

# Perception of English



# Perception of English

*A Study of Staff and Students  
at Universities  
in Yogyakarta, Indonesia*

By

Anita Dewi

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A Study of Staff and Students at Universities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

By Anita Dewi

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This book is dedicated to:  
my beloved husband – ***Adit***,  
and my two babies – ***Adel*** and ***Audrey***



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

Reflecting on the history of the language, it is apparent that English does not spread across the globe through any simple mechanism. Rather the language expands through a number of processes ranging from colonialism to globalisation. Each process leads to a different relationship between English and the community that has come to use it (Clyne & Sharifian, 2008, p. 2; Sharifian, 2009, p. 1). At one extreme, English exists in a hegemonic relationship with the local language such that both the local language and people are marginalised, while in other areas English functions as a means of empowerment for its new-found speakers (Crystal, 2006, p. 427; Sharifian, 2009, p. 1). This brings about differing perceptions of the language in different places. With the massive expansion of English throughout the world, it is important to research these perceptions across diverse local communities. Indeed, one of the consequences of such situations is the emergence of a new paradigm called English as an International Language or EIL, which specifically highlights how English is situated in the global era.

More studies are needed in the area of EIL due to its debatable and controversial situation, where a large knowledge gap is currently present. To contribute to the discipline of English as an International Language (EIL), this study examines how English is perceived in the context of tertiary education in Indonesia. This study specifically aims at discovering how English is viewed by varying stakeholders at Indonesian universities. Indeed, the geopolitical prominence, its population size, the existence of a single national language despite many local languages, and the fact that the majority of the population is Muslim make views held about English in Indonesia of particular relevance within the English as an International Language (EIL) paradigm. Apparently, statistics show that Indonesia is the fourth most populated country in the world (United Nations, 2010, p. 1) and the country with the largest Muslim community (US Library of Congress, 2004, p. 7). There are approximately 35 ethnic groups and 725 languages and dialects (US Library of Congress, 2004, p. 6) of which 500 are mutually unintelligible (Dardjowidjojo, 2000, p. 22).

Not only in Indonesia, in general English has spread to various cultural and religious backgrounds including into Muslim communities. The phenomenon of the spread of English in Islamic communities is interesting as it parallels that of Islamic teaching. Similar to English, Islamic teaching developed in diverse ways as it expanded around the world, so that elements of local or national cultures became embedded in its teaching manner in each country in which it is practiced (Dan, Haroon, & Naysmith, 1996; Goebel, 2008; Jones, 1997). In other words, even though there is only one Islam, the Muslim communities across the globe are not homogeneous. Rather, the 'aromas' of Islamic teaching differ across communities, for instance there are clear differences among Muslim practices in the Middle East, compared to those of South Asia, Southeast Asia, and so on. Even within one country, for example Indonesia, the values embedded in the teaching of Islam vary from one area to another.

Considering these parallels between English and Islamic teaching, it would be an act of oversimplification to conclude that English stands in opposition to Islam (Dan et al. 1996; Karmani, 2005a, 2005b) or that English favours Islam (Mahboob, 2009). As such, findings of studies in certain Islamic societies do not necessarily reflect all other Muslims' standpoints. Since there have been very limited such studies on Indonesia, studies into what Indonesians think of English from diverse perspectives are of burning importance.

Moreover, the diversity of the population complicates how English is viewed by the majority of Indonesians, who are Muslims. Clearly, as suggested earlier, to claim English is a threat to Islam (Karmani, 2005a, 2005b) is to oversimplify a complex reality. The existence of Indonesian as the national language also provides a situation which allows for possible conflicts between the national language and English.

Feasibility wise, since Indonesia is geographically constructed of many islands with diverse local languages and cultures, it would be impossible to capture how English is perceived in all parts of Indonesia in one study. Therefore, for reasons of feasibility, this study concentrates on Yogyakarta – Indonesia's city of students (Pemerintah Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2011, p. 2). To provide further focus, the particular location and participants to be involved were narrowed to the staff and students of nine prominent universities. Thus, this study investigates in depth perceptions of English held by staff and students at these Yogyakarta universities.

