THE STATUS AND FUNCTION OF ENGLISH IN INDONESIA: A REVIEW OF KEY FACTORS

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Abstract

In order to understand the way English is used and seen in Indonesia today, it is useful to know something about how historical, political, socio-cultural and linguistic factors have shaped its status and functions over the last century. The use of English in Indonesia has developed in the context of post-colonial educational competency building, and more recently the need to support development – in particular its role in state education. However, attitudes of some policy makers and commentators towards the language have often been ambivalent, expressing fears of its power to exert negative cultural influences. The special status of English as a global language with many potential varieties that might pose as models for Indonesia also poses the question of which one would be right for the country. The paper looks at these educational and policy issues, and also gives some suggestions about the future.

Keywords: English language, Indonesia, sociolinguistics, language planning, language education, language policy, varieties of English, English as an international language, roles of English, language and culture

1. Introduction

This essay sets out to describe and explain the status and function of English in Indonesia today, setting this in its historical, political, socio-cultural and linguistic context. The main question being asked is: What is the status of English in Indonesia today? In attempting to do this, the following questions are asked:

- What historical influences (both colonial and post-colonial) have to be taken into consideration when describing the role of English in Indonesia today?
- What roles or functions is English expected to play in Indonesia today?
- Which norm of English should be taken as a basis for use in Indonesia?
- What role has government legislation played in shaping the current situation?
- What suggestions might be offered with regard to any problems that have been identified with the current status of English?

The essay focuses primarily on the period from about 1900 up to approximately 2000. Further work would be needed to bring it completely up to date. There are also necessarily omissions and possibly errors that the author would be glad to hear about.

1.1. Historical review

The Dutch, who occupied Indonesia for over 350 years, from 1595, were loath to provide any education at all to the Indonesian population. During the Dutch colonial period, few Indonesians received any education, even at primary level and the majority were illiterate. This policy of keeping the colonized people in the dark was quite different to that of the British in their colonial territories. The few secondary schools that existed in Indonesia were attended only by Dutch children and the children of a select few local officials and well-connected people. Although English was taught as a foreign language in these schools, very few indigenous children attended them (Gregory, 1964: 15). Western-style elementary schools were only introduced in 1907 and English was first taught to Indonesians in 1914 when junior high schools were established. Senior high schools were only set up in 1918 (Dardjowidjojo, 2003b: 66), quoting (Van der Veur and Lian, 1969: 2). According to (Tilaar, 1995: 28-33), in 1930, the literacy rate in Indonesia was a mere 6.4% and in 1940, there were only 37 senior high schools in the entire country. The privileged class of Indonesians that received an education grew up knowing Dutch and perhaps some English but English was never taught to be used as a medium of communication.

During the second world war, the Japanese prohibited the teaching of English. When the Dutch returned to Indonesia after the Japanese defeat, they attempted to carry on with the curriculum they had used before the war. The school system during the war and in the four years of turmoil that followed was greatly disrupted (Gregory, 1964: 15). However, the determined and idealistic generation who had struggled through the war years now saw that their time to throw off the Dutch yoke had come and after a short but bloody armed struggle, proclaimed their independence on August 17, 1945.

Indonesia won independence from the Dutch on August 17, 1945, but it was only after they had won recognition of that independence from the Dutch on December 27, 1949 and established a Republican government on August 17, 1950, that they could turn their attention to social and cultural matters including education. Early on, it was decided that English, rather than Dutch, would be the first foreign language of the country, because Dutch was the language of the colonialists and it did not have the international status that English did. Dardjowidjojo (2003b: 67) sees the choice of English as part of a pattern of choices that fell to newly independent states when working out their language policies in the context of bilingual or multilingual societies. While it is tempting to compare the English language situation in Indonesia with that in neighboring Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, as Dardjowidjojo (2003d: 31-32) points out, it is not feasible to try and imitate the policies there because Indonesia has not been a colony of either the U.K. or the U.S.A. in the way these countries have and so there is no foundation use of English in official or public life.

A complete social account of English in Indonesia from Independence to the present would necessarily involve information about the role that English has played in society at large, and in particular in business, politics, education and the media. However, constraints such as limited time and the difficulty of tracking down adequate sources made this impossible. Briefly, however, it is possible to note that English has played an important role in education as it is a compulsory subject in schools and it is unlikely that university students will complete there courses without being assigned at least some readings in English. Meanwhile, business people find increasingly that ideas for success in management are published in English. It is quite common to find people living in the country's large cities will readily agree that everyone needs English to some extent.

