

English Immersion programme and sense of nationalism: A case study of a senior high school in Indonesia

Pritz Hutabarat

*Naskah diserahkan: 25-07-2023;
Direvisi: 31-07-2023;
Diterima: 02-08-2023;*

English Literature, Maranatha Christian University
Email: pritz.hutabarat@lang.maranatha.edu

ABSTRACT: The status of English as an international language (EIL) has shaped the teaching of English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL). In a multicultural and multi linguistic country such as Indonesia, the learning of English has created tensions amongst the people. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how learning English in an English immersion program effect student's identity as Indonesian learners. The participants of this study were 59 secondary school and 10 teachers at an EIP school in Indonesia. The data were collected through questionnaire, semi-structured interview and field observation. The data from questionnaire was analysed using descriptive statistics and the data from interviews was analysed using thematic analysis. The findings show that there is a significant difference between how the students view their learning and their teacher's in terms of how it effects their sense of nationalism. The teachers were concerned about the student's attitude towards Indonesian arts and history claiming that they did not show respect to the local culture. Whereas students seem to dot aware of how their learning experience shape their identity. The study proposes a social and cultural examination of the EIP to complement the discussion about English learning process in Indonesia.

Keywords: EIL, EIP, ESL/EFL, nationalism

ABSTRAK: Status Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Internasional (EIL) telah membentuk pengajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua / asing (ESL / EFL) di seluruh dunia. Di negara multikultural dan multibahasa seperti Indonesia, belajar bahasa Inggris telah menciptakan ketegangan di antara orang-orang. Oleh karena itu, studi ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki bagaimana belajar bahasa Inggris dalam program immersion bahasa Inggris mempengaruhi identitas siswa sebagai siswa Indonesia. Para peserta studi ini adalah 59 sekolah menengah dan 10 guru di sebuah sekolah EIP di Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner, wawancara semi-struktur dan observasi lapangan. Data dari kuesioner dianalisa menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan data dari wawancara dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa ada perbedaan yang signifikan antara bagaimana siswa melihat pembelajaran mereka dan guru mereka dalam hal bagaimana itu mempengaruhi rasa nasionalisme mereka. Guru-guru khawatir tentang sikap siswa terhadap seni dan sejarah Indonesia, mengklaim bahwa mereka tidak menunjukkan rasa hormat terhadap budaya lokal. Sementara siswa tampaknya menyadari bagaimana pengalaman belajar mereka membentuk identitas mereka. Studi ini mengusulkan pemeriksaan sosial dan budaya dari EIP untuk melengkapi diskusi tentang proses belajar bahasa Inggris di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: EIL, EIP, ESL/EFL, nationalism

INTRODUCTION

Numerous attempts have been made to enhance the quality of English instruction in Indonesia, but none appear to have produced the desired results.

The implementation of a full English immersion program (FIP) is an ambitious strategy selected by some elite institutions in Indonesia in an effort to maximize exposure to the language in meaningful contexts. One of the founders of the institution where this study was conducted asserts that through a full immersion program, Indonesian students will be able to speak and write English nearly as well as native speakers. This is comparable to Lanneberg's critical period hypothesis (1967), cited by Bot, Lowie, and Verspoor (2005), which states that it is impossible to attain a native-like level of proficiency when learning a second language begins after a critical period, which is typically associated with puberty.

Plethora of studies around EMI indeed confirm the assumption that EMI improve student's English proficiency level (Baldwin, 2021; Gaffney, 2007; Genesee, 2007; Lenker & Rhodes, 2007; Liu et al., 2017; Savage & Hughes, 2014; Tarhan, 2003; Tong et al., 2008; Wei, 2007). The claims include that it is suitable for teaching English to younger students (Lenker & Rhodes, 2007), improve student's confidence, intercultural understanding, and interpersonal communication skills (Liu et al., 2017), and encouraging bilingualism (Tedick & Fortune, 2012).

