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The Impact of English-Only Instruction Policies in Indonesian Higher Education Institutions

Aditya Pangestu[1]

[1]Department of Language Education, Yogyakarta State University

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Corresponding Author:
Aditya Pangestu

Email:
adityapnstu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

***Purpose**: This study explores the impact of English-only instruction policies in Indonesian higher education, particularly how such policies are interpreted, implemented, and experienced by academic stakeholders. It examines the extent to which English-medium instruction (EMI) advances institutional goals of internationalization while addressing challenges in practice.*

***Subjects and Methods:** A qualitative approach was employed, involving in-depth interviews with faculty members, students, and administrators across multiple Indonesian universities. This method allowed for rich insights into stakeholders' perceptions, experiences, and strategies in navigating English-only policies.*

***Results:** Findings indicate that English-only instruction policies are often implemented unevenly, generating fragmented practices across institutions. Students frequently report linguistic anxiety, reduced classroom participation, and a reliance on informal code-switching. Faculty and administrators highlight a gap between the symbolic appeal of English for global competitiveness and the limited pedagogical and institutional support available. The policy is thus perceived as more symbolic than functional, reflecting external benchmarks rather than educational priorities.*

***Conclusions:** The study emphasizes the need for context-sensitive, multilingual, and equity-oriented policies. Sustainable internationalization in higher education requires moving beyond rigid English-only mandates toward inclusive strategies that empower both educators and learners.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the spread of English as a global lingua franca has significantly reshaped the linguistic landscape of education, particularly in non-Anglophone countries. In the realm of higher education, English has become more than just a medium of communication; it has emerged as a symbol of academic prestige, global integration, and modernity (Lasagabaster, 2022). Indonesian higher education institutions, seeking to enhance their global competitiveness and improve their rankings, have increasingly embraced English-medium instruction (EMI) policies (Irham & Wahyudi, 2023; Prayuda et al., 2024).

These policies, often formulated under the umbrella of internationalization strategies, typically mandate the exclusive use of English in classroom teaching, academic resources, and communication, particularly in international programs and select faculties (Utesch et al., 2024). The rise of English-only instruction in Indonesian universities is neither isolated nor ideologically neutral. It is deeply entangled with discourses of globalization, knowledge economies, and neoliberal reform agendas (Patrick, 2013; Springer, 2012). As Indonesia positions itself within

the ASEAN Economic Community and the broader global knowledge economy, English has been constructed as a gateway to opportunity, both for institutions and for individual students (Fitriati & Rata, 2021).

The assumption underpinning this policy orientation is that English proficiency directly correlates with academic success, employability, and international mobility. This perspective is widely reinforced by policymakers, administrators, and even segments of the student population. However, while the strategic adoption of English in higher education may appear beneficial on the surface, its implementation as an exclusive medium of instruction raises complex pedagogical, social, and ideological issues.

Critics have pointed out that English-only policies can deepen inequalities, particularly for students from rural, lower-income, or non-English-speaking backgrounds who may not have had equitable access to quality English education in earlier schooling (Mathew, 2022). In the Indonesian context, where multilingualism is the norm and Bahasa Indonesia is the national language of instruction, the imposition of English-only instruction can generate a "linguistic alienation effect" (Rozi, 2023), wherein students struggle to fully engage with academic content due to linguistic barriers.

Furthermore, the cultural and cognitive implications of English-only instruction are far from trivial. Language is not merely a neutral vehicle for information; it is embedded in identity, meaning-making, and epistemology (Bagga, 2022). By enforcing the use of English as the sole academic language, institutions may inadvertently marginalize local ways of knowing and restrict students' ability to critically engage with complex ideas in their first or more familiar languages. This is particularly significant in disciplines that rely on contextually grounded reasoning and cultural specificity, such as the social sciences and humanities.

Moreover, despite the symbolic appeal of English as a "neutral" global language, its dominance in academic settings often reinforces existing hierarchies of knowledge and power (Zeng & Yang, 2024). Research has shown that the valorization of English frequently coexists with the devaluation of local languages and epistemologies, fostering what some scholars have called "linguistic imperialism" or "epistemic injustice". In practice, English-only instruction can create an exclusionary academic environment where only those with strong prior exposure to English typically urban elites can fully thrive.