1.2. Roles and functions of English
### 1.2.1 English as an international language
It is widely recognized that English is important for Indonesia and the reason most frequently put forward

for this is that English is a global or international language. The global status of English is partly due to the number of people who speak it. (Crystal, 2003a: 67-69, Crystal, 2003b: 108-109) estimates that in 2,000 there were approximately 1,500 million speakers of English worldwide, consisting of around 329 million L1 speakers (mostly in inner circle countries), 430 million L2 speakers (outer circle countries) and about 750 million speakers of English as a foreign language in the countries of the expanding circle. This means in effect that approximately one in four of the world's population are capable of communicating to a "useful level" in English. That is potentially a lot of people for Indonesians who know English to communicate with.

The development of English to its present status is the result, according to (Crystal, 2003a: 59), of the expansion of British colonial power up to the end of the nineteenth century and the emergence of the United States as the current world economic superpower. These two forces have left us with a situation in which English is spoken in almost every country in the world and where there are seventy five territories in which it is either a first language (L1) or it is used in some official or institutional capacity as a second language (L2) (Jenkins, 2003: 2). The extremely widespread use of English means that there is a great deal of variation in the English which is used in different places. In attempt to find some sort of order in this complexity, a number of models of the worldwide use of English have been put forward.

Kachru's widely accepted conceptualization of the geographic and historical spread of English as three circles is helpful. In the most frequently cited version of the model (Kachru, 1992: 356), the circles are oval rather than circular and presented vertically, rather than concentrically, with the lowest circles representing the earlier versions of English.

In the model, the inner circle refers to the "traditional bases" of English: the UK, USA, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The outer (or extended) circle refers to the earlier spread of English in non-native settings, where the language has become a part of the country's important institutions, and it plays an important 'second language' role in a multilingual setting: it includes Indonesia's neighbors Singapore and Malaysia, India, and over fifty other territories. The expanding or extending circle refers to nations which recognize the importance of English as an international language, but which were not colonized by the countries of the inner circle, and which have not given English any special official status. In these countries, English is taught as a foreign language. Indonesia belongs to this group, which also includes China, Japan, Greece and Poland (Crystal, 2003a: 60). English in the inner circle is said to be 'norm-providing', that in the outer circle
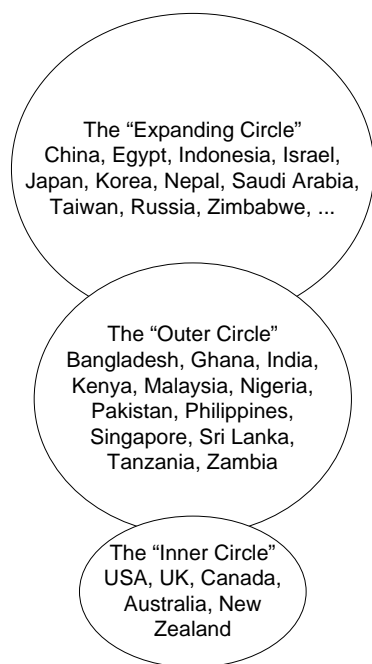
Figure 1. Kachru's Three-circle model of World Englishes. Source: (Kachru, 1992: 356), reprinted in (Jenkins, 2003: 16).

'norm-developing' and that in the expanding circle to be 'norm-dependent' (Jenkins, 2003: 15-16). Not all agree with this view, however. Simatupang (1999: 64) considers that only English of the inner circle is 'norm-providing', while the other two are 'norm-breaking'.

The sociolinguistic view in the Kachru model sees that English language standards are created and maintained by speakers of English as a native language (ENL), while the English as a second language varieties are becoming institutionalized and are developing their own standards. However, the English as a foreign language (EFL) varieties, such as English in Indonesia, are 'performance' varieties and have no official status and remain dependent on the standards set by native speakers from the inner circle (Jenkins, 2003: 16). Kachru considers that attitudes, power and politics, and a number of fallacies about the users and uses of English have dictated English language policy.

In Indonesia, although English has no wide use in society, is not used as a medium of communication in official domains like government, the law courts, and the education system, and is not accorded any special status in the country's language legislation, it is still seen as a priority, as the most important of the foreign languages to be taught (Simatupang, 1999: 64). Making easy generalizations about the social functions of English are not easy in a country like Indonesia where it is not the first language. In inner circle countries, English by definition is used for all communicative situations, but in Indonesia, its role is defined primarily

by means of a conscious process of language planning, rather than by linguistic evolution (Crystal, 2003b: 106).