On the other hand, the social and cultural growth of the children is often overlooked in the effort to develop student's English skills. This is an irony since student's social and cultural development is an integral component of the implementation of an EIP. There has been a tension between the need to establish a global and unified standardization in the sphere of education is what motivates the use of English as a language of instruction (Ballantine & Spade, 2008) and the need to nurture student's sense of nationality. One clear example can be seen in the Indonesian Constitution Court asserts that the implementation of EMI manifests a clear harm to students' sense of nationalism in the instance of the closing of international standard schools in Indonesia (RSBI). In order to equip its students to compete worldwide, Indonesia's educational system should help them develop their sense of self as Indonesians who uphold the country's ideals and are proud of its culture.

Nationalism is an ideology that Handler (1988) defines as an ideology about individuated being. According to him, it is concerned with boundedness, continuity, and homogeneity that includes diversity. In addition, he describes nationalism as an ideology in which social reality, conceived in terms of nationhood, is endowed with the reality of natural objects. Another definition about nationalism is a sense of belonging to a larger group than one's immediate family and acquaintances (Casas, 2008). Citizens esteem each other's well-being as well as their own when they believe that they are all engaged in a national endeavor.

From the above definitions, it can be deduced that nationalism encompasses not only the political aspect of a nation, but also the cultural and value system that leads a community to form an agreed-upon national entity. According to Koentjaraningrat (1974), nationalism moulds the identity of a nation, and each member is expected to exhibit certain characteristics to represent their nationality. It is evident from this definition that a language plays a crucial role as

a means of national identification. He identifies three cultural forms: ideas, complex activities, and artefacts. Ideas are intangible and can be documented through letters, books, recordings, databases, etc. This study restricts the discussion of nationalism to four categories: the ability to speak and appreciation of Indonesian language, the knowledge and appreciation of Indonesian national days, the appreciation and knowledge of Indonesian dances and music, and the awareness and appreciation of the concept of collaborative community service, also known as *gotong royong*.

There haven't been many studies done to find out how EIP effects students' sense of nationalism. This study fills a vacuum by carefully examining how stakeholders perceive the English immersion program (EIP) implementation at an Indonesian senior high school and by examining how the program affects the kids' feeling of identity and nationalism. Therefore, the research question guiding this study is: To what extent does learning in an English environment influence the sense of nationalism and shape the identity of the students as Indonesian citizens?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted as a case study research in which it employed naturalistic qualitative research design where the researcher did not manipulate or interfere with the classroom activities, but worked with the case specifically as the design point of qualitative research (Silverman, 2020). In addition, this research fits with the guidelines given by Yin (2003) as quoted by Baxter and Susan (2015) where it covers contextual conditions because it is believed to be relevant to the phenomenon under study.

This study's research design is a combined one, in large part due to the use of two distinct data collection methodologies. As detailed in the subsequent sections of this chapter, two data collection methods—questionnaire survey and interview—were employed for data collection. These strategies are associated with quantitative and qualitative paradigms, respectively. In order to find answers to the present study's research queries, a combination of two strategies was employed. The research literature in the social sciences is replete with examples of combining data collection strategies across a vast array of studies. Furthermore, this study triangulated the data from the questionnaire, interview and observation. Triangulation is defined as using different research methods to explore the same phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Figure 1 shows the data collection instruments used in the study namely, questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The goal of using multiple data collection instruments is to improve the trustworthiness of the results of the data analysis process. When it came to the sources of the material, both students and teachers were involved. Each group made their own tools to collect both kinds of information. There was a survey questionnaire, a set of rules for interviews, and unstructured notes. The first one had Likert scales and both category and numeric questions, which gave us data that we could measure. The pilot study also had both qualitative and quantitative steps that were used to check for validity and dependability. When looking at the data, descriptive statistics and scores were

used, which are all quantitative methods. A qualitative method called "content analysis" was used to look at the conversations and field notes from observations.



