

Teacher Agency in Multilingual Education Policy in an Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The issue of the role of teacher agency in teacher professional development and school reform has increased significantly over the last decade. This article explores teacher agency in multilingual education policy in an Islamic Boarding School context and how they translated multilingual language policy into their class. Research on teacher agency within multilingual language policies has been widely conducted in public schools in many countries, but in Indonesia, the topic is relatively under-researched. Indonesia has an educational model born from local wisdom and applies multilingualism for student competence, namely Islamic boarding schools. This case exploratory study takes data from 3 teachers from various subjects such as (English, Religion, and Biology) at an Islamic boarding school at the same level as senior high school. Thematic analysis is applied to analyze the phenomenon regarding the multilingual education policy. This study reveals that teachers as agents in multilingual education policies run classes based on beliefs and abilities. Data was collected by interviewing teachers as agents in implementing multilingual education policies. The implication of this research is to provide a reference for education practitioners in adjusting to the implementation of multilingual education

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the last ten years, studies on school language planning and policies have focused on the role of agencies, such as how they granted autonomy to translate policies from the macro-level to their environment. The role of the Agency in the context of LPP can operate in all parts of language planning, whether as a policymaker or implementer (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2018). However, understanding language policy and planning (LPP) has traditionally focused on government-level activities at the expense of local actors and their role in language decision-making (Baldauf, 2008; McKay & Bokhorst-

Heng, 2018). Regional actors are only seen as implementing policies that are lowered from the macro-level to the local level, and the scope of their decision-making is only related to how they implement policies that have been instructed from the macro-level (Johnson, 2009; Wiley & García, 2016). This means that the micro-level has often not been seen as a level at which language policies are created. This can also be interpreted that language policy is often considered as part of the structure that has the influence to determine or limit actions and decision making, rather than part of the Agency and capacity of individuals to make their own decisions or act independently for the solutions they deal with (Cassels & Eric, 2014; Coburn, 2013). Such a view is contrary to the teacher's autonomy in carrying out the learning process by translating language policies from the macro-level adapted to the circumstances or conditions they face and the choice of action depending on their teacher's intuition.

The role of teacher institutions cannot be separated from the macro-level policy as a general guide and then translated from the meso level to the micro-level. At the micro-level, schools can be a place for policymaking because, in the context of LPP policies, various actors can interpret it in the policy environment, combining critical thinking (Ball et al., 2012). For the school environment, teachers become actors or implementers who directly deal with policy targets as reported by the school administrator; for the case of English teachers who were given complete autonomy in the development of English lessons as long as the targets were mastery of the material and communicative use of language (Widodo, 2017). Every teacher builds language policies in the classroom based on their experiences and beliefs and then puts them into practice. Zuniga et al. (2018) present two foreign language teachers and explore translating language policies for their classes. This finding confirms the teacher's role as an agency capable of creating language policies for their respective classrooms

Research on agency in / multilingual education is generally conducted outside Indonesia. For example, Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, (2020) present an overview of the theoretical definition of Agency and how it appears in the concept of LPP by considering how developments in methods and approaches for LPP research focus on social actors and institutions in decision-making. They also consider how an agency can be conceptualized in the planning field, how it can be implemented, and who can exercise Agency. Chen et al. (2021) present an in-depth study of the agentic actions of stakeholders at the institutional level: people who have power and people who have expertise in the context of languages other than English (LOTEs). This research may help orient language policymakers to create supportive contexts for the exercise of individual agencies in the local context of LPP and implementation. Widodo (2017) presents qualitative research that examines the construction and negotiation of the Agency and identity of English learners that lies in developing vocational English (VE) materials in which teachers and students are involved in the design process: planning, implementation, and evaluation. This study provides empirical evidence on how student capacities and social roles contribute to the teacher-student-driven development of ESP materials. Several of these studies examine institutions conceptually and institutions collectively because teacher agency research at the implementation level in the classroom needs to be studied further, especially in the implementation of multilingual language policies and Islamic boarding-based school locations

This study will explore teachers' Agency in multilingual language policies in Islamic boarding schools. This study will sample three teachers of different subjects (religion, biology, English) with gender one male and two females. The research questions lead to, 1) what language policies are implemented in schools and 2) how do they translate those language policies into the classroom

2. METHODS

This current study was conducted in Indonesia to explore agencies in multilingual education policy in an Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia. A formal institution, the Islamic senior high school in Surakarta, conducted a multilingual education policy. This school has many programs, and one of them is an Islamic boarding school. This school provides dormitories to students in certain programs so that after school, they don't go home but live in dormitories with other friends. This program implements a multilingual education policy that the school trusts to improve the quality of students. To analyze the

language phenomenon in the research location, the researcher uses a Theoretical Framework for Language Policy and Planning, which includes Language Practice (ecology), Language Belief (ideology), Language Management (Planning) (Spolsky, 2003)

An explanatory case study was considered appropriate for this study. A case study is an empirical investigation in real-life contexts to investigate contemporary phenomena, especially when there is no clear evidence of the phenomenon and context (Yin, 2018). Data was collected by interviewing three teachers as executors of multilingual policies and observing how they translated multilingual policies in the classroom. The interview process was in Bahasa Indonesian to minimize the language barrier and ease the participant in answering the question and providing elaboration. For the interview, the question was adopted from a pre-development instrument which is based on the Language Planning and Policy Theoretical Framework that includes Language Practice (ecology), Language Belief (ideology), and Language Management (Planning) ((Spolsky, 2003) which is translated in the form of a semi-structured interview.

Thematic analysis was chosen to analyze the role of the Agency in multilingual education policies. (Barkhuizen et al., 2014)) described thematic analysis in qualitative data analysis manuals discussed in detail. The participants' stories were coded and categorized based on the theme. The coding focused on the key meaning of participants' narratives, to which the researcher had to pay attention to making understandable signs to represent every experience. The next step of the analysis was coding. The process involved identifying narratives, assigning a codeword or phrase that describes the meaning of narratives precisely.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

NO	Participant (Pseudonym)	Rofik	Betty	Anita
1	Designation	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
2	Subject taught	Religion	Biology	English and Tahfidzul Qur'an
3	Gender	Male	Female	Female

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section explains the results of the teacher agency in multilingual policy by giving them a questionnaire and then confirming it with direct interviews to get explorative results.

Language planning and policies implemented at the school

This research took place in a formal institution at the high school level in Surakarta. This school has many programs, and one of them is an Islamic boarding school. This school provides dormitories to students in certain programs so that after school, they don't go home but live in dormitories with other friends. This program implements a multilingual education policy that the school trusts to improve the quality of students. To analyze the language phenomenon in the research location, the researcher uses a Theoretical Framework for Language Policy and Planning, which includes Language Practice (ecology), Language Belief (ideology), Language Management (Planning) (Spolsky, 2003)

Language Practice (ecology) is directed at the language behaviour commonly used in the school community or the community in the school environment. In general, the community in the school environment uses Indonesian and Javanese, which are the indigenous languages of the school location. In communication, they are rare, and almost none of the people around the school carry out daily communication using foreign languages. They are more dominant in using Indonesian and Javanese, which have become a habit for a long time. However, the linguistic profile of the area around the school does not impact the language policies implemented in schools. The school has the authority to design

language policies that are considered to benefit students without interference from the language habits of the community around the school environment.

Every element in school has an important role in carrying out the policies that have been determined because the LPP agent can operate at all levels, whether policymakers or implementers (Jr & Richard B. Baldauf, 2018). LPP is limited at the macro level, like government, on a smaller scale that usually occurs in a school context, but they are also quite active in developing language policies to develop resources in their environment. In the context of this study, language belief (ideology) is their belief in the composition of the language chosen to be applied in their environment. According to Betty, the ideal and chosen multilingual policy should be projected for the student's development. The policy chosen for LPP is to use Indonesian as the national language, Javanese as the regional language, English as a foreign language representing the international community, and Arabic as the language of the Al Quran because Pesantren or Islamic Boarding School represents Muslims.

"The four languages are not languages that are too strange for students to use. Like Arabic as the main language used to study the Al Quran, English is used by more than half of the world's population, Indonesian to further instill a sense of love for the language in their own country, and the Javanese language, which is one of the cultures handed down by ancestors in the land of Java has become a place of learning and school" (B)

"Arabic is necessary because it is the language of the Al Quran. We as Muslims must remember where we come from. Indonesian because it is a national language, as a form of our love for the homeland. English is also important because, as an international language, it is hoped that children will compete at the national level and be able to penetrate the international arena. The Javanese language is no less important because the location of our school is in Java, so the children can also know the culture of the surrounding community and show good manners and politeness." (Anita)

Policies are determined through a long process and are always developed to get the best results. Because this case focuses on language policy in the school environment, the linguistic profile of the school community gets enough attention. This school is an Islamic boarding school. Students certainly come from many regions in Indonesia which have very diverse indigenous languages. The Javanese language has received attention from researchers regarding how students from different regions are forced to learn that language. According to the Regulation of The Governor in Central Java No 57 (2013), Javanese is the indigenous language that must be learned in the Central Java environment. This is used as a recommendation to be studied and a subject to learn and has value in reports. In implementing this policy, all students must learn Javanese, regardless of which region they come from and what regional language was used first. Participants Betty and Anita said that if students enrolled in their school, they must have committed to implementing all the policies that have been determined in the school, so this is not a problem; even Amar explained that this would create a more interesting language community.

With the decision of policymakers to adopt multilingualism in English, Indonesian, Arabic, and Javanese, the implementation of the policy requires the support of the entire school community, both teachers and students. In addition to teaching and learning activities, students are bound by a 24-hour policy because they are placed in dormitories. Student activities in dormitories are also a unique aspect of this school because after they get enough general insight at school, they also get more intensive religious knowledge in the dormitory but without forgetting the multilingual policy that has been implemented. Islamic Boarding schools, called pesantren in Indonesia, have different characteristics from those of education abroad. This educational model upholds religious values seriously and obediently. Besides, in the context of pesantren, teachers are mandated to act as parents (Puad & Ashton, 2021). Lukens-bull (2001) states that the relationship between teachers and students in Islamic boarding schools is like "father-son." Every parent who leaves their child to study at the Islamic

boarding school tends to trust the school manager. Every parent always provides full support for all the policies set by the school management for their child. Besides the relationship with the teacher, the closeness of the students is also slightly different. Because they get 24 hours together, the relationships formed will be stronger than in the common school, a school that does not stay in dormitory

Teacher agency in the multilingual education policy at the school

There are 3 participants in this study consisting of teachers of religion, biology, and English. All of them act as policy implementers in the schools where they teach. In implementing multilingual language policies, teachers have a very important role as executors or implementers who are facing directly with policy targets (students). Besides their responsibility to deliver subject matter as their expertise, they are responsible for supporting the agreed language policy, which will always be inherent in learning activities with students.

"As an implementer in learning "(R)

"Act as implementers and encourage students in the application of multilingualism in learning in the classroom and the school environment "(B)

"As a teacher, I act as an executor in encouraging and controlling students to use language not only in class but outside the classroom, as long as it is still in the school environment."

(A)

According to Biesta et al. (2015), teacher is considered a professional agency in the agency discourse; teachers make an active contribution to the learning process and take an important portion in the process of meaningful education. Teachers are responsible for guiding students to achieve the competencies that school policymakers have expected. Every system created to implement a policy will be carried out structurally; therefore, teachers must report the achievements and obstacles they encounter in the field.

"I reported to the school management. Management also carries out periodic supervision of teachers. So, the teachers will be given an evaluation and input if there are still things that are not appropriate." (A)

Teacher professional growth can be pursued with a dynamic character and expresses the teacher's agency role (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). In the context of professional development and human resource development in schools, teachers are assumed to contribute to improvement and implementation in their schools significantly. To realize the desired changes and improvements, schools' professional development and human resource development programs involve teachers developing knowledge and skills in new work projects individually or in groups.

(Billett, 2004) states that schools that act as teachers' workplaces provide opportunities for teachers to change practice according to their competence. Indirectly, teachers are given full authority to manage and develop their students in the classroom as long as it aligns with the country's mission. Active teacher involvement will encourage teacher change in the work context and is seen as a core component of learning (Tynjälä, 2013)

".....I speak Arabic more, I might also be more dominant there, although in my learning I slipped a little English to translate some vocabulary in Arabic into English" (R)

"Maybe I prefer to mix in the use of language in class, so what I use is English and Indonesian when teaching, but the material I teach is dominantly using English. So, I understand the condition of the students. Besides trying to understand the material presented, they also have to understand the language used in explaining the material itself, so I mixed it to make it easier for them to understand the material presented." (B)

'.....So there is Indonesian, English, and Arabic, although the portion can be said to be unbalanced, at least there are three languages....." (A)

Professional Agency is practiced when teachers or society influence, make choices, and even take attitudes by influencing their work and professional identity (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). Mister Amar, Miss Betty, and Miss Anita showed a good effort in realizing a professional agency and executing the multilingual policy in their schools in the classroom. Although using multilingualism as a whole cannot be said in the implementation, they try to combine several languages in teaching. The language used depends on their respective abilities. When Indonesian and Javanese are relatively easy, every teacher is capable and proficient at using them, but in selecting foreign languages for use, whether Arabic or English, they have tendencies that align with their learning references. For example, Amar is a religion teacher who prefers to use Arabic. He combines multilingualism with Arabic more often than English because the lessons he teaches got many references from Arabic, and Betty, as a biology teacher, gets many references In English but the case of Anita as an English teacher and also a tahfidz teacher, and he is better at combining two foreign languages in his class because all foreign languages are still a reference to their lessons

The efforts made by the teacher agency in designing activities to increase student's knowledge are part of their professional development (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). Some activities are also designed for multilingual implementation related to the school's goal. In the implementation of multilingual policies context, teachers always play an active role because they act as human resources in schools. Some policies developed to support the language policy were to create language zones when they were in class and bring native speakers for the student partner to practice their foreign language skills.

".....we invite native speakers to join our class, and then students can practice what they have learned (R)

"..... Then there are activities every two weeks, usually held on Saturdays. We used to call it "confident Saturday," its activity is to provide opportunities to give speeches, and that is in several languages intake turn using English, Arabic, Indonesian and Javanese to train their minds while practicing their ability to use several languages" (A)

They believe their efforts can help the students implement the policies on their multilingual education process. Although in implementing the policy, many obstacles must be solved for students and even teachers to adopt habits and practice language skills. In their role as policy implementers, patience and a sense of responsibility are needed to carry out their agents' functions. A multilingual policy might be considered something new to students, but it may not be. We can't say every student is smart or not, and there need to be treated depending on their ability. Do not apply language policy rigidly but must adapt to the situation faced by students; therefore, teachers are allowed to ask what is best for themselves (Tollefson, 2015) and then decide what to take in their class.

The active contribution of teachers in shaping work and conditions in the field to seek a good and meaningful education is a form of professional Agency in agency discourse (Biesta et al., 2015). Every place has various characteristics, so they cannot be generalized to one another. Hence, every implementer or actor has their policy regulating government policy according to their environment or circumstances. (Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2020) stated that the theoretical definition of Agency related to implementing LPP involves social actors and intuition in decision-making. They also consider how the Agency is conceptualized in planning and how it can be implemented. In addition, Eteläpelto et al. (2013) conceptualize Agency from a subject-centred socio-cultural perspective and claim it is interconnected. Teacher autonomy has traditionally been essential in terms of pedagogy in their classrooms. The teacher agency includes actors in the context of actions and the quality of how actors enact these contexts (Biesta et al., 2015). Then empower teachers about their active role as members of school organizations, accept responsibility as educators, and are burdened with their constraints and limitations (Weick, 2009).

4. CONCLUSION

This article aims to explore teacher agency in multilingual education policies in the context of Islamic boarding schools and how teachers translate policies determined by policymakers into their classrooms. This study took a sample of 3 teachers who teach different subjects, namely English, Biology, and Religion. In this study, the teacher acts as a policy implementer and is responsible for multilingual policies with students. The language selected in the multilingual policy is Indonesian, Arabic, English, and Javanese. The selection of the language used in the composition of the multilingual policy represents the school's goal to complete the competence of their students. Indonesian and Javanese represent policies from the macro and meso levels, while English and Arabic are chosen for student empowerment. English as an international language and Arabic as a holy book language for Muslims (Al Quran) as the identity of schools that adopt Islamic boarding schools.

This study also found how the teacher agency translates policies according to their respective abilities. Fourth, languages chosen as multilingual policies are not used thoroughly in implementing learning. Teachers combine languages according to the references they use for their subjects, such as a religion teacher who uses Arabic more often than English and vice versa for biology teachers. Teachers also design activities to fulfil their role as agencies in multilingual policies; they bring a native speaker to their class and create an activity for students to practice multiple languages. In this study, some weaknesses can be corrected for further research. The researcher only discusses the teacher agency with 3 participants. In the future, the focus of research can be directed to policymakers and involve more teachers and students for further exploration.

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