In this study, five questions are addressed. From these five questions, five themes emerged out of the participants' responses. These themes include English and its acceptance in Indonesia, English at tertiary level, the roles of English, English in relation to identity, and the perception of



World Englishes. The participants consisted of students, lecturers, and leaders at nine public and private universities in Yogyakarta Indonesia. Each university consisted of a different institutional culture, namely secular, Catholic, and Islamic. Through individual interviews and questionnaire surveys, the data was collected and analysed using a mixed-methods approach. In total, 305 students were involved in the questionnaire surveys, while 43 interviews were undertaken with students, lecturers, and leaders from the nine universities.

## **Background**

Nowadays, English has become so diverse. Even though some experts designate the diversity of English in various ways, such as “World Englishes” (Jenkins, 2000), “English as a world language” (Mair, 2003), or “English as a global language” (Crystal, 2003), the essence remains that English is flourishing globally in various forms. Those whose first language is English are nowadays much more open to contacts with other varieties of English due to increased migration into English speaking countries, or in Kachru’s term the Inner Circle (Kachru, 1985, 1986; Seidlhofer, 2005). This has resulted in the emergence of more and more varieties of English which is “leading in contradictory directions” of intelligibility versus diversity (Graddol, 1997, p. 3).

It is very possible that those who are so-called non-native speakers will be more prominent in the future of English, especially due to their relatively large size of population. The historical background of English alone is not sufficient to be used as the only tool for people whose first language is English in maintaining their dominance. As suggested by Graddol feelings of ownership remains strong amongst native speakers, but the power of decision making on the future of English lays with non-native speakers (1997, p. 10).

Along with their diversities, speakers of English around the globe are bound to the social and linguistic elements of their lives. Their life ideologies are components that cannot be separated and in fact influence their use of language, or languages in the case of bilingual individuals. Variations in definitions of language ideology include definitions of language ideologies as beliefs about the dominance, sufficiency, acquisition, and contact of languages (Kroskrity, 2005, p. 2). Nevertheless, as suggested by Kachru (1986, p. 51), “whatever the reasons for the earlier spread of English, we should now consider it a positive development in the twentieth-century world context”.

Indeed, the Expanding Circle (Kachru, 1985, 1986; Seidlhofer, 2005) has been one of the main locations where English expands rapidly. As one of the largest Expanding Circle countries, Indonesia with its fourth largest population in the world (United Nations, 2010, p. 1) has the potential to play an important role in the spread of English. The fact that almost 90 percent of the total Indonesian population consists of Muslims (US Library of Congress, 2004, p. 7; University of Cumbria, 1998, p. 1) make this study on perception of English even more interesting.

Furthermore, it is intriguing to rationalise the needs for such research to be conducted particularly in Yogyakarta rather than other areas in Indonesia. Indeed, the rationale is closely related not only to geographical location and population size, but also to religious and linguistic profiles of the area. The following section provides several points which comprise the rationale for conducting a study on perceptions of English among university staff and students in Yogyakarta.

The fact that Indonesian population is approximately 239.871 million people with a high growth rate of 1.1 percent (United Nations, 2010, p. 1) has made this study necessary. Perception of such a large number of Indonesian citizens has the competence of influencing its surrounding countries. This is why the study addressing the Indonesian people's perception of English is significantly needed.

In addition to the large Indonesian population as mentioned above, Indonesia possesses a large number of languages, that is some five hundreds mutually unintelligible languages which are classified into "vernacular languages", "national language", and "foreign languages" (Dardjowidjojo, 2000, p. 22). Even though the category of foreign languages is stated in a plural form, unlike the national language, the most prominent foreign language is English. The perception of English in Indonesia and its relationship with the national language as a symbol of national identity is undoubtedly worth investigating. Indonesian was pledged in the third verse of the Youth Oath at the 1928 National Youth Congress as the unifying language of the multicultural and multilingual country (Foulcher, 2000, p. 378). The existence of Indonesian as the only official language has become a significant reason for undertaking this study.

