarma & G. W. Jones. (Eds.) *Education in Indonesia* (pp. 180 - 202). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Simpson, A. (2007). Indonesia. In A. Simpson (Ed.). *Language and national identity in Asia* (pp. 312-336). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Spillan, J. E., & Virzi, N. (2017). *Business opportunities in the Pacific Alliance.* Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sulistiyo, U. (2015). *Improving English as a foreign language teacher education in Indonesia: The Case of Jambi University.* Unpublished doctoral degree dissertation. RMIT University, Australia.

Waterworth, P. (2016). Teaching English in ASEAN: The voices of English teachers in ASEAN nations. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *5*(2), 154-166.

Zacharias, N. T. (2003). *A survey of tertiary teachers' beliefs about English Language Teaching in Indonesia with regard to the role of English as a global language.* Unpublished MA-ELT Dissertation. Assumption University of Thailand, Thailand.

Zein, M. S. (2012). The context of English language teaching at primary level in Indonesia. *Journal of Teaching and Education, 1*(3), 85-90.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In This Issue