



English Shaming on TikTok: A Window into English Language Ideologies in Indonesia

Nakita Febiola Vesya¹, Mohammad Umar Muslim²

^{1,2}Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia

Corresponding E-Mail: nakita.febiola@ui.ac.id

Received: 2025-05-01 Accepted: 2025-10-31

DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v13i2.5010

Abstract

In Indonesia, positive opinions of English are frequently linked with instances of mockery aimed at those thought to have poor English skill. This practice is known as English shaming and has gained importance in the modern era of social media. This study aims to identify English language ideologies in Indonesia through the lens of online English shaming. Using a qualitative research approach based on virtual ethnography, this study draws on the theoretical frameworks of language ideology. Analysis of 621 comments on TikTok is carried out using a three-stage inductive coding process drawn from the Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology. The findings suggest that there are four key English language ideologies in Indonesia: 1) non-standard English is unacceptable; 2) English is an index of educational level; 3) non-standard English is acceptable, and 4) non-standard use of English in international forum is national disgrace. These findings highlight the dominant role of "Standard English" as a social marker in Indonesia, the harmful effects of online English shaming on individuals and national identity, and the need for embracing linguistic diversity. The study also demonstrates the potential for resistance against dominant ideologies and the importance of fostering inclusive language policies, as well as respectful online discourse.

Keywords: *English language ideologies, Indonesia, language shaming, TikTok*

Introduction

Language ideologies, the unspoken beliefs about language's role and nature within a community (Rumsey, 1990, p. 346), bridging linguistic practices and social context (Gal, 1998). Yet, their inherent diversity fuel implicit tensions (Woolard, 2020). These tensions stem from linking language judgments to speaker identity and social standing. In the context of ethnically and linguistically diverse Indonesia, English continues to permeate various spheres of Indonesian life (Zein, 2020, p. 46). Its increasing presence in online spaces raises questions about its influence. While the internet empowers individuals (Rismaya et al., 2022), it also amplifies harmful

voices like "English shaming". This phenomenon is particularly rampant on social media platforms, such as TikTok.

TikTok's anonymity and open dialogue fuel online criticism. Faceless interactions amplify negativity and instant judgments (Irawati et al., 2023; Ott, 2017), transforming perceived language imperfections into fodder for mockery and critique. This digital shaming not only reflects existing language ideologies, but actively shapes them (Nguyen, 2019; Piller, 2017a, 2017b). It becomes a powerful lens for examining standard language ideologies (SLI) in contemporary Indonesia.

Digital shaming towards perceived non-standard varieties of English in Indonesia is particularly evident in the case of Javanese-accented English. Despite being grammatically correct, it is often ostracized due to its pronunciation differences from Westernized norms (Dewi & Kariko, 2017; Wardani & Suwartono, 2019). Javanese-learners face challenges with specific consonant & vowel sounds, alongside negative stereotypes fueled by the tendency to "correct" their accents (Dewi & Kariko, 2017; Fauziah, 2017). This prejudice highlights the dominance of Standard Language Ideology (SLI), which values "correctness," uniformity, and authority (Heuman, 2022; Milroy, 2001, 2007). Deviations from the standard can result to criticism, discrimination, and shame (Garrett, 2010, p. 7; Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 67; Vogl, 2012), leading to linguistics anxiety and discomfort (Amadi, 2022; Milroy, 2001; Piller, 2017a; Zhang & Hu, 2008).

Social media has amplified this shaming trend. Research on online criticism of accented English highlights a persistent tendency to question nonstandard varieties despite widespread adoption of English as a global language (Kytölä, 2012; Sharma, 2014). This reflects the enduring influence of SLI & echoes the "tradition of complaining" about deviations from perceived language norms (Milroy, James; Milroy, 2012, p. 31; Schaffer, 2010).

Existing study of English language ideologies in Indonesia has traditionally taken root in educational settings and family dynamics. For example, Harsanti & Manara (2021) shed light on native speakerism ideology among English teachers in school, while Lumbanbatu et al. (2023) explore parental ideology of English as an asset for their children's future. However, the ever-expanding landscape of social media platforms presents a largely uncharted territory for English ideology research. A recent study by Kaldina & Darmawan (2023) on YouTube comments shows that native-speakerism ideology is still rampant within the Indonesia's English language learners and speakers, and they urge further studies to explore online language ideology in Indonesia.

This study aims to fill that gap by examining how Indonesians engage with and perceive English in the dynamic of online discourse on the relatively young platform of TikTok. With 106,5 million users in Indonesia as of October 2023 (Statista, 2023), TikTok captures the evolving nature of language attitudes in response to online interactions and shifting societal norms. Through an analysis of English shaming on TikTok, particularly targeting Javanese-accented English, we

can gain deeper insights into the intricate relationship between language ideologies and online shaming practices.

Specifically, this study focuses on comments on TikTok videos featuring a recent English speech delivered by Indonesia's current president, Mr. Joko Widodo. His speeches, which have been widely criticized in both mass and social media for their thick Javanese accented English (Usman, 2014), provide a suitable lens to examine the phenomenon of English shaming. This study focuses on answering the following research question: What are the specific language ideologies fueling English shaming of Javanese-accented English on TikTok in Indonesia, and how do these ideologies reflect and reshape attitudes towards language variation in contemporary Indonesia? The aim of this study is to identify the content and nature of English shaming comments directed towards Javanese-accented speech on TikTok and investigate the specific language ideologies they reflect and contribute to within Indonesian online spaces. Understanding these specific English language ideologies surrounding Javanese-accented English on TikTok will contribute to a broader understanding of multilingualism in the Indonesian digital landscape.

