Intercultural Dialogue on English Language Teaching

Intercultural Dialogue on English Language Teaching: Multilingual Teacher Educator's Narrative of Professional Learning

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

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I would like to, firstly, thank all of my respondents for their generous and valuable time and stories. Your narratives have taught me more about teaching lives and the struggles of articulating our voice and dealing with marginalization in our profession in our teaching and learning communities (locally, nationally, and internationally). I do hope, just as you all have shared with me in the interviews, that more can be done to promote alternative paradigms and discourses in ELT in Indonesia (as well as other parts in the world) to move towards a more multilateral and dialogic relation of teaching and learning English. I join your call for pedagogy reform in ELT in Indonesia. I feel honoured to have the chance to work in this project with every one of you.

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PREAMBLE

In 1997, I graduated from the English language teaching department of Dharma University, with a Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and an "*Akta IV*" certified by the Ministry of Education [Level 1-Teaching Certification]. To my great delight, I was immediately hired to teach in a "national-plus" elementary school in Jakarta. "National-plus" schools in Indonesia are distinguished by the fact that they offer English as the medium of instruction while still working with the Indonesian National Curriculum. Their curriculum offerings includes several additional subjects that they adopt from foreign countries' curricula (e.g. usually from the UK, Singapore, India, etc.).

At my first school, I found I was assigned as a teaching assistant in the pre-school department. I would be "assisting" the "main" English teacher, an expatriate American, whose husband had accepted a short term contract to work in Indonesia. She had applied to teach English in this school for the duration of his contract. She was employed because she was a "Native-Speaker of English" (NSE). The literature often refers to such teachers as "backpackers" (cf. Braine, 2010). Sometimes referred to as 'educational tourists' (Quezada, 2004), since they rarely have formal teaching qualifications, and they almost invariably stay for only a limited period of time before returning to their country of origin. My salary was one fourth of that of the NSE teacher. The kind of tasks that I had to do did not involve any teaching at all (mostly helping the three or four years old students to go to wash their hands, keep them sitting tightly while the teacher was teaching, assisting them while they were eating, and other baby-sitting tasks).

This experience led me to question my position as an English teacher in my own country. I knew I had learned a great deal but who else valued this learning and my knowledge? It did not seem that the school valued either my own learning or the integrity of the teacher education institution from which I had graduated. I quit after only one day on the job.

At that time, I did not have the language to describe this experience. I could only feel that my teaching qualification was not valued and that somehow I was being discriminated against for being what I am – an Indonesian. Working in two other Language Course institutions in my early years of teaching, I found similar experiences where NSE teachers

(mostly without any teaching qualification) were positioned higher in professional hierarchies than the local teachers. Seeing this, I subconsciously began to accept this as a common "reality" in the English language teaching profession. Since then, I have understood that this "reality" is a widely held misconception of English language teaching by many people in Indonesia (including parents and students and also by administrators and teachers in schools). These people are lead to believe in and accept such practices in our own Indonesian educational context and setting. Now, as a teacher educator working in an Indonesian English language department of a large university in Indonesia, it continues to disturb me that these centralized and prescribed foreign sets of professional frameworks and standards are imposed on my profession in my own teaching setting through a range of deeply embedded narratives and discourses about English language teaching that so often seem to have originated in the west.

In my own professional life, I have seen how the knowledge, discourse, and experiences of these various western notions of professionalism have influenced my understanding of the ELT profession in Indonesia. I often find myself questioning, accepting, rejecting, (re)negotiating, (re)evaluating, and (re)shaping my understanding about the teaching profession through sharing my teaching experiences or narratives with my students, colleagues, and academic community. And yet I feel that I have to continuously struggle to find my own place in several dimensions of this profession: especially with respect to the "core values" of teachers' professionalism in Indonesian contexts, professionalism in my ELT education from the west that I experienced in Indonesia, Thailand, and Australia, and my sense of English teacher professionalism as perceived by conservative social institutions in Indonesia (the University, faculty, students, educators, parents, and wider society).

This has often made me wonder what other teachers experience, feel, and think of their profession. In particular, I have wondered how English Language teacher educators learn to live with/in the multiple dimensions of: i) a particular English speaking community; ii) the English language teaching community in general; iii) the community of English language teachers in Indonesia; and iv) the community of teaching professionals in Indonesia. I have been particularly interested in individual and collective narratives of English language educators talking about their professional in an Indonesian context. This project provided me with an opportunity to wonder in a more rigorous and methodical way, to learn more about how and why this happens, and to generate and disseminate knowledge that may perhaps help to bring about change in this area.

INTRODUCTION

…I speak three languages, write in
Two, dream in one.
Don't write in English, they said, English is
Not your mother-tongue. Why not leave
Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,
Every one of you? Why not let me speak in
Any language I like? The language I speak
Becomes mine, its distortion, its queerness,
All mine, mine alone.
It is half English, half Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,
It is as human as I am human don't
You see? It voices my joys, my longings, my
Hopes, and it is useful to me as cawing
Is to crows or roaring to the lions, it
Is human speech, the speech of the mind that is
Here and not there, a mind that sees and hears and
Is aware…
(*An Introduction,* Kamala Das, 1965)

The first time I came across Kamala Das' poem, I was captivated by her powerful way of expressing her thoughts, feelings, and, most importantly, identities. Kamala Das, an eminent contemporary Indian writer, was best-known for her boldness of speaking about postcolonial identity, gender equality, and political issues in her time through her honest writings. At times, when great South Asian writers were using English in their creative writings, this use of English was also being challenged by some critics because of its historical relation with the colonizer (Paul, 2003). Kamala Das responds to these critics pertinaciously through her poem, "An introduction". She bluntly vocalizes her strong opinion and feeling about the languages she speaks, the cultures from within which she writes, and her sense of multiple identities. The poem shows the complexities of these interrelated elements in any human life. And in showing these complexities, it challenges purist views of identity, communicating instead a hybridized and creative understanding of self (Bakhtin, 1986). The poem can be considered as a way of speaking back to the dominant or "authoritative discourse" (Skidmore, 2000) which at that time still operated, and

continues to operate under essentialist views of language, culture, and identity in certain domains of English language education.

