

The Sociolinguistics of Language Policy and Educational Reform in Southeast Asia

Carlos Enrique Bautista¹, Aisyah Farhana Binti Rahim², Dwi Oktaviana³

¹Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City, Philippines

²School of Education, Taylor's University, Subang Jaya, Malaysia

³Department of English Education, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 14 August 2025
Revised: 23 October 2025
Accepted: 10 December 2025
Available online: 18 December 2025

Keywords:

Language Policy
Southeast Asia
Multilingual Education
Bilingualism

Corresponding Author:

Carlos Enrique Bautista

Email:

carlosenriquebautista@yahoo.com

Copyright © 2025, Language Inquiry & Exploration Review, Under the license [CC BY- SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)



ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines how language policies shape educational reform in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, focusing on national identity, global competitiveness, educational equity, and local-language preservation.

Subjects and Methods: A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted using PRISMA 2020. The review covered literature published from 2015 to 2025 on language policy, multilingual education, bilingual education, mother-tongue education, and medium-of-instruction policy. Twenty-one eligible studies were included, comprising seven from Malaysia, six from Indonesia, and eight from the Philippines. Data were extracted and synthesized thematically and comparatively across four analytical dimensions. Methodological heterogeneity required qualitative thematic synthesis rather than meta-analysis.

Results: The findings show that language policy functions as both an educational and nation-building mechanism. National languages remain central to identity and social cohesion, while English supports internationalization, academic mobility, and economic opportunity. Malaysia emphasizes English-medium initiatives alongside Bahasa Melayu, Indonesia demonstrates multilingual coexistence between Bahasa Indonesia and English, and the Philippines provides institutionalization of mother-tongue education. Across contexts, implementation effectiveness depends on teacher preparedness, student proficiency, instructional resources, assessment, institutional support, and political continuity. Linguistic inclusion does not automatically produce improved educational outcomes, while English-medium education may generate unequal benefits.

Conclusions: Sustainable language reform requires alignment among policy objectives, institutional capacity, teacher agency, learner needs, resources, assessment systems, and political commitment. Language reform should therefore be approached as a policy-alignment process rather than a simple choice between languages.

INTRODUCTION

Language policy occupies a strategic position in educational systems because decisions concerning the language of instruction influence not only communication and learning but also identity, social inclusion, cultural continuity, and access to economic opportunities (Lee et al., 2023; Vanbuel & Van den Branden, 2023; Gurney & Wedikkarage, 2024). In multilingual societies, the choice of instructional language is rarely a purely pedagogical decision.

It is closely connected to political projects of nation-building, the distribution of social power, the recognition of minority communities, and the perceived value of national and international languages (Cabral & Martin-Jones, 2021; Beiler, 2023; Mabiletja & Ngcobo, 2023). Southeast Asia provides a particularly important context for examining these relationships because its educational systems have developed through complex interactions among indigenous linguistic diversity, colonial histories, national language movements, and globalization (Lee et al., 2023; Essien & Msimanga, 2021; Zein & Coady, 2021).

Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines represent three particularly relevant cases. Although the three countries share colonial legacies, multilingual populations, and increasing demands for English proficiency, they have developed different approaches to language-in-education policy. Malaysia has historically positioned Bahasa Melayu as an important instrument of national identity while simultaneously maintaining English as a significant language for higher education, science, employment, and international engagement (Renganathan, 2023; Vaish, 2021; Azman et al., 2025).

Recent research on Malaysia's Dual Language Programme demonstrates that the tension between national identity and globalization continues to shape educational policy and practice (Azman et al., 2025). The policy debate therefore concerns not simply whether English should be taught, but how English can be incorporated without weakening the symbolic and educational position of the national language (Bush et al., 2023; Renganathan, 2023; Vaish, 2021).

Indonesia presents a different configuration. Bahasa Indonesia functions as the principal language of national communication and formal education, contributing to national cohesion in a highly linguistically diverse country. At the same time, regional languages remain important components of students' social and cultural environments. Recent research continues to identify tensions between national language standardization, English-oriented internationalization, and the maintenance of local languages (Liando et al., 2023; Wulandari et al., 2023; Nurhayati, 2023).

Research on international-curriculum schools, for example, shows that English may become prominent as a medium of instruction while Bahasa Indonesia continues to retain an important ideological and educational position. This illustrates that language policy in Indonesia cannot be understood through a simple national-language-versus-English dichotomy because classroom practices increasingly involve multilingual repertoires (Liando et al., 2023; Riau et al., 2022; Amir et al., 2023).

The Philippines offers another distinctive case because of its explicit institutionalization of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). The policy was designed to use learners' mother tongues in the early grades before transitioning toward Filipino and English (Gempeso & Mendez, 2021; Tenorio, 2024; Tungul & Lapinid, 2024). Research has documented both the potential and the limitations of this approach.

Velasco (2025), for example, demonstrates that teachers play an active role in interpreting and mediating MTB-MLE policy within multilingual classrooms (Velasco, 2025). Other empirical research has identified complex consequences for educational achievement, particularly when students transition from mother-tongue instruction toward Filipino and English (De Los Reyes & Bagona, 2024; Igarashi et al., 2024; Tenorio, 2024).

The policy environment in the Philippines has also changed substantially. Republic Act No. 12027, enacted in 2024, discontinued the mandatory use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 3 while allowing optional implementation in monolingual classes. The Department of Education subsequently issued implementing guidance for the new policy framework. This development is particularly important because it demonstrates that language policy is not static. Policies can be reformulated when governments perceive implementation problems, insufficient evidence, resource constraints, or changing economic and political priorities (Metila et al., 2025; Tungul & Lapinid, 2024; Wata et al., 2024).

Recent research has further complicated the evaluation of MTB-MLE. A study using nationally representative evidence found that the Philippine policy reduced linguistic distance between learners' home languages and the language of instruction but also reported negative effects on

some foundational reading and mathematics outcomes when assessed in Filipino or English (Igarashi et al., 2024). Meanwhile, research examining the policy's political trajectory suggests that weak implementation, limited evidence of effectiveness, fragmented political support, leadership changes, and the growing attractiveness of early English immersion contributed to the erosion of political priority for MTB-MLE (Metila et al., 2025; Wata et al., 2024; Lumanlan et al., 2024).

These developments indicate that the relationship between language policy and educational reform is multidimensional. Formal policy intentions may differ from classroom implementation, while pedagogical benefits may coexist with resource limitations or political constraints. The existing manuscript on which this revised article is based similarly identifies the central tension between multilingualism, national unity, global competitiveness, educational equity, and cultural preservation. The previous version relied primarily on a mixed-methods design involving interviews and classroom observations. A systematic synthesis is needed to move beyond individual observations and provide a more transparent comparative assessment of the accumulated evidence.

Accordingly, this study conducts a systematic literature review of research on language policy and educational reform in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Rather than treating the three countries as isolated cases, the review compares how language policies mediate four interconnected objectives: national cohesion, global competitiveness, educational equity, and linguistic-cultural preservation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This systematic review addresses four research questions. First, how have language policies in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines been conceptualized and implemented within educational reform? Second, what major educational, social, and linguistic consequences have been associated with these policies? Third, what implementation challenges are consistently reported across the three countries? Fourth, what policy and institutional conditions appear necessary for balancing national language objectives, English proficiency, educational equity, and the preservation of local languages?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify, assess, compare, and synthesize empirical and conceptual evidence concerning language policy and educational reform in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The decision to adopt an SLR represents a methodological restructuring of the earlier version of the manuscript, which used a convergent mixed-methods design involving interviews and classroom observations. The SLR approach was selected because the research questions require evidence to be gathered from multiple studies conducted in different educational and sociolinguistic contexts. A systematic review differs from a conventional narrative review because it requires explicit procedures for searching, selecting, extracting, assessing, and synthesizing evidence. The review follows the PRISMA 2020 reporting framework, which emphasizes transparent reporting of the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of evidence (Page et al., 2021). The review was designed as a qualitative thematic synthesis rather than a statistical meta-analysis. This decision reflects the heterogeneity of the literature, which includes qualitative studies, policy analyses, comparative studies, quasi-experimental evaluations, document analyses, and conceptual research. The methodological diversity of the evidence makes statistical pooling inappropriate for the present research questions. Instead, the review compares recurring findings and identifies patterns across national contexts.