Moreover, another rationale for conducting this study is the fact that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslims (US Library of Congress, 2004, p. 7). Even though English in different contexts has frequently been associated with Christianity and is often suggested as being in contest with Islam (Karmani, 2005a, 2005b), there is no guarantee that Indonesian people hold such a contradictory perception of English in

relation to their religions. Thus, it becomes interesting to see the Indonesian people's perception of English in relation to their religious identity. Indeed, it is exciting to find out whether English is well accepted in Indonesia, or the language is felt as, in Graham's term, "an uncomfortable and at times traumatic experience" (Graham, 2004, p. 20).

In terms of location, Yogyakarta was chosen to be this study's location instead of other large cities in Indonesia due to its status as the Indonesia's city of students (Pemerintah Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2011, p. 2). As a matter of fact, young people come from all over the country to study at tertiary levels of education in Yogyakarta. Moreover, Yogyakarta has become one of the barometers for national education as proven by the existence of many nationally acknowledged tertiary educational institutions in Yogyakarta. However, it is worth to mention again here that, for the purpose of this study, the institutions involved are limited to nine prominent universities with various 'aromas' – Islamic, Catholic, and secular.

In brief, this book presents a study of five major themes of Indonesian tertiary staff and students' perception of English. First of all, this book explores how staff and students at Yogyakarta universities perceive English and its acceptance in Indonesia, which includes their perception of English promotion and status of English in Indonesia. It also covers how staff and students at Yogyakarta universities perceive English at tertiary level education, which incorporates three sub-themes: perception of English in the curriculum, perception of English as a medium of instruction, and whether or not a reinforcement of English at tertiary level is deemed necessary. Thirdly, it encompasses how staff and students at Yogyakarta universities view the roles that English plays, which includes that of English in the students' current life, for students' future, and for the country's future. Furthermore, the book also includes perception of staff and students at Yogyakarta universities about English in relation to identity. This includes their perception English and the West, in relation to national identity, and in relation to religion. Finally, the book explores staff and students' perception of World Englishes at Yogyakarta universities. This final theme includes perception of the ownership of English and of New Englishes in relation to British English, and American English. It also explores further the questions of whether or not cultural aspects are to be included in English language teaching, whether Indonesian English will develop, and in the case that it will develop then whether or not it should be included in the tertiary curriculum.

The study of how staff and students of universities in Yogyakarta view English is very crucial, especially since English has currently become the

most commonly used international language. A lot of studies have been carried out on English, however there is a very limited number of research which deals with how the speakers of English perceive and feel about the language. As strongly suggested by (Kroskrity, 2005), the speakers' viewpoints have been "neglected, dismissed, denigrated, or proscribed" in earlier research. This study on speakers' perspectives is of significant importance, considering English is and will continue to be more widely spoken by so-called non-native speakers. The notions of the speakers play an important role, since these speakers of English bear various social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

Certainly, referring to the above arguments and facts, this study is beneficial for many parties. In itself, this study is expected to significantly contribute to the discipline of English as an International Language (EIL). This is based on the consideration that there have not been many studies in the area of English as an International Language (EIL) in Indonesia. Outcomes of the study on perceptions of English of staff and students at Yogyakarta universities will be significant in terms of its pedagogical implications, both for the students and language teachers in terms of their teaching preparation.

Another general significance of this study is related to the strategic location of the country in general and specifically Yogyakarta. Situated along the equator, Indonesia is involved in a large number of interactions with various countries, including in the form of 'university to university' (U to U) relationships. Being the city of students and also being located in the centre of the country's most dominant island of Java, the study of prominent universities in Yogyakarta is predicted to provide meaningful results for the enhancement of U to U relationships between Indonesian universities and universities in other surrounding countries.

Besides U to U relationships, this research also provides contributions to countries surrounding Indonesia, including Australia. This is especially due to the fact that Australia is one of the main destinations for Indonesians in wishing to pursue higher studies after completing their bachelor degrees in Indonesia.

## **Overview of the Book**

The book is organised into ten chapters. Chapter 1 is Introduction which provides background of the study and an overview of how this book is organised. Chapter 2 consists of two sections. The first section of this chapter highlights English and Indonesia, which includes elaboration on English in Indonesia, language regulation in Indonesia, English and Islam,

and perception of English. Meanwhile, the second section elaborates the new paradigm of English as an International Language (EIL) and relevant theories of perception. Chapter 3 is focused on how perception is investigated in this study. There are six sections in this chapter, namely research design, location, participants, instruments, variables of the study, and analysing interviews and questionnaires.

