A MATTER TO THINK OVER: NATIVENESS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

A shift is happening in languages used in Indonesia, especially in English as a foreign language becomes a compulsory subject in Indonesian formal education institutions from primary to tertiary levels. After Bahasa Indonesia and the regional languages, English comes in third place. Since English as an International Language (EIL) paradigm appears, some debates burst up if non-native speaker or native speaker who better take the role as English teachers in outer-expanding countries. This paper provides a discussion about the issue of non-native and native speaker of English regarding the selection of English teachers in Indonesian context. The issue is analysed by using a list of teaching behaviours between non- native English speaker teachers (NNESTs) and native of English speaker teachers (NESTs) examined by Medgyes (1994). A few recommendations about the issue of selecting English teacher in outer-expanding countries are presented in the end of the paper.

Keywords: *English teacher; nativeness; Indonesian teacher; EIL*

INTRODUCTION

The status of English in Indonesia remains the same regardless several changes made in Indonesian curriculum since August 17, 1945, the Independence Day of Indonesia. The government conceived the Indonesian education curriculum in such a way which put English at the top rank of compulsory foreign language taught in Indonesian formal education. This occurs since the government consider the need to prepare its students with a 'basic' language ability to participate in a global world which employ English as an international language

Kachru (1992) classified three types of English based on where and how it is used. Numerous debates appears regarding the nativeness of teacher who better take the role in the English teaching process in outer-expanding countries (Kachru, 1992; Clouet, 2006; Wolff, 2015). This paper aims to reopen a debate

on growing concern on whether native/ non-native English speakers teachers in outer-expanding countries, especially in Indonesia. In terms of English language teaching in Indonesia, there is no particular formal guiding instructions of recruiting foreign language teachers, which emerges the issue regarding English teachers' selection would be worth-discussed. This article sets up several discussions on its relation to certain concerns put around non-native vs. native English language educatorss in Indonesian secondary school setting with some analyses regarding language policy of Indonesia. Besides, I will highlight some conclusions along with the suggestions for the English educators recruitments in Indonesia.

Languages in Indonesia

a. Bahasa Indonesia as a national language

Indonesia is a multicultural and multilingual nation occupied by more or less 300 ethnic groups in around 17,000 islands who speak roughly 700 different languages (Paauw, 2009; Lowenberg, 1983). Most people in Indonesia tend to speak a regional language in daily conversation and Bahasa Indonesia, the national language, in various context both in formal and informal settings. Bahasa Indonesia is an Austronesian language that descended from Malay, which served as

the lingua franca for voyagers and traders in Southeast Asia for hundreds of years (Errington, 1986). Bahasa Indonesia, according to Gupta (1983), is a pidginised version of Malay. In the Oath of Youth (Sumpah Pemuda) of 1928, Bahasa Indonesia, for the first time, was proclaimed as the language of the Indonesian people. This was Indonesia's revolutionary period of nationalism, and with it came the belief that a national language should be created. Paauw (2009, p. 5) writes;

"The potential danger of ethnic divisions and conflicts occurring in such a large and diverse nation made it essential to bring the nation together through a shared sense of nationhood, and the Indonesian language was both the symbol and the vehicle of that unity."

To put it another way, Bahasa Indonesia was established, along with its roles as a national representation, to unite the whole ethnic groups in the archipelago underneath a single name, Indonesian. In 1988, the Great Dictionary of Bahasa Indonesia (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia), an official dictionary of Bahasa Indonesia, was published along with a guide on how to use standardised Indonesian in written language. It is important to know that in the New Order era, the central government actively promoted the national slogan

"Menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia yang baik dan benar" (Use the good and proper Bahasa Indonesia) to encourage the people to use Indonesian conventions properly in the relevant social domain. This effort was successful since the percentage of population who understand Indonesian increased from 40% in 1970 to 67% in 1990 (Ewing, 2014).

