English Language Teaching in Indonesia: Monolingual and Multilingual Practices

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ABSTRACT

21st century urges one’s ability to tacitly navigate the increasingly complex linguistic spaces of this modern world and it results in super diverse society (Gallagher, 2020). Kachru’s (1986, as cited in Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015) arrives with the conceptual framework named world of Englishes. It becomes such pivotal consideration to drive today’s language ideology, including Indonesian. This literature review then aims at unveiling Indonesian EFL teachers’ views about monolingual and multilingual practices by capitalizing English language teaching classroom as the context. Data were derived from relevant research reports that meet the criteria. Criteria comes in threefold. They were conducted in any range of time, were obtained from catch-all indexing, and were done in Indonesian setting. The findings come in agreement that both monolingualism and multilingualism yielded two camps: justifying it and rejecting it in Indonesian EFL context. Implication is then needed to further validate it in accordance with empirical research’s result.

Keywords: Language Ideology, Multilingualism, Monolingualism.

INTRODUCTION

Before addressing today’s English language teaching, it is essential to notice the existence of the paradigm shift in this current century. Gallagher (2020) asserts that 21st century urges one’s ability to tacitly navigate the increasingly complex linguistic spaces of this modern world. It connects to the result of globalized world. Studies (e.g., Cook, 2016; Gallagher, 2020; Hickmann & Robert, 2006; Troyan & Sembiante, 2020) channel that today’s linguistic and non-linguistic communication need to be widely expanded and this such belief relies to the urge of creating spaces that are accessible for everyone. Pinpointing the complex linguistic spaces, Kachru’s (1986, as cited in Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015) world of Englishes can be the example. The theory panders on what is socially constructed and is believed as circles of English(es). English itself has categories. In inner circle, English is primarily used by most of its population or native speakers, such as USA, UK, Australia. Furthermore, in outer circle, English happens to be used by non-native speakers and is enacted institutionally (i.e., official language that resulting in second language). Some of the examples are India, Singapore, Malaysia, South Africa, the Philippines (Algeo & Butcher, 2013; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Last, in the expanding circle, their speakers must follow the rules that enacted by the inner circle and developed or challenged by the outer circle. In this circle, English is learned as a foreign language. Some countries that are included are Indonesia, China, Russia, Brazil.

Consequently, these series of complexities and varieties in today’s paradigm shift result in superdiverse society with language identities and practices that become too complex to be boxed and to be neatly categorized (Arnaut, Blommaert, Rampton, & Spotti, 2015; Rasman, 2018). Pinning the trait of being ‘superdiverse’, it is notable to observe language’s position extensively and comprehensively in its accepting community. Additionally, relevant studies (e.g., García, Flores, & Woodley, 2015; Rasman, 2018) unveiled the root of this such alert starts from the highly rocketing growth of the neoliberal economy and technological advancement. It then yields in the form of increased humans’ mobility in moving from one place to another. As a result, individual can surely have more than one linguistic competence or identity. Thus, those concerns need to be taken into an account. It aligns to Eaton’s (2010) study that portrays what the classroom of 21st century would be. Three notable considerations could never be dismantled in this setting and those are individualized, customizable, and learner-centered approaches. It later interlinks to the expectation found in today's English language teaching.
To begin with, Fandiño, Muñoz, and Velandia, (2019) conducted a study discerning 21st century skills and the English foreign language. The research strives for stimulating relevant and diverse alternatives in critically motivating English language students to understand complex perspectives and to creatively engage with others. It is believed that today’s English language teaching holds an accountability and is in charge to prepare that. Importantly, based on the concentric agreement found in Partnership for 21st Century Skills in 2007, learning English in 21st century needs to be done hand-in-hand with cross-cultural skills (i.e., embracing Englishes). It is in avoidance of glorifying dominant language and dismantling the rights of minority language. Additionally, practitioners (e.g., Lähteenmäki, Varis, & Leppänen, 2011; Lotherington & Jenson, 2011) envision the growing perspective in responding English use, especially under the context of multilingual classroom. They believed that governments and schools should focus on removing barriers to access and connectivity. Moreover, today’s English language teaching is also urged to reshape the language use, especially its communicative competence, to be aligned with the various and diverse communication landscape. In other word, English language students’ authenticity and origin must not be dismantled or left behind. As a result, an ongoing conversation in terms of language ideology (i.e., contextually monolingual and multilingual ideology) in English remains strong in time (Cummins, 2007; Herdina & Jessner, 2002).