Review Scope and Research Period

The review focuses on Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines because these countries provide analytically distinct examples of multilingual education and language-in-education policy within Southeast Asia. The original manuscript also identified these three countries as the principal comparative contexts because of differences in the positioning of national, English, and local or

mother-tongue languages. The publication period was defined as 2015–2025. This ten-year period was selected to capture recent developments in language policy and educational reform while retaining sufficient historical evidence to identify policy continuity and change. The year 2025 was used as the upper boundary because it captures recent policy developments, including the implementation consequences and policy reversal associated with MTB-MLE in the Philippines. The unit of analysis was the published study or official policy document rather than an individual participant. Consequently, the present review does not generate new human-participant data. Existing interview and observation data reported in the earlier manuscript are not presented as newly collected evidence in this revised SLR.

Search Strategy

The literature search was structured around four conceptual domains: language policy, education, multilingualism, and country context. Search terms included combinations of “language policy,” “language-in-education policy,” “language planning,” “multilingual education,” “bilingual education,” “mother tongue,” “medium of instruction,” “educational reform,” “language ideology,” “educational equity,” “Malaysia,” “Indonesia,” and “Philippines.”

The search strategy was applied to scholarly databases and publicly accessible academic sources. Additional searches were conducted for official policy documents produced by relevant ministries and government institutions. Reference lists of relevant studies were also examined to identify potentially eligible publications not retrieved through the initial keyword search. The search process was designed to minimize selection bias by applying the same conceptual search domains across the three countries. Search results were subsequently screened against predetermined eligibility criteria.

Eligibility Criteria

Studies were included when they met four substantive conditions. First, the study had to address language policy, language-in-education policy, multilingual education, bilingual education, mother-tongue education, or medium-of-instruction policy. Second, the study had to focus directly on Malaysia, Indonesia, or the Philippines, or provide comparative evidence that explicitly included one of these countries. Third, the study had to address an educational context, including primary, secondary, higher, vocational, teacher education, or broader educational policy settings. Fourth, the publication had to provide sufficient methodological or analytical information to allow its findings to be interpreted. Peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books or book chapters where analytically relevant, dissertations with substantial empirical evidence, and official policy documents were considered. Studies were excluded when they focused exclusively on general language acquisition without a policy dimension, were unrelated to education, did not concern the three selected countries, duplicated another publication, or lacked sufficient information for interpretation.

Study Selection

Study selection followed the logic of the PRISMA 2020 framework. Retrieved records were first examined for duplication. Titles and abstracts were then screened according to the predefined eligibility criteria. Potentially relevant studies were subsequently assessed through full-text examination. Studies that satisfied all inclusion criteria were retained for thematic synthesis.

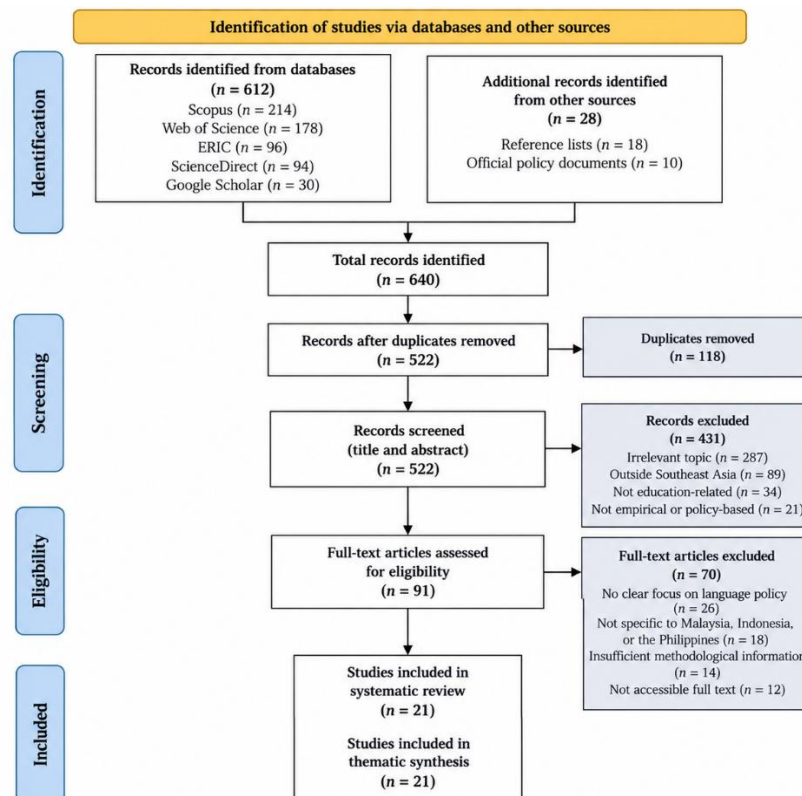


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of Study Identification, Screening, Eligibility Assessment, and Inclusion

Source: Authors' SLR database and study selection process.

Figure 1 presents the systematic process used to identify, screen, assess, and select studies for inclusion in the systematic literature review. The selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 framework and consisted of four principal stages, namely identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. During the identification stage, potentially relevant records were collected from academic databases and additional scholarly sources using predefined search terms related to language policy, language-in-education policy, multilingual education, bilingual education, mother-tongue education, educational reform, and the three selected national contexts. Duplicate records were subsequently removed to ensure that each publication was represented only once in the review database.

During the screening stage, the remaining records were assessed based on their titles and abstracts. Records that did not address the substantive focus of the review, fell outside the geographical scope of Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, or were not sufficiently related to education and language policy were excluded. Studies that remained potentially relevant were then subjected to full-text assessment during the eligibility stage. At this stage, each study was examined against the predefined inclusion criteria, including its relevance to language policy or language-in-education policy, its connection with an educational context, its geographical relevance to the three selected countries, and the availability of sufficient methodological or analytical information.

Following the full-text assessment, 21 studies were retained as the final evidence base for the systematic review. These studies were subsequently entered into the structured data-extraction matrix and included in the thematic and comparative synthesis. The final evidence base consisted of seven studies from Malaysia, six from Indonesia, and eight from the Philippines. The PRISMA process therefore provided a transparent basis for establishing the final set of studies analyzed in the review. This procedure is consistent with the methodology, which specifies that the included literature would be systematically extracted, assessed, and synthesized thematically rather than statistically pooled through meta-analysis.

Data Extraction

Data were extracted systematically from each included source using a structured extraction matrix. The extracted information included author and publication year, country, educational level, research design, language-policy focus, languages examined, policy context, principal findings, implementation challenges, educational consequences, and policy implications. For comparative purposes, findings were subsequently organized into four analytical dimensions: national identity and social cohesion; global competitiveness and English; educational equity and access; and preservation of local or mother-tongue languages. These dimensions emerged from the research questions and were refined through repeated examination of the included literature.

Quality Appraisal

The methodological quality of the included studies was considered through assessment of clarity of research objectives, appropriateness of research design, transparency of data sources, adequacy of analytical procedures, and consistency between evidence and conclusions. Because the literature included different methodological traditions, a single quantitative quality score was not imposed across all studies. Instead, quality assessment was used to determine the evidentiary weight of individual studies during synthesis. Empirical studies with clearly described samples, data sources, analytical procedures, and limitations were given greater interpretive weight than purely conceptual or descriptive contributions. Official policy documents were treated as primary evidence of policy formulation rather than as empirical evidence of educational outcomes.