Reading her poem that first time, I felt a deep connection to this particular excerpt. I am a multilingual speaker who speaks three languages: *Palembangnese* dialect (a South Sumatranese dialect—it is my mother tongue), *Bahasa Indonesia* (the national language, and my second language), and English (my third language), and I am what may be described as a "passive" user of *Menadonese* and *Javanese* dialects. I write in two languages, *Bahasa Indonesia* and English. And, like Kamala Das, I also live among discourses that often try to restrict and control the way I use my languages, particularly English. But, unlike Kamala Das, I come from a country that has no British colonial history. Resistance towards the use of English as the colonial language is not acutely felt in Indonesia. In the 1950s, a few years after Indonesia gained its independence, English was actually chosen to be the most preferred foreign language to be studied over Dutch (widely understood as the language of the colonizer who occupied Indonesia for three and a half centuries). This is often considered to be the beginning of the flourishing period of "English Language Teaching aid" (Phillipson, 1992) in Indonesia; it has also been considered as the beginning of the imposition of a latent agenda of western professionalisation.

I have been an English teaching professional for more than 10 years. I have a range of teaching qualifications in English language teaching and a Master's degree in English language teaching. Yet, throughout my career, I have found myself pinned down through various labelling practices in my personal life, in my professional career, and in my research work as a postgraduate student in an Australian university. I am variously labelled a "Non-native English language learner", a "Non-native speaker of English", "Non-native speaker of English teacher", and a "Speaker of languages *other* than English". As a PhD candidate during my study in Australia, I was categorized as an 'International student'. The labelling practices invariably come with assumptions about behaviours, language practices, and attitudes that try to dictate and suppress my sense of self. These labels leave little room for my dialogic and multi-faceted sense of self, nor do they recognize me as an English language user, a multilingual and intercultural English user, a multi-competence English teacher, an academic, and a teacher educator. Ironically and sadly, these authoritative discourses are often promoted and encouraged through the very education systems and professional communities of which I am a part. This is particularly apparent in some attempts to advocate for professionalism in English Language Teaching (ELT).

Discourses of professionalism in English language teaching

Several scholars (e.g. Holliday, 2005; Maley, 1992; Nunan, 2001) discuss the notion of professionalism in English Language Teaching. Maley (1992) and Nunan (2001) describe the need to carefully define the concepts of profession, professional, and professionalism by emphasizing the diverse characteristics and settings of English Language Teaching across the world. Maley (1992) emphasizes that it is difficult to have a clear cut and fixed definition of the concept because of the "sheer diversity" in ELT contexts and settings. He describes four major divisions as follows:

- *Different perspectives of English teaching that separate the state from the private sectors*: The state sector tends to operate within the classical-humanist tradition (the use of textbook, syllabus, and examinations prescribed by the authorities) whereas private sectors tend to be flexible and innovative in their main interest to meet the paying clients' needs or wants;
- *Division between employers and individual teachers in different contexts* (e.g. in the UK, BASCELT as an association of employers —teachers, or in some countries between Ministries of Education— local teachers) often causes conflict between professional interests (i.e. top-down curriculum change conflicts with teachers' perceptions of what is needed);
- *Division between Native and Non-Native speaker teachers* (native speaker teachers are considered to be the best model for English teaching);
- *Quality vs quantity* (there is increasing demand by people throughout the world to learn English, and this sometimes impacts on quality of English Language Teaching across a greater range of "providers"). (Maley, 1992, p. 96-98).

Owing to the diversity sketched out above, Maley argues the need for taking into account distinct ELT characteristics or features when considering the notion of professionalism in ELT. He advocates the importance of recognizing the different needs and aspirations of the ELT professionals in particular settings, and of moving towards professional excellence through co-operation, collaboration and interchange between sectors (Maley, 1992, p. 98). It can be concluded that any understanding of

professionalism must be closely tied to the needs, conditions and contexts of where the English language teaching takes place.

While Maley (1992) sees professionalism as a journey towards professional excellence, Holliday (2005) views it as a site of struggle. This notion of struggle is closely related to the growing status of English as an international language and its impact on the traditional viewpoints on language teaching and learning. Holliday observes this issue from political and ideological perspectives. Although he acknowledges that professionals in the TESOL profession include English educators from different parts in the world who share the same goal (teaching English), he still insists that there exist politics of division which most of the time are dominated by one distinct part of the TESOL world, the "English-speaking west" (Holliday, 2005, p. 2). In line with other scholars' voices (Canagarajah, 1999; Jenkins, 2000; Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Phillipson, 1992), Holliday states that TESOL professionals from the English-speaking west undoubtedly have a privileged and dominant position in the TESOL world. Unfortunately, the rapid increase in the status of the English language globally is not accompanied by changes in perspectives of English language teaching and learning at the same pace. Resistance towards the idea still exists in most parts of the world and in the minds of TESOL professionals (teachers, academics, curriculum developers, writers, publishers, etc.), whom Holliday (2005) refers to as the "inclusive we". For this reason, he emphasizes the notion of struggle for relationships of "how we see each other, how colleagues from the English-speaking west must deal with the divisive elements of their professionalism; and how we must all overcome the legacy of native-speakerism" (2005, p. 16). Holliday calls for rethinking, re-evaluating, and establishing new relationships among the multifaceted elements in ELT.

