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Monoglot Ideologies in Multilingual Ecologies: Case Study of Language-in-Education Policies in India and Indonesia

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Abstract

The creation of language policies is a socially embedded process that affects the socioeconomic well-being of those who live in a given language ecosystem. Unrealistic presumptions about a nation's linguistic landscape on the part of its government run the risk of perpetuating an unequal social climate in which some demographic groups are given more possibilities for social mobility, while others are pushed into a marginalized position of powerlessness. In multilingual societies, the power structures that exist mirror the roles that various languages are given in social, educational, and other domains. The current study examines the ecology/practice of language in multilingual Indian and Indonesian contexts and strives to determine if it receives adequate reflection in the language policies (LPs) of both nations. To comprehend how multilingual social practice is managed and planned through official policy framing, it construes these situations as case studies. In social contexts where societal multilingualism is the norm, the current study takes a critically reflexive approach toward the formulation and application of policy. To determine whether there is a correlation between contentious LPs in multilingual situations and social justice, in terms of equal access to high-quality education, it links top-down government language management with local linguistic realities. Moreover, it draws its own conclusions regarding the implications of policy analysis for fair language management in multilingual contexts and teachers' participation in policy implementation as part of their regular professional activities.

Keywords: language ecology, language management, language policy, multilingualism, social justice

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Introduction

Language policies (LPs) exist in some form in all human societies. These policies are more than a mere obsession of governments with language *per se.* LPs are often articulations of ideological and political positions that have repercussions for social, political, and economic interests of different groups (Cameron, 2006; Hornberger, 2006). This understanding of LPs is conducive to analyzing the effects that planning for one language has on other languages, as well as the effects on sociolinguistic groups associated with these languages. It follows that in multilingual societies, the roles assigned to different languages in social, educational, institutional, and other domains are ultimately reflected in the power structures operating among various groups in that particular social setting (Khan et al., 2022). Kymlicka (1989) argued that since nation-states function within a given sociolinguistic environment, they cannot adopt a position of neutrality concerning language and culture, as some believe that they can concerning religious diversity. LP debates and decisions are, therefore, concerned with more than just language, as they are arenas where ideological, social, political, and economic interests are contested and power structures are negotiated. This understanding of LPs is conducive for certain considerations, such as how nationalism plays out through LPs in different countries (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004), the impact of globalization on LPs in postcolonial and other developing countries (Durrani, 2012), the impact of LPs that accord greater social and educational roles to majority languages and the repercussions of such policies for indigenous and minority languages (Jamshaid & Naqvi, 2021; May, 2014; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2004), and the relation between LPs and identity construction in the era of globalization (Norton, 2010).

LPs can perform a dual function in different social contexts. They can be used by dominant groups to reify, and thus stabilize, existing relationships of power that favor these groups. Furthermore, these relationships can also be appropriated by the community, social groups, or individuals to resist and/or influence language policy and practices. The influence of a community on the concerned LP may challenge the *status quo* and potentially alter the existing power structures. However, the affordance of such 'agency' (see Foucault, 1991) for the community or individuals to influence the government or other dominant groups and

change their attitude towards language issues varies from one sociolinguistic context to the other.

Nation-states are frequently conceived of in terms of linguistic affiliations, rather than in terms of race or ethnic identity, in the current era of globalization (Anderson, 1991). This understanding of nation-states offers a particularly thorough and intricate framework for the sociolinguistic and ethnographic analysis of the effects of unbalanced policies that favor the use of dominant languages in postcolonial contexts in the society and academia. In many postcolonial contexts, English plays a significant role in the reimagining of national identities in terms of language preferences and is linked to socioeconomic inequality (Mahboob, 2015; Norton, 2010). According to Norton (2010), in the current era of globalization and against the backdrop of American cultural and linguistic imperialism, postcolonial states are compelled to decide how English shapes their nations' futures.

Language variety is not a problem until it is used to support prejudice, according to Haugen (1973), who conceptualized language as a human problem. Similar to Hymes (1992), who emphasized that while all languages theoretically have an equal potential, in practice this may not be the case due to differences in the opportunities available for some languages to achieve greater social realization, while such opportunities are being denied to others. Arguably, the real challenge while developing LPs in a multilingual environment is less to plan for the expansion of all languages than it is to safeguard indigenous languages from becoming regionally or globally dominant.