Method

This study employs a virtual ethnography approach (Hine, 2000), as it allows for the unobtrusive observation of naturally occurring linguistic behavior on social media. Virtual ethnography, as described by Cavanagh (1999), is a modern adaptation of traditional ethnographic methods. It employs various qualitative techniques, including observation, to understand how individuals create meaning within online spaces. The analysis often draws heavily on the principles of conversational analysis. This approach is particularly well-suited to examining language ideologies as they are expressed through spontaneous interaction. Virtual ethnography offers various ways to engage with the studied online sites.

This includes general browsing, focused observation on a specific site, and "lurking", in which the researcher observed user interactions without actively engaging (Kelly-Holmes, 2015). In this study, the researcher acts as a "lurker" to gather and store the data. Data comprised comments on TikTok videos featuring President Joko Widodo speaking English, selected using the keyword search "*Jokowi pidato Singapura*" ("Jokowi Singapore speech"). Focusing on videos featuring President Joko Widodo's recent speech in Ecosperity Week 2023 Singapore offers a timely and high-profile case study to investigate how Javanese-accented English is perceived and evaluated in Indonesia's online sphere.

To maintain a naturalistic view of potential user experience, the study analyzed the first five videos that surfaced using TikTok's default 'Top' results tab at the time of the search. No additional filters or sorting categories were employed, maintaining the organic nature of search outcomes most users would encounter, yielding a diverse set of videos with varying views and comment counts. While default settings minimize bias, it's important to acknowledge that even default search settings are influenced by TikTok's algorithm.

From 2.457 collected comments from five videos, only 621 comments directly evaluating President Widodo's English were selected for analysis, excluding those focused on speech content, unrelated topics, or indecipherable ones. The number of likes for each comment are also recorded and used as simple indicators of potential agreement, not as an absolute endorsement. This study's dataset encompasses both written comments, their replies, and their respective likes; representing the potential viewpoints of 2.157 users and adding weight to the findings, despite being a smaller sample compared to Indonesia's overall TikTok users. Microsoft Excel facilitated data compilation and organization, and usernames are omitted for privacy.

This study acknowledges that focusing on this specific context introduces limitations regarding broader language ideology representation. However, it allows for an in-depth analysis of discourse surrounding a prominent, real-world example. While the findings may not be directly generalizable to all contexts, they provide valuable insights into language ideologies on TikTok, informing future studies across multiple platforms. The analysis aimed for data saturation to ensure the 621 comments provided sufficient data for identifying recurring themes.

To answer the research question, this study employed a constructivist grounded theory approach (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014) for analysis. Analysis involved a three-stage inductive coding process: initial stage, focused coding stage, and theoretical coding stage. In brief, this three-stages inductive coding method focuses on the patterns within the comments to identify and describe specific English language ideologies surrounding non-standard English in Indonesia, as evidenced by online shaming on TikTok towards Javanese-accented English.

Results

Analysis of 621 comments on President Joko Widodo's English speech video on TikTok reveals four recurrent English language ideologies surrounding non-standard English in Indonesia. However, 5 comments manifest two ideologies, which adds up the comments to 626. The limited amount of data available prevents generalizations, but the comments analyzed offer a valuable insight of these ideologies and their complex interplay with online shaming. To investigate deeper, the table below presents a quantitative summary of the four dominant English language ideologies identified through a three-phase coding process. The ideologies in the table are presented in the order of frequency.

Table 1. The Occurrences of Each Recurrent Ideological Themes

No	Language Ideologies	Comments	Likes	Total
1	Non-standard English is unacceptable	375	998	1373
2	English is an index of educational level	131	259	390
3	Non-standard English is acceptable	67	199	266
4	Non-standard English in international forum is a disgrace	53	75	128
Total		626	1531	2157

The most prevalent English language ideology in Indonesia, as suggested by the data, is 'Non-standard English is unacceptable.' These ideologies reflect complex attitudes towards language variation, education, and national identity within Indonesia's online landscape. The following section will be discussing the four ideologies manifested in the comments starting with the most dominant ideology.

Discussion

Non-standard use of English is unacceptable

The most prominent ideology, "Non-standard English is unacceptable" garnered significant support within the comments. This reflects a strong adherence to Standard English as the sole benchmark for linguistic competence. Deviations from this perceived norm, particularly pronounced Javanese accents like President Joko Widodo's in the analyzed video comments, trigger criticism and mockery within the analyzed video comments. This ideology manifests in various forms, ranging from blunt evaluations as seen in (1) and seemingly innocent questions like (2).

(1) *Hancur banget*

Really awful

(2) *Ngomong apa dek*

What are you talking about, kiddo

Comment (1) shows the commentator's harsh judgement of President Joko Widodo's English, reflecting the dominance of Standard Language Ideologies (SLI) in the online discourse. The way he pronounced some words, like the [v] sound in investment as [f], is perceived by the commenters as 'horrible English'. By using the verb *hancur* (destroyed) and the adverbial *banget* (really) to emphasize the evaluation, the commenter expressed their dislike of President Joko Widodo's Javanese-accented English speech. The word *hancur* is particularly striking. Its hyperbolic nature implies not just a dislike of the accent but a perception that it fundamentally undermines the 'correctness' of the entire speech. Furthermore, the lack of nuance in the comment suggests a possible belief that only one form of 'acceptable' English exists, mirroring the legacy of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) with its focus on diminishing variation.

Comment (1) reveals what they perceive as conventional norms of language use, i.e. language ideology (Rumsey, 1990). While the comment on (2) seem like genuine confusion, closer inspection reveals a hidden layer of disrespect. Using informal terms like *dek* (kiddo) to address the President suggests an attempt to belittle his authority and stature. This goes beyond language critique; it's a veiled form of shaming aimed at undermining the President's position. This highlights the complex nature of online discourse, where seemingly innocent language choices can mask veiled attacks.