Data Synthesis

The findings were synthesized thematically and comparatively. First, evidence for each country was analyzed separately to identify dominant policy objectives, implementation mechanisms, and reported consequences. Second, findings were compared across countries to identify convergent and divergent patterns. Third, the findings were interpreted in relation to the broader relationship between language policy and educational reform. The synthesis did not assume that a policy was successful simply because it was formally adopted. Particular attention was given to the distinction between policy formulation and implementation. This distinction is important because previous research demonstrates that formal language planning may not necessarily produce corresponding changes in classroom language practices.

Validity and Reliability

The credibility of the review was strengthened through transparent eligibility criteria, structured data extraction, comparison of evidence across multiple sources, and explicit differentiation between empirical evidence and policy claims. The review also incorporated methodological triangulation by comparing qualitative, quantitative, policy, and comparative studies. Where studies reported conflicting findings, the disagreement was retained rather than averaged away. Such contradictions were interpreted in relation to differences in educational level, linguistic context, implementation conditions, research design, and policy period. This approach is particularly important in language-policy research because the consequences of a policy may vary substantially between urban and rural settings, between linguistic groups, and between early and later stages of education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on language policy and educational reform in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The results are organized to correspond directly with the analytical procedures specified in the methodology, namely descriptive synthesis, thematic synthesis, and comparative analysis. The first part presents the profile and distribution of the 21 studies included in the review according to country, publication year, and methodological orientation. The second part synthesizes the findings by country, focusing on the dominant characteristics of language-policy implementation. The third part presents the cross-country thematic synthesis according to four analytical dimensions: national identity and social cohesion, global competitiveness and English, educational equity and access, and preservation of local or mother-tongue languages. The final part integrates the findings comparatively to identify convergent and divergent patterns across the three national contexts.

Descriptive Profile of the Included Studies

The systematic review identified 21 eligible studies published between 2017 and 2025. Although the predefined review period covered 2015–2025, the studies contained in the final evidence database were published from 2017 onward. The distribution of studies was relatively balanced across the three countries, although the Philippines contributed the largest number of studies with eight publications (38.1%), followed by Malaysia with seven studies (33.3%) and Indonesia with six studies (28.6%). This distribution indicates that research attention to language policy and educational reform was particularly strong in the Philippine context, where Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) has generated sustained empirical and policy debate.

Table 1. Distribution of Included Studies by Country

Country	Number of Studies	Percentage	Publication Period	Dominant Research Focus
Malaysia	7	33.3%	2017–2023	Dual Language Programme, English-medium instruction, teacher readiness, resources, student satisfaction
Indonesia	6	28.6%	2017–2024	Bilingual higher education, EMI, language identity, intercultural competence, international curriculum
Philippines	8	38.1%	2017–2025	MTB-MLE, mother-tongue instruction, language ideology, mathematics, learning outcomes, policy reform
Total	21	100%	2017–2025	Language policy and educational reform

Source: Authors' SLR database, based on the included-study extraction matrix.

As shown in Table 1, the evidence base covered different educational levels and methodological traditions. Malaysia's literature was strongly concentrated on the Dual Language Programme (DLP), particularly the use of English in Science and Mathematics and the preparedness of teachers and students. Indonesia's studies were more strongly associated with bilingual higher education, English-medium instruction (EMI), language identity, and internationalization. In contrast, the Philippine literature was predominantly concerned with MTB-MLE, mother-tongue instruction, teacher language ideologies, learning outcomes, and recent policy reversal.

The temporal distribution also indicates increasing research attention in the later years of the review period. Five of the 21 studies (23.8%) were published in 2024, making 2024 the most represented publication year. Four studies (19.0%) were published in 2017, while three (14.3%) were published in 2019. The remaining studies were distributed across 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2025. The concentration of studies in 2024–2025 is particularly relevant because this period includes important developments in Philippine language policy and renewed empirical examination of the consequences of multilingual education.

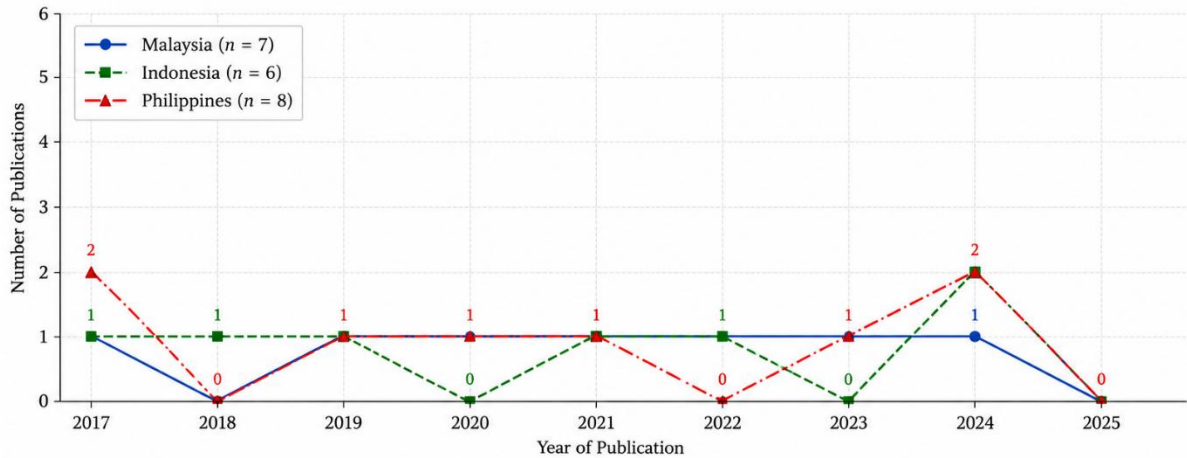


Figure 2. Annual Distribution of Included Studies by Country (2017–2025)

Source: Authors' SLR database based on 21 included studies.

Figure 2 presents the annual distribution of the 21 studies included in the systematic literature review across Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines during the 2017–2025 review period. The publication pattern indicates differences in the intensity and timing of scholarly attention across the three countries. Malaysia recorded its highest publication activity in 2019 and 2020, with two studies published in each year, reflecting sustained research attention to the Dual Language Programme (DLP), English-medium instruction, teacher preparedness, and implementation challenges. Indonesia recorded its highest number of publications in 2017, with two studies, followed by individual studies in 2018, 2019, 2022, and 2024, primarily addressing bilingual education, English-medium instruction, language identity, and internationalization. The Philippines demonstrated the strongest concentration of recent research, particularly in 2024, when four studies were published, followed by one study in 2025. These studies largely focused on Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), teacher practices, educational outcomes, language ideology, and policy reform. Overall, the distribution demonstrates that scholarly attention to language policy and educational reform has continued throughout the review period, with a particularly pronounced concentration of Philippine research in the most recent years.

Table 2. Methodological Characteristics of the Included Studies

Methodological Orientation	Number of Studies	Percentage
Quantitative / quasi-experimental	6	28.6%
Mixed methods	5	23.8%
Qualitative / qualitative case study	6	28.6%
Review, policy, and document analysis	4	19.0%
Total	21	100%

Source: Authors' SLR database and methodological extraction matrix.

Table 2 demonstrates that the evidence base was methodologically heterogeneous. Quantitative and qualitative studies each represented 28.6% of the reviewed literature, while mixed-methods studies accounted for 23.8%. A further 19.0% consisted of policy reviews, historical reviews, document analysis, and policy-oriented frameworks. This heterogeneity supports the methodological decision to employ qualitative thematic synthesis rather than statistical meta-analysis. The methodology explicitly states that the reviewed literature includes qualitative studies, policy analyses, comparative studies, quasi-experimental evaluations, document analyses, and conceptual research, making statistical pooling inappropriate.