Language policy formulation is a socially embedded process that has socioeconomic implications for the people living in a particular language ecology. Unrealistic assumptions about the language ecology of a country on the part of its government may lead to the perpetuation of an unequal social environment in which certain sections of the population can enjoy more opportunities for upward social mobility, while others are forced into a marginalized position of disempowerment (Kennedy, 1983; Street, 2001). Striking a balance between national development needs and empowerment of all citizens at the individual level can, therefore, be the guiding principle for an ideal language-in-education policy. As Tollefson (1991) pointed out that although governments may provide funding for language programs and stress the value of language learning, they can foster environments that

make it nearly impossible for some citizens to develop the language skills they require.

The current article analyses the language ecology/practice in the multilingual contexts of India and Indonesia and whether it finds adequate reflection in the LPs of these countries. It studies these contexts as case study to understand how multilingual social practice is managed and planned through official policy framing. The study adopts a critical and reflexive stance toward the role of policy in social settings where multilingualism is a norm. It links top-down government language management with on-ground realities of linguistic diversity to understand whether there is any connection between divisive LPs (implemented in multilingual contexts) and social justice in terms of equitable access to quality education. It sums up findings from the above two-country context to draw implications for how LPs can be designed using a ground-up framework to promote social justice and equity.

Methodology

The multilingual contexts of India and Indonesia covered in this study are used as cases to examine how educational policy framing can mask ideological goals under the guise of internationalism, global competitiveness, and economic progress. The current study aims to critically examine the above two national contexts to shed light on the position of English as the dominant language and how its dominance affects language-in-education policy and the ecologies of indigenous languages. The analysis that follows determines how official and institutionally supported language planning and policy mediates power, social status, and symbolic value of languages, thereby negatively affecting the ecological balance of languages in multilingual India and Indonesia. This study attempts to unpack the effects of English language dominance on broader language ecologies, not just in India and Indonesia but throughout the countries of the world with analogous linguistic environments. Specifically, it investigates the role of language policy and planning in creating an inequitable distribution of power and social status among languages, leading to further imbalances within their respective language ecologies. It argues that language planning and policy are powerful tools that can be utilized to promote linguistic equality or enact inequality based on the interests of those in power. Such inequities have far reaching consequences for both individuals and communities, as those with access to English are

rewarded with opportunities not available to those who lack such access. To illustrate this point, the current study provides examples from India and Indonesia, where English has become an increasingly dominant language in a region with a history of linguistic diversity.

Language policy can be understood within a framework of language practices, beliefs, and management (Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004). Members of a speech community share a set of beliefs about where languages fit in the society. They accord different prestige values to the various languages used in their sociocultural context (see Figure 1). Language practices/ecology impact and, conversely, emanate from such views. A group may believe, for instance, that their national identity is represented by a particular language. For them, language remains a unifying factor of their nation.

Figure 1
Language Policy Model (Shohamy, 2006, p. 53)
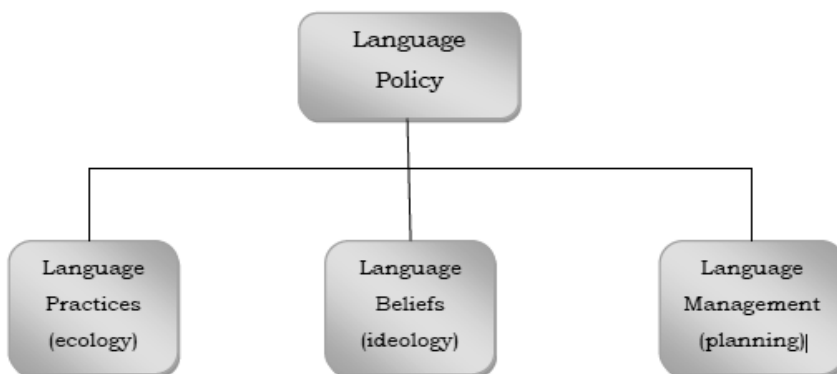
Regardless of formal policies about standard varieties, language ecology refers to actual language practices that occur in a social situation. In such situations, language planning and official publications at most reflect the intentions of strong institutions that have little to no impact on the real ecology of language use. Language management describes specific actions used to control and influence the language behavior of a certain entity. It allows for the ideological policing of language to strengthen or change language ideologies propagated by powerful players, such as governments and other powerful organizations. Policies establish explicit and implicit language planning by determining language attitudes. The community's actual stance on language is more likely to be revealed in its

behaviors than in its administration (Spolsky, 2004). The use of languages and their hierarchical standing in a given environment are likely to be unaffected by explicit policy papers and legislation, unless language management is in line with language ecology and attitudes.