Derived from it, the researcher posits an objective of the study. Through the form of literature review, the researcher aims at unveiling Indonesian EFL teachers’ views about monolingual and multilingual practices by capitalizing English language teaching classroom as the context. This research fits the gap of lack exploration in discerning and documenting this language ideology.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Theoretical Framework of Monolingualism and Multilingualism**

The first ideology to be discussed is monolingualism. Its practice relies to the design in linguistic practices that deploy one language to communicate with one language group only (Ellis, 2016; Ewert, 2008; Llurda, 2005). It can be found in the concept of ‘native speakers’. Crystal (2008) pinpoints monolingualism as the opposite term for bilingualism and multilingualism. The core of the ideology is then elaborated within the field of Second Language Acquisition. Monolingualism ideology stimulates increasing recognition towards the inadequate and traditional assumption in being the ultimate starting point for additional language acquisition (Kachru, 1994; Sridhar, 1994; Auer & Wei, 2007). General public still largely believes that non-native speaker learns English best when they fully use it. Contextually, monolingualism systematically takes and catapults English to the new social height (Al-Ahdal, 2020; Zein, 2020; Zein et al., 2020). Regarding to that, the use of English has undergone numerous critical discerning. Lie (2017), for example, pinpoints the existence of exoglossic language policy. It gradually leads English to arrive in such position with white-washed political power, privilege, and social prestige. Growing from that, some countries opt to include English in their school curricula, and even deploy it in monolingual practice to be used excessively. This such ideology aligns to the act of supporting elite closure, a coined term to refer the use of linguistic choices in exhibiting one’s societal position and role. Studies (e.g., Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015; Myers-Scotton, 1993) channel that language holds proximity in reproducing social inequalities. For example, the exclusiveness found in certain community grants an access in having access to languages that allow them to participate in prestigious segments of society. In this case, English can be used to support the social mobilization strategy in projecting people in power a way of establishing or maintaining their powers and privileges. Not only that, the practice of elite closure is also achieved in the form of employed official language policy. It then paternalistically limits the access of non-elite community to be in such a place of political position and socioeconomic advancement. Again, monolingualism holistically reaches and tickles down a very profound belief towards language prestige attribute. English, for example, has been being widely acknowledged and enacted to various and multidimensional aspects of human’s life, including education.

While the educational agenda of this current century posits an aim to embrace classrooms with no gap and wall, Eaton (2010) believes that the practice of monolingualism leads to an old, authoritative, and “expert-centered” assertion towards the student. Through this such ideology, learning process is somehow seen as black and white televisions. English language teaching with monolingual ideology tends to take in the form of bias in monolingual orientation (Canagarajah & Liyanage, 2012; Gallagher, 2020; García & Lin, 2017; McMillan & Turnbull, 2009; Piller, 2016). For instance, in recent years, monolingual practice has led to numerous concerns away from the predominantly monolingual orientation in language teaching among researchers in the field of second language acquisition (García, 2009; Lee & Lo,
As the opposite of monolingualism, the ideology of multilingualism relies on the belief of speakers' mastery of two or more languages need to be embraced and acknowledged (Haugen, 2012; Margana, 2016). Not only that, Cenoz (2013) believes that multilingualism or multilingual practice capitalizes particular ability found in societies, institutions, groups, or even individuals in daily engaging more than one language within their day to day or regular basis of communicative event. For example, Crystal (2008) defines multilingual as the term to refer particular speech community that has two or more languages to use. In multilingualism, speakers own such competence to utilize and are exposed to more than one language. Precisely, in the contextual space at school, multilingualism counterbalances the challenge on how students' multilingual competence is often reduced. Multilingualism stabilizes the boundaries in becoming fluid and students with multilingual competence are expected to pass the boundaries in a given sociopolitical context (Rasman, 2018; Wei, 2011).

