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## Indonesian language policy and perspectives on its implementation in promoting *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language

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### ABSTRACT

*Bahasa Indonesia* is currently studied by many foreign students and taught internationally. This phenomenon tracks the Indonesian government's language policy goals in promoting *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language. But how does this fit together? This study aims to examine the language policy and its implementation. A qualitative design was employed, and data were obtained using narrative inquiry techniques through semi-structured interviews with 15 participants consisting of academicians, activists, and teachers of BIPA. In collecting data, participants' voices regarding the language policy forms and its implementation were gathered and language policy documents were investigated. The results showed that the Indonesian language policy is enshrined by laws, government regulations, and ministerial decree. The implementation in laws and government legislation have been successful yet the ministerial decrees have not. It can be concluded that the language policy is the nation's interest for public diplomacy to preserve, maintain, develop, and cultivate the language. The implementation of promoting *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language lies on the success of BIPA teaching as a means to spread *Bahasa Indonesia* use internationally. It indicates the inseparable relationship between the Indonesian language policy campaign and the development of BIPA. Theoretical and several practical implications are also discussed.

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## Introduction

*Bahasa Indonesia* currently learned by foreign students in Indonesia and abroad. *Bahasa Indonesia* learned by foreign students is known as *Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing* (BIPA). BIPA as a subject is offered as nondegree course and degree program. Many foreign students are taking BIPA course as part of a nondegree program in many universities in Indonesia as well as in the foreign countries. As a nondegree program, BIPA is offered in many Indonesian embassies, such as in the Indonesian Embassy in the United States of America, Japan, etc. As a degree program, BIPA is taught in many universities in Indonesia and abroad as subject course. In Indonesia, BIPA as a subject course usually taught under Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Literature, and Faculty of Languages and Arts Education or under the Department of Languages, such as the Indonesian Language Department. In universities abroad, this subject is mostly taught under Department of Asian Studies or Southeast Asian Studies. For the ASEAN scope, rapid progress of using of *Bahasa Indonesia* was marked by the implementation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Community, namely a free market that facilitates the free flow of goods and services, investments, capital, and skilled labor among the ten member nations of ASEAN in 2015 (Susanto & Rofiuddin, 2015). Even more, in November 2023, UNESCO declared Indonesian as one of the

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official languages of the UNESCO General Conference. This momentum provides insight into the central role of the language, highlighting the urgency to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language.

Efforts to develop *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language are carried out by government through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology. It is specifically executed by the Language Development and Cultivation Agency (*Badan Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa* or *Badan Bahasa*) and the Technical Implementation Units of Language Agencies in various provinces in Indonesia. The sub-agencies of the Technical Implementation Unit (*Unit Pelaksana Teknis-UPT*) of the *Badan Bahasa* spread across 30 provinces in Indonesia are called the Language Center (*Balai Bahasa*) and Language Office (*Kantor Bahasa*). The general mandate is to strengthen and empower the Indonesian language (*Bahasa Indonesia*), ultimately resulting in a specialized center called *Kelompok Keahlian Layanan Profesional* (KKLP) which oversees BIPA and is specifically tasked in improving the function of Indonesian as an international language.

This complicated series of agencies does put its “feet on the ground” in bringing Indonesian to the public. For example, in 2023, *Badan Bahasa* in Jakarta facilitated 1702 BIPA teachers to teach *Bahasa Indonesia* in 80 institutions in 30 countries. Efforts in this direction are expanding. In some respects, Indonesia’s practice mirrors that of other countries, as noted by Srichampa (2015) for Thai and Starr (2009) for China. Some scholars argued that Indonesia feels challenged to do similar efforts. Rahardi (2018) believes that the government of Indonesia has the obligation for developing *Bahasa Indonesia*. Lopez (2019) said that Indonesian has the potential to become an international language. In line with this, Hamied and Musthafa (2019) said that the policy of promoting Indonesian as an international language is closely related to BIPA, BIPA going global, while Saputra and Saputra (2020), from a different perspective, based his opinion on the novelty of presenting Indonesian as a candidate for an international language and the rootedness of this new status in BIPA teaching.

Behind this is a large body of literature on Indonesian language policy overall, including Dardjowidjojo (1998), Idris (2014), Moeliono (1990), Simanjuntak (2009), Simpson (2007), and Wijana (2018). The findings mentioned by scholars above demonstrate the policy of Indonesian as a national language. Other studies mentioned the Indonesian language policy for *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language, such as those by Jalal (2001), Sudaryanto (2018), and Zein (2020), which focus on the political implications of language policy, the phase of the language policy, and the influence language policy aspects. Meanwhile, other researchers stated the connection between language policy and BIPA (Paauw, 2009; Lopez, 2019). The research above provides no detailed information the form of the language policy. Furthermore, they do not discuss the implementation of the language policy. Therefore, there is a need to conduct research on Indonesian language policy and perspectives on its implementation in promoting *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language. This is the spillover of Indonesian from a nationally unifying language to an internationally connective one.