In order to advance a particular and frequently dominant social position, language ideologies combine linguistic and social ecologies (Schieffelin et al., 1998). Language ideologies, which are "representations, whether explicit or implicit," in the words of Woolard and Schieffelin (1994, p. 3), "envision the intersection of language and people in a social setting." They have a significant impact on the outside world and encompass social and cultural ideas about humanity, citizenship, and morality in addition to language, making it imperative to understand them in order to gain an understanding of the linguistic context. For instance, in the 17th and 18th centuries, the development of the printing press and the promotion of written English as the primary form of the language created the conditions for modernity and the establishment of European nation-states (Anderson, 1991). Due to this, spoken English changed significantly over time, while written English conventions largely remained unchanged.

English eventually replaced French as the official language of communication in Britain. As monolingualism—also known as one language, one nation—became more and more prevalent, it had a negative impact on the minority languages of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. While discussing the earlier language policy formation of postcolonial states, May (2012) argued that the development and promotion of 'unifying' national languages in postcolonial contexts, comparable to those in Western developed contexts, remains the main focus of language planning. The aim is to modernize and build a nation as well as to forge an integrated nation-state out of the various ethnic groups making up the citizenry. For this purpose, elites who are motivated by their interests in retaining and consolidating their power frequently choose a single language for education or status planning.

Results

Language-in-Education Policy in India

The Indian government has been pursuing aggressively a vision of developing its economy to gain prominence in the South Asian region. Through its LPs, it aspires to develop its citizenry into a skilled workforce

that is well-adapted to the demands of the global market economy (Annamalai, 2013). In the postcolonial context of India, English is assigned a seminal role in language-in-education policy in order to enhance the capacity of the learners in the domain of business communication, nationally as well as globally. As Graddol (2010) put it, "In India English is seen not just as a useful skill, but as a symbol of a better life, a pathway" to success and opportunities in the economic sphere of life. He, therefore, suggested that a heavy responsibility falls upon the shoulders of teachers who have been assigned the daunting task of making this dream come true by enabling the learners of English to achieve language proficiency. LPs do not simply operate as a political will but are embedded in the beliefs of the speech community (Spolsky, 2004). The quote below from Pandey (2011) indicates that Dalits (members of the lowest caste in the Indian caste system) have high hopes about the possible impact of learning English on their lives and associate it with greater opportunities for upward social mobility.

> English is the milk of a lioness ... only those who drink it will roar. ... With the blessings of Goddess English, Dalit children will not grow to serve landlords or skin dead animals or clean drains, or raise pigs and buffaloes. They will grow into adjudicators and become employers and benefactors. Then the roar of the Dalits... will be heard by one and all. (p. 16)

India has embraced a policy of linguistic pluralism since the creation of its constitution in 1950. This policy was later codified in the 'three-language formula' suggested by the National Commission on Education from 1964 to 1966 and incorporated into the National Education Policies from 1968 and 1986. By not designating any one language as the nation's official language, the nation upholds 'linguistic secularism,' while 'linguistic liberalism' is upheld by including minority languages in the country's school-level curriculum (Annamalai, 2013). However, a paradoxical situation arises when the need for national integration and the protection of minority languages is pitted against the government's perceived need to ensure the nation's "economic competitiveness at the global level."

As a result of economic growth and globalization, English is given more weight in daily life (Fernandes, 2000). It should be noted that English is the primary language of instruction for higher education in India, acting as a gatekeeper to more senior roles in the government, the tech industry, and business. As a result, there has been greater pressure for language shift in

favor of English. According to Rao (2008), there were 60 local languages being taught at the secondary school level twenty years prior to the study's execution, down to 47 at the time of the study. According to Meganathan (2011), this number would decrease further as English gains a prominent social status and is seen as the key to success and the possibility of a better future at all social levels.

There are conflicts between the English language's apparent promise of global economic opportunities and its negative impact on the use of regional languages in Indian education system. Hindi's low prestige and social stigmatization affect its vitality and reduces its appeal to the public as a medium of education (Rao, 2008). This is because macro-level policy rhetoric and micro-level implementation are inconsistent. India, like many other developing and postcolonial nations, is in a state of ambivalence about how to strike a balance between pressures from the global economy and the requirement for a thriving sociolinguistic ecology where regional languages can flourish (Canagarajah, 2005; Pennycook, 2010).