Figure 1. Data collection instruments

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The study adapted Koentjorongrat's (1974) formulation of what Indonesian identity and attitude would look like. Therefore, students' sense of belonging to their country and their sense of nationalism were looked at in four key areas: their love of and ability to communicate in Bahasa Indonesia, their appreciation of and knowledge of traditional arts from Indonesia, their knowledge of Indonesian history, and their understanding of "gotong royong" (community work) in Indonesia. The student's appreciation is taken into account because it is thought that if students can speak and value their mother tongue, they are more likely to feel like they belong in the community. Students should remember important historical dates to show how much they care about their country's past and how hard they worked to get rid of the Dutch. The arts of their country, whether they are traditional or new, should also be recognized and valued. Lastly, a clear idea of gotong royong is asked about as one of the many ways that Indonesians connect with each other.

Attitude towards Indonesian language

Indonesian became the country's official language after a youth conference on October 28, 1978. At this conference, young people from different ethnic groups came together and said that they needed a common language to help them fight for Indonesia's freedom. Table 1.1 provides a summary of how pupils perceive the role of and their attitude towards Indonesian language. As can be seen, there are two categories with mean values that indicate the uncertainty of student perceptions, namely the preference for Indonesian over English in communication and the significance of Indonesian in academic matters.

Table 1. Student's attitude towards Indonesian language

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am happy that I can speak Indonesian properly	59	3,8814	,87266
I prefer using English than Indonesian in my communication	59	3,1864	,75372
Indonesian language is not compatible in academic field	59	2,7458	1,01018
Indonesian language should keep its status as the official language	59	4,3390	,60487
Using Indonesian language properly shows our respect to our country	59	3,4407	,93350
Valid N (listwise)	59		

The data shows that most of the students say they will be happy if they can speak Indonesian well. This shows that, even though they hear English all the time, they still think it's good to be able to speak Indonesian properly. The second part of this segment is to find out if the kids prefer to speak in English or in their native language. The data also shows that most of the students couldn't decide between the two options between English or Indonesian as the dominant language for communication. This shows that Indonesian is not the main language they use to talk to each other. During a conversation with one student, a further observation was made. The student chose English over Indonesian for the interview. He claimed he was not really able to communicate in Indonesian.

The third aspect investigated is how students perceive their native language in relation to the use of Indonesian in academic settings. The data reveals that more than half of students do not believe the Indonesian language plays a substantial role in academic matters. The interview affirmed that some students believe that studying in English is preferable to studying in Indonesian because the origin of the subjects and the textbooks are written in English.

The fourth topic under consideration is the status of the Indonesian language as the country's official language. According to Table 1.1 the majority of students believe that the Indonesian language should remain the country's official language. The final issue in this segment looked into students' reactions to comments claiming that utilizing Indonesian language shows respect for our country. The data shows that more than half of the students believe that speaking the Indonesian language does not imply respect for the Indonesian country. This suggests that more over half of the students believe there is no correlation between utilizing the Indonesian language and respect for their country.

The celebration of national holidays

The second segment of the discussion regarding the students' sense of nationalism concerns their understanding of Indonesian history. Five Likert-scaled statements were presented to the students who were asked to respond. Table 2.1 provides a summary of the students' perspectives on the significance of recognizing Indonesian history. The data presented in the table reflects students' negative perceptions of their country's history, with mean values ranging from 1.9 to 3.9 (with the exception of the highest mean, which does not reflect the students' sense of nationality but rather is motivated by personal gain).

Table 2. Student's attitude towards national days

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am happy to have flag ceremony at school.	59	3,1017	,80290
I know most of the national days of Indonesia	59	2,5763	,74749
I often watch Indonesian independence's day celebration on TV	59	2,1695	,69858
We should commemorate our national days	59	3,9661	,78710
Commemoration of our national days is out of date	59	1,9492	,59953
Valid N (listwise)	59		

The first statement inquires as to whether students enjoy flag ceremonies at their school. This aspect is relevant for this study because the Indonesian Minister of Education asserts that the importance of flag ceremonies in fostering a sense of nationalism among Indonesian pupils will be regulated by a Ministry of Education decree (Permendikbud Nomor 22 Tahun 2018 Tentang Pedoman Upacara Bendera Di Sekolah, 2018).