Other models of English have been proposed, sometimes in an attempt to improve on Kachru's. They include that of Strevens (1992: 33) which portrays the historical links between varieties as a kind of family tree imposed on a world map. Another is McArthur's circle of world English (McArthur, 1987) which presents World Standard English in the center of a circle surrounded by eight slices each containing a regional collection of Englishes. See (McArthur, 1998: 97) or (Crystal, 2003b: 111) for reprints of the model. Other models are that by Görlach (1988) updated in (Gorlach, 1988), a version of which can be seen in (McArthur, 1998: 101). Most of these models, however, tend to reflect the historical and political reality and do not adequately represent the sociolinguistic reality of the way that English is being used in the modern world as a foreign language, for example in countries like Indonesia (Crystal, 2003b: 109) which have a "huge potential 'foreign language' populations". The model of Modiano (1999b) is an exception in that it gives a prominent place to L2 users. It represents international English as a number of centripetal circles, with proficient international English in the center, native and foreign language proficiency without, and learners and those who do not know English outside the main circle. In a redrafting of his earlier model, Modiano (1999a) bases his EIL model on the features of English which are common to all varieties.

At the core of the model is EIL, a core of features which are comprehensible to the majority of native and competent non-native speakers of English. The second circle consists of features which may become
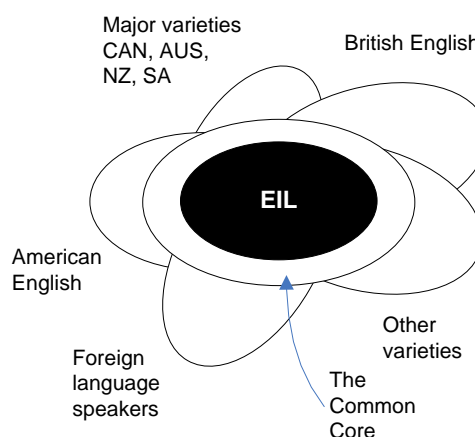
Figure 2. Modiano's English as an International Language (EIL) model illustrated by those features of English which are common to all native and non-native varieties. Source: (Modiano, 1999a: 10) reprinted in (Jenkins, 2003: 21)

internationally common. The outer area consists of five groups, each of which is characterized by features that are particular to that speech community and which might not be understood by people outside it. The model is useful because it provides a place for foreign language speaker varieties, such as that spoken in Indonesia. It also departs from the previous models which were defined in terms of geographical or historically related features and do not always have a place for English as a foreign language varieties. It remains to be seen whether it is possible to distinguish between core and non-core aspects of English. In the case of Indonesian English, will it be possible to identify the features of English used in Indonesia that fall into the EIL area?

1.2.2 What functions does English serve in Indonesia?
The current status of English as an international or global language is underpinned by its wide use in a range of fields such as politics, diplomacy, international trade and industry, commerce, science and technology, education, the media, information technology, and popular culture (Crystal, 2003a: , Huda, 2000: 68, Jenkins, 2003). Crystal (2003a: 86 ff., 2003b: 106), for example, suggests that English importance in particular because of the extent of the role it plays in the following areas:

- Economics and business: The USA's position as the world's number one economy exerts a pull on global business. Organizations which wish to do enter the international market are not likely to be able to do so without using English. The tourist industry in particular is dependent on English, but any multinational business with international offices must have staffs who can work in English.
- International relations: English is one of the official languages of the United Nations and other key international bodies. Diplomats may learn a number of languages during their careers, but when it proves impossible to learn the language of a country, then English may be used as a lingua franca.
- The media – the world of current information and popular culture: A significant proportion (57%) of the world's newspapers are published in countries where English has a special status. The majority of major advertising agencies are US-owned. English dominates global television and radio broadcasting. English language films dominate cinema with the bulk (80%) of all feature films given a theatrical release in 2002 being in English. In popular music, in the 1990s, 99 percent of all groups worked exclusively in English. The English lyrics of some singers have attained a symbolic, socio-political (Bob Dylan) or even literary status (Leonard Cohen), and some musical events have reached global audiences (1984 Live Aid).

- Education: A large proportion of the scientific papers published in all subjects are in English. English is also increasingly used as a medium of instruction in schools and universities, with subjects such as management, information technology and the humanities making particular use of English. English is also taught widely as a foreign language for students intending either further study in an English speaking country or as a requirement for employment.
- Communications: Much of the world's communications are done in English. 80% of the world's electronically stored information is in English. Although the internet can now handle a variety of languages and non Roman scripts (Hussain et al., 2005), it is difficult to envisage being able to make the maximum use of the resources on line without a good knowledge of English.
- International travel and safety: English is the language used for navigation at sea and for air traffic control.

Huda (2000: 68) mentions five factors that have made English an international language:
1. Its internal linguistic features.
2. The large number of English speakers..
3. The wide geographical spread of where it is used.
4. Its importance in fields such as politics, international diplomacy, economics and business, science and technology, and culture.
5. The use of English by countries which currently dominate world affairs economically, politically and culturally.

