

THE SUPERIOR LANGUAGE: THE OBSTACLE OF PROGRESS

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Introduction

Everyday we see people argue about which language is superior. Some people say French for its elegance and historical significance. Some people argue it's Mandarin for its global influence. Nevertheless one fact stays consistent: "It is all argued in English". There's no denying that English is a powerful language. It connects people across the world, opens up access to education, business, media, and opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach. In Indonesia too, English plays a big role in education, careers, and even daily life. It's no longer just a subject, it is a lifestyle. However beyond its ubiquitousness, something much deeper and alarming is happening and it is not talked about enough and if left unaddressed, will hinder progress as a society. More than ever, Indonesians are learning English. This is absolutely a healthy sign of progress as stated in SDG 4: Good quality education. Nevertheless at the same time Indonesians are beginning to view English not just as a language, however as a status symbol, and if left unaddressed, that false sense of worth is expected to bring its own consequences. This essay will explore the impact of English's global dominance, how it's often misunderstood in Indonesia, and why that obsession can create more harm than good.

Body Paragraph 1

English is undeniably useful and dominant on a global scale. Spoken by around 1.5 billion people worldwide, English is the most widely spoken language today. It's the fastest-spreading language in human history, with one in four people able to speak or understand it. In the academic field, nearly all research papers are published in English. In fact, 95% of 925,000 reviewed papers in a study were in English, half of them by non-native speakers. In the employment sector, companies like Rakuten in Japan use English as their corporate language to stay globally competitive. All this shows that English can be a powerful tool — a bridge, not a barrier. So yes, learning English is clearly important. However that's just the starting point, not the end goal.

Body Paragraph 2

The problem begins when English stops being a tool and starts becoming an obsession.

In Indonesia, it's becoming common to treat English like a shiny accessory. We see it in how people force accents, rehearse Instagram captions, or show-off their vocabulary. But these performative actions miss the point. Instead of focusing on communication, people worry about sounding "intelligent" or "aesthetic." This attitude creates a mental load, especially among students. Instead of English freeing them, it cages them in a trap of false conventionality, not because they don't understand, it is because they're afraid of sounding wrong. Around the world, non-native English speakers report feeling excluded or judged just because they don't speak "perfectly".

When English becomes a performance, many are left feeling like they don't belong on stage.

Body Paragraph 3

This obsession with perfection leads to exclusion and missed potential.

The tendency of aspiring the more conventional sounding English itself is already slowing down progress because of the over-emphasis on certain dialects. However there is an indirect consequence that also needs to be addressed. Because of the standards set by mainstream media users, it indirectly creates a stigmatization towards less conventional sounding English. For instance someone who might want to voice their concern might not do so because they feel their concerns aren't as valid because of the dialect difference.

Conclusion

English is important, there is no arguing that. Nevertheless, how we as a society perceive the English language is as important as how much we need to learn it. When we overemphasize accents and try to sound conventional, not only are we actively distracting ourselves from progress we are also indirectly suppressing those who might want to speak but refrain from doing so because of the unnecessary standards that have been set. The truth is, our greatest leaders did not have the most perfect accent and grammar nor did they worry about it. However what they did have is the sheer will and intent to do something worthwhile and that's how a leader should be. Around the world representatives do not have to sound a certain way or be someone else, because the truth is: It's not about how something is said, it is what is said. The gap between learning and leading is as thin as air, but one simple misdirection can backtrack us a long way. *Doctrina lux mentis*: "Learning is the light of mind". To learn is to understand and to lead is not to impersonate and be one's true self. Just like the theme of this competition, life is a journey from learning to leading, and so let English be your guide.