Maley's (1992) and Holliday's (2005) perspectives correspond with Hall's (2004) descriptions of professionalism as situational, relational and often contradictory. It is often related to "the political struggle to define what teachers' work should be and how it should be implemented in the curriculum" (Hall, 2004, p.6). The notion of a teacher's professionalism has often been viewed as related to political purposes that control and guide teachers in the form of policies, standards, and professional criteria (Day & Sachs, 2004; Hargreaves, 2000; Sachs, 2001 & 2003). Sachs (2003) explains that these policies tend to control and restrict teachers through specifications of skills, competencies and attributes of the teaching profession. However, to pin down the concept of professionalism as a generic and uniform set of professional responsibilities and expected

characteristics for all members of the profession disregards the contextual, personal, and dynamic nature of professionalism.

In the case of ELT in Indonesia, the concept of professionalism is still dominated and imposed by the west. Many (including educators, institutions, parents and students) still believe in a purist paradigm of English as owned by the English-speaking west (Holliday, 2005), including countries such as the UK, the US, Canada, and Australia. Standards, criteria, and qualifications for being an English language teacher in most parts of Indonesia are still adopting and adapting systems developed in the Anglophone world as the benchmark of professionalism for their particular contexts. This condition is continually maintained when teacher education programmes in Indonesia design their curriculum to meet these standards, criteria, and qualifications. Despite new developments in ELT towards recognizing a more pluralistic view of language, culture and identity, the ideas of native-speakerism, monolingualism, and monoculturalism are still quite prominent in the language of professional competence in ELT in Indonesia. Terms such as "native-speaker of English", "near native-speaker competence", and "Standard English" are still widely used with less critical assessment of their political and ideological implications in the field of ELT in Indonesia. The notion of *agency* with respect to a multilingual and multi-competence English user and teacher as an independent and self-directing English pedagogue has often consciously and subconsciously been submerged by this dominant strain of professionalism discourse.

As an English language teacher educator approaching this study, I myself had often experienced my professional work and life as a struggle of living among, and interacting within, these overlapping perspectives and dimensions of professionalism that try to control and define what my profession is. I had wondered what other educators experience, think, and feel as they lived within these myriad of discourses in their professional lives, discourses that overlap, mix, and co-exist in conflict with each other. Indeed, it was partly this curiosity that led me to inquire, in this project, into the understandings of other English educators as to what they felt their profession involves, and what value they placed on English language education. I wanted to talk with them, and document that talk, about their opinions of teaching and learning, and the factors, policies, and structures that have contributed to and variously mediated their understanding.

In today's era of globalization, English language teaching has become more complex. With developments in digital technology, individuals can virtually slip across borders to access other cultures. Through the internet, it is possible for individuals to travel and communicate quite easily with

people from various parts of the world with different cultural backgrounds. National and cultural boundaries have become porous (Canagarajah, 2006). Language and inter-cultural connections occur every second. Through enhanced digital technology, people are also exposed to various types of text, communities, and communicative practice and contexts. Along with this strong current of globalization and technology, English seems to have assumed a position as the *lingua franca*. In my own country of Indonesia, certainly, but also elsewhere in the world, the pressure to master English has never before been so urgently felt. English is used in addition to the local languages for various purposes. It is also used to communicate with different communities with their own distinctive discursive practices. This relation between the local and the global has lead to the adaptation, localization, and hybridization of English.

Therefore, the view of monolingualism, monoculturalism, and a one-dimensional identity inherent in ELT has been questioned and challenged in this era of globalization. Several scholars propose a contextualised, pluralistic and critical view on language teaching and learning (e.g. Canagarajah, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Pennycook 2010). Such a view also calls for an alternative perspective and discourse of professionalism in English language teaching. English language educators, therefore, are encouraged to be more aware of the use and role of English in their own sociocultural and institutional context, their learners' needs with respect to English, and suitable teaching approaches to meet their particular learners' needs—a discourse of professionalism that is responsive towards the dynamic interrelationship between the local and the global. This means that teacher education has also become more complex through the impact of globalization. Teacher education in the field of ELT is, nowadays, expected to be able to prepare English language educators with such awareness and capacities to teach in today's globalized world. For some, this constitutes a new "imagination" of ELT professionalism.

In this study, I explore the tense interrelation between the local and the global in a specific sociocultural and historical setting of English language teaching in an Indonesian context. I look at how English language teacher educators make sense of the effects of globalization that are increasingly felt in Indonesia, and I examine how this so-called new 'imagination' in English language teacher education operates in a globalized world.

The focus of this study is an investigation into how English language teacher educators understand their professional work and lives. I explore how these teacher educators understand and express their understanding of professionalism in ELT. This includes consideration of what their profession entails, what constitutes and contributes to their professional

learning, and their ongoing commitment to this profession. I also look at the various factors that mediate their understanding of their professional work and lives. Using a range of narrative-based inquiry methods, this study seeks to explore the following central question:

How do multilingual English language teacher educators understand and express their concept of their profession?