As regards the linguistic properties of English, there may be support for this in terms for example of the large vocabulary of English, but we should note that claims that English are in some way more 'logical' or aesthetically beautiful than other languages are spurious and as (Crystal, 2003b: 106) puts it are the result of "unthinking chauvinism" or "naive linguistic thinking". He categorizes the reasons a person for whom English is not a mother tongue might want to learn English as historical, political, economic, practical, intellectual or related to entertainment.

These factors, and the large number of speakers who use English worldwide, can be considered valid reasons for its special status in Indonesia. Commentators on the use of English in Indonesia have seen it as *potentially* serving a number of important purposes (Dardjowidjojo, 2003d: 32, Huda, 2000: 65-66, Renandya, 2000: 116, Simatupang, 1999: 64):
1. as a means of international communication in practically all fields or walks of life;

2. as a medium through which scientific knowledge, and new technologies can be accessed implemented with a view to succeeding in the global marketplace;
3. as a source of vocabulary for the development and modernization of Indonesian;
4. as a way to get to know native speakers of English, their language, culture and literature, or as a means of expanding one's intellectual horizons.

However, it is only the first two of these reasons that are officially recognized, sanctioned and written into policy. As we shall see, the status of English has been limited by policy makers to that of a 'tool' to serve the needs of development, and its potential as a means of intellectual development or cultural curiosity have been purposely excluded. The policy on the development of Indonesian makes English, a foreign language, and the last choice for word creation, after Indonesian and the vernaculars. However, the actual sociolinguistic situation has a dynamic of its own that does not always flow in the channels created by policy initiatives.

1.2.3 Role of English alongside the other languages

Language policy in Indonesia has to contend with a highly multicultural and multilingual society. English, its status, and its role or function in the functioning of the nation and in education in particular has to be seen against the backdrop of where it takes a place in the third of three main categories, *Bahasa Indonesia*, the regional vernaculars, and foreign languages.

The choice of Indonesian to become the national language has been something of a success story. It now is understood and spoken by the majority of Indonesians. In diglossic situations, Indonesian is used, typically, for 'high' or public functions and one or more of the regional vernaculars are used for 'low', informal, personal purposes or as a means of cementing local ties and cultural identity (Renandya, 2000: 114, Sneddon, 2003: , Sneddon, 2004: , Sneddon, 2006).

English is one of a number of foreign languages which have been in use for some time or which are coming to be taught. These include Dutch, Arabic, English, German, French, Japanese, and latterly, Chinese (*pu tong hua*). Arabic has long been learned in connection with the Islamic faith. It is not learned for social interaction but for religious purposes, especially for Qur'anic recitation and prayers (*sholat*). Dutch continues to be learned by students intending study in Holland and business people. The Chinese language and culture were proscribed during the Soeharto years but in the current climate there is a growing interest in learning Chinese driven by China's growing economic importance and the increase in trade and business between the two countries, cultural and ethnic ties among the community of Chinese descendents in Indonesia and the richness of China's historical, cultural and literary tradition.

There are a number of ways that foreign languages can be distinguished from one another, for example where they are primarily used. A language can have a number of uses, such as a means of daily social interaction, a medium of instructions in education, or as a means of political or media communication. English has a special status among the foreign languages. It was chosen as the language of wider communication in the immediate post-independence period and is presently the only foreign language which is a compulsory subject in schools. Other foreign languages, like French, Chinese or Japanese, if offered, are electives (Renandya, 2000: 115-116).

2. Language Schizophrenia

Despite the debate about the effects of colonialism on English and the impact of English on other languages in countries where it is used (Jenkins, 2003: 50 ff., 146 ff.), these arguments are not particularly relevant to Indonesia. This is because it was not English that was the language of the colonizers, but Dutch. There is some ambivalence, however, about the dominant position that English now has, in the minds of some Indonesian scholars and policy makers. This is the apparent push and pull between the need to benefit from communicating in English for national development and the fear that too much influence from English, in particular culturally, could exert an undesirable influence on Indonesian life and language.

The discussion of what role foreign languages in general and English in particular should play in Indonesia's national language policy has been framed since early on using the metaphor of English as a tool (*alat*) which is to be made use of by Indonesians to bring in selectively specific information, knowledge and technology that would accelerate development. Development is nationalistic, patriotic. English is essential but the role that English be allowed to play is restricted to its utilitarian value in accessing information that can promote economic growth.

Its role as an expression of general cultural and intellectual identity is kept out of the picture. English also represents a threat. Some educators in Indonesia have long worried that the widespread knowledge of English would have a negative impact on Indonesian culture, values and behavior. This threat has usually been portrayed as a threat of western "liberal values" which is interesting because English of course encapsulates all of the values from the U.K. and the U.S.A. including conservative and other values and not only the liberal ones.