Due to social and educational policies based on the perceived hierarchy of languages, some minority languages were denigrated and suffered language attrition and loss after English was declared the official language of the world during the colonial era. From a historical perspective, a hierarchical ideology of language policy and planning is unsuited to the Indian context. According to Mohanty (2006), functional dispersion, not hierarchies, is the most effective way for South Asia's linguistic plurality to function. He argued that modernist policies based on a hierarchy of distinctions and centralized single languages are incompatible with the regional traditions and cultures. The way that individuals, families, and communities choose different languages in different communicative contexts without prioritizing any one of them over others is distinctive to the region. People's choice to accept various languages and thereby become more multilingual, as opposed to being divided through ideological intervention in the form of formal policies, is the secret to India's stable form of bi/multilingualism.

Language-in-Education Policy in Indonesia

Indonesia is another multilingual country like India where the government decided to establish English medium 'International Standard Schools' (IS Schools) to meet the challenges of 'globalization'. The

government claims that these schools fully uphold the National Standards for Education. Indeed, they go above and beyond by considering the educational norms of one advanced nation that belongs to OECD and of another advanced nation that possesses distinctive educational strengths that give it a competitive edge in the international market (Depdiknas, 2007).

In developing nations, the mantra that 'globalization' and 'competitiveness' go hand in hand is frequently repeated. However, the solutions put forth to be competitive in the global market are based on supporting education systems that have a propensity to maintain social inequality and linguistic bifurcation and also have the potential to cause civil unrest (Lamb & Coleman, 2008). It should be noted that Indonesia's demographics are not particularly encouraging given that the nation has achieved only medium human development, as measured by the UNDP Human Development Index (2009). The choice to establish IS Schools should be viewed in this perspective. Indonesia is the world's fourth-largest country by population with 230 million people. The average per capita income fluctuates between USD 82 and USD 150 per month. People in Indonesia who earn USD 1 to 0.25 or less per day are one-third of the population and live in extreme poverty. On the other hand, there are also instances of extreme wealth, personified by the seven Indonesians who are among the richest people in the world, with a combined net worth ranging from USD 1 billion to USD 3.5 billion (Kroll & Miller, 2010). Free and compulsory education is provided for up to nine years. The government provides each student with roughly 44 USD and 66 USD for primary and junior secondary education, respectively. Indonesia trails behind its neighbors in East and Southeast Asia in the evaluation of educational outcomes on a global scale (Coleman, 2011). Primary schools have an attendance rate of about 96%, which is still significantly higher than the junior secondary school attendance rate.

The IS Schools program was introduced in Indonesia in 2007 against this socioeconomic backdrop and in response to the growing demands of the society's aspirant middle class, which demanded that their children be allowed to attend the prestigious IS Schools operating in the country, where English is the medium of instruction and the textbooks are written in this language (Coleman, 2011). In public sector schools, the secondary level of the Indonesian language, Bahasa, is still taught. IS Schools are only open to Indonesian expats who live abroad with their kids. The top public schools

currently in operation would be granted IS School status under the new program if they satisfy a set of criteria created for this purpose. According to Kemdiknas (2009), approximately 0.46% of Indonesia's 190,000 schools, or 874 schools, were designated as IS Schools as of 2010.

The funding for the schools goes disproportionately well to IS Schools. These schools receive generous grants from the district and provincial governments in addition to the funding that BOS (Bantuan Operasional Sekolah) provides to all schools across the country. In addition, while 'traditional' primary and junior secondary schools are not allowed to charge a fee, IS Schools operating at both of these levels are allowed to supplement their financial situation by charging fees from their students, ranging from USD 22 to USD 49 a month, aside from the entrance examination fees and fees for international study tours (Kompas, 2010). Air-conditioned classrooms, multimedia projectors for instruction, foreign teachers hired to expose students to more 'native speakers' of English, and individual chairs for each student rather than benches are features found in many IS schools. Given their limited funding, such programs fall outside the purview of the country's 'traditional' schools.

The main reasons given for the establishment of IS Schools in Indonesia were to address the problems brought on by 'globalization' and to be 'competitive' on a global level. Although, they only cater to a small portion of the population (mostly upper middle class) who can afford to pay for their children to attend these schools, government documents and teachers repeatedly make upbeat claims that the establishment of such schools is conducive to producing "people of [high] quality who can compete locally and internationally." As stated by Hadi (2007), "[to meet] the demands of this age of globalization and the free market." In Indonesia and a number of other developing countries, there are two perceived demands for globalization namely the use of English as a medium of instruction and the requirement to learn other subjects in English (Pearson, 2014).

