



Research Article

Internationalization of the Indonesian Language: An Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Study

Nurul Lutfhi Aulia¹, Yaya Sunarya²

1. Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

E-mail: rullutfhi@upi.edu



2. Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

E-mail: yayasunarya@upi.edu



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Abstract. History records that the Indonesian language has developed rapidly and has been used throughout the archipelago. In this era, the Indonesian nation must continue defending its existence. One way is by promoting the Indonesian language on the world stage. This research aims to delve into the ontology of the scope of the internationalization of the Indonesian language, formulate strategies for the internationalization of the Indonesian language epistemologically, and axiologically find the goals of the internationalization of the Indonesian language. A qualitative descriptive method is used in this research. The results describe that the Indonesian language is increasingly known worldwide through education, culture, bilateral and multilateral communication, and teaching that is very appealing to foreign speakers. Indonesian is now superior to Malay. The Indonesian language must maintain its existence to play a strong role in facing global dynamics and gradually become an

internationally recognized. Therefore, Indonesian society needs to understand the urgency and existence of the internationalization of the Indonesian language by utilizing available technology and promoting BIPA programs.

Keywords: Internationalization Of The Indonesian Language, Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology.

INTRODUCTION

The internationalization of language is a process where a language becomes more widely used on an international level (Wildan, 2023). This process can occur because the language is used in international communication, trade, diplomacy, mass media, or in academic and cultural contexts. Specifically, Indonesian has been successfully designated as an official language at the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on Monday, November 20, 2023, at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France (Sekretariat et al. Indonesia, 2023). The internationalization of language can promote international understanding, international trade, cultural exchange, and global collaboration. From its inception, Indonesia has been a manifestation of culture rooted in the nation's historical struggle, unity in cultural diversity, and shared aspirations to achieve the goals of the nation and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

The mandate for the internationalization of the Indonesian language is constitutionally enshrined in Law Number 24 of 2009 concerning the National Flag, Language, Emblem, and Anthem, Article 44, paragraphs 1, 2, and 3. Several efforts are being made to implement this mandate. First, the Development and Fostering of Language, as the main unit overseeing the development and fostering of the language, has transformed its policy with three main focuses, one of which is the "Internationalization of the Indonesian Language". Second, the highest language forum, the 12th Indonesian Language Congress in 2023, also focused on the sub-theme "Optimization of Indonesian Language Diplomacy through BIPA". Various activities related to the internationalization of the Indonesian language and culture on the international stage are essential to be established as the government's flagship programs.

This research will capture the process of internationalization of the Indonesian language from the perspective of science philosophy. Based on the ontological foundation, philosophy questions the distinctive characteristics of scientific knowledge (compared to various kinds of knowledge and activities conducted by humans) (Sauri, 2016). Then, the epistemological foundation provides a basis for discussing how scientific knowledge works in an effort to realize scientific activities (Wahana, 2016) by explaining the steps, methods of scientific knowledge, and relevant means to achieve the targets and objectives of scientific activities. Meanwhile, the axiological foundation serves as the basis for discussing the values involved in scientific activities. Apart from the value of truth, there is a need to recognize the various utility values that can be found in science and its

implications. Thus, this research will outline (1) ontologically, it will explore the scope of the internationalization of the Indonesian language; (2) epistemologically, it will examine the process and strategies of the internationalization of the Indonesian language; and (3) axiologically, it will investigate the objectives of the internationalization of the Indonesian language.

METHOD

A qualitative descriptive method is used in the writing of this paper to explain and elaborate on ideas in detail to provide an understanding of these concepts and ideas. Additionally, a reflective approach is employed because the ideas discussed have been implemented and are based on the author's experiences and observations. At the conclusion of the paper, a persuasive approach is also utilized to ensure the acceptance of the proposed conclusions and recommendations, as the aim of this writing is to invite collective action for the benefit of the nation.

DISCUSSION

Scope of the Internationalization of the Indonesian Language

(Wildan, 2023) states that Indonesia has great potential to be adopted by Indonesians and other nations worldwide, with several supporting facts. First, in terms of speakers, Indonesian is one of the languages that is very easy to learn and master, both by native and foreign speakers. According to Goddard (2005) and (Alam et al., 2022), the spread of languages in Southeast Asia, namely Indonesian and Malaysian (referred to as Malay), totals over 313.26 million speakers, compared to Tagalog with around 113.9 million speakers and other languages making up the rest. This clearly shows that, quantitatively, Indonesian, which has roots in the Malay language, is one of the significant linguistic forces in ASEAN.

Second, in terms of identity, Indonesian surpasses Malay. Indonesians have proven capable of uniting various ethnicities across different Indonesian islands. This factor is crucial for a language that aims to become international (Alam et al., 2022). Third, regarding structural simplicity, Indonesian's simple structure greatly facilitates new speakers and foreigners interested in using the language. Grammatically, Indonesian is relatively easy and straightforward, making it faster for foreigners to grasp than other languages (Alam et al., 2022).

