THE ROLE OF ENGLISH CULTURE IN INDONESIAN PEOPLE

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Life is a journey that humans should pass through. It is the essence of all beings in this entire universe. Humans should do the best thing in order to achieve what they must have. In this life, humans live in many different parts of the world. Some humans live in Africa, America, Australia, Asia and some others live in Europe. Different parts of the world make people have different values and points of views of what they see and judge.

Value may mean something for some people in some parts of the world, but it may mean something else for some other people. Those aspects of value and belief may create what we call culture. Culture is something that has to do with feeling, belief, value, knowledge, religion and anything that may affect the way people behave and do in their society.

An interesting thing here is the discussion of English culture and its relation to Indonesian people. Will it influence Indonesian people?

Western vs Indonesian Culture

Nearly all western countries are far away from Indonesia. In all aspects of life, we can observe that they have a lot of differences. In western cities, we can watch free projection of life on the street. Free movies that contain adult materials can be displayed everywhere. On the other hand, this thing cannot be seen in Indonesia. In Indonesia, something like this is forbidden and you will be caught by the policemen.

The cultures of these western people have some positive things too. Their values of time really are great thing. They call “time is money”. It will give the real true value of appreciating time as money. They will come on time and do everything as it is scheduled. How about Indonesia? Indonesia is quite famous for what people call “rubber time”. When you invite
someone to come at 7, he/she will come at 8 or even at 9. All of these things show that western culture has its positive and negative values.

Indonesia is a country that has a big population and it is known as a country that has friendly people. The term “being friendly” has been so famous since hundred years ago. Since Indonesian people are friendly, the capabilities and probabilities to intermingle with other people, especially those who come from western societies become an interesting phenomenon. Accordingly, the condition of “being friendly” enables us to welcome those western people as our honorable guests and sooner or later they become our neighbors.

Will these characteristics of Indonesian people be able to accept what western people bring? Without questions, it has the highest probability that will affect everything. We can see that some Indonesian people at this moment start appreciating time by applying it in schools. Indonesian students who come late for classes will be punished and of course will be warned to avoid them in the next occasions.

Based on the previous discussions, it is obvious that English culture significantly influences the way Indonesian people might behave. What we should do as educated people is to filter these influences. Indonesian people should appreciate the positive sides of English culture and approve them readily. On the contrary, some bad aspects like free sex and displaying adult materials should be avoided because they are against the values of religious and education that were taught by our ancestors.

Linguistic Influences

One thing of English culture that we commonly find in Indonesian are the use of loanwords, the use of slang language, the collectivism and individualism characteristics, fashion style, etc. We often use some loanwords in our daily lives. Indonesian has thousands of words that resemble English words. Lots of them serve an obvious purpose, i.e. they fill a gap in the vocabulary. Examples of these are pistol, helikopter, komputer. There was no word to convey those concepts before those borrowed words came along.

The more interesting ones are many of loanwords do not fill a gap of vocabularies. Instead they exist alongside a ‘twin’ word – either native to the language or long ago assimilated
into it – that means virtually the same. For example, *diskusi* exists alongside *pembicaraan*, both meaning “discussion”.

Language and social-cultural contacts will cause borrowings of words or loanwords. It happens because of several needs, especially for new culture in a language receiver. The role and function of language are as device of communication in all fields of life. Loanwords are closely related to social-cultural changes, and from the point of view of loanwords, the development and change of it can be observed. Language and culture are often symbolized as two sides of one coin, as two notions cannot be easily separated (as parts and device of culture).

Loanwords have many impacts to linguistics (e.g. to phonology and morphology levels), and semantics (such as an ameliorative and pejorative and also narrowing and widening of meanings). Those will cause social and cultural impacts (such as to euphemism). The example of phonology in a monosyllabic words which have the same form both for English and Indonesian, such as in *BUS*, it is differed in pronunciation, it can be [b i s] or [b 0 s] in Indonesian, but in English the pronunciation is [bAs]; the English suffix of *ITY* become *ITAS* in Indonesian such as in *QUALITY* becomes *KUALITAS* (Q as the first consonant of word become K), and also the consonant clusters such as in *PSYCHOLOGY* become *PSIKOLOGI*. There are also the importation of prefixes in morphology, such as *PRO-*, *MULTY-*/POLI*--; SUB-*/AUTO*. The importation of English words without substitution due to new culture or substitute the native/old words, such as *MEETING*, *SHOOTING*, *ACTING*, and *CAMPING*.

The development and changes of language can be understood as the result of very often social and cultural contacts, and borrowing will become of the usual one. Loanwords appear to fill the emptiness of new terms of culture, e.g. *COMPUTER-KOMPUTER*, *LINGUISTIC(S) Linguistik/bahasa*, *SEMANTICS*, and *FAXIMILE*. A special impact can be seen in economic for a business activity, or in the field of fashion and beautician, in glamorous live. Euphemism will relate to advertisement and promotion or services.

The conclusion will come to a positive one for fulfilling the emptiness of Indonesian vocabulary, especially for the new terms in social aspects (e.g. *CONGLOMERATE* becomes *KONGLOMERAT*) and culture (e.g. *PARABOLA* is imported), and euphemism e.g. U (Dutch) or
SIE (German) become ANDA in Indonesian language). Besides that loanwords happened long
times ago and the sources of loanwords cannot be traced back (see KBBI compare with KUBI).