It is hard to see how in fact a language can be stripped of the cultural and social values that it encodes, not to mention the idea that English can somehow be rewritten in English textbooks for Indonesian school students so that the original cultural values are replaced by Indonesian ones, with the presumed hope that the consumers of such an English will never notice the difference. That might have held for the class of '67 or '75 or even of '85 but it is much less likely to go down with the class of 2006 which has access to films, videos and above all the internet.

And even if it were possible to write English textbooks with no undesirable western values and only really desirable Indonesian ones, one wonders what the nature of such an English would be? Is this an English of technical manuals, of dry legal documents, of generic Indonesian characters conversing in English, just as surrealistically fictional as their local soap opera counterparts?

This kind of love-hate view of English was referred to as a kind of "language schizophrenia" or "exolinguaphobia" by Kartono (1976: 124). He stated that such attitudes represent an emotional and irrational dimension in Indonesian national language policy which might have had a negative effect on development.

One way that this split view of the role of English can be seen in regard to views about English vocabulary. Halim (1976a: 23-24) notes that one of the reasons that English is needed is that a large proportion of the books and other information resources which deal with modern knowledge and technology which are needed for national development are published in English, and because these sources can be of use in developing term banks in Indonesian (*dapat kita manfaatkan sebagai salah satu sumber untuk kepentingan pengembangan bahasa nasional kita, terutama di dalam pengembangan tata istilah*). On the other hand, for a time, there was quite a public debate about the large number of foreign names that were being used, for example in housing estates. This was thought to be the thin end of the wedge and a threat to Indonesian so some policy makers wanted to pass a law that required all names to be in Indonesian (Alwi, 2000: 12).

English is seen by many as carrying a certain amount of prestige. According to Gunarwan (1998) English has a prestige among Indonesians that may even surpass that of Indonesian. Knowledge of English is perceived of as either important or essential by large numbers of people, and knowledge of the language is a requirement for many types of employment, as well as being seen as a symbol of education, modernity or even sophistication. Some people also worried that the habit of educated Indonesians to sprinkle English words in their use of Indonesian was not only going to have a negative effect

on Indonesian but signaled a decline in nationalistic idealism. However, as Alwi (2000: 12) says drolly, this behavior was hardly likely to endanger the spirit of national unity (*membahayakan semangat persatuan bangsa*). On the other hand, members of the Indonesian elite, from politicians to celebrities, increasingly can be seen code-mixing English into their daily use of Indonesian to appear in a positive light or to "foreground a modern identity" (Lowenberg, 1991: 136). This habit of mixing English vocabulary in Indonesian by the prominent in society is imitated by others (Renandya, 2000: 116). The impact of English on Indonesian, in particular the large number of loan words that are entering Indonesian, has been both discussed and worried over by a number of commentators (Lowenberg, 1991: , Marcellino, 1994). It has been suggested that, given the impact English is having on language use in Indonesia, it should be reclassified as an "additional" language rather than merely as the first "foreign" language (Lowenberg, 1991: 127).

The 'threat' that English has been presumed to pose has also been framed in the discourse of post-colonial imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), with the use of Indonesian being nationalistic or patriotic and the use of English as somehow not. The strong nationalistic strand of thinking comes out clearly in (Halim, 1976b: 20) who mentions four main functions of Indonesian : as a symbol of national pride, as a symbol of national identity, as a tool to achieve unity among the different ethnolinguistic groups in the country, and as a common means of communication among different regional and cultural groups.

Alwasilah (1997) sees the continued dominance of languages such as English as a form of post-colonial imperialism which are to be countered by bolstering feelings of nationalism which are to be expressed through the use of the national language. The author sees the need for English, but to promote English for the necessary purpose of obtaining its technology, Indonesians run the risk of having their own culture sullied or polluted (*dikotori*) by "liberal" western cultural values. The problem is portrayed as a kind of defensive war against foreign values. He asks "*cukup tangguhkah nasionalisme kita ini untuk berlaga melawan penetrasi dan imperialisme budaya liberal*?" (Alwasilah, 1997: 10). Where a strong sense of national identity is absent, it will be filled by the cultural values of the former colonial masters. In order to avoid this, he adjoins educators to "*menangkal budaya liberal*" (Alwasilah, 1997: 11). He warns people in the media business that they have a "moral responsibility" to ensure that the programs they air are not just "for profit".

While national unity is probably preferable to national disintegration and there is no doubt that Indonesian

performs well the function of providing equal opportunity in education to children from many different ethnolinguistic groups and acting as a national language in public life, not everyone in the west has been so rosy eyed about the concept of nationalism or its only slightly less disreputable sister – patriotism. For example, Albert Einstein (1879-1955) was quoted as saying "Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind."; George Orwell (English Novelist and Essayist, 1903-1950) said "Nationalism is power hunger tempered by self-deception." and Samuel Johnson (English Poet, Critic and Writer, 1709-1784) claimed that "Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel." Perhaps western intellectuals have developed a slightly more jaundiced view of nationalism due to the excesses performed in its name during the rather longer histories that western nations have had.