Beyond direct criticism, humor can also be a tool for shaming. Derision and mockery directed at speakers using non-standard English highlight the potential for shaming to inflict emotional harm and create feelings of linguistic insecurity. These

reactions, both verbal and non-verbal, aimed to ridicule President Joko Widodo's English without explicit critique, subtly turning humor into a tool for shaming. Many comments mocked President Joko Widodo's English pronunciation through laughter, evident in words like *ngakak* (informal laughter) and *hhha* (onomatopoeia for laughter), as seen in (3) and (4). In these comments, laughter and emojis are used to ridicule President Widodo's pronunciation, turning humor into a subtle weapon of attack. However, the researcher also acknowledges potential alternative interpretations (e.g., genuine laughter without malicious intent, laughing emoji) for some comments.

(3) hhha 😂😂😂

(4) 😂😂😂😂 *ngakak*

To further understand the usage of humor present in this ideology, specific contexts come into play. Instead of direct criticism or just pure laughter accompanied with emojis, some comments like (5) and (6) humorously mock President Joko Widodo's English by imitating his pronunciation. This reveals a regional dimension to language scrutiny.

(5) *Plis inpes in Mai kantri...*

Please invest in my country

(6) *nonitumori* 🤔🤔

no need to worry 🤔🤔

Comments like (5) and (6) weaponize humor for shaming purposes. This seemingly playful jab mirrors Nguyen's (2019) findings on English shaming in Vietnam, highlighting a cross-cultural trend of using humor to mask prejudice. By exaggerating Javanese-accented pronunciation and intentionally misspelling words, the commenters expose a belief that "correct" English is inherently tied to specific accents and orthography. They engage in a form of linguistic policing, using President Widodo's speech as a target to reinforce SLI while undermining his authority with mockery disguised as amusement.

Scrutiny towards Javanese-accented English reveals the pervasive issue of accent shaming, where comments mock the individual's English pronunciation and subtly demean their accent and delivery. The tendency to ridicule non-standard accents reflects a broader societal trend within Indonesia, where English proficiency is associated with social status. Consequently, non-standard accents are often seen as indicators of lower social standing.

As Zentz (2017) observed, even the incorporation of English into speech has become a tool and symbol of social standing or aspiration within Indonesia. Its association also extends beyond formal contexts, where English appears in product labeling, popular culture, and even within the Indonesian language itself through loanwords (Zentz, 2012). This reflects the prestige associated with English and its symbolic connection to education, wealth, and even aspirations for social advancement.

This perception is not unique to Indonesia. For instance, in Japan, English is closely associated with modernity and internationalization (Kallen & Dhonnacha, 2010). Even in nations like India, where English has evolved with unique characteristics, it remains intertwined with regional identity and social standing (Dhongde, 2002). The Indonesian case, as seen in the comments directed at President Joko Widodo's Javanese-accented English, highlights this complex interplay between education systems, language policy, and societal expectations.

The ease of access to English through technology also highlights the complex role of globalization in shaping perceptions of English, particularly as social media use can influence attitudes towards both standardized and non-standard varieties. The dominance of American and British accents in movies, music, and international business further reinforces the belief that these are the most 'prestigious' ways of speaking English. This dominance extends into the digital world as well. Increasing access to technology and social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok exposes Indonesian, especially the young generation, to diverse varieties of English from around the world on daily basis (Hamied, 2012). While this exposure offers a broader perspective on English, it can still inadvertently reinforce the idealization of certain 'standard' forms, particularly those dominant in American and British media (Dewi & Kariko, 2017; Latifa, 2020).

Fueled by globalization, English proficiency is seen as a key to upward mobility in Indonesia's market-driven economy. This has led to a situation where job seekers must demonstrate proficiency through English language tests like the TOEFL or TOEIC for prestigious employment (Zein, 2019). This creates a situation where English fluency, particularly in 'standard' varieties or the perceived 'correct' form, becomes a marker of educational attainment and potential socioeconomic success.

Despite the practical motivations driving English acquisition, research indicates that the ideology of native-speakerism remains deeply ingrained within Indonesian society. Kaldina & Darmawan (2023) reveal how comments on platforms like YouTube perpetuate the belief that native-speaker accents and models of English are inherently superior. This aligns with findings from studies in Turkey (Karakaş, 2019) and Malaysia (Kaur, 2014), where native-speaker accents are often favored and perceived as 'standard' compared to non-native varieties, even among English teachers in training.

This dominant ideology has broader implications. Javanese speakers, like many non-native speakers worldwide, face additional challenges due to the inherent differences between their native language and English phonemes. Lestari (2017) highlights how specific English phonemes clash with Javanese pronunciation, creating hurdles for effective communication. Another study (Istiqomah, 2016) also shows the difficulties of mastering a new language while carrying the imprint of their mother tongue. This reflects the need for English language teaching to acknowledge and embrace accent diversity, then move away from rigidly perspective approaches. By challenging the misconceptions

surrounding non-native accents and promoting acceptance of linguistic diversity, we can create a more supportive environment for all English learners, regardless of their background or accent.

English is an index of educational level

Comments mocking President Joko Widodo's Javanese-accented English expose the deeply held belief that English fluency directly equates to educational attainment. This misconception is rooted in a complex interplay of historical factors, language policy, and the commodification of English within Indonesian society. This ideology manifests in comments like (7) and (8) below.

(7) *ngomong apa sih kok begituh bnget bahasa inggris nya. kata nya kuliah* 🤔🤔

what are you talking about why is your english like that. you said you went to university 🤔🤔

(8) *bahasa inggris anak tk*

English (the level) of a kindergartener

Comment (7) mocks at President Joko Widodo's English skills and his Javanese accent, expressing disbelief that such ability belong to a university graduate. Comment (8) goes further, comparing President Joko Widodo's English skills to that of a kindergarten-aged child, which is around 4-6 years old. The comments reveal an underlying assumption: English proficiency goes beyond mere linguistic competence to become a marker of intellectual achievement in Indonesian society. Consequently, it fuels pressure to conform to a narrow "standard" English, often associated with Western accents, with deviations perceived as indicators of lower educational attainment.