In KUBI we can observe the sources of loanwords. The excessive use of English words in
the above domains is motivated by both linguistic and sociolinguistic factors. From the linguistic
viewpoint the use of Indlish can be viewed as due to at least four fundamental reasons:

First, the unavailable stock of vocabulary in Bahasa Indonesia encourages Indonesian
people to import words from the English language. In anticipation of a proliferation of modern
technological concepts or products, Indonesians feel that there is an urgent need to borrow words
that cannot be found in their native language. As a result of this "lexical gap", they fuse and even
code switch English words with Indonesian so that it may sound typically Indlish.

Second, Indonesian people may mix English words in their language if they feel that the
existing terms in their own language are either inadequate or incapable of distinguishing things
or concepts represented by the terms. That is to say that the meaning of English words is so
distinctive that it is difficult to find the precise equivalent in their native language. Thus, the
words mutasi, reformasi, organisasi, komisi, asosiasi, etc. are just simply adopted by adjusting
their phonology and mixed into Bahasa Indonesia due to the subtle and distinctive meanings
these words possess.

Third, the use of English words by presenters, commentators, and journalists are motivated
by the nature of their work which requires the immediate understanding and response from their
interlocutors. Consequently, since English words are far more efficient than their Indonesian
equivalent, their use is badly needed. Or, as linguist Uriel Weinreich once put it, the presence of
loanwords in any borrowing language can be accounted for by the fact that using ready-made
designations is more economical than describing things afresh. Another reason encouraging
Indonesian society to adopt English is concerned with "euphemistic" purposes.

Thus, there is a tendency among Indonesians to substitute existing Bahasa Indonesia words
with English since the latter have more refined connotations than the former. Accordingly, many
adopted English words such as asisten (assistant), komisi (commission), and "ex-" as in ex-
presiden (ex-president) are frequently employed instead of the respective Indonesian words
pembantu, upah, and bekas president, which are considered coarse in the community.
Finally, due to its receptivity toward foreign languages, the English words can be easily mixed or transformed into a Bahasa Indonesia affixation. For instance, the following Indlish utterances can often be heard: *Mentransfer dana* (to transfer fund), *dimodifikasi* (being modified), *diasosiasikan dengan* (being associated with), and many others.

Apart from linguistic factors, sociolinguistic aspects also play significant role in encouraging Indonesians to produce Indlish in their utterances. The belief that English is a prestigious and internationally recognized language cannot be separated from the social values of the language community concerned. Therefore, if the Indonesians have a positive attitude toward English words, they are more likely either to borrow or code switch them into their language in order to display their social status.

It is also interesting to note that sometimes both language borrowing and code switching are expressed together, as shown in the following statement: *Terjadinya keributan dewasa ini mengindikasikan lemahnya law enforcement* ("the riots that happened recently indicate poor law enforcement").

The above points demonstrate that the attitudes of speakers of a given language community influence the extent to which language mixture occurs. This is indeed in line with the word-coming policy that stipulates that "in case there is no appropriate terms for the borrowed words in Bahasa Indonesia or its language family, the terms can be taken from a foreign language”.

Cultural contact may also – to a large extent – have an impact on language mixture or even language change. This cultural influence may accordingly trigger language borrowing from one country to another. Usually, a less developed country would borrow extensively from a more dominant or advanced country, as Indonesian borrows from English and the Dutch. With regard to this cultural penetration, it is amazing to note that a relatively advanced country such as Japan has also imported a tremendous number of English loanwords in the domains mentioned above. In fact, Japanese people admit that the lexical limitation in certain domains motivates them to adopt words from English. The words computer and television, for instance, have been adopted in the Japanese words *konpyuta* and *terebi*, respectively.

Both linguistic and sociolinguistic factors discussed above provide a clear justification that the term Indlish and also Japlish, if they are truly understood as language borrowing, and thus
language mixture, should be regarded as an inevitable language phenomenon. Loyalty to the mother tongue per se is just insufficient, or extremely speaking, impossible. The extent to which one language is favored or preferred will depend very much on the community's attitude or perception of the language used. In other words, the creative use of a language is not the sole prerogative of the language specialists or central authority. The fact that the National Center for Language Development (Pusat Pembinaan Bahasa) fails in its mission to promote the use of the national language among the Indonesian people supports the above statement.

Collectivism and Individualism

The next role of English culture is the collectivism and individualism characteristics. Individualism means emphasis on the individual person. Western culture's embrace of individualism stems from its embrace of reason because, as we shall see, the individual – and only the individual – has the ability to reason.

One of the examples that we often see in our daily lives of individualism characteristics is when we are in our workplace. Viewed as a whole, businesses are collective enterprises, meaning that a number of individuals make up the company and must work together to meet the company's goals. However, each worker is by himself an independent entity, so all companies must address the idea of individualism in the workplace in order to remain efficient and competitive.

In a business that wants to promote individualism, managers allow employees to look after their own work to a high degree. They also give workers freedom to explore new ways of completing basic procedures or projects. Unless a worker presents a threat or otherwise is not performing up to the company's standards, she enjoys a high privacy level. Everyone gets a chance to voice individual opinions, and management does not necessarily discourage open debate. Management also responds to requests for personal time.

One benefit to promoting individualism in the workplace is that employees have a high level of personal responsibility -- that is, workers cannot freeloade on each other, assuming that others will pick up the slack. Individualism also creates some degree of healthy competition, as each employee can demonstrate his own talents and skills clearly and subsequently rise in the ranks as appropriate. As part of this competition, workers may exhibit great amounts of
innovation and creativity as they strive to shine. Workers also may find unique solutions to conflicts that arise. Although individualism can promote innovation, it can hinder cooperation. In the long run, this sometimes means productivity suffers and conflicts increase. Lack of productivity can decrease overall revenue, and conflicts may cost money to resolve. Individualism also can create a tense work environment if people are too rigid in their ideals.

Bibliography