Indonesian has hundreds of regional languages and thousands of dialects but Indonesian remains the national language. Recent Indonesian linguistic policies have aimed to encourage multilingualism and treat regional languages similarly to Bahasa Indonesia. According to Nababan (1982, as cited in Lowenburg, 1983), ethnic languages are now spoken as a language of culture by the majority of Indonesians. Furthermore, according to the 2010 census, regional language was still the most widely spoken language in Indonesia, with 79.45% of the population speaking it (BPS, 2011). Nevertheless, the significant increase of Indonesian speakers, however, makes it worth thinking about the issue of endangered regional languages. Even though regional languages are still widely spoken by Indonesian population, several studies show that the use of regional language is declining (Conners & Klok, 2016; Kurniasih, 2006; Ravindranath & Cohn, 2014)

In the pre-Independence period of Indonesia, language and national origin had a close connection. For about 350 years, the Dutch had colonized Indonesia. Indonesians "have been preoccupied with the search and maintenance of national identity" since 1945, when the country declared independence from Dutch colonialism (Dardjowidjojo, 2003, p. 44). Indonesians saw the necessary of determining their identity as Indonesian in order to get the recognition from other countries around the world. At that stage, Bahasa Indonesia plays a role as a reflection of Indonesian freedom.

Furthermore, Indonesia has needed a lingua franca language since 1945 in order to connect with other former sovereign states as political allies in order to maintain its state and disseminate its sovereignty around the world. Since Dutch was the colonialist's language and was not considered an international language at the time, the government was rather conservative and wished to eradicate the Dutch community. As a result, English was selected as the first foreign language in Indonesia since its has a high political standing and affiliation strength on a global scale. This explanation for language policy selection may be a reflection of how

language and identity are interconnected once again. The Indonesian government language policy maintains the country's identity, which is expressed in its language, by making Bahasa Indonesia stays and along with English become compulsory subjects in every Indonesian school's curriculum.

In addition, in Indonesian secondary school curriculum, Bahasa Indonesia is allocated 180 minutes/week, twice longer than English (90 minutes/week). The decision arranging such time range reflects how the government tries their best to keep maintaining Indonesian cultural identity to the students Indonesian while they are ordered to learn English as their preparation to take a part in global world. Therefore, they never get lost in determining who they are and where they belong.

b. English in Indonesia

English does not play a practical role in most aspects of Indonesian culture. According to Lauder (2008), there are three stages of language classification in Indonesia. Following Bahasa Indonesia and regional vernaculars, English comes in third position. The number of Chinese language learners in Indonesia increased dramatically after the fourth Indonesian president's, KH Abdurrahman Wahid. However, according to Indonesian language policies, English gets priority over other languages such as Arabic, French, and Chinese.

After Indonesia's independence, the country's school curriculum has been revised ten times (in 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2006, and the most recent in 2013). According to central government policies, English will remain to be the first foreign language required to be taught in public schools. Even to this day, in the most recent curriculum, known as "Kurikulum 2013," From kindergarten to tertiary school, English has been a main subject that should be taught in school in any classroom. However, it seems that not all Indonesian students are capable of comprehending English well for various purposes. Darjowidjojo (as cited in Kirkpatrick, 2007) identifies five contributing factors: 1) large class sizes; 2) teachers with limited English proficiency; 3) the poor salaries of public English teachers, which allows (or even forces) many to moonlight; 4) a lack of proper training to teach the new curriculum; and 5) cultural barriers.

Even though most Indonesian students have studied English for more than ten years, the mentioned reasons indicate that English would not be widely used or understood by them. In this way, the question among average Indonesians is

not so much about which kind of English they speak, but whether they speak English at all. Since most English speakers only come to Indonesia for a brief stay, there seems to be no English-speaking community in Indonesia.