Chapters 4 to 8 are based on the themes of findings in this study, which are linked in a way that will be easy to comprehend. Chapter 4 discusses English and its acceptance in Indonesia, where English promotion and the status of English in Indonesia are highlighted. Following discussion on English and its acceptance in Indonesia, Chapter 5 deals with English at tertiary level. In this chapter, discussion on English in curriculum, medium of instruction, and reinforcement of English at tertiary level are provided. In Chapter 6, the perceived roles of English are elaborated. This includes roles of English as perceived in the current life of students, for students' future, and for the country's future. The next chapter encompasses the theme of perception of English in relation with identity. Some sections are included in this chapter, namely English and the West, English and national identity, and English and religion. The final theme-based chapter is Chapter 8 where perception of World Englishes is elaborated. This chapter includes sections on the ownership of English; New Englishes, British English, and American English; the inclusion of culture(s) in ELT; the emergence of Indonesian English; and Indonesian English and English language teaching. At the end each of the above chapters, a summarising discussion is provided both as a means of critically discussing and summing up each theme.

The final two chapters are overall discussion and closing. Chapter 9 provides a discussion overarching all themes of the findings, which was presented in the earlier chapters of data analysis – Chapters 4 to 8. Based on the five research questions, the discussion is cross-linked with relevant literatures and other research findings previously presented earlier in Chapter 2. There is a highlight on the perceived tensions between English and Indonesian, as such tensions frequently revealed in the findings. Meanwhile, Chapter 10 as the final chapter of the book is a sum up of all chapters, which summarises ideas and findings forwarded in the conduct of the study. Furthermore, this chapter conveys discussions on the implication of the study and recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ENGLISH, INDONESIA, EIL AND PERCEPTION

This chapter consists of two main sections – a literature review on English and Indonesia, and a theoretical framework which is based on the paradigm of English as an International Language (EIL). As suggested in the previous chapter, the first section encompasses English in Indonesia, language regulation in Indonesia, English and Islam, and perception of English. Meanwhile, the second section mainly discusses the new paradigm of English as an International Language (EIL) and relevant theories of perception.

#### **English and Indonesia**

The use of English as an International Language continues to develop in Southeast Asia. Surrounded by the English speaking countries of Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Papua New Guinea, and the Philippines, Indonesia is the one of only two countries in the area that does not give English the status of an official language. The other country is Timor Leste which used to be part of Indonesia prior to its independence in 1999. Language use, as termed by Crystal (2003, p. xii) is “easily politicized”. The abovementioned English speaking countries all of which were either previously colonised or strongly influenced by the British and the US illustrate this point.

Most of the previous research on English in Indonesia focused on language teaching and education (Agustien, 2000; Dardjowidjojo, 2000; Djiwandono, 2000; Hamied, 2000; Kweldju, 2000; Yuwono, 2005). Even though there have been some studies investigating how English fits within the society in Indonesia (Alip, 2004; Gunarwan, 2000; Kridalaksana, 2000; Lowenberg, 1991; B. D. Smith, 1991), they have been much fewer in number than those that research English Language Teaching (ELT). Incorporating both areas, Alwasilah in the Jakarta Post writes popular articles on English language teaching, education, and socio-culture. These articles have been compiled in a book consisting of two grand areas – language education, and education and culture (2001).

To provide a clear review of literatures relevant to the study, this section is divided into four sub-sections namely English in Indonesia, Language Regulation in Indonesia, English and Islam, and Perception of English. Those theme-based sections presented in this chapter are in relevance with the context of Indonesia as a country which relationship with English is quite unique.

### **English in Indonesia**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is worthwhile investigating English in Indonesia, since Islam is the religion of the majority of the population and *Bahasa Indonesia* or Indonesian is its only national and official language. Even though English has spread into this mostly Muslim highly populated nation, the language has never been an Indonesian official or national language. The national language, as pledged in the 1928 Youth Congress by the youth nationalists, is Indonesian. This language was proposed as the national language with the aim of uniting the diverse ethnic groups, each with their own languages in the country (Foulcher, 2000, p. 378). This has resulted in a strong national identity that unites all Indonesians. As Smith puts it, the Indonesian language has consequently been a “sensitive” entity to its people’s identity (B. D. Smith, 1991).