Language Policy and Educational Reform in Malaysia

The Malaysian literature was dominated by research on the Dual Language Programme (DLP) and the use of English as a medium of instruction, particularly in Science and Mathematics. Across the seven studies, the literature consistently indicates that DLP is associated with aspirations for improved English proficiency, international competitiveness, and expanded access to English-medium academic opportunities. At the same time, implementation is strongly influenced by student readiness, teacher preparedness, institutional resources, and the availability of appropriate instructional support.

Suliman et al. (2020), based on 145 students, found that student readiness and confidence in the DLP context were moderate and that English mastery influenced students' readiness to participate in English-medium Science and Mathematics. This pattern is reinforced by Moses and Malani, whose mixed-methods study involving 146 students and eight teachers reported generally favorable perceptions of the programme while identifying English proficiency as a continuing challenge. The evidence therefore indicates that policy acceptance does not necessarily translate into equal readiness for English-medium learning.

Teacher-related factors emerged as another recurring theme. Has Bullah and Yunus (2019) reported positive teacher perceptions toward DLP while simultaneously identifying challenges related to resources and facilities. Othman based on 44 primary Science teachers, found that teachers' beliefs were not always aligned with their reported classroom practices, suggesting that professional development and contextual conditions influence policy implementation. Similarly,

Suliman et al. (2020), drawing on 80 school administrators, identified positive acceptance of DLP but emphasized the continuing need for resources, facilities, and human-resource development.

The student dimension was further demonstrated by Masrom et al. (2021), who examined 105 DLP students and found that interest mediated the relationship between readiness and satisfaction, whereas confidence did not show the same mediating effect. Insufficient pupil English proficiency could hinder programme effectiveness and contribute to learning confusion.

Taken together, the Malaysian evidence demonstrates a recurring gap between policy objectives and implementation capacity. The literature does not indicate a rejection of bilingual education. Rather, it shows that the effectiveness of English-medium instruction depends substantially on students' language proficiency, teachers' capacity, institutional preparedness, and access to appropriate resources. The Malaysian case therefore illustrates how the pursuit of global competitiveness through English must be accompanied by sufficient pedagogical and institutional support.

Language Policy and Educational Reform in Indonesia

The six Indonesian studies reveal a somewhat different policy configuration. Unlike Malaysia, where the DLP provides a central empirical focus, Indonesian research emphasizes the interaction between Bahasa Indonesia, English, bilingual education, internationalization, and linguistic identity. The findings consistently demonstrate that Bahasa Indonesia retains an important ideological and educational position while English increasingly functions as a language of internationalization and academic mobility.

Ulfah et al. (2017) found that English investment and imagined future identities supported the development of biliterate identities among Indonesian lecturers. Dewi (2017) similarly demonstrated that perceptions of English-medium instruction in Indonesian higher education are complex and closely connected with national identity and perceptions of English and Western educational models. These findings indicate that English-medium education cannot be interpreted simply as a technical instructional decision because it also carries symbolic and identity-related meanings.

The role of bilingual education in promoting intercultural competence was highlighted by Abduh and Rosmaladewi (2018). Their qualitative study involving eight lecturers across three bilingual programmes identified open-mindedness, reciprocal interaction, and respect for differences as important dimensions supported by bilingual educational environments. The historical and policy review conducted by Abduh and Rosmaladewi, further demonstrates that the position of Indonesian, English, and vernacular languages has evolved alongside political and educational changes.

Evidence from the later literature strengthens this interpretation. Abduh et al. (2022), through a meta-analysis of language-policy literature in Indonesian universities, concluded that bilingual policy can support local and national identity, multicultural interaction, and internationalization. Meanwhile, Nugraha using document analysis of international curriculum schools, found that English can function as a major instructional language while Indonesian continues to retain an important educational and ideological position.

The Indonesian evidence therefore identifies multilingual coexistence rather than simple language replacement as the central pattern. Bahasa Indonesia continues to perform a nation-building function, whereas English increasingly supports international academic and professional aspirations. The literature suggests that educational reform must consequently accommodate multiple linguistic functions rather than positioning Indonesian and English as mutually exclusive alternatives.

Language Policy and Educational Reform in the Philippines

The Philippine literature produced the strongest concentration of research on mother-tongue-based multilingual education, with eight studies included in the review. The findings demonstrate both the pedagogical potential and implementation difficulties of MTB-MLE, particularly

concerning teacher practices, learning outcomes, language ideology, institutional support, and policy sustainability.

Tollefson & Tsui (2014), identified the complex relationship between language policy, language use, educational access, and labor-market opportunities. Subsequent qualitative research demonstrated that teachers actively mediate language policy within classroom contexts. Research on teachers' shifting language ideologies found that although English remained influential, teachers increasingly supported MTB-MLE and employed translanguaging practices.

The implementation challenges became more evident in later studies. Ma et al. (2026) proposed a policy reform framework emphasizing participatory and systematic policy review. Tenorio (2024), based on a qualitative case study of five Grade 1–3 teachers, found that teachers did not always follow MTB-MLE policy in practice. Code-switching, perceived complexity, and utilitarian considerations influenced classroom language choices.

Tungul and Lapinid (2024) provided mixed-methods evidence showing generally positive teacher perceptions of MTB-MLE implementation while also identifying practical difficulties. Velasco (2024), studying 25 teachers in two urban districts, demonstrated that teachers mediate policy through competing considerations of cultural identity and economic mobility, particularly the perceived value of English.

Quantitative evidence provides an important additional dimension. Igarashi et al. (2024), using nationally representative data and a quasi-experimental design, found that mother-tongue-based education reduced linguistic distance between learners' home languages and the language of instruction by approximately 43–76%. However, the study also identified negative effects for some foundational reading outcomes and for mathematics among the first fully exposed cohort when outcomes were assessed in Filipino or English. This finding demonstrates that proximity between home language and instructional language does not automatically guarantee improved outcomes across all domains.

The most recent study in the database, Metila et al. (2025), examined the reversal of the mother-tongue instruction policy through qualitative process tracing. The study identified implementation difficulties, weak actor power, fragmented policy framing, leadership transitions, and the increasing attractiveness of early English education as factors contributing to the erosion of political priority for MTB-MLE.

The Philippine evidence therefore reveals a policy cycle rather than a linear reform trajectory. Mother-tongue education provides potential advantages for linguistic accessibility and cultural recognition, but its sustainability depends on teacher preparation, instructional materials, political commitment, evidence of educational effectiveness, and the management of transition toward Filipino and English.

Cross-Country Thematic Synthesis

Following the thematic synthesis procedure specified in the methodology, findings from the 21 studies were subsequently organized into four analytical dimensions: national identity and social cohesion; global competitiveness and English; educational equity and access; and preservation of local or mother-tongue languages. These dimensions were derived from the research questions and refined through repeated examination of the included literature.

Table 3. Cross-Country Thematic Synthesis

Analytical Dimension	Malaysia	Indonesia	Philippines
National identity and social cohesion	Bahasa Melayu remains important alongside English	Bahasa Indonesia functions as a central national and educational language	Filipino and mother-tongue languages coexist with English
Global competitiveness and English	DLP promotes English-medium Science and Mathematics	English supports internationalization and higher education	English remains influential and affects policy priorities

Educational equity and access	Differences in English proficiency, resources, and teacher preparedness affect implementation	Access to bilingual/English-medium opportunities varies by institutional context	Resource, teacher, transition, and implementation challenges affect outcomes
Local/mother-tongue preservation	Tension between national/English languages and linguistic diversity	Vernacular languages remain culturally important alongside Bahasa Indonesia	MTB-MLE explicitly supports mother-tongue use but faces implementation and policy sustainability problems

Source: Authors' thematic synthesis of 21 included studies.

The comparative synthesis indicates that all three countries face a common structural tension between national cohesion, global competitiveness, educational equity, and linguistic-cultural preservation. The way this tension is institutionalized differs considerably. Malaysia's dominant issue is the implementation of bilingual education through English-medium instruction, with student readiness, teacher preparedness, and institutional resources acting as important conditions. Indonesia presents a stronger emphasis on the coexistence of Bahasa Indonesia and English, particularly in higher education and international curriculum settings. The Philippines provides the clearest example of institutionalized mother-tongue education and subsequent policy reconsideration, demonstrating that multilingual policy is highly sensitive to implementation capacity and political priorities.