It's difficult to equate the English language position in Indonesia with that of its neighbours, such as Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, but, as Dardjowidjojo (as cited in Lauder, 2008) points out, it's quite impossible that the language policies in those countries will be implemented because Indonesia has never been a colony of the United States or the United Kingdom, so it's no surprise that English has no basic use of culture or official institutions. English is commonly spoken by city dwellers, who are mainly concentrated in Java, but it is scarcely spoken in rural and suburban areas, which have a larger population. Dardjowidjojo (2003) emphasizes that English "has never been considered an official language coexisting with the national language… English is now officially called ' the first foreign language of the country.' "

In Indonesia, on the other hand, English is becoming increasingly common. There are many Indonesians who can communicate in English these days. They are predominantly young people who have had more exposure to English than previous generations. They sometimes use English in combination with Bahasa Indonesia. As a result, more Indonesian media outlets are now more likely to use English than they were a few years earlier, in order to adapt to the youth audience. A famous MTV program among young people is broadcast on one of Indonesia's television stations, and the hosts speak two languages, English and Bahasa Indonesia. In this situation, the show can serve as a catalyst for younger people to become more familiar with the use of English. This condition emphasizes the role of the media in reshaping language and culture.

English as an international language

The number of English speakers is growing substantially. Crystal (as cited in Lauder, 2008) estimates that about 1500 million English speakers live worldwide, with nearly 329 million speaking English as their first language (mostly in inner circle countries), 430 million speaking English as a second language (outer circle countries), and about 750 million speaking English as a foreign language (the outer expanding countries).

The large amounts of English speakers outside the inner circle countries eludes the notion that English belongs to a certain nation and the concept of an English 'native' speaker. The

"sophistication" of English has been highlighted by the growing perspective of English as an international language. What was once thought to be a prestigious language –owned by people of inner circle countries—has been a language that is used as a communicative language by people all over the world.

Living languages are not only diverse, but also still evolving. The role of English has shifted in the last decade or more. Nowadays, English serves as a foreign language that is used to interact with people from all around the world. The number of people who speak English has grown, and it is no longer limited to a single nation.

"When even the largest English-speaking nation, the United States of America, turns out to have only about 20% of the world's English speakers, it is plain that no one can now claim sole ownership," Crystal (as cited in Xu, 2009, p.226) writes. Essentially, English is a language that has several variations and is spoken by people all over the world. It does not belong to any one group of people.

This situation limits native speakers' influence in defining English values and standards. This situation reduces native speakers' influence in defining English norms and principles. That will provide a lot of diplomatic advantage to outer-expanding countries learning English so they won't have to follow the "Standard English" of a specific community, which they won't be able to do. They can no longer rely on people from the inner circle who used to be referred to as "native speakers" to teach English to their learners. Economically, it will be better for them to save their education funds by using them to create their own type of English rather than hiring English teachers from the inner-circle countries, who are usually paid more than local teachers.

Moreover, the definition of "native English speaker" is still unclear, especially in the field of English education. It raises the question of what kind of English instructor is required in outlying areas, given that there are many different types of English spoken around the world. In order to create an effective English teaching method for learners, educators, society, and so on, the curriculum planner should give more thought to the topic and take into account the cultural backgrounds of the educators.

Native English Speak Teachers (NESTs) and Non-native English Teachers (NNESTs)

Teaching is a series of interactions between students and teachers that often includes cultural exchanges. The cultural

context of the teachers has a significant impact on how they teach the target language and culture to the students in communication, especially language teaching. To make their course comprehensible and contextual, any language teacher—native or non-native—must have sociocultural competence toward their students' cultural backgrounds. As a result, the teachers will be able to bridge the social and cultural barriers in their classroom between the source and target languages.

Cultural awareness is highly important in language teaching. This is because people would find it more difficult to learn the language linguistically if they are unfamiliar with the history of the country where the language is spoken. Traditionally, the target culture of ESL or EFL learners has been American or British culture. Often English textbooks have images and ethnic references of Americans or British people that are not from the learners' native community. Furthermore, the concept of culture is also a work in progress. "Culture is one of the most difficult concepts in the human and social sciences, and there are many different ways of defining it," writes Hall (1997, p.2).

Culture itself is not constant and it never will be. It shifts depending on where and where it is reflected by whom. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) have shifted their emphasis away from the UK and US context when discussing the definition of target culture. They identify *target culture* as the culture of Inner-Circle countries, *source culture* as the culture of the students, and *international target culture* as a combination of inner-outer-and outer-expanding countries.

