THE VIEWS OF BENGKULU CITY OFFICIALS TO ENGLISH IN GLOBALIZATION ERA: AN INPUT TO LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING

Bambang Suwarno, Arasuli, Amanda P. Yanuar

Bengkulu University
E-mail: wdsaraswati@gmail.com

Abstract: In the age of globalization, English mastery is indispensable. The language policy needs to develop ways to provide a good environment for English cultivation in the community. Bottom-up input might provide some ideas for the policy. This study aimed to explore such bottom up input, through the investigation of the views of some senior officials towards English in Bengkulu city, Indonesia. The design was descriptive. The sample consisted of 40 senior officials, from governmental and non-governmental sectors, in the city. The instrument was an attitude scale. The result showed that most respondents supported a more extensive use of English in various domains. They accepted the use of English, orally and in writing, in the family and neighbourhood, work environment (office, conference, public service), media (printed and electronic) and educational institutions. However, many respondents rejected the use of English as a criterion for promotion. They also rejected the use of English in social events. The result showed that the officials could accept more use of English in public domains as well as in private domains. Such a result could be used as consideration for future language policy.
Keywords: *Language Policy, English Use In The Community, City Officials' Views*

Indonesia has been highly recommended for its success in choosing a national official language, *Bahasa Indonesia* (the Indonesian language) (Moeliono, 1986; Lauder, 2008). While many other countries may still grapple with selecting a native language that could be accepted for a national official language, *Bahasa Indonesia* was adopted for the role as early as 1928.

However, a rather unfortunate side effect of the success is the low ability of English (Dardjowidjojo, 2003). For example, Sembiring, Kartini, & Suwarno (2006) revealed that the average vocabulary mastery among students of various universities in Bengkulu was 661 words for the first thousand words. With such mastery, students may get difficulty in receptive tasks, such as comprehending texts or listening to dialogues. They would experiences greater difficulty in productive tasks, such as speaking and writing.

In short, Indonesia has a language problem, with respect to English. When a language problem occurs, the language policy is called into action. According to Spolsky (2004), language policy denotes language planning by the government. Meanwhile, Cooper (1989) declares that language planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respects to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of language codes. Cooper (1989) declares that language planning consisted of three distinct activities. The first, status planning, deals with establishing a language in domains or institutions. The second, acquisition planning, comprises disseminating a language among speakers. The third, or corpus planning, involves the improvement of the language structure.

Status planning deals with the use of language in various domains. Domains, according Schmidt-Rohr (quoted in Fishman, 1972) refer to areas of language use. Some domains are public while others are private. The public domains include national official language, provincial official language, language in the workplace, community language, language for science and technology, language for instruction, language as subject, and language in the mass media. Private domains include family language and community language.

The national language policy does not give much latitude towards English in public domains. The language is obligatory in the domain of subject of instruction at the secondary and tertiary levels. It is optional in the domains of language of science and technology and language for the mass media. In other domains, it is generally prohibited, as these domains are reserved to

Bahasa Indonesia. The private domains are not regulated; thus, in theory, people could English, if they wish, in the family and the community.

With the advent of globalization, there is a need for English fluency among the community. This, in turns, requires an environment in which the language could be better cultivated. The present policy does not give much room for English cultivation. Thus, there might be a need for revision of the Indonesian language policy toward English. Before revision is considered, there is a need to find out community members' views on certain aspects in the policy. This study was conducted with such a perspective in mind.

Therefore, this study aimed to find out the views of certain officials in Bengkulu city. In particular, it aims to find out their views on the expanded use of English in various domains in Bengkulu, a provincial city in Indonesia.

Method

The target population of this study comprised a number of key officials the municipal governmental and non-governmental institutions. Stratified sampling was carried out and an official was selected from each of the twenty governmental institutions and twenty non-governmental institutions.

As an instrument, an attitude scale questionnaire was used. Various statements were grouped based on various domain groups, namely, possible effect of English, language in community, language in workplace environment, language in mass media, and language in education.

The type of scale chosen was the Likert scale (Azwar, 1988), which requires subjects to choose one of five options, namely, strongly agree (SA), agree (A); disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD), and No opinion (NO).

Example:

Do you agree that Indonesian newspapers need to have English columns?

a. (   ) SA   b. (   ) A   c. (   ) D   d. SD (   )   e. NO (   )

The scale is assessed as follows:

Table 1. Option and Value

Statement	Value				
	SA	A	D	SD	NO
Positive statement	4	3	2	1	0
Negative statement	1	2	3	4	0

The attitude scale design was tried out to find its validity and reliability. Validity was fist tested by matching attitude scale items with variables and sub variables in the research problem. Then, every item was tested with t-test by comparing the means of the upper 27% to the lower 27% of the try-out group (Arikunto, 2010). An item was passed if t count > t-table. From 43 items, 39 items were passed. The overall reliability of passed items was 0.9, which is greater than the minimum price (0.8) (Arikunto, 2010).