As a unifying key and a means of communication among the nation's elements, Indonesia is one of the nation's identities and the identity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Indonesian continues to evolve into an increasingly widespread lingua franca. Blank (2023) explains that the use of Indonesian by other nations tends to increase over time, bringing Indonesian to rank 10th or 11th globally. Mandated in Law No. 24 of 2009, Indonesian will be gradually, systematically, and sustainably elevated to an international language. Indonesia's name on the international stage has been very positive in recent years. Various developments and policies made by the Indonesian government have received recognition and positive attention from the global population. This is evidenced by the recognition of Indonesian as the 10th official language of the UNESCO General Conference, along with the six official languages of the United Nations (English, Arabic, Mandarin,

French, Spanish, and Russian), as well as Hindi, Italian, and Portuguese. Thus, Indonesian can be used as a conference language. General Conference documents in UNESCO sessions can also be translated into Indonesian.

Strategies for Internationalizing the Indonesian Language

At the 11th Indonesian Language Congress in 2018, 22 key recommendations were produced, including the Internationalization of the Indonesian language. This is mandated by Law Number 24 of 2009 and the implementation of Government Regulation Number 57 of 2014 concerning the internationalization of the Indonesian language. Using Indonesian as the medium of instruction in schools is also encouraged to be strengthened. The issue of internationalizing Indonesian must be realized to make Indonesian an international language by 2045, precisely 100 years after Indonesia's independence. This is for the dignity of the Indonesian nation. If it becomes an international language, Indonesia will be respected as a great nation recognized by other countries worldwide.

Several strategies are being pursued to take advantage of opportunities to internationalize the national language, as follows:

a. Utilization of Technology

Mastery of digital technology must become Indonesia's strength because young Indonesians already live with technology daily. Therefore, the internationalization of Indonesians must be carried out by young people as they are the ones who master the latest technology.

b. Awareness of Using Indonesian

Article 32, paragraph 1 of Law No. 24 of 2009 explains that Indonesian must be used in national or international forums held in Indonesia. This article implies that all Indonesians have the same obligation to use Indonesian in every forum, whether scientific or non-scientific. This mission can only be accomplished if all societal layers, from the government, the general public, and business actors to academics, support, use, and always prioritize Indonesian in every activity. Conversely, actions that weaken Indonesian or strengthen the function of languages other than Indonesian beyond their status/function in Indonesia must be avoided to succeed in the mission of internationalizing Indonesians and being law-abiding citizens.

c. BIPA Learning

BIPA (Indonesian for Foreign Speakers) is a phenomenon that has been around for a while in developing the Indonesian language. According to data recorded by the Language Agency, from 2015 to 2023, 52 countries organized BIPA learning programs, with 154,526 learners and 1,702 BIPA teachers sent to various destination countries (BIPA Daring, 2023). This BIPA program needs to be developed more seriously by institutionalizing the Indonesian language program in collaboration with local universities. Many renowned universities worldwide have established study centers focusing on Indonesia, such as the Department of South Asian Studies at Harvard University, the Indonesian Language Program at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Indonesian Studies at Cornell University, Malay Studies at the National University of Singapore, Indonesian Language and Studies at the Australian National University, and Southeast Asia

Studies at almost all world universities. Other universities have also opened Indonesian language programs focusing on Indonesian language training. The BIPA program must be an essential part of these efforts to make Indonesian an international language per the law's mandate.

Objectives of Internationalizing the Indonesian Language

The need for the internationalization of Indonesia arises not only from emotional or ideal reasons but, more importantly, from the demands of modern times and technology, as well as pragmatic reasons. The most substantial reason for introducing Indonesia to more foreign citizens is to serve Indonesia's strategic interests in economic, political, security, and socio-cultural fields. This is because language serves three primary functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. These three functions are called metafunctions. These functions reflect different realities.

Under the ideational function, language is used to express biological, and physical reality and pertains to interpreting and representing experience. Under the interpersonal function, language expresses social reality and involves interactions between the speaker or writer and the listener or reader. Under the textual function, language expresses semiotic or symbolic reality and involves creating texts within a context (Wibowo et al., 2021). The functions of the language, adjusted to its current status, include (1) Indonesian as the official language, (2) Indonesian as the language of unity, and (3) Indonesian as the language of culture (Devianty, 2017).

The success of the internationalization of the Indonesian language will strengthen Indonesia's positive image. With an improved image of Indonesia, various favorable conditions will follow, including a) increased international community confidence to visit and travel to Indonesia, b) increased confidence of global-scale industries to invest in Indonesia, c) more open communication access between countries for Indonesians using their native language, d) human resource development will become more accessible and more massive due to various improvements and advancements in various fields with the global recognition of the Indonesian language. Recognizing the benefits of the widespread use of Indonesian globally, the effort to realize this goal is worth pursuing. To ensure all efforts yield significant impacts in a short time with the broadest reach, the government needs to involve as many relevant national elements as possible.

CONCLUSION

The importance of the internationalization of the Indonesian language can be viewed from two perspectives. First, language is a part of soft power in international relations. As more people worldwide speak Indonesian, Indonesia's influence will grow, and foreigners will better understand Indonesian culture and feel more familiar with Indonesia. This familiarity can increase cooperation in other fields, such as economics, politics, and defense. The second factor is the growing interest of foreigners in learning Indonesian because they find it meaningful and relevant. This factor is related to the increasing significance of Indonesia and Southeast Asia due to the region's strategic location, Indonesia's resource potential, and the escalating US-China competition in the area. Amid technological advancements and revolutions,

Indonesia must find ways aligned with contemporary progress to effectively internationalize the Indonesian language.

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