Language policy refers to the formal provisions set by the government or other authoritative bodies to foster and develop a language. This aligns with Weinstein’s (1990) view that language policy is the government’s tool for enhancing the function of a language within society. Similarly, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) emphasized that language policy is linked to official regulations. These definitions clearly demonstrate that language policy falls within the purview of governmental authorities. Moreover, language policy involves deliberate efforts to transform a language or to enhance its role in society. Echoing this perspective, Ager (2001) defined language policy as “official planning,” conducted by those with political authority. In this context, official planning refers to the formal provisions and political authority exercised by the government or an institution supported by the government. In contrast, language planning is often seen as a systematic activity or program designed to foster and develop a language.

The term ‘language policy’ is often used interchangeably with ‘language planning’, which focuses on the process of language implementation in a community (Cobarrubias & Fishman, 1983). Language policy regulates the sustainability of existing languages, while language planning functions to organize language development in the future. Linguists use other terms to name language policy, such as language engineering (Alisjahbana, 1974), language development (Ferguson, 1968), language regulation (Gorman, 1973), and language management (Spolsky, 2009). Zein (2020) stated that language policy consists of three interrelated components, namely language practices, language ideologies, and language planning or management. Each term emphasizes a particular aspect, depending on each perspective of the

language policy. The terms illustrate the operational scope of language policy. These terms function as a guided laws and regulation to maintain, protect, and develop the language. Hence, in this article, the researchers do not distinguish the terms and rigid definition, but choosing one that better accommodates one another, namely language policy. The term Indonesian language policy means all regulations for preserving, maintaining, and developing *Bahasa Indonesia*.

This paper examines a national language that is currently going global. There is a large and growing administrative-pedagogical framework for bringing *Bahasa Indonesia* to the world. The study is expected to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the language policy to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language?
2. How is this language policy implemented?

## Method

The current study adapts a qualitative methodological approach (Creswell, 2014) by using a narrative inquiry design (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This design allows us to explore the participants' voices regarding the language policy from its implementation. In data collection, the researchers ask questions to the participants and carefully record their voices. A semi-structured interview aims at gathering their perspective such as (1) the guidelines in campaigning *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language, (2) the function of language policy to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language, and (3) the implementation of the existing language policy. Additionally, a literature study was conducted by reading various documents related to the policy provisions for *Bahasa Indonesia*. The documents were retrieved online from government platform. Meanwhile, interviews with academicians, BIPA activists, and BIPA teachers were done through WhatsApp calls. The interviews were deemed semi-structured since the communication in *Bahasa Indonesia* during the calls was casual and friendly. Questions were open-ended and smoothly conducted like a daily conversation. The interviews were used to figure out the participants' points of view related to the existence of the language policy and its implementation in society.

## Participants

We conducted semi-structured interviews aimed assessing the response to (1) the campaign to make *Bahasa Indonesia* an international language, and (2) the place of official language policy in this effort. The participants consisted of three sociolinguistics lecturers, six BIPA activists, and six BIPA teachers. They were selected based on how intensely they promoted Indonesian as an international language. These participants came from Java and Bali islands, because that is where most of BIPA programs are active. The following criteria were further applied in selecting them.

1. For academicians as university professors: (1) have taught a Sociolinguistics class where the language policy is being covered; (2) have actively participated in BIPA international conferences; (3) have participated in language congresses related to Indonesian language, literature, and culture; (4) have knowledge to provide depth insight into issues related to language policy and their implications; and (5) voluntarily agreed to be interviewed.
2. For the BIPA activists: (1) have been working in the university for managing BIPA program, (2) have participated in BIPA conferences and workshops, (3) registered member of *Afiliasi Pengajar dan Pegiat Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing* (APPBIPA-Affiliation for Teacher and activists of Indonesian as a Foreign Language); (4) have experiences in implementing Indonesia language policy as an international language; and (5) voluntarily agreed to be interviewed.
3. For BIPA teachers: (1) have been teaching BIPA classes for more than five years, (2) have an experience teaching Indonesian in Indonesia and abroad; (3) Teaching BIPA as their main job, (4) active in BIPA teachers professional development seminar or workshop, and (5) voluntarily agreed to be interviewed.

The participants' demographic data is shown in [Table 1](#).

### Data collection

The data collection was done in following steps.

1. Conducting semi-structured interview with 15 participants consisting of three sociolinguistics professors, six BIPA activists and six teachers to find out the form of the Indonesian language policy to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* an international language and its implementation. The participants were contacted through WhatsApp and asked about their willingness to participate in the interviews. The interviews were conducted from January 2020 to May 2021.
2. Collecting the Indonesian language policy form to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* an international language. The language policy documents freely assessed through Website as a public document. This was done from June to August 2021. This language policy should contain indicator such as *Bahasa Indonesia sebagai bahasa menjadi bahasa internasional*, *Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing*, *BIPA*, *Bahasa Indonesia sebagai bahasa internasional*, and *tenaga kerja asing*. The researchers carefully read all the documents and marked the parts that were indicators. Therefore, the first data consist of various language policy forms.
3. Collecting participants' voices regarding the successful and unsuccessful implementation of Indonesian language policy as an international language. Thus, the second data contain participant perspectives regarding the successful and failed implementation of the existing language policies to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language.