Taking into the account of English language teaching as the setting, Harmer (2015) believes that multilingualism exists as an acknowledgement of students' natural response. For instance, language learners resort to their mother tongue or L1 in a situation where the choice of task, teacher's projection of L2, and compatibility of the matter are not aligned to their current proficiency. Aside to that, Hornberger and McCay (2010, as cited in Wardhaugh & Fuller 2015) assert that the multilingual practice within the classrooms signaling the norm, not the exception. It also resembles the critical perspectives in this world regarding the existence of how integral language ideologies are to the development of both sociolinguistics and language education. Moreover, Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015) notice that multilingualism counterbalances the prominent issues of minority language use. Through multilingualism, minority language will have access to the language use, incorporation, and instruction within the classrooms around the world. They then put a highlight on education and world-wide English. A concern then comes to the surface. Explicitly, in classrooms around the world, repetitive issues do exist, and it tends to revolve around the question in embracing minority languages or not. Instruction, legitimation, and culture are urged to be closely discerned to correspond the biased side in using one majority or international language only. At the same time, this such practice also recalibrates the on-going polarization of a particular language societal position.

To its practice, multilingual classroom, which involved English use, is often portrayed as the classroom setting where language contact usually happens as a mixture of local language, national language, and foreign or second language. Additionally, García and Wei (2014) assert that multilingual ideology in ELT concerns with to deploy rigorous instruction and to maximize interaction. It primarily strives for developing the language use and meaning-making repertoire. This such belief is aligned to what was found in relevant studies (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; García, Flores, and Woodley, 2015; Rasman, 2018) that highlight this concern. One communal agreement is made in it concerns on how multilingualism echoes a widespread phenomenon that pushed forward by the globalized world, which the grandeur of technology and its face-paced access are highly valued.

**Indonesian’s Monolingual Practice in ELT**

Like a double-edged sword, monolingualism of Indonesian ELT is distinctively seen in twofold: accepting and rejecting. To begin with, monolingual practice in Indonesian context can be largely tolerated as a communal attempt of chipping with the globalized world’s current demands. For example, Azir (2019) believes that monolingual ideology in the Indonesian EFL context is rooted from the nation’s attempt in challenging the demand of the globalization era in 1998. It was then resulting in a language policy was issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Started from that, English was then placed as the first foreign language of Indonesia that later enacted as the medium of the instruction. Precisely, it was echoed to the higher education. This 1998 Official Policy then paves several opportunities for Indonesian’s tertiary level education institutions in competing to the motion by endorsing monolingual (i.e., English-only) environment to the academic discourse (Dardjowidjojo, 2000; Lie, 2007). Furthermore, Lauder (2008) and Dardjowidjojo's (2000, 2003) studies then unveil a belief that the use of English in Indonesian language learning results in no interference towards the role of Indonesian as the unifying the nationwide. It affirms Manara's (2007) result of study. The study signals that both Indonesian teachers and students partially fall to the ideology (i.e., monolingualism) that English language teaching must be fully done in English.
Through obtaining non-native speaker teachers’ and 216 students’ opinions toward the use of L1 support and practices in the Indonesian context, it is unveiled that maximum use of English aims to increase students’ chance in receiving maximum exposure to the L2 or target language (i.e., English). Aside to that, they also pinpoint that the existed concerns of negative effects of foreign cultural influence back then were led to over-simplistic and lied upon on cultural chauvinism instead of rational evidence-based examination. Further, monolingual practice is still largely believed to be the right applied ideology in the context of English language teaching. It aligns to Ekawati and Setyarinji’s (2014) study that posits in investigating 103 Indonesian high school students’ attitudes of a private high school in Salatiga, Indonesia. It strives to obtain students’ response towards the enactment of monolingual approach in English language teaching. Thus, their study affirmed that overall students show positive attitude towards the use of monolingual approach.