The policy trend toward English-only instruction also overlooks the pedagogical benefits of translanguaging and multilingual practices in the classroom (Ooi & Aziz, 2021). Research from various multilingual contexts has demonstrated that allowing students and lecturers to use their full linguistic repertoire can enhance comprehension, foster critical thinking, and create a more inclusive learning environment. However, under English-only regimes, lecturers often feel constrained from using code-switching or local languages, even when such practices might support more effective teaching (Gamage, 2024).

Permana & Rohmah (2024) and Juwariyah (2021) said that In Indonesia, the push for English-only policies is also complicated by inconsistencies in teacher preparation and institutional support. Many lecturers are required to teach in English despite having limited training in academic English or EMI pedagogy. As a result, the quality of instruction may suffer, with both lecturers and students experiencing frustration, reduced participation, and superficial engagement with course material. Given these complexities, there is an urgent need to move beyond the instrumentalist discourse that equates English proficiency with academic quality and explore how English-only instruction is experienced on the ground (Bondy, 2016; Bernstein et al., 2020). This study seeks to address this gap by critically examining the real-world implications of English-only policies for students and lecturers in Indonesian higher education.

It centers the voices of those directly affected by such policies to uncover how they navigate the tensions between linguistic aspiration, pedagogical reality, and cultural identity. While the internationalization of education remains a valid and important goal, it should not come at the expense of educational equity, linguistic diversity, or the epistemic agency of students and educators. This study thus contributes to broader conversations about language policy, linguistic justice, and decolonial approaches to knowledge in postcolonial education systems. In doing so,

it challenges the uncritical embrace of English as the singular path to academic and institutional excellence in Indonesia and calls for more nuanced, context-sensitive, and inclusive approaches to language use in higher education.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The qualitative design applied in the current research direction was based on a phenomenological perspective to examine and discern the lived experiences of relevant individuals directly involved in the policies of English-only instruction in the Indo-Independence higher-education educational environments. The broad auspices of the research mentality had to do with the specific benefits of a phenomenological design in the evocation of refined subjective experiences within which participants work through the challenging intrigues of institution and language. This orientation allowed it to narrow down into exploring the meaning, perceptions and internal responses which are by students and lecturers attached to the practical implementation of such language policies. Rather than resorting to the imposition of ready-made hypotheses, a naturalistic inquiry and interpretative analysis was undertaken, with a greater concern being given to the voices of participants as well as placing their experience in the very center of the research.

Research Sites, Context, and Participants

This study was conducted across three higher education institutions located in urban centers in Indonesia, each of which had adopted English-only Instruction Policy either within specific faculties or in undergraduate international programs. The institutions were chosen using a purposive sampling method, based on the fact that they had institutionalized English Medium Instruction (EMI) programs, were accessible to the researcher, and differed in terms of size, funding status (public/private), and geographical profile. Despite all three universities implementing English-only instruction as part of their internationalization strategy, the extent and manner of adoption varied, making this a comparative study that revealed different aspects of EMI practices. The participants of this study were divided into two main groups: undergraduate students and university lecturers with experience in EMI classes. A purposive sampling technique ensured that respondents had sufficient knowledge and exposure to EMI environments. The final sample consisted of 15 undergraduate students in their second or third year, allowing them to reflect on at least one full academic cycle under the policy. These students represented various academic fields such as business, international relations, and engineering. Additionally, six lecturers participated, both native and non-native English speakers, who had taught EMI courses for at least two consecutive semesters. Selection criteria such as gender, academic performance, and linguistic background were considered to ensure diversity and representativeness among respondents.