### Data analysis

The data analysis employed the critical interpretive constructivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In this technique, the researcher conducted analysis through following steps.

1. Displaying data, showing various language policy, and the success and failure language policy implementation
2. Describing data, researcher articulate the contained data.
3. Interpreting data, researcher reveal and interpret the meaning of finding.
4. Explaining data, researcher contextualize, construct and synthesizing the findings.

### Results

The results describe the language policy and its implementation to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language.

**Table 1.** The demographic data of the participants.

Name	Gender	Background	Ages	Location
Participant 1	Male	University professor	63	East Java
Participant 2	Male	University professor	53	DKI Jakarta
Participant 3	Female	University professor	45	Central Java
Participant 4	Male	BIPA activist	60	Bali
Participant 5	Male	BIPA activist	52	East Java
Participant 6	Female	BIPA activist	55	West Java
Participant 7	Female	BIPA activist	53	DKI Jakarta
Participant 8	Male	BIPA activist	45	East Java
Participant 9	Female	BIPA activist	40	Central Java
Participant 10	Male	BIPA teacher	34	East Java
Participant 11	Male	BIPA teacher	32	East Java
Participant 12	Male	BIPA teacher	33	East Java
Participant 13	Female	BIPA teacher	33	East Java
Participant 14	Female	BIPA teacher	32	East Java
Participant 15	Female	BIPA teacher	30	East Java

### ***The language policy to promote Bahasa Indonesia to be an international language***

The data collected demonstrated that participants were well-aware of the underlying policies that set their efforts in motion. Interviews indicated that there was grassroots understanding of Jakarta's language-policy aims. A professor stated:

"To acknowledge Indonesian language policy, it is best to trace the recommendations of the Indonesian Language Congress. This scientific forum organized by the Language Agency makes recommendations to the government to issue language policies, including the language policy to promote Indonesian as an international language."

A BIPA activists and teachers was able to outline the policies calling for a global Bahasa with great precision:

There are five language policy to promote Indonesian to be an international language. They are: 1) Law No. 24 of 2009 (*UU No. 24 Tahun 2009*); 2) Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014 (*Peraturan Pemerintah No. 57 Tahun 2014*); 3) Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 27 of 2017 (*Permendikbud No. 27 Tahun 2017*); 4) The Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Regulation No. 12 of 2013 (*Permenakertrans No. 12 Tahun 2013*; and *Permenaker No. 8 Tahun 2021*).

In this straightforward and seemingly dry statement, a central challenge emerges. There is a gap between the knowledge of specialized juridical-administrative laws possessed by BIPA practitioners and the more abstract understanding of the general public. For this reason, it is important to describe these five main language policies. They explain what is at stake in talking to BIPA practitioners.

#### ***The language policy in the Law No. 24 of 2009 (UU No. 24 Tahun 2009)***

This is the first directive to explicitly promote *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language. Its authority derives from the Law No. 24 of 2009 on the National Flag, Language, Emblem and Anthem (*Undang-Undang Nomor 24 Tahun 2009 tentang Bendera, Bahasa, dan Lambang Negara, serta Lagu Kebangsaan*), under which Article 32 states that (1) *Bahasa Indonesia* is used in an international or national forum (*Bahasa Indonesia digunakan dalam forum nasional atau internasional*) and (2) *Bahasa Indonesia* may be used abroad (*Bahasa Indonesia dapat digunakan di luar negeri*). Furthermore, the fourth part of the constitution specifies that the function of *Bahasa Indonesia* can be increased to be an international language (*peningkatan fungsi bahasa Bahasa Indonesia menjadi bahasa internasional*). While such language is abstract, the overall implication is that expansion of global Bahasa programs would be undergirded by established legal and administrative precedent. Consequently, future initiatives will move forward more rapidly through bureaucratic echelons.

#### ***The Language Policy in the Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014 (Peraturan Pemerintah No. 57 Tahun 2014)***

The improvement of the function of *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language is regulated in the Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014. This language policy regulates development and protection of language and literature, as well as the improvement of the function of *Bahasa Indonesia*. This directive seeks to improve the function of *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language. Its details are spread through several involved sections. However, the total effect is to increase the aspirations for an international language policy. Thus, point 1 report that the improvement of *Bahasa Indonesia's* function aims to showcase the identity and enhancing the nation's competitiveness. The second point elaborates on this through (a) the use of *Bahasa Indonesia* in international forums; (b) its development for teaching foreigners; (c) increasing linguistic and literary cooperation with foreign parties; (d) development and empowerment of the learning centers abroad; and (e) other efforts under statutory provisions. Acknowledged in subsequent provisions is the fact these additional programs will require increased funding. Thus, a groundwork is laid for expanded governmental support.

### ***The Language Policy in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 27 of 2017 (Permendikbud No. 27 Tahun 2017)***

The language policy issued by the Minister of Education and Culture was called *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan No. 27 of 2017* (Minister of Education and Culture Regulation). The regulation controls the competencies of BIPA graduates (*Standard Kompetensi Lulusan-SKL*). It includes the standards for graduates of courses and training in many fields, such as in tourism, park maintenance, health offices, carpentry constructions, brick installations, scaffoldings, pipe layings, heavy equipment mechanics, and *Bahasa Indonesia* for foreign speakers. From this foundation BIPA policy affects the work force, including the world of manual labor.