From a historical point of view, the status of foreign languages in Indonesia is somewhat related to the struggles between the Dutch, the English, and the Japanese who all attempted to colonise the country. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there was a terrible conflict between two Indonesian invaders – the Dutch and the English. Two memorable events happened, namely the Dutch destroying English factory in Jakarta in 1618, and the Amboina Massacre when the Dutch killed eighteen English men in 1623. As a result, neither Dutch nor English was adopted as a lingua franca, rather Malay and Portuguese were the main tools for communication between the expatriates and local people. Although both languages were used, it was Malay that developed further and continued to spread.

During the occupation eras of both the Dutch for 350 years from 1794 onwards, interrupted by the British for only a short period from 1811 to 1816, not much attention was paid to language and education. A twenty-pupil English-medium school was established in 1771, but this was mainly for the children of European planters. In fact, only a limited number of British families used it. Since there were more cases of mixed marriages between British and local people, local Malay dialect adopting many English words was more frequently used as the main tool for

communication. Dutch-medium schools offered English and French as foreign languages were established in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some future Indonesian nationalists had the opportunities to attend these schools. During the Japanese occupation, 1942-1945, more caution was given to foreign language(s). As a matter of fact, the Japanese prohibited the use of all foreign languages of European origins (B. D. Smith, 1991, p. 40).

In 1945, English was chosen by decree as the main foreign language by the Indonesian government. Even though the Dutch language had been used in Indonesia for some three and a half centuries, English was chosen because Dutch was identified as the language of the enemy, a reflection of attitudes to past Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. A further reason for the adoption of English was that Dutch did not have the status of an international language (Dardjowidjojo, 2000, p. 23; Yuwono, 2005, p. 4).

Thus, English has been taught at schools since 1945. Since then, English Language Teaching (ELT) has been facilitated by many foreign institutions such as the Ford Foundation from the U.S.A. and London and Leeds Universities from the U.K. Strong support for English from the Indonesian government is also shown by a declaration of the Ministry of Education that the aims of English Language Teaching (ELT), which starts with secondary education, are for social justice and prosperity through enrichment of human and economic resources (B. D. Smith, 1991, p. 40).

This does not mean that things have gone smoothly and that English has spread around the country through education. As asserted by Yuwono (2005, p. 4), English teaching in Indonesia has never been easy throughout its history. In the implementation of five different curricula of ELT throughout an approximately 50 year time frame – Grammar-translation Approach in 1945, Oral Approach in 1968, Audio-lingual Approach in 1975, Communicative Approach in 1984, and more Communicative Approach in 1994 (Dardjowidjojo, 2000, p. 26; Jazadi, 2000, p. 33), the main role of English as a tool for communication has been frequently neglected (Widiyanto, 2005, p. 111). In his study, Smith records that weekly sessions of two to four hour of English at secondary schools have resulted in individuals mastering less than 800 words (1991, p. 41). These inefficient and ineffective ELT practices at schools have triggered the mushrooming of non-formal English language courses outside school areas, which promise better mastery of English. On the one hand this certainly shows Indonesian people's desire to learn English. On the other hand, however, this indicates the inadequacy of ELT at formal educational institutions.

In addition, the Indonesian government's support for the spread of English throughout the country has not been consistent. There was a time



in the 1970s when the government prohibited the use of English in advertisements on televisions, shop signs, and announcements, as this was seen as “cultural pollution” (B. D. Smith, 1991, p. 41). Still, the extensive influence of English media such as movies, magazines, and books, is uncontrollable. Moreover, such media exposure has positioned American English as the main variety of English and British English as another variety of a special status (B. D. Smith, 1991, p. 41). Indeed, Indonesians have not supported any variety of English or English(es) other than the ones used in textbooks and those used by teachers – American English and British English (Dardjowidjojo, 2000, p. 27). Positively viewing the use of English in Indonesia, however, Lowenberg puts forward the idea that it should be treated as an “additional language” (1991, p. 136). Lowenberg’s idea is based on the fact that it provides loan words that have been and are being incorporated into the Indonesian language, even though English itself has not been widely used in Indonesia. This practice opens a possibility for Indonesian English to eventually emerge in the future.