However, it takes two to tango. The existence of monolingual practice in Indonesia can be somewhat problematic. This such status quo is primarily initiated by Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture in setting curriculum policy that later put approximately 94 million people as learners of English. It is driven from the fact that it takes 37% of the 255 million Indonesian population categorized as the school/college-age individuals. This such policy then rotates to the on-going conversation towards Indonesians’ socio-cultural factors in respecting the foreign language (i.e., English as the prestige one). Lie (2017) believes that Indonesians are highly influenced by Western popular culture and socio-cultural icons. To its practice, English has massively gained a popularity to indicate one’s social position in hierarchy. It relates to how the language is named as the prestige one and is practiced among the middle-class social community. So, monolingualism is then opted to portray this such exclusive identity among Indonesians. Then, studies (e.g., Bin-Tahir et al., 2017; Zacharias, 2003) confirm that monolingual practice in Indonesia seems out of reach and tends to be white-washed. To further explicate, Pardede (2018) then assert that monolingualism, in this case Indonesian context, exists with the prominent belief of debunking mother tongue use. His study revealed that English teachers in the setting around Jabodebek (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, and Bekasi) would give higher score for English learners that are monolingual. At the same time, these teachers tend to internalize the monolingual practice and ideology. They reject students’ authentic characteristic, and it turns out to be less effective. Linking to this, Effendy and Fahri (2019) unpacked that restriction of L1, which is rooted from monolingualism, towards students yields none. Especially, Indonesia is a multicultural country with linguistic diversities.

**Indonesian’s Multilingual Practice in ELT**

Relating to Indonesia’s context, Marti et al. (2005, as cited in Azir, 2019) address that Indonesia is crowned to be the second largest linguistic diversity in the world (i.e., 742 local languages and spread varieties to its 17,508 islands). Growing from such diverse linguistic spaces and varieties, Indonesian language policy surely depends on it. In terms of communal respect in the nationwide, Indonesia deployed and embraced the use of Indonesian language, regional or local language, and foreign language. Legally, it is validated in the 1945 Constitution, especially article 32 (Lie, 2017; Setyabudi, 2017). Moreover, these studies also affirm that the existence of multilingual practice in Indonesian ELT relates to third bullet of Indonesian Youth Oath in 1928, “Kami poetra dan poetri Indonesia mendjoen-djoeng tinggi bahasa persatoean, bahasa Indonesia”. Bringing it closer to the actual implementation of English language teaching, Effendy and Fahri (2019) conducted a qualitative study to obtain teachers and students’ opinions toward multilingualism in ELT. Their finding briefly addressed a center towards a particular way of embracing more than one language use within the classroom. Kidwell (2021), for example, asserts that the use of multilingual practice in Indonesian ELT channels the idea of protectors. Indonesian teachers try to secure and to sustain the rich diversity found in its socio-economic background. Not only that, Manara (2014, as cited in Zein et al., 2020) provided detailed outlook. Their study aimed at obtaining Indonesian students' opinions toward the significant use of English in ELT context. The result of the in-depth interviews unveiled the status quo of linguistic hierarchy. The participants acknowledged that English in the Indonesian ELT context tends to be over-glorified socio-economically, culturally, and pedagogically. They then added that English use often created tensions, so they suggested to further demonstrate the need for a critical evaluation of the current institutionalization of English in Indonesia. It, at the same time, affirms Bonnin’s (2013) study. It is highlighted that multilingualism exists to challenge the unequal social valuation of particular communities’ ways of speaking. Further, multilingualism debunks the indexical nature of language. As a retrospect, monolingualism was once creating wider social, cultural, and economic inequalities through its glorification of English.