There are a number of sub-questions that inform and help to tease out this question:

- According to these teacher educators, what does it mean to be an English language teacher educator?
- What kinds of experiences do they narrate (recount) as having contributed to their perception of themselves as educational professionals?
- In what ways does their professional learning contribute to their sense of their professional identity? (What factors and structures—historical, social, political, and institutional—have contributed to or mediated these understandings? How do they feel that they work is valued?)

In all educators' lives, there are various overlapping discourses and authoritative or policy-driven rhetoric on professionalism that often appears to dictate their professional work and identity. Professionalism itself is often seen as a politically and socio-economically driven construct. Certainly, discourses of professionalism in the area of ELT in Indonesia are often dominated by the discourses of the west, and yet it remains an under-researched topic. This study seeks to address this "deficit" in the literature. As suggested earlier, any consideration of professionalism in ELT needs to take into account the distinct characteristics and contextual and situational needs of English language educators in diverse settings, and this is what I attempt to do in this research project. I examine how English language teacher educators interact with and make meaning of these various discourses and explore other issues in ELT in their own specific context.

In probing the particularities of the specific context of the teacher educators being interviewed, this research does not jump to easy generalizations. I do not claim that the findings of this research necessarily apply widely across the whole Indonesian context. However, this research constitutes a rigorous and reflexive account of these teachers' stories,

experiences and attitudes, and to that extent it opens up a rich vein of understanding of issues that are elsewhere written about and spoken about in more de-contextualised perspectives. In terms of numbers of participants the research may appear modest, and yet (in the rich tradition of in-depth qualitative studies) by examining and exploring the complexities and socio-cultural nuances of this topic, it enriches the rapidly growing knowledge base about English language teacher education across the world.

Narrative-based inquiry

In this study, I am particularly interested in how the five English language teacher educators make sense of their teaching and learning experiences in relation to various discourses of professionalism in their teaching setting. Through dialogue with a small number of these teacher educators in a series of extended interviews, and in email communication around these interviews, I learned about and explored how they constructed and reconstructed their professional identities. I then represented their stories in my own narrative accounts of the stories and interviews, using a range of methodological approaches that can be broadly framed as narrative-based inquiry. Narrative-based research is chosen owing to its philosophical assumptions of pluralism, relativism, and subjectivity (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). On the basis of such assumptions, I have explored the uniqueness of each individual teacher educator's understanding of professional learning while also being alert to possible commonalities in their understandings. As Doecke and Parr (2009) explain "narratives in all their diversity and multiplicity make up the fabric of our lives: they are constitutive moments in the formation of our identities and our sense of community affiliation" (p. 66). Narrative serves as a medium and method for this study, allowing meaningful engagement with individuals' experiences and how they see and interpret themselves in different situations and time.

The narrative research is informed by Bakhtin's concept of 'dialogism' (Bakhtin, 1981) which relates to relationality, openness, dynamism and diversity in meaning making processes. Bakhtin describes how all individuals have some degree of choice to reveal or communicate to others certain parts of themselves. This openness in self-revelation is, to an extent, a "free act of consciousness" (Bakhtin, 1973). In this sense, Bakhtin's concept of dialogism also touches upon identity construction as narrated by the individual, or what Shields (2007) terms as "narratives of identity". Through narrative, individuals engage in an interactive dialogue

with themselves and with others in which they reflect, examine, decide, and co-construct their understanding of particular phenomena in the process of sharing with others. My account of English language teacher educators' attitudes and beliefs about English and English teaching is based on the narratives conveyed by a limited number of professional individuals in ELT in order that I might delve deeply into how they perceive their professional lives, how they live or struggle in various dimensions of their profession, what they consider matters to their professional works and lives, and how they see themselves as English language teacher educators.

Overview of the chapters

Chapter 1 provides a contextual background of the project, laying the contextual and socio-historical foundation of teaching profession in Indonesia. In this section, I intertwine elements of my own teaching and learning narrative with the more conventional reviews of the literature. I do this as a way of grounding and providing situated contextual perspectives in a review of research literature that otherwise might run the risk of presenting a de-contextualised account of abstract issues.

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature related to professional learning, interculturalism, and ELT discourses and the theoretical perspective used in this research project. This section also frames notions of professional identity that will underpin later discussion of the participants' narratives. It looks at the discourses of professionalism in ELT as often constructed by the discourses of the west and current development in ELT that moves toward the need for contextualizing its understandings and practices.

Chapter 3 presents the research design as well as the rationale for using narrative-based inquiry as the methodology. I describe the context of the study, the various methodological approaches I used and research instruments I employed for my data collection, and I make clear my own position as a researcher in this whole project. This chapter also presents a glimpse into the biographies of the participants of the study, my relationship with them, and the approaches of re-constructing the participants' narratives.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the accounts of the five teacher educators' learning and teaching narratives. These chapters explore their understandings of their professional work and lives. Chapter 4 reconstructs the narrative learning of two teacher educators (Tuti and Lukas) whose work as teacher educators is distinctive because they also hold senior

leadership positions in the institutions where they work. Thus, their narratives are able to describe and reflect upon multiple notions of practitioner and leader—that is, they speak about their professional self both as an educator and as a leader. Chapter 5 presents the narratives of a younger generation of teacher educators (Sukiyem, Daniel, and Ucoq). Their narratives are a mixture of interactive discussions and interweaving issues concerning monoculturalism and interculturalism in ELT, multi-dimensional identities, the tensions between the local and the global, and the relevance of political and power relations in these teacher educators' professional work and lives.