Which variety (norm) of English is right for Indonesia?
Referring back to Kachru's three circle model, Indonesian English is 'norm-dependent'. The question for Indonesia is which norm should form the basis of a model of use? Certainly, until now, it has been generally assumed that the variety of English which is to be taught or learned is either British or American English, both "inner circle" varieties.

Both have exerted an influence on teaching. To a lesser extent, the presence of Australian English has been seen, for example in Australian government sponsored teaching materials for the police, or in Australian English language broadcasting of English lessons for Indonesians, the *Kang Guru* (ambiguous: Big Brother Teacher and kangaroo) programs. But Australian English continues to have less prestige than either British or American varieties, except perhaps with students returning from study there.

There has been relatively little discussion among local scholars about the possibility of teaching other varieties of English, for example "outer circle" varieties such as Singaporean or Malaysian English. The majority of teachers at present would see even Australian English as having lower prestige than British or American and it is not likely that they would have a positive attitude about the "outer circle" varieties such as Singaporean English.

However, as the middle class are beginning to find that sending their children to Australia, Singapore, or Malaysia for their education becomes an option, they are asking experts if the English their children would pick up there represents a desirable norm, or at least a tolerable one. Perhaps it would be pragmatic to distinguish norms which have traditionally enjoyed more (USA, UK) or less (Australia) prestige, from the newly emerging norms in the outer circle countries

(Singapore, Malaysia), which may be tolerable to such parents as they weigh all the factors in making their decision. Also, it is now the case that the majority of EFL speakers need English not to speak with British or Americans, but with other non-native speakers. Yet, while this may be true of individual cases, at a national level it is a different story.

Norm-developing varieties such as Malaysian and Singaporean English may have practical or utilitarian value, but do not show signs yet of the prestige for them to be adopted as models for Indonesia. This leaves Indonesian policy makers with something of a dilemma because there is likely to be some resistance to adopting a local norm developing variety such as Singaporean English, but problems remain with basing teaching solely on the inner-circle varieties such as British or American English. One practical problem is that if these are a model, then it would make sense to have enough native speaker teachers to do the teaching. This seems out of the question as there are obviously not enough and neither are there likely to be in the foreseeable future.

It has been suggested that eventually Indonesia might develop its own standardizing variety of English. However, it is probably not realistic at present to claim the existence of an Indonesian variety of English in the same way that countries of the Outer Circle like Nigeria, India or Singapore can. The type of interlanguage errors that are made by Indonesian speakers of English are not consistent enough to claim they form a new variety. In addition, the variation in English use in Indonesia is partly due to the interference from the many different mother tongues, indigenous regional languages such as Javanese, Batak, or Balinese (Simatupang, 1999: 66-69).

This leaves us with the idea that perhaps now is a good time to consider the search for a definition of some internationally acceptable variety such as World Standard English or English as an International Language. It is difficult, in the absence of research to establish what the characteristics of Indonesian English that might fit within an EIL model might be. This would necessarily have to include descriptions of syntactic and phonological features as well as attention to lexis.

That remains something of a project, but, from a pedagogic point of view, for the time being, it is still necessary to make some decision about which variety is to be taught. This means a degree of prescriptivism and perhaps it makes sense to do some research to see what the attitudes of teachers are to different varieties of English. If British and American English retain their 'gloss' then it might make sense to stick with them for the time being while research is done to help define the features of an International variety.

3. Language Policy

English in Indonesian national legislation
The education system is ultimately shaped by legislation, which in Indonesia today comes in a potentially bewildering number of forms. In an effort to clarify their status, in August 2000, the supreme state body, the 700 member People's Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* or MPR) issued the following official hierarchy of legislation:

- 1945 Constitution (*Undang-Undang Dasar* 1945)
- MPR Resolution (*Ketetapan MPR*)
- Law (*Undang-undang*)
- Government Regulation Substituting a Law (*Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-undang*)
- Government Regulation (*Peraturan Pemerintah*)
- Presidential Decree (*Keputusan Presiden*)
- Regional Regulation (*Peraturan Daerah*)

In practice, there are other legislative instruments in current use. They include Presidential Instructions (*Instruksi Presiden*), Ministerial Decrees (*Keputusan Menteri*) and Circular Letters (*Surat Edaran*) (Tabalujan, 2002). Education has been governed primarily by Laws and Ministerial Decrees.