Glancing at these historical facts, it seems fair to say that English in Indonesia cannot be viewed merely as a manifestation of linguistic imperialism. The language is learned without the aim of replacing either Indonesian or the local languages. There is, however, a feeling of inferiority among Indonesians about communicating on the international stage, which powers the motivation to learn English. Within the country, however, the role of English is not as prominent as that of Indonesian, as English is only intelligible to a limited proportion of the whole Indonesian population.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that there has long been a strong tendency towards using British and/or American varieties of English. The situation reflects Tan and Rubdy’s statement (2008, p. 7) that “negative attitudes towards varieties of English that do not conform to Standard English norms (usually British or American) in the Inner Circle are easily transferred to countries in the peripheries”. Moreover, the fact that the most available ELT books in Indonesia feature British and American English has strengthened this tendency.

Despite the situation described above, English has become very important for Indonesians due to globalisation. This point is confirmed by Yuwono (2005, p. 15) who explicitly suggests that the importance of English in Indonesian school system is closely related to demands of the global era. Several main problems, however, need to be resolved. These are large classes in teaching English, insufficient mastery of English on the part of teachers, unfamiliarity with curriculum, and most of all the shift of teachers’ role from “masters” into “facilitators” (Dardjowidjojo, 1997;

Kirkpatrick & Prescott, 1996). Such a shifting role is not a trivial matter, especially since teachers in Indonesia are very much role models not only for their students but also the society, thus not only in school but also in social life (Widiyanto, 2005, p. 107). Consequently, teachers possess a high social status as persons that others look up to, even though they are often not financially well off.

Moving on to discussing the national language, Indonesian was derived from Malay. The language was chosen as the national language of Indonesia precisely because it was not one of the dominant local languages. This enables it to function as a unifying language in this multicultural and multilingual country with almost no risk of arousing jealousy between ethnic groups. In fact, there are five reasons for the success of Indonesian as a national language (Bertrand, 2003). The first reason is that Indonesian is spoken as a *lingua franca* among people of different ethnic backgrounds since the language is easy to learn. Secondly, the emergence of Indonesian as the national language has significantly reduced inter-ethnic conflicts. Furthermore, the language is viewed as a language for modernisation. Fourthly, even ethnic groups of different idealisms have found the advantages of using Indonesian outstrip its disadvantages. Finally, the language is taught at schools and through this means has become the most dominant language in the country. In brief “linguistic policies met with little open resistance because of the government’s tight hold on power” (Bertrand, 2003, p. 265). It is precisely governmental power that has been the reason for no overt-resistance to Indonesian.

In fact, Indonesian has now become a mother tongue in Indonesia. In 1992, it was reported that the proportions of the Indonesian population that used Javanese, Indonesian, and Sundanese as their mother tongues were 38.44%, 15.34%, and 13.80%, respectively (Grimes 1992 in Bertrand, 2003, p. 269). One area where Javanese is generally used is Central Java, including the city of Yogyakarta, which is the geographical context of this study. These figures show a recent shift towards Indonesian as the mother tongue, replacing local languages including Javanese. This endorses Bertrand’s finding that instead of languages, religion and region have now become ethnic markers for Indonesians (2003, p. 267). The growing strength of Indonesian within the country is significant due to its close relationship with the nationalist and anti-colonial movements. Indeed, Indonesian has become one of “the pillars of nationalist expression and an important source of unity for the diverse ethnic groups” (Bertrand, 2003, p. 269).

In a broader context, there has been a discourse of making Indonesian an international language. However, as Tan and Rubdy suggest, “value

profiles of languages and language varieties often reflect how they are positioned in global as well as local markets” (2008, p. 4). This has made the idea of making Indonesian into an international language currently out of reach. This is because the use of any language in the international arena is determined by economic power. Clearly, the Indonesian language has not been able to provide such power sufficiently.