This pressure to conform to a narrow "standard" English in Indonesia is not unique. Globally, similar ideologies exist where English proficiency is often (and inaccurately) seen as a proxy for intelligence or social status (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). This perception has deep roots in colonialism; for instance, in Malaysia, English remains embedded in the education system as a legacy of British rule, shaping the identities of those who pass through it (Wong et al., 2012).

President Joko Widodo's English pronunciation, deemed non-standard, clashed with the expectations shaped by years of English education in Indonesia. This emphasis on English has its roots in Indonesia's postcolonial era. Historically, English only played a minor role in Indonesia's education system during Dutch and Japanese colonization (Lauder, 2020; Nababan, 1991). It wasn't until the 1950s that English was included in the national curriculum (Zentz, 2012). English then gained prominence during the New Order era (1967-1998) as a compulsory secondary school subject through Presidential Regulation No.28/1990, becoming associated with global opportunities and a symbol of national progress (Zein et al., 2020). Later, English became the second language for Indonesian speakers, and the third language for people who are speakers of local languages and Indonesian.

The relatively recent introduction of English into formal Indonesian education has created a powerful association between fluency in the language and access to educational opportunities. This perception is further reinforced by language policy. Undang-Undang 24/2009 outlines a hierarchy where local languages are to be “loved,” Indonesian is to be “used”, and foreign languages, with an emphasis on English, are to be “studied.” (Lauder, 2020; Zentz, 2014). This policy shapes the context in which adolescents negotiate their linguistic identities. Furthermore, learning materials often portray English as the language of global success, influencing learners' positioning and potentially fueling aspirations they may struggle to achieve (Rostandi & Rohandy, 2024).

As a result of this emphasis on English, a misconception of a single “standard” English often prevails. In Indonesia, most exposure to English occurs in formal classrooms with textbooks that use standardized language in written form and interactions with peers learning the language (Doró, 2007). Many Indonesian EFL teachers still prioritize American and British accents, to the point of correcting students who speak with regional accents like Javanese (Dewi & Kariko, 2017). The inherent linguistic differences between Javanese and English accents present an additional hurdle for learners. Adding to this complexity is the variation within Javanese dialects, each with its own distinct accents. Furthermore, accent difference issue can discourage learners, creating feelings of insecurity about their pronunciation and a fear of being mocked for “non-standard” pronunciation (Laroy, 1995). Despite research showing that native-like accents are not essential for clear communication (Laroy, 1995), the pressure for conformity within the “English is an index of education” ideology persists.

The challenge of attaining a ‘standard’ accent is intensified within Indonesian English classrooms. Traditional, grammar-focused methods often lack exposure to diverse English varieties, fostering intolerance towards accents like President Joko Widodo's. While social media can broaden exposure, it simultaneously reinforces the dominance of American/British accents, solidifying idealized “standards”. This emphasis on a narrow ‘standard’ is further perpetuated by institutional forces. Indonesia's latest curriculum, the Merdeka Curriculum targets a CEFER B1 (intermediate) level of proficiency despite recent inclusion of English as an elective in elementary schools (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). Moreover, the persistence of English proficiency tests like the TOEFL (with minimum score requirements often around 450) for university graduates entering the job market further strengthens the equation of English fluency with educational success (Rido, 2020; Zein, 2020).

The government also plays a role in regulating access to English education, shaping it into a valuable commodity linked to educational success and potential social mobility (Zentz, 2017). This regulation, however, contributes to inequity. Private institutions offer greater exposure to 'standard' varieties (Zentz, 2012), creating a hierarchy where English proficiency becomes linked to status and perceived future opportunities. This fuels a belief that English proficiency is a

prerequisite for success. This commodification and societal pressure lead to intolerant attitudes towards those who lack access to such privileged instruction. To add more, the emphasis on a specific standard of English contributes to intolerance towards regional accents. Given this context, it is unsurprising that President Joko Widodo's accent sparked comparisons to schoolchildren and doubts about his education.

The shaming directed at President Widodo's Javanese-accented English highlights the societal pressure to conform to this "standard" English. This pressure reveals a deep contradiction within Indonesia: an insistence on English proficiency for all, despite the starkly varying access to quality English education. While English is part of formal education starting from the secondary school now (Kemendikbudristek, 2023), English instruction and extracurricular opportunities remain unequal. Many students seek supplemental English education outside of school, but not everyone has the financial or time resources to do so (Lamb & Coleman, 2008; Sugiharto, 2014). This creates a situation where English proficiency becomes unfairly linked to educational attainment without considering individuals' circumstances.

Non-standard English is acceptable

While a dominant preference for "standard" English is evident in the comments, a substantial number promote a counter-ideology of tolerance and acceptance towards non-standard English. This dissenting voice challenges the rigid adherence in a narrow 'Standard English'. They advocate for inclusivity and acceptance of diverse linguistic forms.

Instead of focusing on flawless pronunciation, comments like (9) prioritize understanding the meaning of the message over accent. Similarly, comment (10) and (12) promoted confidence in Indonesian accents, urging against imitating "westerners." They suggested embracing unique linguistic identity and referencing India's English fluency as an example. Comment (13) implicitly stated that mastery over British accent is not mandatory as other countries embraced their own accent just fine. This resistance aligns with Heuman's (2022) observation that dominant ideologies can be downplayed through process like trivialization, highlighting the dynamic nature of language beliefs. It is within such resistance that alternative perspectives gain ground.