Chapter 6 discusses some distinctive features of the teacher educators' narratives as well as several overlapping features of commonalities in their narratives within their particular contextualized backgrounds. The chapter pays close attention to and analyses various discourses of, professionalism as imposed by the discourse of the west and its institution; the tensions, conflicts, and frictions that the educators have experienced working with/in various discourses; and how they make meaning in dialogue with these discourses.

Chapter 7, the final chapter, provides an overview of the struggles of living with various discourses that the five teacher educators spoke about in their narratives and how they make sense of their interaction with these discourses. The discussion then moves to critically and creatively re-imagine ELT in Indonesia drawing on insights emerging from analyzing the narratives of the five teacher educators. This re-imagining provides a deeply contextual basis for generating localized knowledge of English language teacher education as one example of productive dialogic interaction between the local and the global.

As the nature of the study looks at the particularity and contextual sensitivity of teaching and teacher identity, I begin by examining and exploring social and historical perspective of teacher professionalism in Indonesia in the next chapter. I firstly discuss the historical background and the emerging perspective of teacher identity in Indonesia before I engage with the problematic of professionalism as it is variously understood in the research literature about mainstream education and education, specifically in the ELT domain.

CHAPTER ONE

THE DISCOURSE OF TEACHER IDENTITY IN CONTEXT

> Education is and has always been part and parcel of culture. The two are just inseparable. This is true for any country, society, or community. For this reason productive discussion of any educational issue must take into account the realities that exist at any given time within the cultural environments, both local and national. Any educational discourse conducted without due regard to the cultural conditions of the time will be meaningless and futile.
>
> (Buchori, 2001, p. xiii)

The status of teachers in Indonesia has historically been highly contested. They have been positioned in different levels, roles, and conditions throughout Indonesia's history. In this section, I will discuss several socio-historical aspects that have had some influence on professionalism in teaching in Indonesia. I will draw largely on Buchori's (2001) work, who lays out a structural landscape of education development in Indonesia. I indicate five eras based on major socio-historical development that have influenced the unfolding perspectives toward teachers and educators.

The historical context of "guru"

The Indonesian translation for a teacher is "guru". This word was derived from the *Sanskrit* in Hindhuism and Buddhism (that entered Indonesia in early times of the so-called Indonesian Great Empires era). Hindhu and Buddhist cultural influences passed into Indonesia through trading with India, China and Middle Eastern countries in the early fifth century (Taylor, 2003) and continued to have significant influence on cultural and educational practices for millennia afterwards. Hindu understandings of "guru" carry the meaning of a teacher or guide of religious or spiritual matters, and thus Gurus pass on their knowledge of wisdom and religious or spiritual guidance to their people through their

teachings. The strong influence of Hindhuism and Buddhism on teaching in Indonesia is reflected in a range of historical artifacts from these early dynasties. Guru was subsequently adopted into the *Javanese* vocabulary as a short form of a *Javanese* rhyme, *Kirata Basa* (Widiyanto, 2005), "Sing diguGU lan ditiRU" which means a person who needs to be listened to and upon whom one should model oneself. The *Guru* is expected to set good examples for their followers. This ancient *Javanese* rhyme depicts philosophical values and views with respect to the teacher as a moral guide and a wise person with still great authority, knowledge and power to influence people. Gurus enjoyed a very high status during this Great Empires era. This ancient historical knowledge probably explains the common positioning of guru as "the source of all knowledge and wisdom" and an 'authoritative figure' in more recent educational settings in most parts of Indonesia.

In the colonial era, Indonesia was successively occupied by the Portuguese (1512-1580), the Dutch (1602-1942), and the Japanese (1942-1945), a period historically interpreted as one when Indonesians were operating under colonial rule (Ricklefs, 2005). During the Dutch colonization, with their interest in exploiting natural resources of the country, education systems were carefully constructed to accommodate Dutch imperialist interests, which involved suppressing Indonesian national and cultural identity.

Buchori (2001), in his book *Notes on education in Indonesia*, includes a wide ranging discussion on the status of the teaching profession in Indonesian history. He explains that Indonesian educators adopted the political concept of "national education" which was popularized in the early 1920s in the west, arguing that they wanted to do so in order to resist or challenge the educational system created by the Dutch colonial government (Buchori, 2001, p. 76). This national education concept was realized by the establishment of "founding schools"—the first independent schools with a national curriculum. One influential educator in Indonesian history, Ki Hajar Dewantara, initiated this nationalist spirit by establishing the *Taman Siswa* organization in 1922. Ki Hajar Dewantara criticized the philosophy and practice of the Dutch colonial schools as "elitist and misleading" (2001, p. 78). The Dutch colonial schools had taught Indonesian students about European culture and values and in the process tended to "alienate" them from their social and cultural environment and their own history.

Taman Siswa school systems were founded to liberate Indonesian youngsters from this alienation. The primary mission of Indonesian education at that time was to raise young Indonesian people's awareness

and belief in fighting for freedom from Dutch colonization. This founding school educated its students "to become Indonesians who are free in their spirit, free in their thinking, and free in labour. Pupils were prepared to be able to live as free persons in their own environment" (Buchori, 2001, p. 77). Buchori describes how the *Taman Siswa* schools refused offers of financial support from the colonial government in order to have the freedom to develop their own educational programme. The primary belief of the schools was that the education of the next Indonesian generation is "the responsibility of the Indonesian people" and that society therefore had to do its best to share this responsibility. The nationalist values and beliefs, as articulated by Ki Hajar Dewantara, were soon adopted by other Indonesian schools and became a part of a national movement for independence (2001, p.78).