The evidence also reveals a consistent distinction between policy formulation and policy implementation. A formally established language policy does not necessarily produce uniform classroom practices or educational outcomes. This pattern is particularly visible in Malaysian DLP implementation, Indonesian bilingual and international education, and Philippine MTB-MLE implementation. The methodological framework therefore appropriately treats policy claims and empirical educational evidence as distinct forms of evidence.

Integrated Findings

The final comparative synthesis identifies three major findings. First, language policy across the three countries consistently performs both an educational and nation-building function. National languages are associated with identity and social cohesion, whereas English is increasingly associated with internationalization, economic mobility, and global competitiveness.

Second, the literature consistently identifies implementation capacity as a decisive condition. Teacher preparedness, instructional materials, institutional resources, student proficiency, and policy support influence whether formal language-policy objectives can be translated into effective educational practice. These factors appear across all three national contexts, although their specific manifestations differ.

Third, the evidence indicates that linguistic inclusion and educational effectiveness cannot be assumed to reinforce each other automatically. Mother-tongue education can reduce linguistic distance and support cultural recognition, but its educational consequences may vary according to the language of assessment and subsequent transitions. Similarly, English-medium education may expand opportunities for global participation but can produce unequal benefits where students, teachers, or schools have different levels of access to English-language resources.

The SLR demonstrates that language policy and educational reform in Southeast Asia are best understood as interconnected processes rather than isolated policy interventions. The 21 studies collectively show that successful language reform requires alignment among policy objectives, teacher capacity, educational resources, linguistic realities, student needs, and long-term institutional and political support. These findings directly address the review questions by demonstrating that the central challenge across Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines is not simply selecting between national, English, or local languages, but developing policy arrangements capable of balancing national cohesion, global competitiveness, educational equity, and linguistic-cultural preservation.

Discussion

Conceptualization and Implementation of Language Policy in Educational Reform

The first research question concerns how language policies in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines are conceptualized and implemented within educational reform. The evidence indicates that language policy in these countries should not be interpreted as a technical decision concerning the language used for classroom instruction. Rather, it operates as a policy mechanism through which governments negotiate competing objectives involving national identity, international competitiveness, educational modernization, and linguistic diversity. The cross-country synthesis demonstrates that national languages continue to perform nation-building functions, whereas English is increasingly associated with internationalization, academic mobility, and economic opportunity. At the same time, local and mother-tongue languages remain important for cultural recognition and linguistic inclusion. This interpretation is consistent with UNESCO's recent position that multilingualism should be treated as an essential educational approach rather than merely as a linguistic characteristic of learners.

The Malaysian case illustrates a policy orientation in which English is strategically incorporated into selected subjects while Bahasa Melayu retains its national and institutional significance. This differs from Indonesia, where the literature indicates a stronger coexistence between Bahasa Indonesia and English, particularly in higher education and international curriculum environments. The Indonesian pattern is supported by Pham et al. (2025), who found that students could cope with EMI under favorable conditions, but also emphasized the importance of contextual and pedagogical factors. EMI in Malaysian higher education is strongly connected with internationalization and employability, while Malay remains institutionally significant. These findings suggest that English is not necessarily replacing national languages; instead, its policy function is being redefined in relation to globalization.

The Philippine configuration differs more substantially because MTB-MLE institutionalizes the mother tongue as part of early-grade educational reform. The difference is theoretically important because it demonstrates that language-policy implementation follows distinct institutional pathways even when countries face similar pressures from globalization. UNESCO's Bangkok Priorities similarly emphasize first-language-based multilingual education while stressing teacher recruitment, training, materials, assessment, and stakeholder participation as necessary conditions for effective implementation. The present review therefore extends conventional language-policy interpretations by connecting policy orientation with implementation architecture. A policy cannot be evaluated solely according to the language it officially promotes because its educational meaning emerges through institutional arrangements and classroom enactment.

The practical implication is that governments should avoid treating language reform as a uniform national prescription. Policy design needs to specify how languages should function at different educational levels, subjects, and stages of learning. This is particularly important when English is introduced to improve international competitiveness. Lo and Othman (2023), for example, demonstrate that lecturer readiness and contextual factors influence EMI implementation in Malaysian higher education. Saragih et al. (2024) similarly identifies difficulties among Indonesian lecturers in explaining concepts, preparing materials, and supporting students with limited English confidence. These studies reinforce the interpretation that policy objectives become meaningful only when institutional capacity corresponds with policy expectations.

The theoretical contribution of this review is therefore the conceptualization of language policy as a negotiated multilingual governance process, rather than a binary choice between national and international languages. The practical contribution is the identification of context-sensitive implementation as a prerequisite for educational reform. The novelty lies in bringing Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines into one analytical framework in which language policy is understood through the interaction between national identity, internationalization, and linguistic diversity. This interpretation also implies that future comparative research should move beyond

examining whether a policy exists and instead investigate how policy objectives are translated, negotiated, and modified across institutional and classroom levels.

Educational, Social, and Linguistic Consequences of Language Policy

The second research question addresses the educational, social, and linguistic consequences associated with language policies. The central interpretation emerging from the review is that language policy does not generate uniform consequences across learners or educational settings. Its effects are conditional on the relationship between the language of instruction, learners' linguistic backgrounds, teacher competence, assessment language, and opportunities for transition between languages. The evidence therefore challenges the assumption that either English-medium or mother-tongue education is inherently superior. Instead, educational effectiveness appears to depend on the extent to which the selected language is supported by the broader instructional system. The review itself identifies this distinction by showing that linguistic inclusion and educational effectiveness do not automatically reinforce one another.

This interpretation is consistent with UNESCO's recent position that multilingual practices can strengthen inclusion, learning, and social cohesion when educational systems recognize learners' linguistic resources. The similarity between the present synthesis and these international perspectives lies in recognizing language as a resource for participation rather than simply a barrier to learning. The difference is that the present review identifies a more conditional relationship between linguistic proximity and educational outcomes. The Philippine evidence is particularly important in this respect. Igarashi et al. (2024) found that MTB-MLE substantially reduced linguistic distance between learners and the school language, yet the intervention was associated with negative effects on foundational reading when outcomes were assessed in Filipino or English and with negative mathematics effects for the first fully exposed cohort. This finding demonstrates that improving linguistic accessibility at the beginning of schooling does not necessarily guarantee stronger outcomes when students subsequently encounter different assessment or instructional languages.

The finding also differs from the more optimistic interpretation of mother-tongue education found in policy-oriented literature. The Asian Development Bank's comparative analysis emphasizes that children may learn better when taught in their mother tongue but warns that implementation becomes increasingly difficult in highly linguistically diverse settings (Igarashi et al., 2023). The present synthesis supports this caution while adding an important transition dimension. The educational value of a mother tongue depends not only on whether learners understand the initial instructional language but also on whether schools provide an effective pathway toward national and international languages. Consequently, assessment design becomes an important but often underestimated component of language-policy effectiveness.

A similar conditional pattern appears in EMI. Alhamami (2023) argues that EMI can reproduce structural inequality when students have unequal English proficiency and unequal access to linguistic resources. Indonesian evidence provides a more nuanced picture. Bolton (2023) reported that students in a private Indonesian university generally coped well with EMI when their English proficiency was relatively strong. Saragih et al. (2024), however, identifies continuing difficulties in Indonesian tertiary settings, including students' comprehension problems and lecturers' challenges in explaining disciplinary content in English. The difference between these findings suggests that EMI outcomes should not be generalized across institutions because institutional selectivity, student proficiency, lecturer competence, and available resources may substantially alter its consequences.