### ***The Language Policy in the Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Regulation No. 12 of 2013 (Permenakertrans No. 12 Tahun 2013)***

The language policy in the Regulation of Minister of Manpower and Transmigration was called *Permenaker (Peraturan Menteri Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi-Minister of Manpower and Transmigration) No. 12 of 2013*. This policy regulates the qualifications, procedures, and requirements for foreign workers in Indonesia. As stated in Article 26, foreign workers in Indonesia are obligated to be able to communicate in *Bahasa Indonesia (tenaga kerja asing di Indonesia dipersyaratkan dapat berkomunikasi dalam Bahasa Indonesia)*.

### ***The Language Policy in the Minister of Manpower Regulation No. 8 of 2021 (Permenaker No. 8 Tahun 2021)***

The language policy in the Regulation of Minister of Manpower, also known as *Permenaker (Peraturan Menteri Tenaga Kerja)*, No. 8 of 2021 regulates the use of foreign workers in Indonesia (*Penggunaan Tenaga Kerja Asing*). As stated clearly in Article 10, 11, 43, and 49, employers of foreign workers in Indonesia are obliged to facilitate education and Indonesian language training for foreign workers. The language training is conducted by employers or in collaboration with educational institutions or language training institutions in Indonesia (*Pemberi Kerja TKA wajib memfasilitasi pendidikan dan pelatihan Bahasa Indonesia kepada TKA yang dilakukan oleh Pemberi Kerja TKA atau bekerja sama dengan lembaga pendidikan atau lembaga pelatihan Bahasa Indonesia*).

All of these laws are ambitious. Taken together they are extremely ambitious. What do participants say about putting them into practice?

### ***The implementation of the language policy to promote Bahasa Indonesia to be an international language***

Based on the interviews results with fifteen participants, surface enthusiasm dissolved not to show rejection of the goals, but uncertainty about the state of policies and programs. When participants were requested to identify which directives were being implemented in the broad spirit intended and which continued to face challenges, the results were evenly mixed, due to mixed feelings on the underlying question. The criteria for the success and failure are: (1) does language policy create controversy or conflict in society, (2) does on the language policy follow-up by real actions and clearly directed, (3) does the language policy make changes to the movement of BIPA teachers, distribution of BIPA program implementation, and increase in the number of BIPA students, and (4) does the background of BIPA learners indicates students or workers? The reflection of the success and failure in the Table 2.

All the participants supported the aim of making *Bahasa Indonesia* function as an international language, albeit with the proviso that it be done in a gradual, systematic, and sustainable manner (Law No.24 of 2009). A dominant opinion was that, so far, success has been measured by the creation of programs aiming at the use of *Bahasa Indonesia* internationally, and that there are many government-funded for foreigners to learn Bahasa. These responses implicitly define success more in terms of "making an effort toward," not necessarily in achieving the loftily aims. Benchmarks toward obtaining the more ambitious aspects of the legislative programs were not specified in the individual answers.

**Table 2.** The result of interview of the implementation of language policy.

No	Language policy	Action	
		Succeed	Not succeed
1.	Law No. 24 of 2009	V	–
2	Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014	V	–
3	Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 27 of 2017	V	V
4	The Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Regulation No. 12 of 2013	–	V
5	The Minister of Manpower Regulation No. 8 of 2021	–	V

At the same time, within a smaller sphere of direct pedagogical activity, participants gave more granular accounts of language policy (Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014) being successfully implemented. One example put forward was the use of *Bahasa Indonesia* in the International Conference on Teaching Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (*Konferensi Internasional Pengajar Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing-KIPBIPA*). Inherent in these answers is the conviction that basic language instruction makes up the fundament of more ambitious cultural, economic and social goals for a global Bahasa. Consequently, success, at least in part, is to be measured by the growth of “bread and butter” programs in Indonesian as a foreign language.

Yet how were the language policies that prescribe competencies for BIPA graduates (Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 27 of 2017) implemented? There are tensions between conflicting policy interest and allegiances, albeit in muted and indirect form. Some of the participants said that some of the descriptions of learning outcomes are not completely suitable for foreign students. For example, some of the culturally specific unifying ideas of Indonesian nationalism (e.g., comity between state and religion by enjoining a common belief in “God almighty”) cannot not be easily transferred into Indonesian as a foreign language forum, as BIPA students come from backgrounds and heritages with different cultural ideals and reference point. Such difference in experience and ideologies might not only lead to a misunderstanding of internally directed Indonesian educational and cultural policy, it could present the program of global Indonesian as being opposed individual sentiments and collective identity beyond Indonesia’s borders. Even if inadvertent, such conflict has the potential to interfere with the guiding principle of connecting Indonesia to the outside world.