Furthermore, the data indicates that the majority of them do not really have such a strong need for it nor did they reject it. However, when asked about the Independence day flag ceremony, the data reveals that the majority of the students do not observe the Independence Day Ceremony on television, despite the fact that the program is broadcast on every channel in the country. During Indonesian independence flag ceremony, the students appeared particularly displeased with having to remain still for more than an hour on the field. Some of them even chuckled while singing the national anthem since they weren't singing it seriously. Despite the professors' cautions, they kept moving and talked to their buddies quite a bit.

The third statement relates to the student's appreciation for Indonesian historical events. The data shows that there is an ignorance with regard to

acknowledging historical events in Indonesia. Half of the participants did not think that such thing is important.

On contrary to the previous statement which reveals student's apathy of Indonesia historical events, the majority of the participants think that holidays must be observed. According to the data nearly 70% of respondents concur or strongly agree with the statement. This high percentage is not a reflection of their desire to commemorate the struggles their country has endured in the past, but rather their own personal interest, as they believe that if all national holidays are celebrated, they will have more school holidays. It is evident from the interviews that their motivation for celebrating national holidays is solely to receive additional days off. When asked if commemorating Indonesian national days is outdated, the majority of students concurred with the findings of the previous response. One of the teachers said:

"The lack of appreciation for the Indonesian language among our students has weakened their feeling of national pride. People prefer using English than Indonesian because they perceive it to be distinguished." (T2, Interview)

The appreciation for Indonesian art

The third segment examining the students' sense of nationalism concerns their appreciation for Indonesian arts. Table 3 summarizes the students' perceptions of Indonesian traditional arts and it can be seen that the mean values are low except for statement number three. This indicates that the students have negative perceptions of the traditional arts of their county.

Table 3. Student's perceptions of Indonesian traditional arts

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I enjoy watching traditional dance	59	2,7288	,94377
I know more of English songs than Indonesian	59	3,8305	,89351
Indonesian music is not appealing to me	59	3,1186	1,13083
I know traditional arts	59	2,2542	,80072
My school should teach traditional arts	59	2,6441	1,07900
Valid N (listwise)	59		

The initial statement inquires as to whether or not students appreciate watching traditional dances. Table 3 reveals that more students were not enthusiastic about traditional dance. According to the interviews, they did not have the opportunity to routinely observe traditional dances, but they also claimed they would not have done so anyway. The second and third claims pertain to the genres of music that students listen to. Table shows that the majority of the students claim to listen to more English songs than Indonesian songs, because they think that Indonesian music is unappealing. This is in line with the data gathered from the observations, the pupils preferred singing English songs and worshipped

western musicians instead of Indonesian ones. A similar observation was seen during students' talent event where they had the chance to demonstrate their singing or dancing skills. Eight groups performed throughout the concert, six of which sung and two of which danced. When offered the option to select the songs or dances they would perform, all of the pupils selected English songs, contemporary hip-hop, and Korean dances. The show's MC primarily used English while making occasional jokes in Indonesian. The audience appeared to be enjoying the show a lot.

The fourth and fifth statements deal with the students' knowledge of the general traditional arts and their opinions about the teaching of the arts at their school. The data shows that more than half of the participants admitted that they did not have sufficient knowledge of the traditional arts where their responses to the fifth statement confirm their lack of interest in the art as nearly half of them do not want to study traditional arts at school.