The differing viewpoints on the definition of culture raise the issue of how to distinguish between non-native and native speakers of English. Who has the authority to decide the accuracy of English if the native speaker is determined by how people pronounce English phrases or how they practice their accent, and other practical considerations? Singaporean English, Indian English, Arabian English, and a variety of other English dialects are spoken by people all over the world. They have assimilated English into their native languages. Who would dare to suggest that their English is not 'correct'?

This is an endless debate that will need further investigation in the future, but the words "native speakers" and "non-native speakers" are also commonly used by educators and scholars. It's like a jargon that makes indicating to the differences between two binary subjects simpler,

despite the lack of a clear definition addressing the terms.

"The native speaker is a fine myth: we need it as a model, a goal, almost an inspiration. But it is useless as a measure." Davies (as cited in Arva and Medgyes, 2000) said. Anybody who claims to be a native speaker has indeed been accepted by the community that distinguishes the difference between non-native and native speakers (Arva & Medgyes, 2000). Therefore, to make it simpler to compare "two distinct groups" of teachers, I use the terms Native English Speaker Teachers (NESTs) and Non-native English Speaker Teachers (NNESTs) in this article.

METHOD

The issue discussed in this article is qualitatively analysed by familiarisation and identification of a thematic framework based on categorisation of teaching behaviours between native English speaker teachers (NESTs) and non-native of English speaker teachers (NNESTs) examined by Medgyes (1994). I use my background knowledge to sort and match the main points of the categorisation which accommodate discussions in regard of related issues of general teaching practises in Indonesia.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As the demand for English grows, many Indonesian parents place strong expectations on their children to "speak English fluently" (Martin, 2011). They also put their children to private schools where English is taught as the primary language. In this situation, they choose NESTs that they believe will provide their children with extensive exposure to natural English. According to Martin (2011), in order to satisfy parents' needs, several private schools and language organisations employ a large number of NESTs that they claim can teach English better than NNESTs. Parents in several cities are more interested to send their children to private or public schools that hire NESTs.

The presence of a native speaker attracts students to thousands of English classes. Unfortunately, there seems to be no clear provision in Indonesian language policy about NESTs and NNESTs. This may pose a threat to Indonesia's language teaching environment in certain ways. Without clear institutional guidelines, the recruiting standard for employing foreign teachers would be vague, potentially affecting the consistency of language teachers and it is possible since several institutions will employ foreign teachers who have lack of pedagogical skills.

Regardless of language policies, there are various debates about how to

choose English teachers for ESL and EFL students. Medgyes (1994) studied the distinctions of teaching behaviour between NESTs and NNESTs in 11 nations, as seen in Figure 1.

NESTs	non-NESTs
Own use of English	
Speak better English	Speak poorer English
Use real language	Use 'bookish' language
Use English more confidently	Use English less confidently
General attitude	
Adopt a more flexible approach	Adopt a more guided approach
Are more innovative	Are more cautious
Are less empathetic	Are more empathetic
Attend to perceived needs	Attend to real needs
Have far-fetched expectations	Have realistic expectations
Are more casual	Are more strict
Are less committed	Are more committed
Attitude to teaching the language	
Are less insightful	Are more insightful
Focus on	Focus on
fluency	accuracy
meaning	form
language in use	grammar rules
oral skills	printed word
colloquial registers	formal registers
Teach items in context	Teach items in isolation
Prefer free activities	Prefer controlled activities
Favour groupwork/pairwork	Favour frontal work
Use a variety of materials	Use a single textbook
Tolerate errors	Correct/punish for errors
Set fewer tests	Set more tests
Use no/less L1	Use more L1
Resort to no/less translation	Resort to more translation
Assign less homework	Assign more homework
Attitude to teaching culture	
Supply more cultural information	Supply less cultural Information

Figure 1. NESTs and NNESTs differences in teaching behaviour (Medgyes, 1994, reprinted in Arva & Medgyes, 2000)

Figure 1 shows that both NESTs and NNESTs have different ways in teaching in the classroom. Which one is better to teach secondary school students? We can examine it by looking at the four focused categories on Figure 1, they are (1) Own use of English; (2) General attitude; (3) Attitude to teaching the language; and (4) Attitude to teaching culture.