The first Law to specifically deal with education was Law 2 of 1989 on the National Education System (*UU No. 2, 1989 Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*). However, according to Komaria (1998: 23), Law number 4 of 1950 (*Undang-undang RI Nomor 4 Tahun 1950* mentions Indonesian and the regional languages. English is not mentioned. The 1950 Law helped lay the foundation for future legislation in distinguishing kindergarten, primary, general and vocational secondary and higher education and was effective until the 1989 Law on Education was issued.

English was first made mention of formally in 1955 at a conference of teacher trainers, when Mr. Wachendorff, the first head of the *Central Inspectorate of English Language Instruction* in the Ministry of Education, stated that English could never be widely used in daily life in Indonesia, or even be the second official language, but rather that it should be "the first foreign language" (Komaria, 1998: 24-25).

Law 2 of 1989 on the National Education System (*UU No. 2, 1989 Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*) framed the overall purposes of education at the national level, describing the growth of the individual in terms of spirituality, ethical responsibility, skill, physical and mental health, self-sufficiency and capability in contributing to national development. The law distinguishes education at school from extramural education. It considers compulsory education to be the six years of primary school (*Sekolah Dasar* or *SD*) and

three years of Junior High School (*Sekolah Lanjutan Tingkat Pertama* or *STLP*). In addition to this, it provides for three further years at Senior High School (*Sekolah Menengah Atas* or *SMA* or *Sekolah Menengah Umum* or *SMU*) which is seen as the path to entering higher education. Higher education can be pursued at polytechnics, academies, institutes or universities. In addition to specifying the overall purposes, levels and institutions where education can be carried out, it also deals in general terms with the qualifications and duties of teachers. Finally, it gives the government an important say in the process of the writing and selection for schools of textbooks. The 1989 Law gives English a place as the *first foreign language* and makes it one of the compulsory subjects to be taught at the secondary level, but allows it to be taught from Primary Four (Komaria, 1998: 29). It also allows the possibility of teaching foreign languages other than English (Komaria, 1998: 25-31).

In the 1989 Law, Chapter IX, Section 39, Verse 3, English is specified as a compulsory subject, part of the Basic Curriculum. This is supported by Government Regulation (*Peraturan Pemerintah*), Number 28, 1990, which states that English is to be taught from the first year of Junior High School but may be taught as early as Primary Four at the school's discretion. Government Regulation Number 27 on Kindergarten Education, in fact, does not mention that English may be taught. A debate has been going on among educators about the appropriate age to start teaching. The legal framework allows the possibility of an early start. English is now quite commonly taught in some form or other in primary schools. In addition, the 1989 Law on Education, Chapter XI, Section 42, Verse 2 also allows for the possibility of using English as a medium of instruction, with the proviso that this is needed for developing knowledge of a particular subject or vocational skill. The purpose of teaching English has been primarily to develop reading ability as a means of helping students to gain access to information, to read references. However, legislation does also provide a place for other skills. Ministerial Decrees (*Keputusan Menteri*) of 1967 and 1994 both gave priority to reading in English. However, the overall order of priority was changed from reading, listening, writing and speaking in 1967, to reading, listening, speaking and writing in 1994 (Komaria, 1998: 33-36).

The status of English as the 'first' foreign language
The need for English as a language of international communication exists in complementary distribution to that of Indonesian as a language of national unity. In Indonesia, the success of the national language, which has developed from modest beginnings to be able to meet the communication needs of a modern society, has been achieved at the price of people not having a working ability in English.

In countries like Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines, there is a national language, or languages, and alongside this, English plays an important role as the administrative and business language of the country. This situation gives people there benefits. The policy in Indonesia has never recognized English as an official or second language. While the national language is spoken today by a majority of the population, the situation is multilingual with many also speaking one or more of the local vernaculars.

While Indonesia has been successful in the adoption of Indonesian as a national language, as demonstrated by the large numbers of people who now use Indonesian for daily communication, it has been less so in promoting the use of English for international communication as the majority of people remain handicapped by their "less-than-adequate knowledge of English". Even highly educated intellectuals often make a poor impression when giving presentations in English or find themselves unable to access academic articles written in English, being confined to publications in Indonesian. This is obviously a handicap and means that while policy for Indonesian development is relatively successful, the same is not true for English. (Dardjowidjojo, 1996: , Dardjowidjojo, 2003b: 71, Dardjowidjojo, 2003c: 57-58).

According to Huda (2000: 69), one of the factors that have kept attainment back is the government's reluctance to accord it official second language status. It is thought by some that the use of English as a medium of instruction would have a negative impact on Indonesian.