Likewise, doubts about the implementation of The Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Regulation No. 12 of 2013 and No. 8 of 21 emerged. All participants said that this regulation, which if defined in its most uncompromising fashion would require non-Indonesian business entities to fully adapt *Bahasa Indonesia*, is, at present, not advisable because foreign companies cannot be persuaded to offer full support to the regulation. Indeed, to get around what is perceived as overly burdensome regulation, the majority of foreign enterprises advised investors to move their operations outside of Indonesia. In addition, companies in Indonesia that employ expatriates have not administered *Bahasa Indonesia* competence as a requirement, for reasons that are not difficult to discern. Therefore, implementing such regulation in a confrontational manner is not feasible, and punishment seems ineffective for engaging companies that do not facilitate BIPA learning. A more collaborative and gradual approach appears most conducive for steady progress.

## Discussion

This section discusses the existence of the language policy to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language and its implementation in society.

### ***The existence of language policy to promote Bahasa Indonesia to be an international language***

As regards the big picture, it is necessary to evaluate a work in progress. And to see forward, it helps to take a brief look backward. The language policy to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international



language is a new transformation of an old discussion on the status of *Bahasa Indonesia*. There are three historical pillars of the status of *Bahasa Indonesia*. First, the Youth Pledge on 28 October 1928 which settled *Bahasa Indonesia* as the unitary language. The Youth Pledge reads as follows.

*Kami Putra dan Putri Indonesia, mengaku bertumpah darah yang satu, tanah air Indonesia.*

(We are the sons and daughters of Indonesia, acknowledge one motherland, Indonesia).

*Kami Putra dan Putri Indonesia, mengaku berbangsa yang satu, bangsa Indonesia.*

(We are the sons and daughters of Indonesia, acknowledge one nation, the nation of Indonesia).

*Kami Putra dan Putri Indonesia, menjunjung bahasa persatuan, Bahasa Indonesia.*

(We are the sons and daughters of Indonesia, respect the language of unity, Indonesian Language).

In the Youth Pledge, *Bahasa Indonesia* is recognized as one of the three striving pillars alongside homeland and nation, which freed the youths in the Dutch East Indies to form a state and nation of Indonesia united by *Bahasa Indonesia*. Secondly, the language policy is expressed in National Constitution 1945 Article 36 which states that *Bahasa Indonesia* is the nation's language. *Bahasa Indonesia* is the national and official language of the state. Thirdly, National Law No. 24 of 2009 states that *Bahasa Indonesia* is an international language. *Bahasa Indonesia* as a unified language served to unite various ethnic groups in the Dutch East Indies with different languages and cultures, functioning as a national identity and national pride. This language diplomacy is intended to establish friendship, increase mutual understanding with other nations in order to create world peace, and create mutual prosperity. In what respect are contemporary measures a continuation of the past? Sudaryanto (2018) stated that *Bahasa Indonesia* passed three stages of development, namely (1) *Bahasa Indonesia* as a language of unity, (2) *Bahasa Indonesia* as a nation's language, and (3) *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language. However, as the results of the survey demonstrated, agreement between high-level administrators and lawmakers, on the one hand, and grassroots supervisors and teachers, on the other, tends to reflect ideals and goals, more than consensus about method and practice.

As of the present moment, the fate of a global Bahasa remains uncertain. Even if one reduces the subjects most "implementable" as specified in Government Regulation No 57 of 2014, Chapter VII big questions remain that government's five paths to increase the status of *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language, namely: (1) using *Bahasa Indonesia* in international forums, (2) developing the program to teach *Bahasa Indonesia* for foreigners, (3) increasing the cooperation in the area of linguistic and literature with foreign parties, (4) establishing *Bahasa Indonesia* learning centers abroad, and (5) performing other efforts which are in accordance with laws and regulations. The vagueness of the "other efforts," as mentioned at the end, shows that such policies remain hedged with uncertainty. Yet, they also open broad fields for study. More efforts are needed to see how programs designed to implement such goals play out in practice.

Consider one example: the regulation to make foreign workers in Indonesia to learn *Bahasa Indonesia* is similar to what Thai government regulation to encourage foreign workers in Thailand to learn Thai. Srichampa (2015) reports that Thai government issued language policy for foreign workers in Thailand to learn Thai. However, in the context of Indonesia, there are challenges in implementing the regulation as it does not get the full support from the foreign companies. Most of the foreign companies urged the investors to relocate their businesses outside Indonesia to avoid the regulation. Due to the complicated situation, the Ministry of Manpower issued a new regulation No. 16 of 2015 in which foreign workers are not required to use *Bahasa Indonesia*. Subsequently, there was a failure in the implementation of the language policy that had been issued before. Bearing this in mind, it can be said that language policy is influenced by economic-political matters.

A closer look shows that there are difficulties on the ground: (1) Inadequate socialization of language policies to employers who employ foreign workers, (2) There is no pressure from foreign workers on employers regarding their Indonesian language needs, (3) There is no integration between ministries such as Manpower and education departments, so that the presence of foreign workers in the company is undetected, (4) There is no time provided by employers for foreign workers to learn Indonesian. Lastly, (5) Weak law enforcement regarding employers' violations of not providing Indonesian

language training to foreign workers. Yet, at the same time, the larger perspective should not be lost. It also took much time for Bahasa to spread throughout the Indonesian archipelago. There also were many gaps between the intentions of policy and implementation in practice. To be sure, a global language is a more ethereal concept than a national language. However, the evidence so far suggests not only that Indonesian is moving beyond its traditional borders, but that this transformation is being cultivated.