(9) emang knp b.inggrisnya kan emang logatnya mendok..yg pnting mkna nya dapet
so what if his english is heavily accented..what matters most is the (obtained) meaning

(10) berbahasa Inggris gak perlu sampe aksennya niru org barat, kita hrs bangga aksen Inggris kita sekaligus menambah pede utk ngomong. contoh india jg gt

we don't have to mimic the accent of westerners; we must be proud of our english accent as well as increasing (our) confidence to speak (english). India as example also does that

(11) Alhamdulillah udah mendingan ya bahasa inggris nya
Alhamdulillah his english is getting better

- (12) Yang bener gitu bro ga ngilangin identitas, jadi orang pada tau kalo kita orang indo
That (accent) is (the) right form bro it doesn't erase (our) identity, so everyone knows we are Indonesian
- (13) itu kan bs inggris, emg wajib bs aksen inggris? bahkan org russia, jerman, japan aja byk yg ngomong inggris pake logat mereka
he can speak English, is speaking in British accent mandatory? Even the Russian, German, Japanese, (they) speak English with their own accent

This spirit of acceptance extends even to those actively working to improve their English. Acknowledging progress and offering encouragement isn't absent even among dissenting voices. Comment (11) illustrates this point, praising President Joko Widodo's efforts to improve his English. It demonstrates that even within counter-narratives, appreciation and support can coexist with critical perspectives. This acceptance could reflect a rising sense of national pride, where Indonesians embrace a uniquely Indonesian English while still valuing international communication skills.

The acceptance of non-standard English accents is a phenomenon evident beyond Indonesia. A study by Kaur (2014) on Malaysian English teacher trainees revealed positive attitudes towards non-native speaker (NNS) accents. Some respondents emphasized that intelligibility was the most crucial aspect of an accent, expressing preference for certain NNS accents over native-speaker ones. Others viewed their accent as a part of their identity, asserting that there was no need to conform to native-speaker norms. This perspective resonates with comments like (10), which celebrates linguistic identity and resists the pressure to "mimic westerners". Such comments illustrate a sense of agency and pride in linguistic variation.

The comments advocating for acceptance of diverse Englishes are in line with the growing relevance of the English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) perspective within Indonesia. Zein (2020) advocates the adoption of this perspective to better suit Indonesian context. ELF recognizes that English is primarily used for communication among non-native speakers globally. This perspective challenges the notion that "native speaker" English should be the goal and instead prioritizes effective communication across diverse cultures. As Zein (2020) highlight, Indonesia's evolving sociolinguistic landscape, particularly its role within the ASEAN community, underscores the importance of ELF. As Indonesians increasingly interact with other non-native English speakers throughout Southeast Asia, the focus shifts away from native-like pronunciation and towards mutual intelligibility (Hamied, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2012).

The importance of comprehensibility is further supported by Ortu's (2021) study investigating European (Italian) perceptions of East and Southeast Asian English varieties. The findings indicate that listeners favored the most comprehensible accent, regardless of their personal feelings towards any specific accent variety. This highlights that effective communication can sometimes

outweigh a focus on native-like pronunciation, a perspective echoed by some of the TikTok commenters, like comment (9).

The emphasis on cross-cultural communication challenges the dominance of native-speaker models. Furthermore, the ELF perspective supports Indonesian character-building initiatives (Kirkpatrick, 2010, 2011). Instead of adhering to the cultural contexts of British or American English, ELF allows for localized use of English that aligns with Indonesian social, religious, and cultural values. Moreover, the ELF perspective uniquely accommodates the linguistic diversity of Indonesia. It allows for innovation where English interacts with local languages and cultures, reflecting the complex negotiation between Standard Indonesian, indigenous languages, and English's global role (Zein, 2019).

This approach supports both the preservation of linguistic heritage and the practical benefits of English proficiency (Zein, 2020). Research underscores this positive view of NNS norms, particularly in relation to identity. Studies in China (Wang, 2013) and across various contexts (Kang, 2015) reveal that while NS norms remain influential, speakers recognize the value of ELF or English as an International Language (EIL). They appreciate its role in effective communication and expressing cultural identity. This emphasis on identity reflects the resistant positioning seen in many Indonesian comments toward President Joko Widodo's English speech, challenging the idealized 'standard' and embracing a unique Indonesian English.

Overall, the comments on this section reflect what Rostandi & Rohandy (2024) named as 'resistant positioning', where Indonesian adolescent speakers assert their distinct linguistic identity amidst pressures to adopt a standardized English. This counter-ideology also recognizes the potential for 'hybrid positioning' (Rostandi & Rohandy, 2024), where Indonesian English speakers embrace both their cultural heritage and a desire for proficiency within a globalized world. Comments on this section demonstrate that Indonesian TikTok user sees English as an important vehicle for global competitiveness and social recognition but allow a *medhok* Javanese accent as it showcases the Indonesian identity.

The analysis of this counter-perspective reveals a fascinating interplay of ideologies within the Indonesian TikTok comments. While a tendency towards strict adherence to an idealized "standard" English remains evident, a powerful counter-narrative emerges, embracing non-standard accents and emphasizing identity and effective communication. This mirrors the global rise of ELF perspectives. The findings suggest that Indonesia's evolving linguistic landscape may lead to greater acceptance of diverse Englishes, potentially influencing educational approaches and social dynamics. It shows that criticism can be met with resistance, pride, and even encouragement, challenging the dominant narrative of English shaming. This reminds us that language is a diverse landscape, where different voices and values intersect.

Non-standard use of English in an international forum is a national disgrace

The final ideology, "Non-standard use of English in international forum is national disgrace" indicates a potential link between language and national pride. Comments like (14) and (15) echoed a collective sense of shame, implying that President Joko Widodo's Javanese-accented English tarnished Indonesia's image on the international stage. Such sentiments might stem from feelings of linguistic insecurity within a global context where English fluency is perceived as a marker of sophistication and success.