(1) *Own use of English*. In this focus, NESTs seem to have a better point rather than NNESTs because their attitudes lead to a natural classroom atmosphere. NNESTs obviously have good English proficiency mainly accurate pronunciation. This could be beneficial for the students since one of the goals is having communicative competence in English, especially in

oral skill. Hymes (as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2008) points out that communicative competence emphasizes on language acquisition and language use. Students cannot master a foreign language solely by learning from the textbook because language is more about practice it in real life. Students need to be encouraged by the teacher in practicing their English and familiarise themselves with English words to be able to speak intelligibly. Therefore, characteristics of NESTs teacher in this part are more appropriate to meet the need of the students.

(2) *General attitude*. In the field of ELT in Indonesia, teachers need to have a proper understanding that English is not the first language of the students. Learning English in Indonesia is not easy. Teachers should have realistic expectation towards their students in order to keep the students stay motivated and optimists in learning English. Seidlhofer (as cited in Brown, 2012, p.151) writes, "One could say that native speakers know the destination, but not the terrain that has to be crossed to get there: they themselves have not traveled the same route." In making organizing assessment material, Canagarajah

(2009) says, "Assessment has to be contextualized" and so the tests should include the norms of inner, outer, and expanding countries which NNESTs are more likely able to arrange. In such a way, NNESTs is the most appropriate selection in this category.

(3) *Attitude to teaching the language*. Linguistic competence is important as it is a part of gaining communicative skill. According to Celce-Murcia (2008) linguistics competence includes four types of knowledge; they are phonological, lexical, morphological, and syntactical. In this need, NNESTs are more capable of giving insightful explanation towards students. NNESTs tend to be more conscious and cautious toward the structure of language rather than NESTs who prone to less attention about language matters because they were born and grew up with English.

(4) *Attitude to teaching culture.* I suppose it would be challenging if the teachers simply teach the language and not so much about the culture. Since it has an effect on how people communicate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. "Communication in real situations is never out of context, and because culture is a part of most contexts, discussion is rarely culture-

free," write Cortazzi and Jin (1999, p. 197). In today's modern world, it is essential to teach intercultural competence in language education to ESL or EFL students' to adapt with the world's multiculturalism. The instructor should educate their students regarding the culture of both source and target language to increase students' ability to overcome cultural differences in a multicultural world whilst also preserving their cultural identity. NNESTs have an advantage in this group when it comes to teaching English in Indonesia.

As the discussion continues, it would be challenging to determine either NESTs or NNESTs who are the most qualified English teachers. Whether it is NESTs or NNESTs, the recruitment of English teachers should focus on professional considerations such as pedagogical expertise and language proficiency. As a result, it is possible to ensure that the selected teachers have the necessary teaching skills and have a high level of tolerance towards the students' cultural differences.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The topic of NESTs and NNESTs in Indonesian schools is addressed in this article. It is worth considering of recruiting English teachers solely on their abilities to teach, regardless of their nationality. In this situation, bilingual teachers are more likely than NESTs or NNESTs to succeed at mediating classroom behaviour because they share the best qualities of both types of teachers. The following are some suggestions for ELT teacher recruiting in Indonesia;

1. Choosing teachers with a thorough knowledge of EIL. This style of instructor would set appropriate standards for their students and have more reasonable expectations of them. This is more likely to occur when they recognize that Indonesian learners are studying English as a second language and cannot reach the standard of native-like speakers.

2. Assuring that teachers have adequate English skills and pedagogical knowledge. Teachers should be allowed to complete a minimum IELTS or TOEFL score to demonstrate their language skills. Furthermore, educators ought to get a pedagogical degree, like TEFL or TESOL, in order to prevent professional misconduct in the classroom. By making this decision, the selection process will

be more competitive, and the outcome will be more rewarding.

3. Specifying the requirements for recruiting NESTs to teach in the region. The Indonesian Ministry of National Education should establish a law and standard to monitor the spread of NESTs in Indonesian schools as swiftly as possible. A well-organized law will handle the spread of foreign teachers and keep them on track, ensuring that NNEST's work in Indonesia and other outer-expanding countries is not jeopardized.

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