Data Collection Methods

To capture the complexity of the EMI experience, the study employed three main qualitative data collection techniques: in-depth semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The primary method was semi-structured interviews, conducted with both students and lecturers, to explore perceptions, attitudes, challenges, and coping strategies in English-only instruction. Open-ended questions allowed participants to elaborate freely while enabling the researcher to probe deeper where clarification was necessary. Interviews lasted between 45–90 minutes and were conducted either face-to-face or online, depending on participants' availability. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Classroom observations were conducted across six EMI classes within the three universities. An observation protocol was followed systematically, documenting aspects such as linguistic behavior, the use of English versus code-switching, participation patterns, and lecturers' strategies in addressing language barriers. These observations provided direct insights into teaching and learning practices under the EMI policy.

Document analysis complemented interviews and observations by examining institutional materials such as official policy documents, course structures, internal guidelines, and institutional communications related to EMI. These documents helped contextualize how EMI

policies were framed, justified, and implemented at the institutional level, offering a broader understanding of the structural and policy dimensions shaping participants' experiences.

Data Analysis Techniques

The work made use of thematic analysis which was informed by six phase frameworks of Braun and Clarke, 2006. Transcripts of interviews and observational field notes were transcribed and the researcher made repeated readings to acquaint herself with data. Inductive coding arose at the repetitive themes and the codes were edited and trimmed and integrated into four super themes including (1) linguistic struggle and adaptation; (2) exclusion and participation; (3) pedagogical compromises; and (4) perceptions of institutional support. The methodological triangulation was adopted as a way of data reliability encompassing cross-validation of the interviews and the observation and documents used in the act. NVivo software allowed coding, categorization and management of the data. During the analysis, memos were created to summarize approximations that came to light as well as initiate reflexive analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The discourse of internationalization, which more often than not emerges out of the discourses of global academic competitiveness, has seen many universities in Indonesia adopt English as the primary mode of instruction. These policy reforms are not neutral as they are usually presented to sound and its impacts are skewed to different groups of people. The practice of institutionalized English-only rules overlaps with the geometries of educational reality involving faculty diversities in English knowledge, student varieties in linguistic readiness, and an absence of institutional infrastructures to facilitate linguistic change-over. The results presented below are, therefore, the result of accounts of lived experiences of faculty members, students, and administrators and records how the English-only policies are implemented, bargained, and opposed in the university context. Contrary to the appearance of a simple implementation arc, the evidence shows that the manifold interactions of symbolic compliance, strategic adaptation and unintended consequences interact in a dynamic manner. At that, these insights disclose the practical implication of the policy as well as put in the forefront issues related to language and power, as well as managerial practices in Indonesian higher education.

Pedagogical Tensions

The current study recognizes the pedagogical contradictions that occur because of the English-only instructions policies. Such tensions are noticeable in the process of delivering instructions as well as in the process of receiving instructions and they result in less communicative clarity, less motivation of the students, and subsequently, lower performance. Institutions might be in their rights to justify such policies as representations of international standards of excellence and competitiveness in academia, but this research shows that issuing such a policy in the context of multilingual and pedagogically diverse setting has often brought more discord than benefit.

As a student, the compulsion to be taught in English only poses huge obstacles to understandings especially in situations where lecturers present heavy concepts without providing linguistic support in Bahasa Indonesia. Compounded by this is that many participants felt confused and intellectually detached. An issue that kept on arising was that they could not follow lectures when technical terms or abstract theories were being explained using words that were out of their English vocabulary. One third year engineering student gave a classic example when he said, "Well, sometimes I can learn the subject more when the lecturer creates an example using Indonesian speaking, but now all the things are in English and I am at sea." This feeling of being lost was also visible on faculties, particularly in the STEM and social sciences field where different wordings to denote certain disciplines only increased the mental burden on students who were already struggling with limited level of English comprehension.

Undeniable empirical evidence reveals that the inconsistency between the language policy and the pedagogical practice remains present: the former is supported by the institutional ambition, whereas the latter lacks the necessary adaptation and lacks institutional support. As a result, the English-only policy does not develop the high-order cognitive skills in place of facile understanding and rote learning. Students state that they use mostly translated notes or found

on websites synopsis instead of critical appreciation of course material. Therefore, the policy without intention also discourages interactive learning and propagates passivity in academics.