The comprehension of the notion of Gotong Royong

The final aspect of nationalism and identity relates to *gotong royong*, an Indonesian term for community collaboration. *Gotong royong* serves two purposes: first, it is an efficient method for completing a project, and second, it is an excellent socialization tool. In this research, five distinct aspects of *gotong royong* are examined. The first and second factors are associated with a propensity to participate in community service. The outcomes are detailed in Table 4.1 which summarizes the findings on this segment where it can be seen that the means range from 1.69 to 3.94. It can be inferred that the students are not in favor of *gotong royong* although they do not think that people's individual activities should prevent them from participating to the work.

Table 4. Student's perceptions of *gotong royong*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I enjoy doing community work	59	2,4237	,77021
I always take part in community work	59	1,6949	,59464
It is better to pay people than <i>gotong royong</i>	59	3,1356	,89938
<i>Gotong royong</i> is difficult to do	59	3,9492	,53896
It takes ages to complete the project through <i>gotong royong</i>	59	3,0678	,90714
Valid N (listwise)	59		

The third aspect of *gotong royong* focuses on the students' perceptions of paying individuals for work as opposed to collaborating with the community. As can be seen in Table 4.1 the students have differing perspectives on the issue, and there is no dominant response to this statement. Some students believe that *gotong royong* is preferable to paying others to complete their work, while others prefer to do whatever they want and therefore prefer to pay others. The fourth factor relates to the difficulty in conducting *gotong royong* due to the private

activities or occupations of community members. Moreover, the majority of students think that working collaboratively in the shape of *gotong royong* is not effective thus takes so much time to complete any projects. This indicates that the individual activities of community members should not impede them from participating in *gotong royong*.

Discussion

The interviews reveal that teachers and students are both concerned about how students are losing their proficiency in Indonesian, which may weaken their sense of nationalism, limit their ability to communicate with other Indonesians, make it more difficult for them to pass the national examination, and separate them from their cultural roots as Indonesian people. These effects can seriously impair their capacity to function as Indonesian citizens since they will be unable to successfully communicate with other Indonesians. On the other hand, everyone here concurs that the Indonesian language should continue to hold its position as the nation's unifying language. This demonstrates their continued feeling of nationalism and their understanding of the significance of maintaining Indonesia's official language as Indonesian. This proves that identity is a complex phenomenon where acquiring a foreign language and culture does not necessarily mean abandoning or rejecting one's native language and culture. This is inline with a study in Thailand investigating the effects of learning English to student's identity (Boonchum, 2010). According to the study involving 113 students from three university, there is very small and insignificant effect of learning English to student's identity.

A study in India argues that, English proficiency has come to play a crucial role in the acquisition and performance of other significant forms of capital associated with middle-class identity, in addition to being a valuable form of class cultural capital in its own right. As a result, the ability to demonstrate proficiency in English has come to be regarded as essential for claiming and sustaining a place in the middle class, regardless of other forms of class cultural capital a person may possess (Jayadeva, 2018). This is in line with Smith's (1991) observation regarding English learning in Indonesia in which he asserts that learning English as a foreign in Indonesia is related to the social class. Only those who come from middle and upper class were able to access informal English classes at private English language institutions.

In contrast to Indonesian traditional music and dance, the students' responses to the surveys indicate that they prefer to enjoy western music and art. The interviews with the students, who claimed that both Indonesian dances and music are not enticing to them, provide the background information for this choice. The information acquired from the observations supports these conclusions. According to the observations, the pupils seem to have a stronger connection to western music and dance than Indonesian music and dance, not because they dislike Indonesia.

In this study, the teachers appeared to be more concerned about the students' lack of nationalism than the students themselves. Similar to what Hatori

(2005) expressed in Japan, the teachers' worry is expressed in a similar way. He highlighted the writings of numerous other authors who came to the conclusion that the expansion of English had caused significant issues for those nations. According to Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2013), from the standpoint of English linguistic imperialism, the world is "characterized by inequality" in that the major English-speaking countries that make up the Center maintain power, while the affected countries that make up the Periphery now function as subordinate interstate actors within this power structure. This power system is comparable to racism and sexism and (re)produces imperialism in the fields of culture, science, media, and education. Citing Ricento, they argue that colonialism itself was not the greatest threat to independence, but rather the globalization and control of culture. In light of these theoretical ideas, Hatori (2005) proposes a different approach to the teaching of foreign languages in Japan. His view is that Japan's language policy in education should not be based on nationalistic/expansionistic or laissez-faire tendencies, but rather should promote minority languages and terminate required English instruction in order to combat linguistic imperialism.