Meanwhile, the transformation of language function can be traced from the development of *Bahasa Indonesia* in the three phases of language policy. In the first phase (Youth Pledge - 28 October 1928) *Bahasa Indonesia* functioned as a diplomatic tool for the struggle for Indonesian independence. Indonesia achieved independence on 17 August 1945. In the second phase, the language policy in the National Constitution 1945 (as the basis of the state), *Bahasa Indonesia* serves as a symbol of Indonesian identity and pride. In the third phase (Law No. 24 of 2009) *Bahasa Indonesia* serves as a tool of Indonesia's diplomacy in the international arena to create world peace and shared prosperity. The transformation of function from phase 1 to 3 is a real practice that *Bahasa Indonesia* policy is related to the principles of language development (Ferguson, 1968), language regulation (Gorman, 1973), language management (Spolsky, 2009), and language policy and language planning (Cobarrubias & Fishman, 1983). The function of *Bahasa Indonesia* in the previous phase was maintained and even used as the basis for improving the function of *Bahasa Indonesia* in the next phase.

The transformation of the status and function of *Bahasa Indonesia* into an international language is illustrated in Figure 1.

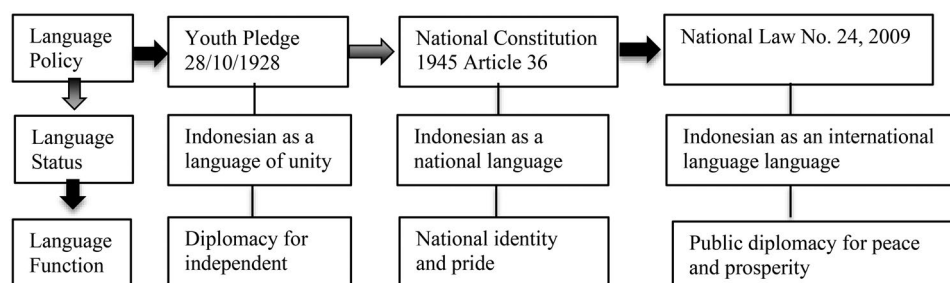
### **The implementation of the language policy of Bahasa Indonesia as an international language**

The discussion of the implementations of language policies to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language is explained below.

#### **The language policy in the Law No. 24 of 2009 and in the Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014**

The language policy for *Bahasa Indonesia* is stated in Law No. 24 of 2009 and in the Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014. There was an important history and momentum for developing *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language. Furthermore, both Law No. 24 of 2009 and the Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014 constitute comprehensive policies for *Bahasa Indonesia*. The two regulations are the juridical foundation for developing *Bahasa Indonesia*. Also, because of the two regulations, the improvement of the function of *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language becomes official.

Both Law No. 24 of 2009 and the Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014 are essential in developing and promoting *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language. Furthermore, the Law and Government Regulation become a legal foundation to introduce *Bahasa Indonesia* internationally. The language policy in Law No. 24 of 2009 and the Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014 show that governments shall organize the language policy. As described by Weinstein (1990), language policy is government authorized. According to Baldauf and Kaplan (2008), the official characteristics of the language policy is that language policy is associated with official regulations. Therefore, the government of Indonesia has the responsibility to develop *Bahasa Indonesia* internationally (Rahardi, 2018). Reflecting on the historical journeys of language policy for *Bahasa Indonesia* in the law and the government regulation, it is evident



**Figure 1.** Indonesia's status and function transformation.

that the development of language policy to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* does not only involve linguistic matters but also with politics and power dynamics. At this point, the government or authority matters.

Based on the arguments above, it can be concluded that there are two objectives of the language policy to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language, namely the linguistic objective and a political objective. The two objectives are described as follows. The linguistic objective comprises the following items: (1) providing trainings that help foreigners to be able to use *Bahasa Indonesia* and master *Bahasa Indonesia* well; (2) encouraging foreigners to seek opportunities to pursue study on *Bahasa Indonesia* so that they become experts in *Bahasa Indonesia*; (3) developing *Bahasa Indonesia* vocabulary through the process of absorbing foreign language vocabulary; and (4) creating opportunities for the development of assimilation and affiliation of Indonesian culture. Secondly, there are also some items to be considered in terms of political objectives. They are: (1) realizing the idea that *Bahasa Indonesia* is a language used for international communication; (2) realizing the globalization which is resulted from international relations and revolution, and (3) making BIPA one of the ways for diplomacy of Indonesia in the international level (Susanto & Rofiuddin, 2015). Making BIPA as soft diplomacy for Indonesia is similar to what soft power's Chinese government do with Confucius Institute. As stated by Starr (2009), the Chinese government implementing soft power through China's international cultural promotion program called the Confucius Institute.

The language policy to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* in Law No. 24 of 2009 and the Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014 can also be defined as language planning. The language policy serves to regulate the sustainability of existing languages, while language planning is to plan language development in the future. Others defined them as *language engineering* (Alisjahbana, 1974), *language development* (Ferguson, 1968), *language regulation* (Gorman, 1973), and *language management* (Spolsky, 2009). All of the terms used by scholars illustrate the scope of the language policy. As stated by Hamied and Musthafa (2019), different names show different purposes to maintain the status quo, reform, and transform the language status. Furthermore, Zein (2020) emphasized that language policy consists of three interrelated components: language practices, language ideologies, and language planning or management.