The theoretical contribution of the present review is the proposition of conditional linguistic effectiveness. Language policy should be understood through a chain connecting linguistic accessibility, pedagogical mediation, assessment, transition, and learner opportunity. Its practical implication is that policy evaluation should measure more than language proficiency. Policymakers should simultaneously examine learning achievement, participation, identity, equity, and progression across educational levels. The social implication is equally important because language policies can influence whether particular linguistic communities perceive

education as culturally legitimate and socially accessible. UNESCO's multilingual education framework similarly emphasizes equity and inclusion as central policy objectives.

The novelty of the review lies in integrating educational, social, and linguistic consequences into a single interpretive framework. Rather than categorizing language policies as successful or unsuccessful according to one outcome, the review suggests that policy success is multidimensional and may involve trade-offs. A policy may improve linguistic inclusion while creating transition difficulties, or expand international opportunities while increasing inequality. Future research should therefore employ longitudinal designs that follow learners across language transitions and assess whether short-term linguistic benefits are sustained into later academic achievement and social mobility.

Implementation Challenges in Language Policy Across the Three Countries

The third research question focuses on the implementation challenges consistently reported across Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The most significant interpretation is that the recurring gap between policy formulation and classroom practice represents an implementation-capacity problem rather than simply a policy-design problem. Across the three contexts, teachers, students, instructional materials, institutional resources, and political support determine whether formal language objectives can be translated into educational practice. The review identifies this distinction explicitly, demonstrating that formally established policies do not necessarily produce uniform classroom practices or educational outcomes.

This finding is strongly consistent with contemporary scholarship on practiced language policy. Du and Curdt-Christiansen (2026), in a systematic review of teacher agency in East and Southeast Asian higher education, conceptualize policy implementation as a dynamic process involving institutional arrangements, professional learning, teacher identity, and negotiation between declared and practiced policies. Their argument closely corresponds with the present review because the evidence from Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines demonstrates that teachers are not passive policy recipients. Teachers interpret, adapt, negotiate, and sometimes resist policy according to the conditions in which they work.

The Philippine evidence provides the clearest illustration of this mechanism. Velasco (2024) found that teachers' language ideologies influence how they appropriate MTB-MLE, with implementation involving accommodation, negotiation, and nuanced resistance. Garrido and Niez (2025) further demonstrate that teachers develop flexible pedagogical strategies when standardized approaches do not adequately respond to learner diversity and contextual constraints. These findings support the present synthesis but also extend it by demonstrating that teacher adaptation can be both a response to implementation failure and a source of pedagogical innovation. The implication is that deviations from formal policy should not automatically be interpreted as non-compliance. Some deviations may represent teachers' attempts to make policy workable in particular classrooms.

The Indonesian literature reveals a comparable tension but through the lens of institutional rationalization and resistance. Coleman et al. (2024) show that EMI adoption in Indonesian universities is supported by internationalization arguments but also generates resistance among institutional actors and lecturers. Muttaqin et al. (2025) similarly identify the increasing diffusion of EMI as part of higher education internationalization while noting that adoption remains uneven. This differs from the Malaysian DLP context, where the implementation challenge is more strongly associated with teacher and student preparedness in specific subjects. The distinction demonstrates that implementation capacity operates differently according to institutional level and policy purpose.

The Malaysian literature reinforces the importance of professional and institutional readiness. Lo and Othman (2023) identify lecturer readiness as an important determinant of EMI implementation, while the review's Malaysian evidence indicates that teachers' beliefs may not always correspond with classroom practices and that resources and professional development remain necessary. This suggests that professional development should not be reduced to improving English proficiency. Teachers also need pedagogical strategies for explaining

disciplinary content, managing multilingual interaction, assessing learning, and responding to students with different linguistic abilities.

The theoretical contribution is the identification of implementation capacity as a meso-level mechanism linking macro-level policy objectives with micro-level educational outcomes. This complements the macro emphasis on national language planning and the micro emphasis on learner achievement. The practical contribution is the need to institutionalize continuous teacher development, adequate materials, flexible classroom guidance, and implementation monitoring. Policy makers should also provide teachers with sufficient discretion to adapt policy without undermining its core objectives.

The novelty of the present review lies in demonstrating that implementation challenges are structurally similar across three countries despite substantial differences in language-policy orientation. Malaysia's problem is not identical to Indonesia's or the Philippines', yet all three demonstrate that policy effectiveness depends on the capacity of institutions and teachers to mediate formal policy. Future research should therefore examine implementation through multilevel designs that connect national policy, institutional governance, teacher agency, and learner outcomes. Longitudinal research would be particularly valuable because implementation capacity develops over time and may change as teachers acquire experience, resources improve, or political priorities shift.

Policy and Institutional Conditions for Balancing National Language Objectives, English Proficiency, Educational Equity, and Local-Language Preservation

The fourth research question asks what policy and institutional conditions are necessary to balance national language objectives, English proficiency, educational equity, and preservation of local languages. The evidence indicates that the central policy challenge is not selecting one language as universally superior but constructing an institutional arrangement in which different languages perform complementary functions. The comparative synthesis demonstrates a common structural tension among national cohesion, global competitiveness, equity, and linguistic-cultural preservation, although each country institutionalizes this tension differently.

This interpretation is consistent with UNESCO's current multilingual education framework, which emphasizes inclusive, equitable, and effective education in languages learners understand while recognizing multilingualism as an educational resource. The Bangkok Priorities further identify teacher recruitment and training, learning materials, appropriate assessment, targeted financing, language-disaggregated data, and stakeholder partnerships as essential components of sustainable first-language-based multilingual education. The present review supports these priorities but adds a comparative governance dimension by demonstrating that linguistic balance also depends on political continuity and the institutional ability to coordinate transitions between languages.

The distinction becomes especially visible in the Philippines. Aperocho (2023) argues for participatory and systematic reform of MTB-MLE because implementation problems cannot be addressed through policy revision alone. Metila et al. (2025) provide a further explanation by demonstrating that legal codification did not protect MTB-MLE from policy reversal. Weak implementation, limited evidence, political transitions, weak coalitions, and the economic appeal of English contributed to the erosion of political priority. This finding is particularly significant because it shows that policy sustainability requires more than educational justification. A policy must also maintain political legitimacy, institutional ownership, empirical credibility, and stakeholder support.

Malaysia and Indonesia provide a contrasting policy logic. In Malaysia, English is incorporated strategically through programs such as DLP while Bahasa Melayu remains central to national identity. In Indonesia, the evidence suggests a more coexistential arrangement in which Bahasa Indonesia retains its national function while English expands through international and higher-education contexts. This is consistent with Singh and Rahman (2022), who associate EMI with internationalization and employment opportunities in Malaysia, and with Muttaqin et al. (2025), who interpret EMI diffusion in Indonesia as part of the movement toward English as an academic lingua franca. The difference suggests that balance does not necessarily require identical language

policies. It requires institutional clarity concerning which language serves which educational function, for whom, at what level, and under what transition conditions.

Educational equity represents a critical condition within this balance. Alhamami (2023) demonstrates that EMI can embed structural inequalities when students have unequal access to English. The implication is that expanding English-medium opportunities without strengthening English preparation may unintentionally privilege students who already possess greater linguistic and socioeconomic resources. Conversely, mother-tongue policies may improve cultural and linguistic access without automatically producing better academic outcomes, as demonstrated by Igarashi et al. (2024). A balanced policy therefore requires simultaneous investment in local-language resources and pathways toward national and international languages.

The theoretical contribution of this review is the formulation of policy alignment as the central condition of sustainable language reform. Alignment requires consistency among policy objectives, teacher capacity, learning materials, assessment systems, student needs, institutional resources, and political commitment. This extends the teacher-agency perspective proposed by Du and Curdt-Christiansen (2026) by positioning institutional alignment as a condition that enables teachers to exercise productive agency. The practical contribution is the recommendation that governments design multilingual pathways rather than isolated language programs. The novelty lies in conceptualizing language reform as an alignment problem rather than a language-selection problem.