The academic employees are in their dilemma. The majority of lecturers are proficient English speakers but report a persistent lack of the ability to communicate a subtler message, provide an adjustable curriculum to the level of language skills of the student, and maintain the atmosphere of interactivity in a classroom. A senior lecturer in the humanities noted, I actually feel that I can only deliver 60 % of what I wish to deliver in English. I am able to teach idiomatically in Indonesian. It is too simple in the English language, and I lose the meaning." This observation allows highlighting the loss of semantic richness and the cultural context in the case of instruction being restricted to a non-native language. In certain cases, lecturers feel guilty about lowering their standards (or even dumbing down) their presentation or telling scripts to achieve policy compliance.

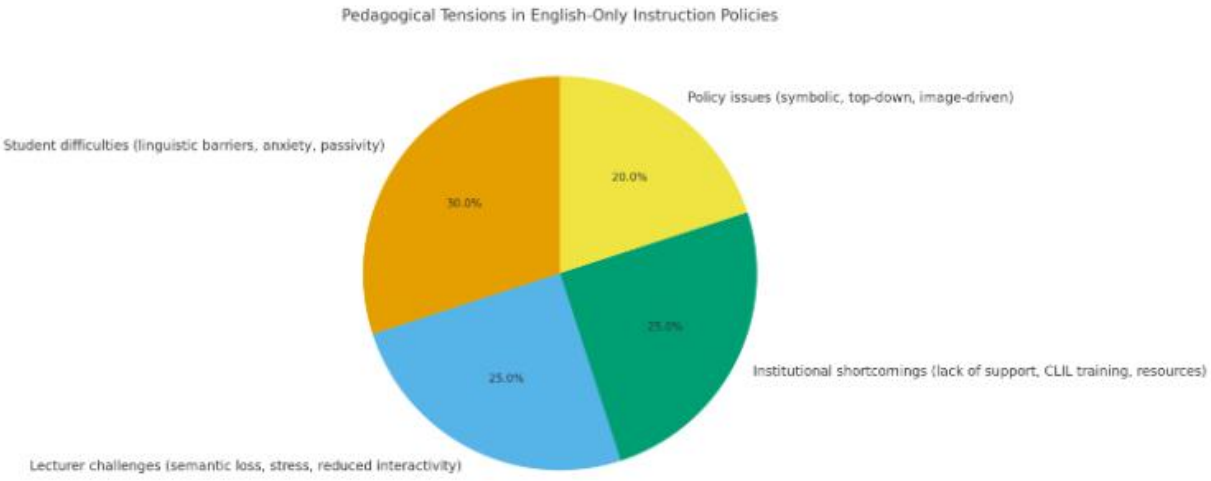

Figure 1. Pedagogical Tensions in English-Only Instruction Policies

Such feelings of pressure to adhere to the English-only rule create emotional and professional stress, as well. A number of lecturers feel that they are under scrutiny more intensively not only by students but also by administrators that watch the process of EMI delivery as a dimension of more general institutional marketing programmers. As described by one respondent, it is a case of performance of internationalization with form overshadowing the substance. Other people reported that the requirement to teach complex content and language in English was not matched by a systemic institutional commitment to finance EMI-related pedagogies, including content and language integrated learning (CLIL) training, access to English learning materials and facilities, and mechanisms of collaborative planning.

Institutionalized provision of pedagogical development was identified as a glaring shortcoming. In this landscape faculty members were expected to come up with their means of classroom intervention on their own without necessarily having supporting evidence of a pedagogical framework with which they worked. Some decided to change the tempo of speech, to make the choice of the words more basic or to use more materials visual, others did not even attempt to have class discussion at all due to the fact that their language was not predictable. Thus, the practice of instruction gravitated even more towards the lecture form of one-way operational delivery that did not match significantly to the existing trends in the programs of higher education that centered on the concept of interactive and student-centered approaches.

What was also relevant was a lack of open policy discussion and of formal feedback processes. The teachers often saw themselves as little able to affect policies either by the process of policy formulation or policy appraisal despite being the main implementation agents. This mismatch between the administrative policy word and classroom practice reflected a top-down approach to the conduct of government whose emphasis was based on institutional image and conformity rather than on classroom success and equitable learning outcomes.