(14) *bikin malu presiden 1 ini*

this one president makes me embarrassed

(15) *dia yg pidato gua yg malu 🤔*

he's the one speaking but I'm the one who's embarrassed 🤔

This concern for national image stems from the concept of "face", where an individual's reputation reflects on their community (Haugh & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2009). For many Indonesians, English proficiency has become a key marker of sophistication and success. As (Zentz, 2012) observes, the increasing presence of English within Indonesian society, from product labels to public discourse, means that "...speaking English in public is often a semiotic display indexing everything it 'hitchhikes' along with" (p.13). This includes wealth, education, and aspiration. Therefore, the President's thick Javanese accent during an international speech became a cause for collective loss of face and shame, as his English was perceived to reflect poorly on the nation's standing. This echoes Ammon's (2006) view of language choice and national pride, where fluency becomes a marker of national standing.

However, within Indonesia, there's a fundamental tension: English is seen as key for representing the nation globally, yet the insistence on a 'standard' form can also be perceived as a threat to Indonesian identity. Therefore, the very act of representing Indonesia through English becomes a potential source of shame, as President Widodo's experience reveals.

This ideology sheds light on how language can transcend simple evaluation, becoming a battleground for national identity and pride. While some comments reflect a desire to project an image of sophistication with 'standard' English, President Joko Widodo's choice to retain his Javanese accent might signal his preference for authenticity. Regardless of intent, his English becomes a source of shame some, reflecting a complex interplay between language, identity, and the global stage. Comments like (16) and (17) reflect the pressure on public figures to conform to idealized linguistic standards.

(16) *jokowi presiden jdi harus mempunyai keahlian dan basic berbahasa inggris yg baik agar lebih di pahami, krna bhsa inggris bhsa dunia*

Jokowi as a president should have a good basic English skill to be understood, because English is the language of the world

- (17) y ga bisa gitu bro ,dia pidato ke luar negri tuh bukan ke emak2 kampung, apay g di sampaikan mencerminkan bangsa Indonesia bro
yeah it cannot be like that bro, he's delivering a speech overseas not to the village mothers, what he says mirror Indonesia as a nation bro

Commenter on (16) specifically demands 'good basic English skill' for global understanding. This mirrors a belief that perfect English is a non-negotiable requirement for a head of state, especially on the global stage. Others, like in (17) consider a president's English a reflection of the whole country on the global stage. President Joko Widodo's perceived shortcomings, which is his Javanese-accented English, then become a source of national embarrassment, tarnishing both his and Indonesia's image. Both comments exemplify the pressure on public figures to conform to idealized linguistic standards. Furthermore, Indonesia's position within a broader global context adds another layer to this issue. As (Duchêne, 2008) observes, English is a dominant working language within international organizations, including influential regional bodies like ASEAN and SEAMEO. This global shift towards English intensifies the pressure felt by Indonesians, particularly public figures like President Widodo, to achieve a high level of proficiency.

This expectation stems from the deeply ingrained ENL ideology in Indonesia (Zein et al., 2020). English education often prioritizes the "standard" varieties (American English & British English) (Dardjowidjojo, 2000) and high school graduates are expected to possess intermediate proficiency (Kemendikbudristek, 2023) The rigid adherence to 'standard' English and misconception about native-like accent resulted in negative perception towards Javanese-accented English, as evidenced in Dewi & Kariko (2017). Coupled with the presidential requirement of a high school diploma as stated in UU No. 7/2017, this creates a societal link between English fluency and presidential qualifications.

President Joko Widodo's Javanese-accented English, perceived as falling short of this expected standard, became a symbol of inadequacy for some commentators. This reflects Zentz's (2012) observation that within Indonesian society, English has been commodified – it is linked to status, access to education, and aspirations for upward mobility. Leaders, as public figures, are particularly susceptible to scrutiny regarding their 'standard' English. Failure to conform can undermine their image as competent and sophisticated in the public eye, potentially tarnishing Indonesia's reputation on the global stage.

Conclusion

This study investigates English language ideologies in Indonesia, as reflected on 621 comments shaming President Joko Widodo's English speech video on TikTok. Four recurrent ideologies emerged, revealing the intricate relationship between language, identity, and power. The four key English language ideologies in Indonesia are as follow: 1) non-standard English is unacceptable; 2) English is an

index of educational level; 3) non-standard English is acceptable; and 4) non-standard use of English in international forum is national disgrace. Three ideologies rigidly uphold "Standard English," equating non-standard forms with incompetence and national shame. President Widodo's Javanese accent became a target for ridicule, intertwining with educational expectations, social status, and national pride.

English shaming extends beyond pronunciation, revealing a regional bias against Javanese accents, where Javanese-accented English becomes a target of online mockery. This phenomenon echoes Amalia et al.'s (2017)'s study, highlighting the internal doubts Javanese English faces despite its international exposure. Comparisons with established World Englishes and a bias towards Western accents deepen skepticism. The study confirms Indonesians' belief in British/American accents as "standard," deeming local accents, especially Javanese, inferior. There is a need for English language teaching to acknowledge linguistic diversity and move beyond a singular "standard" variety.

While dominant, three ideologies face opposition advocating inclusivity and embracing linguistic diversity. This counter-ideology challenges rigid adherence to prescriptive norms, prioritizing understanding over flawless pronunciation. It resonates with Nguyen's (2019) findings in Vietnam, where a minority of commenters expressed similar sentiments, viewing the criticism of non-standard English as unnecessary. In the Indonesian context, this translates into accepting and celebrating accents like Javanese, prioritizing understanding over flawless pronunciation. While English undeniably plays a crucial role in global communication, it is essential to move beyond the misconception that a single "standard" accent or proficiency level equates to greater intelligence or educational attainment.