Though praises toward multilingual practice are vary, its opposite view does still exist. A study conducted by Haryanto et al. (2016) argue that Indonesian learners in
English language teaching show greater excitement in temporally dismantling their multilingualism. They have done the mixed method study in the form of questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) towards 57 fourth semester students that enrolled to a university in Jambi, Indonesia. This study spots Joseph & Ramani’s (2006) perspective. One thing that these two studies shared relies to the belief that being multilingual can reduce the value of being merit. It is largely believed that students’ use of the target language in ELT escalates their proficiency in having good written and spoken input. This such belief tends to side with the pragmatic definition of ‘the more we practice English, the more proficient we are’. Sundari and Febriyanti (2021) then come up with a study that ultimately strives to unveil teachers’ practices and perspectives towards the use of first language (L1) in EFL classrooms. Those 20 secondary English teachers with years of teaching experiences in around four to thirty-seven years of Jakarta (i.e., Indonesia) reveal that there is a call for implication in sounding the belief that teachers must be consistent in fully using target language to instruct or to teach. Maximal result, which presumptively assumed by the research, can solely be obtained through teachers’ awareness and willingness in embracing the use of target language during the teaching process. Considering towards the social lens, monolingual practice Indonesia is surely prominent and pivotal. Again, the proficiency English language students of this nationwide is still quite far from satisfying and the large amount of exposure in monolingual practice can lead to postponed progress (Renandya, Hamied, & Nurkamto, 2018; Wulyani, Elgort, & Coxhead, 2019). Thus, it interlinks and wraps the perspectives of multilingual practice in two eyes. Like monolingualism, this ideology has its side of acceptance and rejection.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, both language ideology is considered in the practice of English language teaching for Indonesian context. In terms of monolingualism, Indonesian EFL teachers yield two perspectives. Justification is made regarding preparing Indonesian EFL students with a communal attempt of exposing with them to globalized world’s current demands in being well-mastered in English. Reviewed existing studies (e.g., Azir, 2019; Dardjowidjjo, 2000, 2003; Ekawati & Setyarini, 2014; Lauder, 2008; Manara, 2007) regarding this matter prompted positive responses and attitudes. In contrast, opposing views (e.g., Bin-Tahir et al., 2017; Effendy & Fahri, 2019; Lie, 2017; Pardede, 2018; Zacharias, 2003) also derived from the belief encountering the monolingual practice in EFL context as a form of being overly influenced by Western popular culture and socio-cultural icons, such as forces in standardizing nativelikeness and exclusivity. Its practice strongly relates to prestige identification and a form of power for the middle to upper class social community. It also does not completely embrace Indonesian students, the ones that come from a multicultural country with linguistic diversities. Moreover, the multilingual practice also results in two camps: justifying and rejecting it. Studies (e.g., Bonnin, 2013; Effendy & Fahri, 2019; Kidwell, 2021; Lie, 2017; Manara, 2014; Setyabudi, 2017; Zein et al., 2020) encounter that multilingual practice in Indonesian EFL context is justified. Classroom in today’s century must be seen as form of embracing more than one language use. Language use must be able to secure and to sustain the rich diversity found in its socio-economic background. It is a form of counterbalancing English in the Indonesian ELT context to be over-glorified socio-economically, culturally, and pedagogically. It thus debunks the indexical nature of language. As a contrary to this, multilingualism in Indonesian EFL context is not fully justified by relevant studies (e.g., Haryanto et al., 2016; Joseph & Ramani, 2006; Renandya, Hamied, & Nurkamto, 2018; Sundari & Febriyanti, 2021; Wulyani, Elgort, & Coxhead, 2019). Their views emphasize that multilingual practice possibly reduce the value of being merit. Students’ use of the target language in ELT escalates their proficiency in having good written and spoken input. Being multilingual also does not fully cater the proficiency English language students of this nationwide that are still quite far from satisfying. They do need large amount of exposure in monolingual practice can lead to postponed progress. Derived from this, implication is made. This literature review is lack of external validity since it does not conduct empirical research in obtaining the view. Future researchers are encouraged to deploy this literature review in validating it or going against it based on research findings.

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