Sociolinguistic Inequities

As the investigation shows, the establishment of policies of the English-only instructions has not provided the equitable academic environment and, in truth, has enhanced already existing sociolinguistic differences among students. As described by the participants, although supposedly unbiased and standard, these policies have actually favorited a limited group of learners and systematically discriminated against others. Learning experience is therefore all about inequitable use of classroom talk, disproportionate confidence in expressing knowledge and anxiety caused by linguistic stratification.

These privileged educational pathways usually in the form of urban private schools or international programs give kids the linguistic capital that they would need to succeed in classrooms where English is being the only language. Many of these students have been exposed to English-speaking instructors, international curriculums and intensive language-learning conditions even before they get into the university. Later on, they are more fluent, confident and are capable of achieving academic expectations. Another interviewee noted, “We had been taught English in high school already, and it is therefore a continuation to us.” The ease with which they interact during classes talks, write in English, and establish relationships with lecturers puts them in a good place in the system.

On the other hand, rural students, students in public schools, and those in poor areas have significant linguistic gaps in their entering into institutes of higher learning. English language has been taught as one unfamiliar subject but not as a medium of instruction and they are normally exposed to grammar exercises and recitals vocabulary papers. This kind of preparation does not make them well prepared to handle the challenge of full immersion in the university. The resultant dilemma was best expressed by one of the many participants, a first-generation college student at a small town in Sulawesi, who said, I know what I want to say, but my English is not good.

Inferiority in language reared its head many times among the students who had poor competence in English. In the case of many respondents, a relative lack of understanding of subject matter was not the problem of the main importance; rather, the problem was transferring the acquired knowledge into academic English. The gap between the intellectual potential and fluency of the language caused a feeling of shame and inadequacy. In the classroom, learners also revealed that they had a sense they were invisible in class discussions, and some learners had experienced the situation where they were considered silent as a sign of disengagement or lack of readiness. As a matter of fact, they were trying to pull through a type of linguistic gatekeeping that excluded them systematically to demonstrating their homogeneous knowledge on a par with more fluent counterparts.

These dynamics were noticed by the lecturers and it was noted that linguistic fluency had become de facto form of academic competence. Speaking fluently, one teacher told me, the students are praised and encouraged more. The quiet ones - we suppose, they are not ready. But in reality, they may already have the answer but are not able to articulate. This observation highlights the fact that policies based on English-only are egalitarian in their standardization, but to the extent that they confer linguistic privilege on those who can use the language as opposed to those who, but lack the skills, they institutionalize a privilege that is based on linguistic ability.

The sociocultural setting within the Indonesian classroom traditions that impose a greater value on showing respect to the authority, group harmony as well as student humility only aggravated the imbalances. A previous struggle to speak out during classes in most Indonesian learning environments was made doubly harder by the fact that these utterances were to be made in a foreign language that the student felt insecure in speaking. Students who are already preconditioned in avoiding public speech should, therefore, deal with this extra linguistic anxiety. Effectively, the policy became a mutterer of the linguistically and socially marginalized people both directly and indirectly.

The linguistic inequality of students can be noticed both in the speech during teaching process, as well as in written works, discussions in the working group, and speech on the stand. In such settings, those who speak English proficiently are likely to take the lead of interaction thus

perpetuating the differences that are already in place. In cooperative assignments, less skilled students often yield to other students who speak English with a more confident tone even though they have equal or even more valuable contributions to make. Recurrent acts of marginalization may lead to the learned helplessness effect, where the students are conditioned to accept their lower proficiency in language and fail to contribute.

All this goes beyond a matter of customary pedagogy; it reflects a very structural issue of language-based stratification in the university. The institutions recreate patterns of educational injustice based on the always uneven opportunity to learn a language through the use of English as the obligatory language of academic instruction. Though the leaders of the institutional sector promoted the English-only policy as the means to achieving global competitiveness, its immediate conductive, non-critical implementation, as applied, has actually served as the reinforcement and high schooling of the class structure, and language marginalization. The policy makes the linguistic capital of the urban elite special, bores influencing the periphery voices.