Findings also expose the harmful impact of English shaming, amplifying prejudices and perpetuating linguistic discrimination. The pressure for conformity also put an emphasis on standard English, reinforcing a narrow exclusionary vision of language proficiency. There is also a red string tying national pride and language, resulting in English intertwining with national identity, which then leads to shame and embarrassment when expectations are not met.

The study, albeit limited in scope, provides insight into language ideologies in Indonesia. Future research could explore these ideologies in other social media contexts with larger datasets, examining the long-term effects of English shaming, the evolving nature of languages in the digital age, and the role of social media platforms in shaping language ideologies. Studies comparing language ideologies across different age groups or socioeconomic backgrounds would offer valuable insights. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods, such as surveys alongside critical discourse analysis, could further illuminate how these ideologies function within online space.

Ultimately, this study calls for challenging discriminatory language ideologies and promoting linguistic diversity. The focus on a single 'standard' form and the resulting shaming has the potential to perpetuate linguistic prejudice and limit the self-expression of English learners. To address this, educational institutions could revise curricula to better reflect English as a global language, with exposure to various accents. Media representations could be more inclusive, showcasing prominent speakers with diverse regional accents. On a broader scale, social awareness campaigns could dispel the myths linking English fluency and 'standard' accents to educational attainment and intellectual ability.

References

- Amadi, C. E. (2022). The effect of language shaming on second language learner's self-confidence. *INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF AFRICAN & ASIAN STUDIES (IJAAS)*, 8(1).
- Amalia, S. D., Laila, M., & Adityarini, H. (2017). The place of Javanese English among globally known varieties of Englishes in Asia. *URECOL*, 123–128.
- Ammon, U. (2006). Language conflicts in the European Union: On finding a politically acceptable and practicable solution for EU institutions that satisfies diverging interests. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 16(3), 319–338. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2006.00121.x>
- Cavanagh, A. (1999). Behaviour in public: Ethics in online ethnography. *Cybersociology Magazine*, 6. http://www.cybersociology.com/files/6_2_ethicsinonlineethnog.html
- Dardjowidjojo, S. (2000). English teaching in Indonesia. *EA Journal*, 18(1), 22–30. <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/aeipt.113365>
- Dewi, U. P., & Kariko, A. A. T. (2017). Dialect prejudice: Language attitude of English teachers toward local dialect of spoken English in EFL class. *The 2nd International Conference and Linguistics on Language Teaching (I-COLLATE)*, 182–187.
- Dhongde, R. V. (2002). Linguistic landscaping and road-side advertisements. In N. H. Itagi & S. K. Singh (Eds.), *Linguistic Landscaping in India* (pp. 69–85). Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages.
- Doró, K. (2007). The use of high-and low-frequency verbs in English native and non-native student writing. In *Second language lexical processes: Applied linguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives* (pp. 117–129). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Duchêne, A. (2008). *Ideologies across nations: The construction of linguistic minorities at the United Nations*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Fauziah, E. R. (2017). Errors in pronunciation of English segmental sounds by Javanese students. *Retain*.
- Gal, S. (1998). Multiplicity and contention among language ideologies: A

- commentary. *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*, 317–331.
- Garrett, P. (2010). *Attitudes to language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hamied, F. A. (2012). English in multicultural and multilingual Indonesian education. In *English as an international language in Asia: Implications for language education* (pp. 63–78). Springer.
- Harsanti, H. G. R., & Manara, C. (2021). “I have to teach the ‘English’ English”: Native-speakerism ideology among the English teachers. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 11(2), 330–340. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v11i2.26379>
- Haugh, M., & Bargiela-Chiappini, F. (2009). Face and interaction. *Face, Communication and Social Interaction*, 1–30.
- Heuman, A. (2022). Trivializing language correctness in an online metalinguistic debate. *Language and Communication*, 82, 52–63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2021.11.007>
- Hine, C. M. (2000). Virtual ethnography. *Virtual Ethnography*, 1–192.
- Irawati, R. A., Sujatna, E. T. S., & Yulawati, S. (2023). Strategi ketidaksantunan sarkasme warganet pada kolom komentar Instagram Ganjar Pranowo. *Diglosia: Jurnal Kajian Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajarannya*, 6(3), 911–930. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30872/diglosia.v6i3.739>
- Istiqomah, N. (2016). The Analysis of Javanese accent interference in students’ English pronunciation (sound/g/) and its application in teaching speaking at the fourth semester of English Education Program of Purworejo Muhammadiyah University in the academic year of 2015/2016. <http://repository.umpwr.ac.id:8080/handle/123456789/2554>
- Kaldina, V., & Darmawan, I. N. P. (2023). “That’s why i never learned English from Indonesian teachers”: Investigating native-speakerism in YouTube video comments. 6. <https://doi.org/10.33019/berumpun.v4i2.110>
- Kallen, J. L., & Dhonnacha, E. N. (2010). Language and inter-language in urban Irish and Japanese linguistic landscapes (E. Shohamy, E. Ben-Rafael, & M. Barni, Eds.; pp. 19–36). *Multilingual Matters*. <https://doi.org/doi:10.21832/9781847692993-004>
- Kang, O. (2015). Learners’ Perceptions Toward Pronunciation Instruction in Three Circles of World Englishes. *TESOL Journal*, 6(1), 59–80. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.146>
- Karakaş, A. (2019). Preferred English accent and pronunciation of trainee teachers and its relation to language ideologies. *PASAA*, 58(1), 264–294. <https://doi.org/10.58837/CHULA.PASAA.58.1.10>
- Kaur, P. (2014). Accent attitudes: Reactions to English as a lingua franca. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 134, 3–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.04.218>
- Kelly-Holmes, H. (2015). Analyzing language policies in new media. *Research Methods in Language Policy and Planning: A Practical Guide*, 130–139.
- Kemendikbudristek. (2023). *Capaian pembelajaran Kurikulum Merdeka*.