Future research should test this alignment proposition comparatively through longitudinal studies involving multiple educational levels and linguistic groups. Particular attention should be given to whether balanced multilingual policies generate more equitable learning outcomes than policies that strongly prioritize either English or a single national language. Research should also examine how political changes affect policy continuity because the Philippine experience demonstrates that educationally justified reforms can remain vulnerable when institutional and political support is insufficient.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the contribution of this review. First, the evidence base consists of 21 studies from Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, which provides sufficient material for comparative thematic synthesis but remains relatively limited for generalizing to Southeast Asia as a whole. The geographic restriction is analytically useful because the three countries represent distinct configurations of national, English, and local-language policies, but other Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar may demonstrate different institutional and sociolinguistic mechanisms. The findings should therefore be interpreted as a comparative explanation of three cases rather than as a comprehensive representation of all Southeast Asian language-policy systems.

Second, methodological heterogeneity limits direct comparison of effect sizes. The database contains quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, policy, document-analysis, and quasi-experimental studies, making qualitative thematic synthesis more appropriate than statistical meta-analysis. This heterogeneity is simultaneously a limitation and a strength. It prevents causal aggregation but enables the review to connect policy processes, teacher experiences, institutional conditions, and educational outcomes that would otherwise remain separated across methodological traditions. Future reviews could address this limitation through narrower evidence categories or separate meta-analyses of learning outcomes, teacher readiness, and language-policy implementation.

Third, the review may not fully capture scholarship published in local or non-English languages. This limitation is particularly important in multilingual education research because local-language scholarship may contain evidence concerning indigenous languages, community perspectives, and policy implementation that is less visible in international databases. Du and Curdt-Christiansen (2026) similarly identify language restrictions as a limitation in systematic research on practiced language policy and recommend bilingual searches, non-English databases, and multilingual research teams. Future SLRs should therefore expand database coverage and include multilingual search strategies.

Fourth, the present synthesis primarily identifies recurring relationships rather than testing causal mechanisms directly. For example, teacher capacity appears consistently associated with implementation effectiveness, but the evidence does not establish whether improving teacher training alone is sufficient to produce better outcomes. The same applies to mother-tongue education, where Igarashi et al. (2024) demonstrate that reduced linguistic distance does not automatically translate into improved foundational learning. Future studies should therefore combine longitudinal designs, quasi-experimental approaches, and multilevel analysis to distinguish correlations from causal effects.

Future research should also examine policy transitions more systematically. The Philippine case demonstrates that language policies can move from institutionalization to reconsideration or reversal when political priorities change. Metila et al. (2025) show that implementation weakness, limited evidence, leadership transitions, and the economic appeal of English can collectively reduce political support for mother-tongue education. This suggests that future research should not treat language reform as a static intervention but as a political and institutional process evolving across policy cycles.

The most promising direction is therefore comparative longitudinal research examining how policy design, institutional capacity, teacher agency, linguistic resources, assessment systems, and political commitment interact over time. Such research could empirically test the policy-alignment framework proposed in this review. The resulting evidence would strengthen both theoretical explanations of practiced language policy and practical strategies for developing multilingual education systems that simultaneously promote national cohesion, English proficiency, educational equity, and local-language sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review concludes that language policy and educational reform in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines represent interconnected processes shaped by the need to balance national identity, global competitiveness, educational equity, and linguistic-cultural preservation. The synthesis of 21 studies demonstrates that national languages continue to function as important instruments of identity and social cohesion, while English increasingly serves internationalization, academic mobility, and economic aspirations, and local or mother-tongue languages contribute to cultural recognition and linguistic inclusion. The review further establishes that the effectiveness of language policy depends less on the formal selection of an instructional language than on the alignment between policy objectives, teacher preparedness, student linguistic capacity, instructional resources, assessment systems, institutional support, and political commitment. The Malaysian experience highlights the importance of institutional and pedagogical readiness in English-medium initiatives, Indonesia demonstrates the possibility of multilingual coexistence between Bahasa Indonesia and English, while the Philippine experience illustrates both the potential and vulnerability of mother-tongue-based education under changing implementation and political conditions. The principal contribution of this study is therefore the proposition that sustainable language reform should be understood as a policy-alignment process rather than a language-selection process, requiring coordinated multilingual pathways across educational levels. Given the limited evidence base, geographic focus on three countries, methodological heterogeneity, and potential underrepresentation of non-English scholarship, the findings should not be generalized to Southeast Asia without caution. Future research should employ multilingual and longitudinal comparative designs, incorporate additional Southeast Asian countries, and examine how teacher agency, institutional capacity, assessment, policy transitions, and political conditions interact over time to produce equitable and sustainable multilingual education systems.

REFERENCES

- Abduh, A., & Rosmaladewi, R. (2018). Promoting intercultural competence in bilingual programs in Indonesia. *Sage Open*, 8(3), 2158244018788616. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018788616>

- Abduh, A., Samad, S., & Rosmaladewi, R. (2022). A Meta-Analysis of Language Policy on Bilingual Education in Indonesian Universities: Implication for Multicultural Education and Internationalization. *International Journal of Language Education*, 6(2), 210-220.
- Abdullah, S. H., & Nordin, Z. S. B. (2023). Teachers' Perceptions And Challenges On Dual Language Programme (DLP) In Meradong District. *The Journal of Social Analysis and Sustainability Studies (JSASS)*, 10(2), 93-109.
- Alhamami, M. (2023). Inequity, inequality, and language rights in English as a medium of instruction programs. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 99, 102297. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2023.102297>
- Amir, F. A., Atmowardoyo, H., & Sakkir, G. (2023). An analysis of translanguaging practices in an Indonesian EFL classroom. *JTechLP: Journal of Technology in Language Pedagogy*. <https://doi.org/10.26858/jtechlp.v2i4.56796>
- Aperocho, M. D. B. (2023). A policy reform framework for mother tongue-based multilingual education in the Philippines. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*, 4(3), 692–700. <https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.04.03.02>
- Azman, M. N. B., Chik, A., & Bodis, A. (2025). Malaysia's Dual Language Programme: A quest for equilibrium between globalization and national identity. *Current Issues in Language Planning*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2024.2442213>
- Beiler, I. R. (2023). Anglonormativity in Norwegian language education policy and in the educational trajectories of immigrant adolescents. *Language Policy*, 22, 95–117. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-022-09632-5>
- Bolton, K. (2023). EMI (English-medium instruction) in Indonesian higher education. *World Englishes*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12622>
- Bullah, N. H., & Yunus, M. M. (2019). Teachers' perception on the implementation of Dual Language Programme (DLP) in urban schools. *Asian Social Science*, 15(1), 24-31. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v15n1p24>
- Bush, T., Ng, A. Y. M., Too, W. K., Glover, D., & Chay, J. (2023). Ensuring acceptability and feasibility: The challenges of educational policy reform in Malaysia. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 22(2), 314–329. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2021.1933063>
- Cabral, E., & Martin-Jones, M. (2021). Critical ethnography of language policy in the global south: Insights from research in Timor-Leste. *Language Policy*, 20, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-020-09570-0>
- Coleman, H., Ahmad, N. F., Hadisantosa, N., Kuchah, K., Lamb, M., & Waskita, D. (2024). Common sense and resistance: EMI policy and practice in Indonesian universities. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 25(1), 23–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2023.2205792>
- De Los Reyes, R. A., & Bagona, E. R. (2024). Translanguaging in teaching and learning science in selected multilingual elementary classrooms in the Philippines. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 23(6), 940–954.
- Dewi, A. (2017). English as a medium of instruction in Indonesian higher education: A study of lecturers' perceptions. In *English medium instruction in higher education in Asia-Pacific: From policy to pedagogy* (pp. 241-258). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-51976-0_13
- Du, X., & Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2026). Teacher agency in practiced language policy in higher education in East and Southeast Asia (2010–2025): A systematic review. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 171, 105345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2025.105345>
- Essien, A. A., & Msimanga, A. (Eds.). (2021). *Multilingual education yearbook 2021: Policy and practice in STEM multilingual contexts*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-72009-4>