The argument given for the establishment of highly resourceful schools lacks logical consistency. This is because no explanation is given as to how it is conducive to national development and meets the demands of today's globalized world if only a limited and already privileged section of the society is given access to better education. Furthermore, the argument of promoting English as a medium of instruction even at the primary level runs in the face of research-based evidence suggesting that using the mother

tongue for primary education is conducive to the holistic development of the child. According to Canagarajah (1999), a solid foundation in one's native language and culture aids in the learning of other languages, literacies, and information. Education is not a benign project but is laden with social and economic repercussions. The implications of an education or language policy must, therefore, be carefully scrutinized in terms of its stated and unstated effects on all members of a community before money is poured into projects which may rest upon the grand rhetoric of 'globalization' and 'international competitiveness' but, in essence, perpetuate social disparity.

Conclusion

The multilingual contexts of India and Indonesia provide a typical example of how discrepancies between official language policies and the actual linguistic ecology of nations create educational circumstances that are not favorable for children coming from less privileged socioeconomic classes. The existing class disparities are only exacerbated by language-in-education policies that do not build upon the multilingual practices of the community but attempt to impose hegemonic ideologies of language through language management and planning. LPs are, therefore, ideological creations that reflect and uphold power imbalances in the society (McCarty, 2004). English-only policy in Indonesia, for instance, dissociates students from the multilingual ecology they live in, where several languages perform vibrant functions in daily interactions and help to maintain economic and non-economic relationships. By denying them the opportunity to get the schooling relevant to the multilingual ecology, such a policy promotes an ideology of subordination for indigenous languages. Students are not given the opportunity to develop literacy and good competence in the local dialect which pushes these languages to the status of inferior vernacular languages and develops disdain against them. Additionally, it maintains and expands the already evident social divide between children coming from upper socioeconomic levels and the vast majority of children coming from lower socioeconomic classes. IS Schools support not only the superiority of standard English over other languages but also the reification of cultural, pedagogical, and classroom norms that mirror those in advanced western English-speaking countries (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007).

It is not the case, as claimed by the proponents of English-only policies, that supporters of a plurilingual approach toward language-in-education are not interested in developing English proficiency of multilingual students.

On the contrary, they support the development of English through scaffolding from other languages available in the multilingual context of students (Ricento, 2006; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2004; Tollefson, 1991). Supporters of additive bilingualism want to bridge the gap between the monoglot standard ideology that guides language education programs and the multilingual realities that students experience. Due to these measures, minority languages are now being used and preserved in several educational institutions (May, 2014, 2012).

The disconnect between the ecology of language use and language policies in India and Indonesia demonstrates the need for any language education program, to acknowledge the fact that these nations comprise multilingual and multicultural societies composed of individuals with diverse ethnolinguistic identities who accord different functional status to different languages and varieties. Any framework for language management and planning at the official level should take this as its starting point (Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004). Additionally, in the context of school education, multilingual and monolingual learners should be treated differently. Bilingual people acquire a variety of linguistic skills and rarely do they speak both languages with the same level of fluency. Multilingual persons frequently switch their languages when conversing. The ideologically motivated distinct boundaries created through certain policies are, therefore, suspect as they are built on the premise of distinct boundaries between language systems (Canagarajah, 2005). Instead of precisely generating each language in accordance with monolingual norms, multilingual individuals should be to use their linguistic repertoire keeping in view communicative purposes within a given situation. This fundamental notion ought to serve as the foundation for the creation of language policies in multilingual Asian countries, such as India, Indonesia, and Pakistan.

Implications

By opposing, resisting, and changing language planning and management policies that are ideological in nature and have their roots in fulfilling the interests of a few influential segments of the society, a vibrant language ecology that is based on the actual linguistic practices of the community and matches the aspirations of children and their parents for a prosperous future should be created. In the absence of such crucial resistance, students who are supposed to gain the most from specialized language policies suffer the most. The mismatch between home and school

languages, according to a 2005 World Bank report, contributes significantly to the school dropout rate. In regions where the school language is rarely, if ever, used at home, 50% of unschooled children reside. This draws attention to the primary impediment to achieving Education for All, a history of unproductive behavior that promotes low learning levels, high dropout rates, and high rates of repetition.

It is critical for education that teachers have the autonomy to implement language policies that affect their instructional strategies. Teachers must be aware of their responsibilities prior to enforcing a language policy in the classroom. Language rules are constantly created, proven, and/or challenged by teachers. Hence, the consequences of these actions must be made clear to them and they must be taught regarding how to apply language guidelines as necessary. Since language policy has such a significant influence on teaching and learning, it should be treated equally in programs for preparing teachers.

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