It can be inferred that during this Dutch colonization era there was some evidence of good collaboration between the national politicians, educators, and Indonesian society in preparing the younger generation to strive for national independence through education. They played a very significant, subversive, role vis-à-vis the Duch colonial schools, and were largely responsible for building a sense of nationalism among the young. The teaching profession at that time carried a sense of mission to encourage nationalist attitudes and beliefs amongst the young generation, developing their critical thinking to strive for independence from the colonizer, or from the oppressor (cf Freire, 1993) an educational tradition that is highly valued and appreciated and still appears in the policy rhetoric of the teaching profession through the National Policy on Teachers and Lecturers (*Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia* No.14/2005, specifically Chapter 2 Verse 6).

After declaring independence, Indonesia had to undergo another unpleasant physical condition because of the Dutch military attack—widely known as the Military Aggression I and II (1945-1949). Buchori (2001, p. 4-6) explains that during this revolutionary era, Indonesian schools had to survive many trials in order to ensure that the younger generation could be educated using the republican curriculum with *Bahasa Indonesia* as the medium of instruction. In the ongoing Military Aggression, Jakarta was heavily attacked by the Dutch. The central government of Indonesia therefore had to evacuate to Yogyakarta. Colleges and high schools had to move as well, and proclaimed themselves "Republican schools". They had to survive with any support they could get. Other schools which still operated within Dutch-occupied territory had to operate without help from the Indonesian government. These were tough economic times, but Buchori describes how in spite of

the difficult political and economical conditions the schools still operated, teachers and students performing their duties and responsibilities as far as possible. Teachers and parents worked hand in hand to make education possible in such hard times. Most of the time educators worked without payment, and parents made the effort to donate anything that they could afford to give to the schools. Buchori asserts that this professionalism was one factor that ensured that national education was able to endure Indonesia's uncertain political and economic conditions.

However, there was a gradual shift in understanding of teacher professionalism during the different political phases after the Dutch and Japanese left Indonesia. During what has come to be known as the *Order Baru* (New Order) era, under the Soeharto regime (1966-1998), the education sector was closely regulated to achieve a certain political agenda—that is, to approve and support the strong political group that was then in power. The curriculum was tightly prescribed; textbooks were developed and monopolized by certain departments and Government-controlled publishers. Education, in contrast to its earlier role as an ally in national development, now was treated as an ideological tool for controlling society. Buchori (2001) explains that education thus lost its political and ideological role in the government and national development system. He claims that this separation from any role in the political system made teachers reluctant to be involved in any civil movement that might strive for political betterment.

Professionalism in this era was thus very tightly controlled and restricted by the dominant political party. Reflecting on my own high school years in the late 80s, I remember that there was a young new PSPB teacher (*Pendidikan Sejarah dan Perjuangan Bangsa*, or History of National Struggle Education) teaching us in first year. He was very vocal in stating his opinion about the government in class, and he criticized the way that the government had been censoring several historical facts about Indonesia, seeking to limit intellectual freedom and silence society's consciousness through strict media censoring. He encouraged us adolescent students to be critical readers as we watched and read the news in the mainstream media. However, when the school heard about what he had been teaching us in class, he was reassigned to a different school and replaced by a senior teacher; we never saw or heard from him again. Apparently, the school administration were worried that if the government found out about this teacher's activities, the school would be closed.

Politicians also tended to ignore the rich history of the role of Indonesian schools in developing the country's future. The government started to pay less attention to education as though it were less important

than economic and political prosperity (Buchori, 2001, p. xv). Indeed, it is fair to say that the national budget for the Indonesian education sector has not been a priority since the New Order era. In 2006, for example, education funding amounted to a mere 8.1 per cent of the national budget which was lower than other neighbouring countries such as Malaysia (20 per cent) and Thailand (27 per cent) (*Education International-Asia Pacific*, 2006, p.1). During the New Order era, teachers were poorly paid and the management of their payroll, especially in remote areas, was poorly handled. Professional learning was harder to engage in since most teachers were still struggling with their day to day life, so it may be understandable if attempting to improve their knowledge and expertise was hardly a priority.

After the fall of the *Order Baru* (New Order) regime in 1998, teachers once again began to resist government interference, and they demanded that it stop taking them for granted (*Education International-Asia Pacific*, 2006, p. 1). Issues such as the mismanagement of tenure conditions for many *guru bantu* (part time non-tenure teachers), delays in payment, and delays in raising salaries were reported in many media outlets, such as in the *Jakarta Post*, *Gatra*, *Tempo*, and even in the Indonesian education association mailing lists.

Since then, changes in the education system and management have been re-evaluated and there has been some reform. The education sector budget has been increased. New policies in National Education and Teaching Professional Qualities have been developed and published, most notably National Education Standard (*Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia No. 19/2005 tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan*), National Education System (*Undang-undang Republik Indonesia No. 20/2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*), and Teachers and Lecturers Policy (*Undang-undang Republik Indonesia No. 14/2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen*). The thinking behind these policies is that a new kind of professionalism is expected to be able to increase the overall quality of the teaching workforce in Indonesia.