Besides support for and excitement about the developing and proliferation of English in Indonesia, negative responses towards English can also be found. One of the most straightforward reactions against English in Indonesia is a paper by Asim Gunarwan (1993) delivered at the Indonesian Language Congress in 2000 entitled “*Bahasa Asing Sebagai Kendala Pembinaan Bahasa Indonesia*”, which approximately translates to “Foreign Language as a Constraint towards Indonesian Language Enrichment”. In this article, English is viewed as the most constraining foreign language on Indonesian language learning in Indonesia. Such a strong opposing view does not happen to other foreign languages in Indonesia, including Chinese, Japanese, French, German, or Arabic, even though Arabic is frequently viewed as an Islamic language while Indonesia is by population the largest Muslim country in the world. Instead, Gunarwan explicitly states that English is most likely to constrain Indonesian language enrichment.

Stronger claims are also found in articles written by Gunarwan, in which he asserts that English impedes the development of a positive attitude or passion for Indonesian (1993, 2000). Gunarwan also claims that English has made Indonesian people more Anglicised or Americanised (1993, p. 670; 2000, p. 67). His article clearly exhibits an anxiety that the Indonesian people experience national identity wear off. His concern that Indonesian people are becoming Anglicised or Americanised due to the use of English clearly suggests that Gunarwan was either unaware how local values can be accommodated in new varieties of English or consciously making statements as he felt the need to defend the Indonesian language. However, the findings of this research establish that languages play different roles in the complex identity constructions of modern Indonesians: local languages are the language of traditions, Indonesian is the language for solidarity, and English is the language for modernisation.

Indeed, Gunarwan’s concern of diminishing loyalty towards Indonesian due to the increasing use of English in Indonesia is not relevant. Instead of limiting the learning of English into exclusively treating the language as an instrument, the Indonesian people can actually make the best use of English to enrich their national identity. Indeed, identity is about who we are and who we are not in the society. In Guibernau’s words (2007, p. 10),

“the defining criteria of identity are continuity over time and differentiation from others – both fundamental elements of national identity”. Furthermore, Guibernau claims that experiences across time provide nation members with a certain sense of identity that is specific to them and differentiates them from the people of other nations. In addition, Goebel argues that identity is “fluid and something that constantly emerges within a chain of communicative events involving discourses of sameness and difference” (2010, p. 2). Thus, communication in English can actually enrich the national identity of Indonesians.

It cannot be denied, however, that national identity is not a simple mechanism of the members of a unified nation pledging as one. Rather it is a complex agreement that involves both the rational and supra-rational elements and dimensions of the diverse individuals who make up the nation. More specifically, Guibernau classifies national identity into five dimensions: psychological, cultural, territorial, historical and political (Guibernau, 2007). In the psychological dimension, Guibernau argues that the role of emotion is stronger than that of reason, because of the prominence of a collective sentiment as a nation. In terms of the cultural dimension, members of the nation hold a similar set of values, beliefs, customs, conventions, habits, languages and practices. Moreover, Guibernau believes that such a shared culture can create a bond among fellow nationals as separate and distinct from people of other nations. It is the territorial dimension that requests a further attention in the current era, as territories are fading away and countries are becoming borderless.

At the micro level, the concept of the “hybrid” pragmatic of World Englishes proposed by Nihalani (2010, p. 42) seems to be the model most compatible with Indonesian context. Nihalani suggests that there should be negotiations of language practices – “‘divergence’ at the segmental level and ‘convergence’ in some ways, at the supra-segmental level”. This means that English speakers do not need to change their phonetic and phonemic system, rather distinct phonetic or phonemic system can be used as a means of putting forward the flavour of national identity. Nihalani clearly asserts that language practices negotiate between national identity on the one hand and international intelligibility on the other, despite the fact that these are frequently seen as two opposing tendencies. In other words, there are variations in which English can be learned and used by Indonesians. By adopting a hybrid English, Indonesian English could become one of the diverse varieties of English in the world.