The language policy in Law No. 24 of 2009 is the first and most significant policy to increase the functions of *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language. The language policy is regulated in Article 44, where it was explained that the government is expanding the function of *Bahasa Indonesia* into an international language in a gradual, systematic, and sustainable. The Law strengthened the study conducted by Ager (2001) which described language policy as official planning that is carried out by those in political authority or government. The official planning included the formal provisions and political authority from the governments or institutions supported by the governments. Bearing this in mind, increasing the functions of *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language that is gradual, systematic, and sustainable can be understood as a systematic program of the governments to preserve and develop the language.

Article 44 mentions the coordinating parties for implementing this policy, namely the Language Institution, in this case, the Language Agency. Law No. 24 of 2009 also explicitly mentioned the Government Regulation as a follow-up to Law No. 24 of 2009. With careful planning, identification of responsible parties, and follow-up actions completed, Law No. 24 of 2009 can be considered successfully implemented. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the language policy in Law No. 24 of 2009 has also been implemented successfully.

As mentioned earlier, the language policy in the Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014 is a follow-up to Law No. 24 of 2009. The language policy focuses on increasing the functions of *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language. The regulations comprise: (1) the development of *Bahasa Indonesia* to be used in the international level (2) the development of *Bahasa Indonesia* through education or teaching *Bahasa Indonesia* for foreigners, (3) the determination of the standards of *Bahasa Indonesia* proficiency for foreigners which are specified by the regulation of the minister, and (4) the funding for developing *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language. The aforementioned regulations have been very well-implemented by the government. The regulations establish a clear direction and become the official force to increase the function of *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language.

Another important point to note is that the Government Regulation No 57 of 2014 Chapter VII explicitly regulates the improvement of the functions of *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language.

There are five methods to increase the functions of *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language. They are: (1) using *Bahasa Indonesia* in international forums, (2) developing the program to teach *Bahasa Indonesia* for foreigners, (3) increasing the cooperation in the area of linguistic and literature with foreign parties, (4) establishing *Bahasa Indonesia* learning centers abroad, and (5) performing other efforts which are in accordance with laws and regulations.

The method has been proven to be done in international seminars. For example, the aforementioned language policy was successfully implemented since it was followed up by the real action of the National Language Agency and Cultivation to send BIPA teachers to many countries since 2015. From the socio-economic perspective, the two language policies can create job opportunities. Institutions, such as universities, language centers, and Indonesian embassies, offer BIPA courses. Consequently, they recruited teachers to teach BIPA. Since then, hundreds of BIPA teachers have experienced living abroad teaching *Bahasa Indonesia* and Indonesian culture as a strategy of diplomacy and campaigning for *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language. As reported by Emilia (2017, 2018) that from 2015 to 2019, there have been 592 BIPA teachers sent to 22 countries to teach 54,923 students. The action to bring *Bahasa Indonesia* to the international level was impossible to be done without financial support from the government. Therefore, it can be stated that the implementation of the language policy to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language is greatly determined by socioeconomic, educational, and political aspects.

The formation of the Indonesian Language Study Programs abroad and the program to send BIPA teachers abroad are concrete actions to teach *Bahasa Indonesia*. In addition to increasing the function of *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language, the language policy is also a form of implementing language politics called Glottopolitics (San Martín, 2019). From the government's point of view, the language policy to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* to be an international language represents the elements of power, ideology, and politics of the Indonesian Government. Considering the acceptance of the language policy from the citizens and the support from various parties, it can be said that the language policy stated in the government regulation has been well-implemented. As of November 2023, *Bahasa Indonesia* is taught in 52 countries. Outside Indonesia, *Bahasa Indonesia* is mostly taught in universities and Indonesian embassies or consulates. Another achievement of promoting *Bahasa Indonesia*, Indonesian has been officially recognized as one of the Official Languages of the UNESCO General Conference. This is proof that the language policy has been successfully implemented.

### ***The language policy in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 27 of 2017***

The language policy issued by the Minister of Education and Culture No. 27 of 2017 (now called Indonesian Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology) is hard to implement since the policy is designed for non-formal courses. Although it guides the particular competence standards of BIPA, many non-formal institutions do not comply with the standards, which creates controversial issues until now. These issues are related to the indicator descriptions of learning outcomes. There are seven essential points that emphasize attitudes and values. Those points explain that to learn characters, the students of BIPA should (1) believe in God Almighty; (2) possess morals and sustainable living ethics in completing their duties; (3) behave as proud citizens that love their homeland and support world peace; (4) be able to work together and have social sensitivity and great concern for society as well as the environment; (5) have respect for diverse cultures, views, beliefs, and religions as well as the personal opinions and the original discovery of others; (6) uphold the law enforcement and willingly put the nation and the wider community first; and (7) give excellent services, in which the quality is shown by the satisfaction of the employer. Departing from the seven points, it is crucial to note that foreign learners should not be ideologically treated like an Indonesian, for instance, to believe in God. Nonetheless, such a sensitive issue is clearly stated in the indicators for BIPA achievements.