In resonance with Hatori (2005) study, Kiavar and Yaghoubi-Notasha (2019) investigated attitudes of bilinguals and monolinguals regarding ten issues, including: general perceptions of English, the status of English, text and content matter comprehensibility through English, job prospects, official status, culture learning, integrating with American or British cultures, religion and foreign language learning, and English ownership. Compliance with British English, American English, or English as a global language. The findings of this study showed that Persian individuals had an extremely tough time learning English. Participants from Azerbaijan place a high emphasis on learning English. Participants who were Kurdish were more in agreement than others regarding the value of Persian and English.

Participants from Azerbaijan and Kurdistan were in complete agreement that English should be taught to all high school and college students. The Azerbaijani participants felt that English should be regarded as the dominant language in Iran. Participants from the Persian culture adopted markedly different attitudes, exhibiting confusion whenever an English-language text or subject is presented. Participants who spoke Persian firmly agreed that the use of English in Iran constitutes linguistic imperialism. Participants from Azerbaijan believed that learning English helps them get a great deal of knowledge about Western values. Because British or American English is a western product, Persian participants preferred not to speak it. Participants from Azerbaijan had a very different attitude toward English since they were motivated to learn all languages, including English, by their religious beliefs. Participants in Persian restrict ownership of English to individuals whose first language is English. Participants from Azerbaijan and Kurdistan were adamant that "Hiring American or British teachers is the best method of carrying out English language teaching." While other participants opted to learn International English, Persian individuals preferred to learn British English or American English. This study illustrates the tensions amongst the multi ethnic groups with regard to their perceptions of learning English. Such tension must be

recognized and managed wisely by the authority to ensure that the learning of English as a foreign language in Indonesia does not lead to another form of social segregation based on their social and economic class.

CONCLUSION

According to the research, teachers and students are both concerned about student attrition in Indonesian language. Both parties concur that the English immersion program clearly affects the pupils' level of Indonesian language ability. This occurrence appears to be common when FIP is used in various settings. Both teachers and pupils don't appear to be concerned about the apparent cultural mix that exists in the school. The students do not believe that their limited cultural and historical knowledge and their limited language proficiency in Indonesia pose a problem or compromise their sense of nationalism. The teachers have a different perspective than this. Concern was raised by a few teachers on the children' diminished feeling of nationalism. Moreover, the learning of English as a foreign language must be seen as a right of every individual as a way to acquire more cultural capital which could enhance their career or study. However, the authority must be aware of the potential social segregation that could happen due to the unequal access to English learning.

The study's findings demonstrate how enthusiastically students and teachers feel about the installation of a FIP at their school, but it is important to address the issue of students' attrition in Indonesian and their ignorance of their own nation. In order to keep students connected to their culture and the rest of society, a bilingual educational system is advised. Although Indonesian teachers are advised to instruct in Indonesian, native English speakers are required to teach in English. To help students with their knowledge of Indonesia and ultimately to build their sense of nationalism, the school must give them enough exposure to Indonesian language and culture. It is advised that the school expand its present Indonesian culture curricula to cover more nationalist and cultural elements.

ACKNOLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to all of those with whom I have had the pleasure to work during this project especially the teachers who had given their time and thoughts throughout the study. Your stories helped me to understand my own struggles as an English teacher in Indonesia. I hope that this study will be beneficial to other NNESTs in Indonesia. I also would like to extend my appreciation to JIMSH LP3M Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari which has given a space for this paper to be published.

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