Analysis of responses was done per item statement. Weighted average was used to find the mean for an item of the questionnaire.

$$M_w = \frac{\sum fxw}{\sum f}$$

Note:

$\sum fxw$: Sum of (frequency selection times weight)

$\sum f$: Sum of frequencies

The interpretation for the average is described in table 2. Although the choice in the questionnaire did not contain 'neutral' option, the 'neutral' option was introduced in the interpretation, in the case where the pro and contra views were in balance.

Table 2. Interpretation of average for positive statement

No	Interval range	Category
1	3.41 – 4.00	Strongly agree
2	2.81 – 3.40	Agree
3	2.21 - 2.80	Neutral
4	1.61 - 2.20	Disagree
5	1.01 - 1.60	Strongly disagree

Note: conventional rounding was used.
For *negative statement*, the category *was reversed*.

Result and Discussion

The result of the study is described in several groupings, namely, views on possible negative effect of English, English in the private domain the family & community, English in the workplace, English in the mass media, and English in education. The result is depicted in several tables.

Possible negative effect of English

Table 3 shows that officials from governmental and non-governmental institutions *disagreed* that extended use of English may negatively affect the use of both the Indonesian language and ethnic languages.

Table 3 Possible negative effect of English

		m-G	Cat	m-NG	Cat
1	Extended use of English negatively affects the use of Indonesian language	3.05	D	3.3	D
2	Extended use of English negatively affects the use of ethnic languages	3.1	D	3.3	D

Note: m-G: Mean for governmental officials; m-NG: Mean for non-governmental officials

English in social environment

The officials generally had positive views on the use of English in social environment, as depicted in table 4.

Table 4. English in social environment

		m-G	Cat	m-NG	Cat
3	English could be used daily in the family	3.05	A	3.1	A
4	English could be used daily in the neighborhood	2.85	A	2.55	N
5	Indonesian cultural symbols need to be enhanced	3	A	2.2	D
6	Innovations need to be develop to bring English closer to the national culture	3.25	A	3.2	A
7	English could be used for social invitation	2.8	N	2.35	N
8	English could be used for social speech	2.4	N	2.3	N
9	English could be used in social events	2.3	N	2.2	D
10	English reading materials need to be increased	3.6	SA	3.55	SA
11	Interest in English coursed need to be aroused	3.6	SA	3.4	A
12	English activities need to be encouraged	3.5	SA	3.6	SA

Note: m-G: Mean for governmental officials; m-NG: Mean for non-governmental officials

Table 4 shows that officials from both groups (governmental and non-governmental institutions) generally *agreed* that the English could be used daily in the family and neighborhood. They *agreed* that Indonesian cultural symbols need to be enhanced and that innovation need to be developed to bring English closer to the national culture. The reason was perhaps to anticipate possible negative effects of the extended use of English. They also *agreed* that English reading

materials need to be increased, that interest in English should be aroused and that English activities need to be encouraged.

However, with respect to the use of English for invitation, speech and social events, their responses were generally *neutral* to *disagree*. This is understandable, as, for example, they would not like to hear speech in marriage ceremony to be conducted in English.

English in the work place

The officials generally had positive views on the use of English in the work place, as depicted in table 5.

On the use of English ability for employee recruitment and promotion, the officials from the non-governmental group *agreed* to the requirement, while the officials from the governmental group were *neutral* or *disagreed* to the requirement. This might indicate that the officials from the business group had more confidence for their English. Both groups generally *agreed* or in neutral position in the matter of the use of English in daily activities, daily conversations, and special events in the office.

Both groups also generally *agreed* that English ability was required for the officers who served as the head of work units, their assistants, the officers that worked in public relations and reception.

They *agreed* that office materials could be written in English; however, they preferred that the materials be written bilingually (in English and Indonesian) (table 6). For internal correspondence and domestic external correspondence, their views ranged from *neutral* to *disagree*. However, for overseas external correspondence, they *agreed* that it should be written in English. They also *agreed* that informational materials and signage be written in English.

In order to facilitate their work in the language, they *strongly agreed* that dictionaries, both the English-Indonesian and the Indonesian-English types, should be available for each work unit.

Finally, to improve their English ability, they *agreed* that budget should be available to enhance their English ability in general and to attend English training in particular.