The next question is the Indonesian people’s readiness for their own variety of English. Indonesians are accustomed to diversity, as shown in the national slogan “*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*”, a Sanskrit phrase which

means unity in diversity. This familiarity with diversity has brought about a tendency of Indonesians to be emotionally ready for accommodating new varieties of English. Not only “unity in diversity”, but “the spirit of tolerance” also operates in almost all aspects of their life, including language. This situation is also in line with Chew’s idea of language change as proceeding “from chaos to order”, where a heterogeneous community is believed to move “in the direction of increasing complexity and integration of more and more diverse elements” (Chew, 2010).

The elaboration above has made any definition of suitable English learning in Indonesia more complex. Indeed, it is not a simple matter to decide which English or Englishes should be taught to Indonesians in Indonesia. It is true that Indonesian and Malay are similar languages with the same origin. It is also true that the cultures of Indonesia and Malaysia are similar. However, Kirkpatrick’s idea that Indonesia is likely to choose an English variety spoken in neighbouring countries in particular Singaporean and/or Malaysian English as its “model of choice” (2006, p. 77) is not likely to occur. This is for political reasons and reasons of national pride. Indonesia and Malaysia have a simultaneous intimate and competitive relationship.

Indeed, the reason Indonesians hope to master English is mostly for communicating with people across the globe. It is not because they adore some colonial power or powers. Recalling the section on the history of this language in Indonesia, English was chosen as the main foreign language because it had no connection with the trauma inflicted by the invading Dutch.

The current situation is in fact quite dynamic. As fluency becomes the main outcome of English learning, “non-native sounding English” (Dardjowidjojo, 2000, p. 27) is nowadays becoming more highly appreciated. English words are also being adopted into and adapted to the Indonesian language, and this language enrichment is in fact a means for enriching the Indonesian national identity. In brief, English is acknowledged as the international language of “modern knowledge and technology” pursued for the sake of “national development”, whereas Indonesian is established in its role in “the media, and national unity” (B. D. Smith, 1991, p. 43).

A study by Rusli (2004, pp. 238-239) revealed that English teaching in Indonesia should refer to the current needs of the society. This involves the restructure of the curriculum and the provision of technological facilities such as computers and the Internet, and opportunities for English educators to progress. Even though her data collection instrument is still based on the native and non-native paradigm, Rusli has certainly made a

very important point by proposing a change in the curriculum to respond to the current global situation that the Indonesian people face.

### **Language Regulation in Indonesia**

On a slightly different angle from the English curriculum, the Indonesian legal system has been concerned to strengthen Indonesian as the national language. In one of the recently released Laws, for instance the law on the national flag, language, coat of arms, and anthem (*Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 24 Tahun 2009 tentang Bendera, Bahasa, dan Lambang Negara serta Lagu Kebangsaan* 2009), the legal prioritisation of Indonesian over other languages is clearly advanced. In fact, Article 3 of the abovementioned Law suggests the following:

*(3) Bahasa Indonesia sebagai bahasa resmi negara sebagaimana dimaksud pada ayat (1) berfungsi sebagai bahasa resmi kenegaraan, pengantar pendidikan, komunikasi tingkat nasional, pengembangan kebudayaan nasional, transaksi dan dokumentasi niaga, serta sarana pengembangan dan pemanfaatan ilmu pengetahuan, teknologi, seni, dan bahasa media massa.*

((3) The Indonesian language as the official national language as mentioned in point (1) functions as the official language of the country, for medium of instruction in education, for national communication, for national culture development, for commercial transaction and documentation, as well as for knowledge development and utilisation, in technology, in art, and as the language for mass media.)

It is explicitly stated in another section of the same law that Indonesian as the national language was “declared in the Youth Oath on 28 October 1928 as the language of unity, which is developed in accordance to the dynamics of the nation civilisation” (*Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 24 Tahun 2009 tentang Bendera, Bahasa, dan Lambang Negara serta Lagu Kebangsaan* 2009, p. 13).

Moreover, even though the Indonesian language is not currently positioned to become an international language, the government strongly supports a proposal to change its status in this direction. In its Law No 24/2009 Part Four (*Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 24 Tahun 2009 tentang Bendera, Bahasa, dan Lambang Negara serta Lagu Kebangsaan* 2009, p. 17) entitled *Peningkatan Fungsi Bahasa Indonesia Menjadi Bahasa Internasional* (The Upgrading of the Indonesian Language to Become an International Language) Article 44, it is stated: