Utilizing SLA Findings to Inform Language-in-education Policy: The Case of Early English Instruction in Indonesia

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Abstract This chapter reviews relevant literature to extend the debate on early English instruction in Indonesia from second language acquisition (SLA) and language planning and policy (LPP) perspectives. In doing so, the chapter examines the validity of SLA-related arguments that support and oppose early English instruction in the country. The discussion in this chapter demonstrates how SLA research on age effects that has been promoted to inform policymakers as to when to start instruction offers little potential in terms of language-in-education policymaking. It is shown how SLA findings on the potential benefits that can be accrued from instruction are more practical to inform language-in-education policymaking. It is argued that should there be an SLA-based rationale for early English instruction, it is not the putative efficacy of early language instruction underlined by the notion 'the earlier the better' but the potential benefits that can be accrued from instruction. Finally, the chapter provides policy recommendations and directions for future research.

Keywords Language policy · Second Language Acquisition (SLA) · Early English instruction · Indonesia

1 Introduction

Indonesia is one of the most ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse countries in the world with more than 400 ethnicities, speaking more than 700 distinct languages. Despite this highly diverse linguistic landscape, a nationwide policy to

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adopt and promote the Indonesian language as the national language and lingua franca has succeeded in the prevention of intense ethnic conflict. This success has been attributed to the efforts of the Indonesian government in making the Indonesian language a source of unification rather than division. Through systematic education and intensified promotion, the government has cultivated the Indonesian language's ethnically neutral position and its historical advantages over colonialist languages such as Dutch and Japanese to maintain national unity (Bertrand, 2003).

The portrait of Indonesian's diverse linguistic landscape has become more colorful with the massive introduction of English in elementary schools occurring in the past decade (Supriyanti, 2014). This results in a great majority of the Indonesian children learning English as their third language (L3), since they have already spoken a local language as first language (L1) and learned Indonesian as second language (L2). For some, Indonesian is their L1 and they learn English as an L2. Although the teaching of English in elementary schools has been viewed as significant for providing children with English as a future investment to succeed in an increasingly globalized world, resistance has escalated in the past few years. Scholars such as Alwasilah (2012) and Dardjowidjojo (2003), for example, argued that introducing English to elementary school children would not succeed due to various reasons, including the absence of a speech community in the country as well as children's cognitive immaturity.

This chapter extends the debate on early English instruction in Indonesia from second language acquisition and language planning and policy perspectives. First, it briefly describes the context of elementary English instruction in the country. Then the chapter discusses the supporting argument for early English instruction, followed by an evaluation on the argument that opposes it. Afterward, the chapter attempts to reconcile the contradictory findings and provides recommendations and directions for future research.

2 The Context of Elementary English Instruction in Indonesia

In 1992, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) Republic of Indonesia held a national symposium on education. It was revealed in the symposium that there was greater awareness of the roles of English in the world and that there was a need to regulate official early English instruction. The outcome of the symposium was a recommendation for the government to officially regulate English teaching in elementary schools. MoEC then followed this recommendation by releasing the Decree No. 060/U/1993. The decree states that English instruction may start from Year 4 at elementary level onward. Its status in the elementary school curriculum is local content subject. Being a local content subject means the government authorizes English teaching in an elementary school provided: (1) the society in which the school is located requires it; (2) the school can ensure the availability of qualified teachers and proper facilities to accommodate teaching-learning activities (Sadtono, 2007).

The status of English as a local content subject remained in the following five years or so. Not all schools taught English; only some did. However, there was a surge of interest in English entering the new millennium. A nationwide educational phenomenon occurred when thousands of elementary schools throughout the country showed a sudden enthusiasm about the idea of introducing children with literacy in English (Supriyanti, 2014).

In the early 2000s, school principals realized that with the status of English as a local content subject, the government would not penalize them should they decide to offer English instruction. As a consequence, many of them decided to start teaching English in Grades 4 and 5, while the majority of them offered English instruction as early as Grade 1, despite having no qualified teachers. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) released the Decree No. 22/2006 about The Structure of National Curriculum to strengthen the Decree No. 060/U/1993 by stipulating English to be taught once a week (2 × 45 min. per lesson) with schools having the freedom to start earlier than Grade 4. The outcomes of English instruction at elementary level are Graduates Competency Standards prescribed by the government in the Decree of Ministry of National Education No. 23/2006. The Graduates Competency Standards place an emphasis on what students are expected to know and do in terms of linguistic competencies (Zein, 2016).

3 'The Younger the Better': The Argument that Supports Early English Instruction

The decision about starting age in language-in-education policy cannot be made on the basis of linguistic consideration alone - there are other social, economic, and political considerations that drive policymakers to officialize early foreign language learning (Enever, Moon, & Raman, 2009). The tendency in our post-modern era is that language policy is subject to change with sociopolitical forces at the macro level (Ricento, 2000). What motivate policies on early foreign language learning for strongly nationalist governments are political reasons such as the increasing demand for foreign language competency.

In Indonesia, as a result of the increasingly globalized world, there is a strong perception that English language competency is crucial for maintaining national development and achieving global competitiveness. On the contrary, parents are more attracted by economic reasons, as they view the value of a particular language in terms of economic development, that is, to enable children to benefit economically from early foreign language instruction (Zein, 2009). These reasons make upgrading citizens' language proficiency profile imperative - language proficiency is valued and taught through curriculum and schooling infrastructures. Despite this, there is also an SLA-related reason for providing children with early English instruction. While Indonesian parents and various educational stakeholders alike believe in the importance of English for globalisation, their view is synonymous

when it comes to the belief 'the younger the better' (Zein, 2009). In addition to the prevalent belief in the importance of English in the global era, the surge of interest in English within this period was also attributed to the assumed advantage that early English instruction offers to children. The majority of Zein's respondents believed in children having advantages over adults in terms of rate of learning and overall mastery in acquiring a foreign language. They believed in the notion 'the earlier the better', that is, the value of an early start and the advantages that it offers to children's language acquisition. Some of the respondents cited SLA theories that highlight how children's language learning during this massive cerebral development period is associated with effortless language acquisition process (e.g., DeKeyser & Larson-Hall, 2005; Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003).

This massive cerebral development is considered to be a 'golden age' range in which optimum results could be gained through language instruction. Being in 'the golden age' range, children are perceived to be better language learners who can master foreign languages faster and easier than their older counterparts (Singleton & Ryan, 2004). This belief stems from the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) that contends that there is a language-related maturationally constrained critical period that ends at a certain point during or at end of childhood that makes language acquisition more arduous and may result in less satisfactory outcomes. The CPH has received significant support from many SLA studies (see DeKeyser, 2000; Long, 2005 for review). A study by Abrahamsson and Hyltenstam's (2008), for example, shows that near-nativelikeness rate is consistently higher among younger learners as opposed to older ones. A study by Hakuta, Bialystok, and Wiley (2003) on the results of the 1990 Census of 2.3 million Chinese and Spanish migrants arriving in the USA demonstrates that "the degree of success in second-language acquisition steadily declines throughout the life span" (p. 37).

Nevertheless, other scholars have postulated contradictory arguments against the CPH (see Birdsong, 2006, and Singleton, 2005 for review). Birdsong (2006) stated that there are more than 20 studies that have reported the rate of nativelikeness among late L2 learners, highlighting that ultimate attainment is still possible among older learners. For Singleton (2005), speaking in terms of the CPH is misleading already due to the significant amount of variation occurring in the way the critical period for language acquisition is understood. Muñoz and Singleton (2011) shared the same view, arguing that the disagreements among researchers concerning the exact nature of maturational constraints have been understated and that other potentially important factors such as amount and quality of input and learners' attitudes have been largely neglected. The fact is high achieving learners and the low-achieving ones have different attitudes towards languages as well as in their liking and enjoyment of certain learning tasks (Muñoz, 2014a). Furthermore, other factors such as the quality of the input provided in the instruction is more influential to the success of learners at either perception or production level than mere starting age (Muñoz, 2014b). Because the CPH is far from unequivocal (Muñoz & Singleton, 2011), it may not account for the successful L2 development among early and late starters (Muñoz, 2008). Furthermore, most of the CHP-related studies were originally set in the context of naturalistic settings where immediate L2 environment is

readily available and accessible. They were not conducted in FL contexts with limited input. This means that "whatever the result of the CPH in L2 acquisition may be, we cannot simply assume that the same result will be obtained in FL contexts…" (Butler, 2014, p. 5).

With Indonesian parents and educational stakeholders alike affirming the belief 'the younger the better', it appears that they are not fully aware of the theoretical discrepancies regarding the CPH. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Indonesia, as it is also found in other contexts worldwide where 'the younger the better' belief has been influential in the development of language policies worldwide (DeKeyser, 2013) as in the case of language folk myth policy found in Arizona, the USA (Combs, 2012). As Combs (2012) suggested, laymen appear to be unaware of research studies in SLA giving evidence that seems counterintuitive to their perspective, ignorantly codifying language policies from language folk myths.

Second, both parents and educational stakeholders seem to be unaware that findings generated in L2 contexts are not readily generalizable in FL contexts such as Indonesia. Reflecting the views of the laymen, Indonesian educational administrators and practitioners seem to have ignored the fact that children in the country are not learning in L2 natural learning environments but in an FL context where exposure to English is very limited. Educational policymakers who strengthened the place for English through the Decree No. 22/2006 might have followed the public blindly, taking the notion 'the younger the better' for granted. They made it a theoretical foundation for early English instruction without understanding that it is drawn from misinterpretations of SLA findings in L2 settings.

4 The Opposing Argument Against Early English Instruction

Language policy researchers such as Alwasilah (2012) understood that the language policy of early English instruction in Indonesia results from misinterpretations of SLA findings in L2 settings. He took the issue even further by stating that it is not the only problem. He argued that early English instruction is not beneficial to Indonesian children's language acquisition because children are not cognitively mature to benefit from it. Rather than acquiring English as a second or third language successfully, Alwasilah maintained that the children "are confused by a barrage of linguistic input. This linguistic confusion does not lead to effective learning" (2012, p. 7). Alwasilah's apprehension led to the suggestion to postpone English instruction.

This suggestion is in line with Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson's (2001) idea that much of the applied research "points to the advantages of postponing formal teaching in specific contexts" (p. 163). It is unknown what Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson meant by "applied research" or "specific contexts", yet some language policy researchers stand on the same ground (e.g., Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Kirkpatrick,

2012). Kirkpatrick indicated that English instruction should be postponed until secondary level. Although most of his arguments are related to developing multilingualism in the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nation) context, he also expounded an argument that is relevant to SLA. His SLA-related reason for instruction postponement is that "it could be more effective and efficient to delay the introduction of English until the secondary school" because by then "children will be cognitively mature and able to transfer the skills they have acquired in learning local languages to the learning of English and thus learn it far more quickly than if they had started before they were ready" (p. 341). Clearly Kirkpatrick's argument of young children's cognitive immaturity as a rationale for postponing English instruction is parallel to Alwasilah's. The latter argued that it is more necessary to develop children's linguistic competencies in the local and Indonesian languages prior to learning foreign languages such as English (Alwasilah, 2012). This is especially because learners' L1 literacy level may affect their language learning development and that their prior knowledge on L1 could be beneficial for them to learn L2 (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004).

This suggestion was then implemented as a language-in-education policy in Indonesia through Curriculum 2013 that stipulates the entire removal of English from the elementary school timetable in the 2016/2017 academic year. In other words, English would only be taught in secondary schools then. MoNE endorsed the piloting of Curriculum 2013 in 2598 model elementary schools throughout the country. Several months later major provinces such as DKI Jakarta banned all public elementary schools in the country's capital from teaching English during school hours (Wahyuni, 2014).

The year 2014 witnessed another policy change when a structural alteration in MoNE meant the educational ministry became the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC). The newly appointed MoEC Minister made a political manoeuvre by assigning a team of experts to conduct a nationwide revision of Curriculum 2013. Wahyuni (2014) reported that while the revision is underway, the piloting of Curriculum 2013 remains in effect in the model elementary schools. The other schools that are not ready to implement Curriculum 2013 are to operate within the KTSP curriculum guidelines. A nationwide implementation of Curriculum 2013 will only occur after the revision is completed and after its successful piloting is achieved.

A policy change occurred in July 2015 when the Minister of Education and Culture then, Dr. Anies Baswedan, urged schools to teach three languages: Indonesian as the national language, a local language of the school's choice, and English as a foreign language. Zein (2016) reported that this decision was made against the backdrop of the constant public outcry over the need of elementary English teaching and in preparation for the ASEAN Economic Society (AEC), which took place in December 2015. This was also in alignment with the plan of the Minister to implement the Act No. 24/2009 on the Flag, Languages and the National Anthem and Symbol of Indonesia which stipulates the necessity of the teaching of the national language, the local languages, and foreign languages. It is unclear whether this decision would also affect the 2598 model schools that are still

implementing Curriculum 2013 because the Minister did not endorse a ministerial decree to officialize it.

A recent political decision taken by the Indonesian President in August 2016 resulted in a cabinet reshuffle that saw Dr. Baswedan leave the office, being replaced by Professor Muhadjir Effendi as the new Minister of Education and Culture. The incumbent Minister is yet to follow up on the decision of the previous Minister, since until the time when this chapter is being revised (November 2016), he has not endorsed a ministerial decree related to the teaching of local languages, English and the Indonesian language. The absence of a policy document officializing elementary English instruction means an extended debate on the starting age for English instruction.

To extend the debate, it is now necessary to examine the validity of the suggestion to postpone instruction on the basis of younger children's cognitive immaturity. Cognitive maturity facilitates L2 acquisition in a minimal-input setting because it allows for the conscious and deliberate processes involved in explicit learning (Dörnyei, 2009). Explicit learning enables learners to benefit from minimal input and draws on their metalinguistic awareness, which is their cognition of language in terms of its nature, function, and form. Bialystok (2001) stated, "[m]etalinguistic awareness implies that attention is actively focused on the domain of knowledge that describes the explicit properties of language" (p. 127). This metalinguistic awareness is related to metalinguistic knowledge (i.e., knowledge about language) and metalinguistic ability (i.e., the capacity to use knowledge about language) (Bialystok, 2001).

Various studies have reported the correlation between learners' cognition and their language acquisition. Studies by Mora (2006) and Muñoz (2006, 2008), are parallel in validating the superiority of late starters over the early ones. In studies in which there is constant amount of exposure in instructed FL settings, a faster rate of learning is found among older learners instead of younger ones (Muñoz, 2008). The reason is because older learners are more advanced than younger learners in terms of cognitive development, and that such cognitive development accounts for their consistent and significant superiority (Muñoz, 2006). Thus, it is argued that in many educational contexts in FL settings where students only receive about two hour exposure per week, older children and adolescents are better at explicit learning because of their superior cognitive maturity (Muñoz, 2008).

However, the plausibility of the argument to postpone English instruction until secondary schools on the basis of children's cognitive immaturity is under question. There are studies that contradict the superiority of older learners over the younger ones. For instance, studies conducted by Takahashi et al. (2011), Hidaka et al. (2012), and Kwon (2006), all suggest the superiority of early starters, regardless of several contributing factors. Kwon's investigation of elementary school children in South Korea demonstrates the superiority of younger learners who started studying in 2003 compared to those studying in 2006. The study proves that early exposure gives positive impact not only on children's language development on the cognitive domain but also their affective one. One may argue on the basis of the studies above that cognitive maturity is not absent among younger learners. But it might be pre-

mature to infer anything from these studies alone other than the researchers' claim of the superiority of early starters to their older counterparts. One obvious thing is that it is necessary to identify whether younger learners are truly cognitively immature so that early English instruction needs to be postponed. This leads the discussion to the following section.

5 Reconciling Contradictory Findings

It is necessary to reconcile the findings that support older learners' cognitive superiority over young learners (e.g., Mora, 2006; Muñoz, 2006, 2008) on the one hand and those that demonstrate the opposite (e.g., Hidaka et al., 2012; Kwon, 2006; Takahashi et al., 2011). There is a common thread in those studies in that they were conducted to inform language-in-education policymaking about when to start instruction by comparing younger learners who began learning an FL at an early point with older learners who began at a later point (Muñoz, 2008). The rationale of those studies was to identify whether younger starters have advantages in FL instructional settings over older starters.

This rationale, however, only generates inconclusive findings. Contradictory findings are even more evident if specific areas of instruction are examined. Studies demonstrating the superiority of younger learners are abundant; for instance, in the areas of speaking (Uematsu, 2012), and listening and reading (Shizuka, 2007) but there are others that show the superiority of older starters in terms of listening (Takada, 2004), pronunciation (Kajiro, 2007), and grammar and vocabulary (Shizuka 2007). It appears that the contradictory nature of studies in FL settings resembles the L2 settings (see previous section), which suggests that no matter where the studies are conducted, contradictory results in regard to the putative efficacy of early language instruction are likely to emerge.

According to Butler (2014), these inconclusive findings have resulted from the varying measuring procedures and the age of exposure being confounded by hours of instruction, that is, early starters receiving longer instruction. The variability of the elementary EFL programs, which includes the quality and content of instruction, is also influential in generating contradictory results in those studies. DeKeyser (2013) argued that most studies purporting the superiority of younger learners are problematic in terms of methodology. For instance, there are problems in the design of the studies, as researchers are required to introduce variables due to the different L1 s spoken by the participants. Moreover, when there is little variation in terms of the structures of the tests and the test items are not representative of the structures, any claims made for generalization and reliability of findings are groundless. For this reason, DeKeyser (2013, p. 61) asserted that "[t]here is little research on age effects that meets very high methodological standards, no research whatsoever that meets all the standards outlined here, and almost no evidence that is clearly of educational relevance." (see DeKeyser, 2013, for further review).

It is now evident that grounding language-in-education policy on early English instruction on ungeneralizable SLA findings is imprudent, as much as grounding it on the assumption 'the earlier the better' that misinterprets SLA findings in L2 settings. Age-effect factors "will need to be interpreted in the same light as age-related factors in every other domain of learning" (Muñoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 26). This implies research on age-effects having less potential to inform language-in-education policymaking. Questioning whether early starters have advantages in FL instructional settings over late starters may have less direct impact than investigating whether early English instruction benefits children's language acquisition (Zein, 2017).

In terms of language-in-education policy, it may be more practical to ask: "Does early English instruction benefit children in terms of language acquisition?" Investigating the potential benefits of an earlier start that can be accrued from instruction is crucial because it can help understand whether younger learners are truly cognitively immature (Zein, 2017). By doing so it could be identified whether it is necessary to delay English instruction in Indonesia until secondary level.

There is ample evidence from recent literature suggesting how children in many EFL contexts benefit from early exposure to the language. This is evident in cognitive domain such as vocabulary where input-based and production-based instructions contribute to receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge and positively affect vocabulary acquisition (Shintani, 2011) and grammar in which incidental grammar acquisition can be enhanced through the provision of a functional need (Shintani, 2015). In terms of affective domain, intrinsic motivation may be increased through quality instruction where teachers facilitate "students perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness" (Carreira, Ozaki, & Maeda, 2013, p. 716).

Early English instruction is also beneficial in terms of language learning strategies as reported by Benvegnen (2011) whose instruction technique using Cognitive Vocabulary Learning Strategies (CVLS) contributed to the 8–10 year old Swiss children in her study developing more effective recall and spelling abilities. Muñoz's (2014a, b) study of 74 elementary EFL children in Spain demonstrated children's "early awareness of foreign language learning, and learning conditions" (p. 24) and "the lack of transparency of English orthography, which stands in contrast to these children's first languages" (p. 37). The growth of aptitude among children age 6 onwards is also viable through effective instruction as reported in a study conducted by Milton and Alexiou (2006). The researchers argued that this growth is indicative of young children demonstrating explicit learning that reflects cognitive maturity. Although older learners may indeed develop more advanced cognition, Milton and Alexiou asserted that younger learners' cognition is still developing and that instruction can enhance children's metalinguistic abilities.

The list of findings above (Benvegnen, 2011; Carreira et al., 2013; Milton & Alexiou, 2006; Muñoz, 2014b, 2014c; Shintani, 2011, 2015) is not meant to be exhaustive but is hopefully sufficient to provide evidence for the benefits of early English instruction for children's English language acquisition. This occurs with children having very little exposure to the language such as 2 × 45 minute-lesson

per week (Shintani, 2011) and opportunities to be exposed to the language outside school ranging from very little to almost none (Shintani, 2015). This is due to the fact that those studies were carried out in EFL contexts (e.g., Switzerland, Japan) where children also learned other languages at school (Benvegnen, 2011; Shintani, 2011, 2015). No evidence can be drawn from the studies that children in these FL contexts were encountering difficulties when receiving early English instruction. What seems to happen is that even in a minimal input setting such as those in FL contexts early start does make a difference, albeit modestly (Larson-Hall, 2008). This appears, for example, in children aged 8–10 who succeeded in their vocabulary acquisition (Shintani, 2011). Muñoz (2014a, b), stated that children at this age range have developed language awareness as well as "a transition towards self-regulation with cognitive maturity" (p. 37). But it seems that younger learners such as those aged 6 who throve in their incidental grammar acquisition also demonstrated some level of cognitive maturity as shown in Shintani (2015). The learners' success in acquiring vocabulary at this age range also corroborates Milton & Alexiou's (2006) contention of young learners' aptitude growth and their ability to engage in explicit learning.

Thus, younger children appear to demonstrate some level of cognitive maturity, allowing them to advantage from instruction despite the little amount of exposure. It may not be possible to ascertain the extent of their cognitive maturity from the current literature, but it is evident that early English instruction is not to the detriment of children's cognitive development. Even modest results in various language acquisition areas discussed above are adequate to purport its significance in laying an early foundation to L2 learning that would ultimately lead to more practice opportunities and stronger proficiency (Moyer, 2004).

This makes a case against the argument to postpone early English instruction in Indonesia on the basis of children's cognitive immaturity. The fact that children in those EFL contexts are able to pick up aspects of language acquisition (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, motivation) does not signal their cognitive unreadiness to learn English as a foreign language. Early English instruction at elementary level would provide learners with "a beneficial effect for starting to study a language at a younger age, even when input is only minimal" (Larson-Hall, 2008, p. 59).

6 Concluding Remarks

In Indonesia, the roles of globalization, economic demands and aspiration for early English acquisition have been overwhelming. Elementary English instruction is a phenomenon so prevalent that even Rachmajanti's (2008) assertion to commence instruction in Grade 4 instead of 1 has done little to dampen parental enthusiasm and society's interest. Postponing early English instruction is a denial to the macro-policy factors contributing to its conception. It is very unlikely that elementary schools would postpone instruction even if SLA findings were against it.

However, what this chapter has demonstrated is that SLA is not entirely against early language instruction. Instruction is beneficial for children's acquisition, highlighting the importance of SLA research. The problem is SLA research on age effects arguably only offers little potential in terms of language-in-education policymaking (Zein, 2017); therefore, it might be more useful for researchers working in the SLA and or LPP domains to look for evidence beyond SLA studies on age effects. This chapter has demonstrated that SLA findings on the potential benefits that can be accrued from instruction are more useful to inform language-in-education policymaking.

The implication is that early language instruction is worthwhile; there is no need to withdraw it from elementary level of education. Should there be an SLA-based rationale for early English instruction, it is not the putative efficacy of early language instruction underlined by the notion 'the earlier the better' but the potential benefits that can be accrued from instruction. Coupled with the strong macro socioeconomic and political factors, the potential benefits that can be accrued from instruction make up another rationale for early English instruction.

Using the potential SLA benefits that can be accrued from instruction is an attempt to avoid the codification of language policy coming from language folk myths (Combs, 2012). Thus, what is now necessary is for the Indonesian government to endorse a language policy for the teaching of languages in schools. There needs to be a ministerial decree that not only officializes compulsory English instruction at elementary level as per the public's aspiration (Hawanti, 2014; Zein, 2009) but also stipulates instruction along with the teaching of a local language of the school's choice and the Indonesian language. The previous MoEC Minister's exhortation could "provide a framework for the establishment of simultaneous instruction in which the teaching of indigenous languages, Indonesian, and English is made viable within the elementary school curriculum" (Zein, 2016, p. 57). As Zein (2016) argued, such a policy appears to be a strategic language policy representing all language needs at the local, national and global levels. It further aligns with the 2003 Education Act, which aspires to a democratic vision of education that values religious and cultural values associated with Indonesian and indigenous languages without neglecting the global aspirations that are associated with English.

A multilingual education policy as such will need to implement a gradualist approach to policy implementation (Bertrand, 2003) in order to facilitate greater understanding between the multilingual communities in the country. Taking the lesson from the adoption of Indonesian language as the national language where the language was embraced most enthusiastically when there was no coercion, it is important to take into account the country's multilingual context. This means it is necessary to consider the fact that English is learned as an L3 by a great majority of Indonesian children and as an L2 for others. SLA studies demonstrate that there are dynamic interactions in language processing of L1, L2, and L3 as the children learn them in a simultaneous manner (e.g., Herdina & Jessner, 2002), while on the other hand the role of L1 oracy in L2 oracy is unclear (e.g., Bigelow & Tarone, 2004) and that children's cognitive maturity affects L2 literacy but not L2 oracy (e.g., García Mayo & García Lecumberri, 2003; Muñoz, 2006). This brings ramifications in areas

that are beyond the purview of this chapter. There are areas that merit further research in order to inform language-in-education policymaking on how this simultaneous instruction can be effectively implemented in a multilingual Indonesia.

First, the dynamic interactions in language processing of children speaking a heritage or indigenous language as L1 while they learn Indonesian as their L2 and English as their L3 merit further research. It is also necessary to investigate the role of children speaking Indonesian as their L1 in terms of how their oracy of the Indonesian language could benefit oracy in English and how their cognitive maturity affects their literacy in English language. Finally, further research may also need to investigate how and to what extent early English instruction in Indonesia boosts the acquisition of the language by the school children as they graduate from every level of education.

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