- Garrido, R. R., & Niez, R. A. (2025). Contextualizing mother tongue-based multilingual education: Pedagogical strategies in Kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms in the Philippines. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, 7(10), 959–974. <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i10.11139>
- Gempeso, H. D. P., & Mendez, J. D. S. (2021). Constructive alignment of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) language policy implementation to the practices of a multilingual classroom. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 4(2), 125–137.
- Gurney, L., & Wedikkarage, L. (Eds.). (2024). *Language education policies in multilingual settings: Exploring rhetoric and realities in situ*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-57484-9>
- Hajrah, H., Sunra, L., & Sakkir, G. (2023). Translanguaging in bilingual classroom: A case study of mathematics bilingual program at Universitas Negeri Makassar. *JTechLP: Journal of Technology in Language Pedagogy*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.26858/jtechlp.v3i1.60070>
- Igarashi, T., Maulana, S., & Suryadarma, D. (2024). Mother tongue-based education in a diverse society and the acquisition of foundational skills: Evidence from the Philippines. *Labour Economics*, 91, 102641. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2024.102641>
- Lee, H. Y., Hamid, M. O., & Hardy, I. (2023). Language and education policies in Southeast Asia: Reorienting towards multilingualism-as-resource. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 20(3), 1106–1124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2021.2002333>
- Lehman, C. (2023). Language policy in English-medium international schools: Transparency, policy cycle, and implications. *Asian Journal of Instruction*, 11(1).
- Liando, N. V. F., Dallyono, R., Tatipang, D. P., & Lengkoan, F. (2023). Among English, Indonesian and local language: Translanguaging practices in an Indonesian EFL classroom. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(1), 204–216. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v13i1.58270>
- Lo, Y. Y., & Othman, J. (2023). Lecturers' readiness for EMI in Malaysia higher education. *Plos one*, 18(7), e0284491. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0284491>
- Lumanlan, J. S., De La Torre, R., Asistio, F. V., De Guia, L. G., Do, H., Ramos, E. T., Jr., & Acuña, M. J. B. (2024). Perspectives on Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education implementation in the Philippines. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 2(12).
- Ma, T., Wang, K., & Fan, D. (2026). From conflict management to collaborative adaptation: designing participatory governance frameworks for human–wildlife relations in Sanjiangyuan National Park, China. *Environmental and Sustainability Indicators*, 101165. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indic.2026.101165>
- Mabiletja, M., & Ngcobo, M. (2023). Language planning in the context of complex multilingual schools. *ScienceRise: Scientific Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.21303/2313-8416.2023.003215>
- Masrom, U. K., Idris, M., & Jusoh, Z. (2021). Dual Language Programme (Dlp): Mediating Effects Of Readiness, Interest And Confidence On Students'satisfaction. *Journal of Nusantara Studies (JONUS)*, 6(2), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.24200/jonus.vol6iss2pp1-20>
- Metila, R. A., D'Agostino, T. J., & Iwasaki, E. (2025). Why the Philippines reversed its mother-tongue instruction policy: Tracing the erosion of political priority for first language-based education in the Philippines. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 118, 103408. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2025.103408>
- Muttaqin, S., Chuang, H.-H., & Liu, H.-C. (2025). The diffusion of English-medium instruction at higher education in Indonesia: Towards English as an academic lingua franca. In R. Stroupe & L. Roosman (Eds.), *Applied linguistics in the Indonesian context: Society, culture and language* (pp. 15–34). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-2336-2_2
- Nurhayati. (2023). Exploring translanguaging practices in Indonesian education. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Education*, 1(2), 34–40. <https://doi.org/10.36456/jalle.vii2.8696>

- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., ... & Moher, D. (2021). Updating guidance for reporting systematic reviews: development of the PRISMA 2020 statement. *Journal of clinical epidemiology*, 134, 103-112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2021.02.003>
- Pham, M., Barnett, J., Arta, B., Jalaluddin, J., Jazadi, I., & Thi Hong Minh, N. (2025). University student learning strategies in English medium instruction: an exploratory study in Indonesia and Vietnam. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2025.2540595>
- Qashas, A. N. H. A., Noni, N., & Korompot, C. A. (2023). Students' perceptions on translanguaging in English teaching-learning process. *Journal of Excellence in English Language Education*, 2(3). <https://doi.org/10.26858/joele.v2i3.51425>
- Renganathan, S. (2023). English language education in rural schools in Malaysia: A systematic review of research. *Educational Review*, 75(4), 787-804. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.1931041>
- Riau, R. R., Kurnia, Y., & Safitri, R. (2022). Translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy in multilingual English classrooms: A qualitative study from Indonesia. *Jurnal Tahuri*, 19(2), 83-98. <https://doi.org/10.30598/tahurivol19issue2page83-98>
- Saragih, A., Khairina, Y., & Batubara, K. B. (2024). Political contestation: Ideology and linguistic realization by 2024 prospective Indonesian presidential candidates. *JOALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature)*, 9(1), 182-200. <https://doi.org/10.33369/joall.v9i1.31677>
- Singh, M. K. M., & Rahman, M. M. (2022). The ideology towards English as a medium of instruction (EMI) adoption in higher education in Malaysia: A case study. *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature*, 28(2). <https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2022-2802-08>
- Suliman, A., Nor, M. Y. M., & YUNUS, M. (2020). Dual-Language Programme (DLP) Implementation in Malaysian Secondary Schools: from the Lenses of School Administrators. *Jurnal Pendidikan Malaysia*, 45, 60. <https://doi.org/10.17576/JPEN-2020-45.01SI-08>
- Tenorio, A. D. (2024). When language gets into the equation: Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) policy appropriation in elementary mathematics instruction. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(6), 2064-2077. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2039673>
- Tollefson, J. W., & Tsui, A. B. (2014). Language diversity and language policy in educational access and equity. *Review of Research in Education*, 38(1), 189-214. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X13506846>
- Tungul, K. T. S., & Lapinid, M. R. (2024). Assessing the mother tongue-based multilingual education policy in the Philippine mathematics education. *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan*, 43(3), 607-618. <https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v43i3.66558>
- Ulfah, B., Widiati, U., Rachmajanti, S., & Astuti, U. P. (2025). The Language Identity of an Engineering Professor: A Narrative Inquiry into Multicultural and Multilingual Experiences. *Sustainable Multilingualism*, 27(1), 215-240.
- Vaish, V. (2021). Linguistic distance and translanguaging: Teaching Malay-English bilingual learners. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 41(4), 673-684. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2021.1997708>
- Vanbuel, M., & Van den Branden, K. (2023). Examining the implementation of language education policies in mainstream primary schools. *Language Policy*, 22(2), 201-222.
- Velasco, Y. P. (2025). The interplay between language ideologies and Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) policy implementation in the Philippines. *The Asia-*

Pacific Education Researcher, 34, 765–775. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-024-00894-7>

Velasco, Y. P. (2025). The interplay between language ideologies and mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE) policy implementation in the Philippines. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 34, 765–775. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-024-00894-7>

Wata, C. A. P., Oraiz, C. G., Galang, J. L. D., & Dones, C. V. (2024). The grassroots reality: A scoping review of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) implementation in the Philippines. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 2(8).

Wulandari, R., Hidayat, A., Amalia, R., & Fadli, M. (2023). Reimagining literacy practices in Indonesian classrooms: Translanguaging pedagogies in multilingual contexts. *Jurnal Tahuri*, 20(1), 80–98. <https://doi.org/10.30598/tahurivol20issue1page80-98>