These observations coincide with other international arguments against English Medium Instruction (EMI) in post-colonial and multilingual contexts where scholars assert that, where English is imposed on a monolingual basis, it exists to be used as a form of exclusion (Song, 2021). Instead of functioning as a unifying force and equalizers of opportunity, English turns out to be a linguistic sieve that over-rewards people who already enjoy elite varieties of education. This language policy is just another method through which inequality can be perpetuated in Indonesia which is a country which already limits social mobility based on both the lands it holds and economic realities.

Global Aspirations vs Local Realities

The last thematic conclusion of this investigation is on the conflict between globalizing initiatives of the Indonesia higher education institutions and the survival logic of practical limits that exist within the local setting of pedagogical and infrastructural landscapes. In the institutions observed, English-only instructional policies, which were fronted throughout, have continuously been added by administrators and institutional materials as essential components of internationalization projects. These policies were justified in terms of discourses of global visibility, academic competitiveness, and reaching of world-level standards. The aim of creating global graduates who would be able to be successful abroad, work in global economy and increase the reputation of the university in international rankings and recognition programs have been stated in policy documents and other promotional resources.

It is, however, these same interviews with students and lecturers that revealed a striking dissimilarity between these institutional hopes and the actualities of classroom life. The participants were skeptical about the substantiveness of such ambitions, especially since there was little institutional investment in the facilitation of the delivery of English-only instruction. The lack of such preparation mechanisms as the English language preparation courses, the availability of the resources facilitating bilingual learning, or existing academic writing centers was reported among students. Lecturers, at the same time, recalled how they were installed in EMI classrooms with zero preparation in terms of pedagogical training on content-language integrated learning (CLIL) and learning how to balance comprehensibility with a strict language policy application.

Although not all subjects require the English-medium instruction, the mandate to establish English-medium instructions on campuses all over the Indonesia produced what many of the respondents described as a symbolic enactment of internationalization or a scenario where English-speaking instructions was used more as an effective form of branding or such a strategy. A senior lecturer expressed this as follows, it may seem good on paper that we teach in English. In reality the students are muddled and lecturers are ad-libbing. It is a huge discrepancy between the image and the experience." The latter note highlights the more general rift between policy and pedagogical practice, which was, and at the same time, pedagogical, epistemological, and ideological.

Lecturers also observed that directions to align to institutional discourses of global competitiveness were not given with regard to contextual realities. The teaching requirements in

the English language were applied in a homogeneous sense, regardless of the preparedness of students, disciplinary character of content and the level of competency or preparation of the lecturer. Some respondents were also described to have switched to Bahasa Indonesia due to pedagogical purposes and endorsed by institutional sanction or informal rebuke. These experiences created a climate of policy anxiety under which teachers had to act balanced against opposing ideals of policy prescriptively and classroom practicality with little institutional sympathy.

This symbolic appropriation of English also evoked fears with regard to the loss of local knowledge, cultural context and the academic multilinguistic tradition that abounded in Indonesia. Faculty and students noted that the hegemonic status of English on the academic scene may alienate the local languages, values, and ways of knowing. One of the students was worried that with all the things being in English, even our own ideas sound western. We cease thinking like Indonesians." This observation comes as part of a wider insecurity on the epistemic implications of monolingual education policy in the postcolonial world and echoes with the critique of the emergence of intellectual dependency and the unquestioning importation of Western knowledge schemes in Southeast Asian universities.

A top-down policy imposition is represented by the importation of the English-medium instruction in the universities in Indonesia, which failed to consider the uneven provision in the access of English-language in the country. As outlined in other parts of this text, students located in urban elite schools quickly caught on to EMI requirements, but those attending under-resourced regional schools, could not cope with the same lingual demands. The measure expanded upon current educational disparities since it narrowed down language-inclusive opportunities without offering compensatory language assistance as English fluency is framed as a pattern of academic achievement.