The next section will describe professionalism in the present National Education framework.

The teaching professional in the National Education framework

Teachers in Indonesia currently work under the framework detailed in three major documents: the National Education Standard (*Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia No. 19/2005 tentang Standar Nasional*

Pendidikan), the National Education System (*Undang-undang Republik Indonesia No. 20/2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*), and the Teachers and Lecturers Policy (*Undang-undang Republik Indonesia No. 14/2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen*). They are expected, indeed officially obligated, to show high levels of excellence in their professional practice. Consistent with governments across the western world (see Doecke, Parr & North, 2008; Wei, Darling-Hammond et al., 2009), the Indonesian government believes that having a higher quality teaching workforce is the key to improving the quality of education in Indonesia. These policies, most relevantly *UURI No.14/2005*, raise the issue of teachers' qualifications, competences, and certification. The management system of the teachers' qualifications and certification for elementary and secondary school teachers is differentiated from the system for the tertiary level educators. For elementary and secondary school teachers, the basic academic qualification required is a minimum of a Bachelor of Arts degree (Sarjana (S1) or Diploma 4 (D4)) in a related academic domain. For the tertiary level, the basic academic qualification requires a minimum of a Master's Degree (S2). Both school teachers and university lecturers are expected to also acquire a set of necessary 'competencies': *kompetensi kepribadian* (personality competence), *kompetensi pedagogik* (pedagogic competence), *kompetensi profesional* (professional competence), and *kompetensi sosial* (social competence). For the purpose of what they describe as "*penjaminan mutu*" (quality assurance) the Indonesian government has taken some responsibility for evaluating teachers' and lecturers' qualifications through teaching certification: teachers and lecturers have to undergo a series of assessments in order to get official certification from the government.

Greater professionalism, according to the National Law on Teachers and Lecturers (*Undang-undang Republik Indonesia No. 14/2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen*), leads to teaching excellence. The policy emphasizes the principles of teachers' professionalism (specifically, Chapter 3 Verse 7). Professionalism is viewed as "*bakat*" (an innate talent), "*panggilan jiwa*" (an inner calling), and "*idealisme*" (a sense of idealism) that is required by those who are interested in teaching. Professional teachers are expected to have a commitment to improving the quality of education, as well as to addressing students' spirituality, and their devotion towards God (Chapter 2, Verse 6):

> *Kedudukan guru dan dosen sebagai tenaga professional bertujuan untuk melaksanakan system pendidikan nasional dan mewujudkan tujuan pendidikan nasional, yaitu berkembangnya potensi peserta didik agar menjadi manusia yang beriman dan bertakwa kepada Tuhan Yang Maha*

Esa, berakhlak mulia, sehat, berilmu, cakap, kreatif, mandiri, serta menjadi warga Negara yang demokratis dan bertanggung jawab.

(Teachers' and lecturers' positions as professional resources are required to administer the national education system, to realise the goal of national education, that is to develop the learner's potential to be an individual who is religious and devoted towards God, virtuous, healthy, educated, skilful, creative, independent, and to become a good, responsible and democratic citizen.)

As stated above, the concept of "national education" is still maintained in upholding the national identity as stated by the "founding education scholars", and this is considered to be an important local value that fosters learners national and cultural identity, thus enabling their active participation in the globalization era. Yet, in my teaching experience, this is sometimes perceived as a far-fetched concept for pre-service student-teachers, and is probably owing to reports of teachers having to bear the responsibility of educating learners to be idealistically perfect individuals.

The description in section 6 of my recent experience of teaching in pre-service education in Indonesia offers the most familiar criteria of professionalism for most student-teachers. At the end of a "micro-teaching" part of the students' pre-service teacher education course, I asked my pre-service teachers to provide some feedback about this part of the course, and we later talked about their attitudes and views of being a teacher. Most of these pre-service student-teachers felt reluctant to pursue a solid career in teaching owing to the very heavy responsibilities they felt of improving their learners' knowledge, attitude, behaviour, and spirituality all at once. Like some of the teacher-education lecturers I subsequently interviewed for this study who spoke about their ambivalence in regard to teaching in their careers, these young pre-service teachers saw teaching as a stepping stone to another career. Being a teacher, to them, seemed to carry a heavy burden or responsibility for improving the younger generations' capacity for the betterment of the nation. Another essential value that they experienced as a burden was the idea of the "teacher as a good role model". To them, this meant that they had to act carefully and behave in a "perfect" way as a good citizen, religious person, and give moral guidance to their students. It was through these conversations with my own pre-service students that I realized how vividly this spiritual and nationalist perspective of professionalism still exists, even in the current globalized era. Their perspective on teachers' identity was not surprising, since these student-teachers had experienced this condition of education ever since they first entered school. They

observed and lived within this discourse in their immediate learning context (receiving exposure from teachers and school administrators, parents at home, and wider society). Again, this perspective appears to connect with the past history of Indonesian social and political conditions, where the "*guru*" was the source of all knowledge and wisdom (during the early years of the Indonesian Great Empire era), and *pendidik* (educator) as the thinker, nationalist motivator, and national hero (during the strive for independence era).