Table 5. English in the work place

		m-G	Cat	m-NG	Cat
13	English ability is required for employee recruitment	2.7	N	3	A
14	English ability is required for employee promotion	2	D	2.9	A
15	English could be used in everyday activities	2.95	A	2.95	A
16	English could be used in daily conversation in office	3	A	2.6	N
17	English could be used in special events, such as seminars or workshops	2.85	A	2.75	N
18	The head of work unit needs to be fluent in English	3.25	A	3.05	A
19	The assistant of the head of work unit needs to be fluent in English	3.4	A	3.1	A
20	Public relation officers needs to be fluent in English	3.35	A	2.75	N
21	Reception officers need to be fluent in English	3.35	A	3.25	A
22	Office materials could be written in English	3.15	A	3.25	A
23	Internal correspondence could be written in English	2.5	N	2.55	N
24	External correspondence with domestic institutions could be written in English	2.2	D	2.65	N
25	External correspondence with overseas institutions needs to be written in English	3.3	A	3.5	SA
26	Signage (sign boards, work hours notice, etc.) could be written in English	3.15	A	3.1	A
27	Informational media (brochures, etc.) could be written in English	3.45	SA	3.45	SA

28	English-Indonesian dictionaries need to be available in each work unit	3.7	SA	3.5	SA
29	Indonesian English dictionaries need to be available in each work unit	3.55	SA	3.25	A
30	Budget needs to allocated to improve English proficiency in general	3.35	A	3.15	A
31	Budget needs to allocated for English training	3.15	A	3.2	A

Note:　　m-G: Mean for governmental officials; m-NG: Mean for non-governmental officials

Table 6. Choice of English for office materials

		Government				Non-government			
		English		Bilingual		English		Bilingual	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
22.b	Office materials could be written in English	6	30	14	70	1	5	16	80
27.b	Informational media (brochures, etc.) could be written in English	6	30	14	70	1	5	18	90

Note; N: Number

English in mass media

The officials generally *agreed* to the extended use of English in mass media, as depicted in table 7.

Table 7. English in mass media

		m-G	Cat	m-NG	Cat
32	National newspaper needs to have English columns	3.35	A	2.95	A
33	Local newspaper needs to have English column	3.15	A	2.75	N
34	Magazine needs to have English columns	3.3	A	3	A
35	Radio station needs to have English program	3.2	A	2.6	N
36	TV station needs to have English program	3.25	A	3.05	A
37	Indonesian film needs to have English subtitles	3.4	A	2.95	A

Note:　　m-G: Mean for governmental officials; m-NG: Mean for non-governmental officials

Table 8. Choice of English in media

		Government				Non-government			
		English		Bilingual		English		Bilingual	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
32.b	English column in newspapers	1	5	16	80	2	10	15	75
33.b	English column in magazines	2	10	15	75	0	0	15	75

Note; N: Number

The officials generally *agreed* to the creation of English columns in newspapers (national and local) and magazines, although they preferred the columns to be bilingual (table 8). The generally *agreed* that TV and radio stations developed English programs and that Indonesian films had English subtitles.

English in education

The officials generally *agreed* that English instruction should be intensified, as depicted in table 9.

Table 9. English in education

		m-G	Cat	m-NG	Cat
38	English hours at schools need to be increased	3.35	A	3.25	A

39	Universities need to have classes with English as the medium of instruction	3.15	A	3.2	A

Note: m-G: Mean for governmental officials; m-NG: Mean for non-governmental officials

The officials *agreed* that English hours at school should be increased and that universities need to have classes with English as the medium of instruction.

Based on the result, it can be concluded that the respondents of both groups generally *agreed* to the extended use of English in various aspects, namely general, social environment, work environment, media, and educational institutions.

There were disagreements here and there, such as in linking English skills with promotion. The government officials generally could not accept it; on the contrary, non-government officials could actually accept it. For the use of English in social events, government officials were *neutral* while non-government officials were *against* it.

However, overall the results of this study indicated the support of government and non-governmental officials in the city of Bengkulu for the extended use of English in daily life, accompanying the Indonesian and ethnic languages. This is very encouraging, because it is in line with the need to strengthen English ability in the community, in order to anticipate the global age.

However, extended use of English in daily life in public domains would be difficult to achieve as the present language policy put limitations on it. Thus, there is a need of public discussion on whether the use of English could be extended and in what domains it would be allowed. This discussion is important as extended use of English might be unavoidable in the future. For example, there is already some contemplation to introduce bilingual curriculum (English and Indonesian) at the tertiary level (Nasir, 2016). Such introduction would need a legal regulation, as this use of English belongs to the public domains and thus need to be regulated by the language policy (Suwarno, Novita, & Arasuli, 2018). However, as the use of English in private domains, which are not regulated by the language policy, community members could take an initiative in this respect. An example is using internet to improve their English (Suryani, 2005). Other examples include reading English newspaper, like "The Jakarta Post", or watching English films.

Conclusion

Senior officials from governmental and non-governmental groups in the city of Bengkulu generally *agreed* to the extended use of English in various aspects, namely, social environment, work environment, media, and educational institutions. They seemed to prefer the use of English in combination with the Indonesian language.

The use of English, including its possible extended use, in public domains is regulated by the language policy. The present policy only allows very limited domains for English. Thus, there is a need to have a public discussion and to conduct further studies to explore if such extension is possible and in what domains it would be allowed.

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