4. (Problems and) Suggestions

The problem of function and status
Currently English is seen as needed for development. It is needed for instrumental reasons, as a tool which provides access to international markets, scientific knowledge and expertise. English has the status of 'first' foreign language, but nothing more as policy makers fret that an increased use of English might have an adverse effect on Indonesian (Huda, 2000: 68). But, it would be a mistake on a grand scale to sideline English, or stunt its growth as the argument that its increased use in society might detract from the development of the national language, Indonesian is a false one (Dardjowidjojo, 2003a: 50). English is essential for development. People should be given every opportunity to learn English. One way to do this would be to give English a new upgraded status.

Lowenberg (1991), in a discussion on the role of English as a foreign language in Indonesia, suggests that because of the particular nature of the impact English is making on the development and modernization of Indonesia's national language, *Bahasa Indonesia*, English should be seen as an "additional" language rather than merely as a "foreign" language. Another approach would be to make English the official second language in the country after Indonesian. As the country's official second language it could be used as a medium of instruction in education, and in the workplace more frequently, thus giving Indonesians more opportunity to develop their communication skills to the point where they could be more competitive in the global marketplace.

The problem of variety
Although there are omnipresent opportunities for exposure to English in Indonesia, at least in the major cities, there are not enough native speaker teachers to provide models. The present situation is to look to British or American varieties as a model, but in the absence of enough native speaker teachers, this poses something of a dilemma. For the moment, we agree with Simatupang (1999: 69) that the status quo can be maintained. In the absence of a clear description of what the nature of an English as an International Language variety might be, it seems reasonable to continue looking towards to varieties that are prominent in people's minds and which continue to carry prestige.

However, it might be a good time to start investigating the possibility of what the features of English as an International Language might be, and what features of Indonesian English would fit that model. A region-neutral, internationally intelligible variety of English spoken in Indonesian is not an impossibility.

The problem of culture
Languages encode more than information. They also are both a vehicle and an expression of the cultural values of the societies that use them. It is difficult to see how English can be stripped of the socio-cultural values that it encodes which seems to underlie efforts by educational planners to promote locally written English textbooks for schools and not give approval to any of the extremely well-written, widely tested, and successful textbooks from major publishers abroad. These foreign EFL materials are written for a global audience and contain little that might be considered insidious or offensive, except to those who are threatened by new ideas and who cling to very highly structured belief and value systems. It is an extremely good idea to encourage local writers to produce locally relevant EFL materials, but the almost total absence of materials written by native speakers is an anomaly at best. Huda (2000: 65) sees that local language planners have given too much weight to what he calls the "emotional" dimension of language planning at the expense of the socio-cultural and political one and advises them to treat the issue of foreign languages more "rationally". Dardjowidjojo (2003d: 32) offers a

similar opinion in claiming that the worry about negative effects of foreign cultural influence is based more on cultural chauvinism than a rational examination of the facts.

Over-simplistic cause and effect models are perpetrated in the popular press and taken in by less educated people. This simplistic kind of thinking is found not only in Indonesia. For example it is common to hear Americans moan that the unholy level of gun violence in the USA is at least partly the fault of controversial musicians like Marilyn Manson. Research into these issues, however, simply doesn't support the idea that kids commit suicide because they listen to the wrong music or watch the wrong television shows. Neither is Indonesia's future likely to be bent out of shape if people can watch what they like or listen to what they like, or learn English in a way that opens the world up to them, rather than presents everything in a carefully predigested form.

The idea that western values pose a threat is not so much a criticism of the west but rather the worry that local values are not strong enough or good enough. Modernization is not the same as westernization. It is possible to have experience or knowledge of something without taking it seriously or adopting it. You can listen to 'Sympathy for the Devil' by the Rolling Stones without becoming a satanic worshipper, or to 'I can't get no satisfaction' without wrecking your use of negation in English.

The future of English in Indonesia
Where will English go in Indonesia? It is difficult to say, but it is likely that the demand for English will increase and if the state sector does not fully meet the need, then the private sector will step in. It would be good if there were some quality controls on this.

However, the big problem in Indonesia is a lack of research. We really don't know what the situation is at many levels. So much of the literature consists of opinion papers. There are relatively few 'hard' facts. Therefore, I suggest that research be conducted to give some clarity to some areas that cannot be sorted out in this paper. Research should be conducted for example on:

- Language attitudes: How important is English to people in different walks of life, what kind of attitudes do they have about the language, and what kind of English do they want to learn and how?
- English as an International Language: What are the features of Indonesian English? Can any core features be identified which would be generally well-received, and that might fit within an EIL framework?
- Sociolinguistic needs survey: What social and functional purposes do people in different walks of

life need English for? How, say, are the needs of a taxi driver different from that of a stockbroker or a university lecturer?

We think that policy should be sensitive to the actual situation and act wisely in the best interests of the country. Research would help policy makers to ensure that their guidelines were pragmatic, effective and wise.

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