The National Law on Teachers and Lecturers, besides prescribing the necessary qualifications and competences, also regulates the need for continuing professional development through life-long learning. Chapter 7 of this law states that teachers and lecturers are expected to have equal opportunities for engaging in professional development, opportunities provided and managed by the government or the institution. This law is endorsed by the Certification Program for Teachers and Lecturers (*Sertifikasi Guru dan Dosen*) which provides a more detailed description of the teacher qualification reform agenda. Professionalism in this document seems to be interpreted as a set of criteria and practices that need to be realized and enacted by individuals in their every day work as educators. It seems here that the emphasis is more on the development of educators as individuals, rather than as valuable participants in the collaborative, collective work of teachers and the teaching profession. Individual teachers and lecturers should be striving and, significantly, should be *competing* with each other to fulfill the qualifications to obtain the "*Sertifikasi Pendidik*" (Educator Certification).

This policy on Teachers and Lecturers explains that to achieve quality in education requires qualified educators. Consistent with other standard reforms throughout western countries (cf Doecke, et al., 2008; Hamilton, Stecher, & Yuan, 2008; Locke, 2001), the Indonesian government feels it is necessary to maintain close surveillance of educators' quality through a process of teaching certification. It is intended that the certification process will result in a better educated generation of educators who will be able to participate and contribute to a better future for the country. Teachers' professionalism and professional development are given great emphasis. As favourable as this idea may sound, some have argued that there is a danger of viewing teacher certification programmes as too product-orientated, putting more emphasis on the gaining of certificates than on genuinely improving teaching knowledge and practice.

Firstly, there is the effort to certify professionalism, which is a complex and de-contextualized concept. Hall (2004) explains that several scholars (Gitlin & Labaree, 1996; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Lawn

1996; Ozga & Lawn, 1981) have analyzed the concept of professionalism, and summarizes the definitions of professionalism in different professional contexts across the world as "situational, relational and often, contradictory." Professionalism is often related to "the political struggle to define what teachers' work should be and how it should be implemented in the curriculum" (2004, p.6). It is not a fixed concept that can easily be defined nor measured. To pin down the concept of professionalism as a uniform set of professional responsibilities or even competencies and a generic set of required and expected characteristics of the member of the profession tends to disregard the contextual, personal, and dynamic nature of teachers' and teacher educators' work. O'Connor and Scanlon (2005) state that "professionalism can be conceptualized as an individual and reflective system of values and beliefs which govern each teacher's personal ethos and classroom practice" (p.2).

Secondly, the process of assessing professionalism and the issuing of teaching certification may be interpreted as achieving new professional status—a certified teacher. This could overshadow a more important aspect of teachers' learning, that is, the learning itself. There is the fear of perceiving teachers' learning merely from the perspective of a change in status in teachers' careers. Day (1999) describes professional learning in very different ways. It is

> the process by which alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives (p. 4).

Here, Day emphasizes professional learning, or what he calls "ongoing professional development", as a process that is both individual and communal. It involves reflective activity that individual teachers and groups of teachers do to develop professionally, and this should happen continuously, not just when completing certification requirements. In Indonesia, as across the western world, teachers are often exposed to discourses of professionalism imposed on them by the government and other educational institutions, which produces a feeling of teachers' and educators' needing to "fit themselves" into these discourses.

In addition to the national policy, English language educators in Indonesia also live within the discourse of professionalism of English Language Teaching. However, in understanding the status of English in Indonesia, I would like to firstly describe the multicultural and

multilingual characteristics and the language policy of the nation before I discuss the discourse of professionalism of ELT in Indonesia.

Indonesia is a very multicultural and multilingual countryand consists of five major islands and about 17,508 smaller islands, 300 distinct native ethnicities, and 742 distinct languages and dialects (Indonesia International Work Camp, 2011). Most Indonesians speak their vernacular as their first language and *Bahasa Indonesia* as their second language. In some cases, those who come from a multi-ethnic familial background may even speak more than two languages. Plurilingual potential in Indonesia is very high, especially with such social phenomena as inter-cultural marriage and people migrating from one province or district to another. I, myself, coming from a multi-ethnic familial background and having migrated from one region (South Sumatra) to another (Central Java) eighteen years ago, have acquired a fifth language, *Javanese* (in addition to *Palembangnese*, *Menadonese*, Indonesian, and English) into my linguistic repertoire. In response to the multiethnic and multilingual characteristics of the nation, and concerns about the cohesiveness of Indonesian society, a significant language policy of *satu bahasa pemersatu bangsa* (one national and unifying language) was established in 1945. Under the 1945 National Constitution, Article 36 *(Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia 1945, Pasal 36*), *Bahasa Indonesia* was legitimately declared to be the official language of the nation. *Bahasa Indonesia* has actually been used in formal settings and it serves the purpose of a bridging language across multiple cultures and multiple languages even long before the declaration of the 1945 National Constitution. However, since independence, it has been felt necessary to legitimately restate the idea of *satu bahasa pemersatu bangsa* (one national and unifying language) in the Constitution. In the educational sector, specifically National Law No. 20/2003, Article 33 on the National Education System (*UURI No. 20/2003, pasal 33*), states that *Bahasa Indonesia* is to be used as the medium of instruction in classrooms. Consequently, most Indonesians operate using two languages (vernacular and *Bahasa Indonesia*) almost all the time in their daily interaction in social and (in)formal settings. Unlike neighbouring countries such as Singapore, English has no official status in Indonesia; it is not widely used in social or formal or informal interactions.

English is thus learned and taught as an additional language or a foreign language. In 1950, English was inserted as one of the required foreign language subjects in the national curriculum (Dardjowidjojo, 2000). It is taught as a required subject from junior high school (grade 7) through high school and tertiary education levels. The English subject learning load varies among schools and school types (private and state