Moreover, English as the proxy of the quality was also very problematic, especially as it is often criticized in the literature regarding global EMI. The students would explain that some courses were taught in English not to enhance understanding but to bring the facilitated prestige on the programmed. Some respondent jocularly noted, sometimes I even begin to think the English is only there to justify the higher tuition fees. This case represents the commodification of language in using market-based higher-educational models where the English language just serves as a pedagogy tool rather than a marketing vehicle, accrues distinction and a consumer-satisfying inducement.

The results of the current research emphasize that, despite the fact that the aims of internationalization in the university are not necessarily flawed, their successful implementation deserves responsive implementation strategies. English-only disposition cannot be justified by a policy statement; comprehensive and long-term investment in faculty development, student assistance in language mastery, curriculum revision, and maintenance of heterogeneity of languages and cultures is necessary. Without such support the mismatch between aspiration and performance will be structural fissure that heavily weighs down upon the students of less linguistically and educationally privileged background.

Discussion

This research can serve as a window to a substantive contradiction present in modern postcolonial, non-Anglophone university management: the quest towards internationalization via English-only pedagogical models usually conflicts with the daily occurrences of university management. This tension in itself in the Indonesian context is not accidental, nor is an isolated case; instead, it represents a particular movement towards viewing transparency as effectiveness, and policy imitation as actual reform (Abdullah et al., 2022). These descriptive mismatches between strategic intent and operational reality have often characterized failures of sensemaking in organizations and failures of alignment with institutions in the literature of management. The current paper argues that implementation of English-only languages of instruction in Indonesia university is another mismatch whereby the external legitimacy is held above the internal incoherence.

The strategic level of national policy drive towards English-only instruction is based on a managerial practice of benchmarking the world and symbolic conformity imperative. The higher education system has been exposed to serious pressure by global knowledge economy, which has long been theorized by Raja et al. (2023) in terms of demanding them to meet international standards that can be inferred as valuing Anglophone norms and standards. Under such conditions, English stops acting as a communication tool but rather as a gauge of academic success, modernity and globalization. This figurative reasoning has come under critical description in the study of management in higher learning institutions because of its tendencies to instrumentalize language policy to serve brand image and not pedagogical integrity. The Indonesian example is only another confirmation of this tendency: the use of English is not backed by any meaningful evidence of its effectiveness and can only be seen as a performative representation of international status (Alrajafi, 2021).

This policy development in the realm of institutional management is also a model of what called the institutional isomorphism: namely, the tendency that organizations imitate the practice of others despite the lack of situational appropriateness. Following the same, the English-only instruction policy is not so much of an intervention that identifies with internal capacity or student demand as the reflection on regional and global change. Researchers have echoed the same observation when describing the Southeast Asian university environment, which actively pursues English-medium study policy as a manifestation of organizational signaling, aimed at selecting the image of competitive, innovative, and global universities. The existence of such performative policy-making illustrates the fact that Wheeldon (2022) identifies the so-called, managerialist university, according to which a symbolic capital is prioritized to a substantive change.

But frontline partakers of this mimicry (faculty and students) are disproportionately affected by it, since the realities their lives dramatize day in day out are fundamentally incompatible with the assumptions of the policy. Also in policy implementation, there was failure in sufficient investment in training of faculty, learner support and curriculum redesigning and is therefore, a classical example of policy failure due to policy implementation gaps. In fact, as various studies show, English-medium instructions need systemic support, which involves language-specific assistance, multilingual evaluation, and customized pedagogy English-medium instructions need scaffolding, which should call offering specific language assistance, multilingual assessment, and the restructuring of pedagogy Without such supports, the policy would be used not as a pedagogical enhancement but as to add new cognitive and emotional work to poorly funded faculty. Human resource-wise, the given policy might thus be labelled as an exploitative model: the performance has to be achieved by using new metrics without redistributing resources and revising work-related expectations (Rahman et al., 2024).