According to some linguists, BIPA activists, and teachers, the indicators are not completely suitable for foreign students. The seven indicators should only be addressed to Indonesian citizens that adopt the *Pancasila* (the five principles of Indonesia) ideology. The rights of BIPA students should be respected as they are foreign learners who adopt different ideologies from those stated in *Pancasila*. BIPA should not drag students to certain ideologies since religion and belief are personal business. As a result, the learning outcomes related to the indicators for attitudes and values in the Minister of

Education and Culture Regulation No. 27 of 2017 are difficult to achieve for foreign students. This clearly shows that language policy is influenced by political interests. This also becomes the concern of Jalal (2001), and Sudaryanto (2018) who clarify that language policy is inseparable from political aspects of the nation.

### ***The language policy in the Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Regulation No. 12 of 2013 and the Minister of Manpower No. 8 of 2021***

In the language policy issued by the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration (*Permenakertrans No. 12 Tahun, 2013*), it was stated that every foreign worker is obliged to speak *Bahasa Indonesia*. They are required to show a certificate of language proficiency in *Bahasa Indonesia* as the prerequisite for employment. As a result, foreign workers must learn *Bahasa Indonesia* to cope with the regulation. The regulation to put *Bahasa Indonesia* as a prerequisite for foreign worker employment is aimed at avoiding miscommunications between foreign workers and Indonesians. It is undeniable that language barrier is one of the causes of miscommunication between foreign workers and Indonesian workers. This regulation to make foreign workers in Indonesia to learn *Bahasa Indonesia* is similar to what Thai government regulation to push foreign workers in Thailand to learn Thai. Srichampa (2015) reports that Thai government issued language policy for foreign workers in Thailand to learn Thai.

However, there are challenges to implementing the regulation as it does not get the full support from the foreign companies. Most of the foreign companies urged the investors to relocate their businesses outside Indonesia to avoid the regulation. Due to the complicated situation, the Ministry of Manpower issued a new regulation No. 16 of 2015 in which foreign workers are not required to use *Bahasa Indonesia*. Subsequently, there was a failure in the implementation of the language policy that had been issued before. Bearing this in mind, it can be said that language policy is influenced by economic-political matters.

The failure of the language policy implementation no. 8 of 2021 concerning the obligation of employers to provide Indonesian language training to foreign workers due to five factors as follow: (1) Inadequate socialization of language policies to employers who employ foreign workers, (2) There is no pressure from foreign workers on employers regarding their Indonesian language needs, (3) There is no integration between departments such as Manpower and education departments, so that the presence of foreign workers in the company is not known, (4) There is no time provided by employers for foreign workers to learn Indonesian. And (5) Weak law enforcement regarding employers' violations of not providing Indonesian language training to foreign workers.

The fate of BIPA, both as a pedagogical program and as a focus of administrative budget and policy, will be determined by what becomes most demands for *Bahasa Indonesia*. Until now, foreign learners have approached Indonesian in a similar manner to the ways that they have approached languages like Thai or Vietnamese, something that gave them access to a country, culture, or people in which they had interest in. But the attempt to go beyond this and treat *Bahasa Indonesia* as a gateway to a global civilization and a country that links diverse people from the wider world has not yet been attempted. This essay has attempted to lay the foundation for what may become one of the most interesting cultural-linguistic and pedagogical-administrative experiments of our age. Results of this study imply that the promoting a language to become an international language needs to be more thoroughly reviewed to achieve the intended objective.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results and discussion known that the five Indonesian language policy to promote *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language were initiated by the Indonesian government. Thus, it can be concluded that the language policy is the nation interest for public diplomacy. Meanwhile, the implementation of promoting *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international language is lies in the success of BIPA teaching, means to spread *Bahasa Indonesia* use internationally. The success and failure of the language policy implementation is influenced by many factors, such as education, political, economic, and socio-cultural.

The inseparable relationship between the Indonesian language policy and the development of BIPA suggest theoretically and practically. Theoretically, (1) BIPA as a subject should be treated as interdisciplinary

science, and (2) Language policy of promoting *Bahasa Indonesia* as an international Language can enrich sociolinguistics course. Practically, (1) for institution should teach BIPA not only a nondegree programs but expand as a subject in their languages department as a degree program and (2) expand a partnership to increase the number of BIPA learners, (3) for academicians or BIPA teachers should improve the quantity and quality of BIPA to create a brand of services of teaching Indonesian internationally, and (4) for Badan Bahasa as a regulator should extend their services in providing initiations, facilitation, and coordination to all parties who interested in BIPA programs.

Despite the best efforts of the author to describe and explain the language policy forms and its implementation, three limitations were unavoidable. (1)The number of the participants only represent Java and Bali, other provinces in Indonesia and abroad countries, (2) the language policy makers from the Minister of Manpower, and (3) foreign worker employers are not covered. Therefore, recommendation can be made to future researcher to conduct wider survey to expand the participants to make more comprehensive result on the language policy research.

## Disclosure statement

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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