That disjunction between national policy on English and actual classroom practice is sharpened by the striking inequality in the way language teaching is organized around Indonesia. As extensive management literature on equity and inclusion has advised, implementation uniformity should continue to be avoided in the contexts wherein there exist heterogeneous institutional capacities and learner backgrounds. The structural disadvantages of the students in non-metropolitan area with linguistic minorities or economic deprived areas are overruled by the directives of the English-only, not being adapted. Rahman et al. (2024) present an analysis in which English-speaking countries (in Southeast Asia) are thought of as a neutral tool, but at the same time, English acts as a gatekeeping mechanism that reproduces hierarchies of opportunity under the guise of meritocracy. In management terms, these policies are a failure in terms of equity-based strategic planning since the difference in the outcomes is not seen as the design problem of the system but rather the issue of implementation failure.

The paper also demonstrates that the symbolic power of the English language may or may not bring about educational effectiveness. Teachers should not be accused of collecting against the directives of policy when they practice code-switching, back- translation, or even just switching back to Bahasa Indonesia, with an aim of ensuring understanding; they are merely balancing the impossibility. This legislation resolves onto the concept of street-level discretion in which the practitioners interpret norms in such a way that institutional requirements and practice on the

ground do not conflict. Such bottom-up updates are unavoidable and indispensable in terms of management. But at the same time the ongoing existence also implies that the chances of policy success have as little to do with enforcement mechanisms as with institutional flexibility and the ability to include citizens in governance.

The paper raises some crucial questions about the popular managerial assumption that linguistic neutrality forms the foundation of internationalization policy by looking into the case of English in transnational higher education. It assumes that English does not fulfil the role of an unmediated medium of information exchange, but instead conveys epistemological presumptions, ideological models and cultural orientations underlying the creation of knowledge. Blinded English promotion therefore isolates intellectual pluralism, and may continue to exclude the monolingual-monolingual monocultural seeing perspective and granules of dispelling the local languages, Indigenous narratives, and alternative formations of scopes. This contradiction, in terms of higher education management, amounts to a kind of mismanagement of knowledge: in making English the single authoritative language of academia, universities undermine their own investments in inclusiveness, decolonialization, and cultural sensitivity.

The implications that this study has are both practical and theoretical. Pragmatically, policy formulation experts and heads of institutions should not assume that England-only regimes and internationalization are the same. Rather, they must adopt pluralistic, flexible, and locally embedded models of language in which multilingual realities are considered as strategic strength, but not a shortcoming. In its conceptualization, the study challenges management scholar to analyses the economy of language in terms of symbolism in policy formulation. English as the medium of communication is as well a tool of management, an institutional identifying tool, and as a power tool. Subsequently, its implementation in the management of the university should be exposed to such a dressing as it is done to the other organizational strategies-not on the output but on the outcome and not on the image but on the equity.

The development of the Indonesian Higher Education Governance system requires a differentiated policy adaptation model, which should be based on an elaborate needs evaluation, regional capacity evaluations and feasibility consultations. As literature in the management of multilingual education shows, the goal is neither to do away with English, nor to attempt to make those parts that remain English-intensive, but, instead, to place English in a much more diversified ecology of languages, pedagogies, and institutional missions. Depending on such repositioning, universities may engage in internationalizing processes and activities, even as they advise against the most superficial and inequitable actions that are internationalization. Management of language policy in higher education should, therefore, be in line with the fundamental aspects of strategic alignment, participatory governance, and context sensitivity-aspects that are deemed to be essential not only in the aspect of educational success but also those that entail effective and ethical practice of institutional leadership.

CONCLUSION

The study analysis here reviewed the complex crossroads and deviations of the results of the English-only policies of teaching in higher education of Indonesian universities. Even though with such policies being defined many times as the mechanism that are meant to strengthen the global competitiveness level as well as the level of the institutional prestige, their course has been rather symbolic and functionally dysfunctional. These outcomes show that such top-down programs do not take into account the linguistic realities of students and lecturers, which produces pedagogical inefficiencies, both equity shortfalls, and managerial inconsistencies. Management-wise, such a mismatch is an inconvenience between strategic aspirations and institutional ability. These efforts are compromised by the inexistence of proper faculty training, system of support on the side of students as well as sensitive overhaul of policies in regard to language. Instead of contributing to the actual internationalization, English-only teaching often becomes the act intended to meet the external standards and guidelines, and producing the tensions, as well as inequalities, internally.

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