- Kirkpatrick, A. (2010). English as a lingua franca in ASEAN: A multilingual model (Vol. 1). Hong Kong University Press.
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2011). English as an Asian lingua franca and the multilingual model of ELT. *Language Teaching*, 44(2), 212–224.
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2012). English as an international language in Asia: Implications for language education. In *English as an international language in Asia: Implications for language education* (pp. 29–44). Springer.
- Kytölä, S. (2012). Peer normativity and sanctioning of linguistic resources-in-use—on non-standard Englishes in Finnish football forums online. In *Dangerous multilingualism: Northern perspectives on order, purity and normality* (pp. 228–260). Springer.
- Lamb, M., & Coleman, H. (2008). Literacy in English and the transformation of self and society in post-Soeharto Indonesia. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 11(2), 189–205. <https://doi.org/10.2167/beb493.0>
- Laroy, C. (1995). Pronunciation. Oxford University Press.
- Latifa, A. (2020). The impact of local language dialect toward the teacher's language attitude in EFL class room in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications (IJSRP)*, 10(3), 740–750. <https://doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.10.03.2020.p9990>
- Lauder, A. F. (2020). English in Indonesia. *The Handbook of Asian Englishes*, 2008, 605–627. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118791882.ch26>
- Lestari, T. I. (2017). Javanese Accent in English Pronunciation of Harris Hotel Batam Employees: A Phonological Analysis. *IALLTEACH (Issues In Applied Linguistics & Language Teaching)*, 1(1), 20–26.
- Lippi-Green, R. (2012). English with an accent: Language ideology, and discrimination in the United States. In *English with an Accent (Second edi)*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003332886>
- Lumbanbatu, I. M. F., Zen, E. L., Rachmajanti, S., & MR, E. R. (2023). Language ideology and attitudes toward English among Multilingual families in Indonesia. 20th AsiaTEFL-68th TEFLIN-5th INELTAL Conference (ASIA TEFL 2022), 291–302. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-054-1_24
- Milroy, J. (2001). Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 5(4), 530–555.
- Milroy, J. (2007). The ideology of the standard. *The Routledge Companion to Sociolinguistics*, 133.
- Milroy, James; Milroy, L. (2012). Authority in language: Investigating standard English (First, Ed.). Routledge.
- Nababan, P. W. J. (1991). Language in education: The case of Indonesia. *International Review of Education*, 37, 115–131. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00598171>

- Nguyen, H. D. (2019). Language shaming practices on YouTube: Ideologies of English in Vietnam [JYX University of Jyväskylä]. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/64883>
- Ortu, L. (2021). World Englishes: Attitude in the expanding circle towards East and Southeast Asian varieties of English [Bachelor Thesis]. Stockholm University.
- Ott, B. L. (2017). The age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 34(1), 59–68.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Piller, I. (2017a). Anatomy of language shaming. <https://www.languageonthemove.com/anatomy-of-language-shaming/>
- Piller, I. (2017b). Explorations in language shaming. <https://www.languageonthemove.com/explorations-in-language-shaming/>
- Rido, A. (2020). English for university graduate employability: Students and employers' voices. *Twelfth Conference on Applied Linguistics (CONAPLIN 2019)*, 6–10.
- Rismaya, R., Wahya, W., & Lukman, F. (2022). Kata bahasa Indonesia penanda register Twitter: Suatu kajian morfologi. In *Diglosia: Jurnal Kajian Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya* (Vol. 5, Issue 2, pp. 511–526). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30872/diglosia.v5i2.411>
- Rostandi, U. D., & Rohandy, F. (2024). Language acquisition and identity negotiation: Discursive positioning of Indonesian adolescents learning English. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(3), 562–572. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v13i3.66919>
- Rumsey, A. (1990). Wording, meaning, and linguistic ideology. *American Anthropologist*, 92(2), 346–361.
- Schaffer, D. (2010). Old wine online: Prescriptive grammar blogs on the internet. *English Today*, 26(4), 23–28.
- Sharma, B. K. (2014). On high horses: Transnational Nepalis and language ideologies on YouTube. *Discourse, Context and Media*, 4–5, 19–28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2014.04.001>
- Shohamy, E., & Gorter, D. (2009). *Linguistic landscape. Expanding the Scenery*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Statista. (2023). Countries with the largest TikTok audience as of October 2023 (in millions). <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1299807/number-of-monthly-unique-tiktok-users/>
- Sugiharto, S. (2014). Disentangling linguistic imperialism in English language education: The Indonesian context. In *The Routledge handbook of educational linguistics* (pp. 224–236). Routledge.
- Thornberg, R., & Charmaz, K. (2014). Grounded theory and theoretical coding. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, 5(2014), 153–169.
- Vogl, U. (2012). Multilingualism in a standard language culture. *Standard Languages and Multilingualism in European History*, 1–42.
- Wang, Y. (2013). Non-conformity to ENL norms: A perspective from Chinese English

- users. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, 2(2), 255–282.
- Wardani, N. A., & Suwartono, T. (2019). Javanese language interference in the pronunciation of English phonemes. *Celtic: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching, Literature and Linguistics*, 6(2), 14–25.
- Wong, F. F., Siong, L. K., Kim, L. S., & Yaacob, A. (2012). English use as an identity marker among Malaysian undergraduates. *3L, Language, Linguistics, Literature*, 18(1).
- Woolard, K. A. (2020). Language ideology. In *The International Encyclopedia of Linguistic Anthropology* (pp. 1–21). Wiley.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118786093.iela0217>
- Zein, S. (2019). English, multilingualism and globalisation in Indonesia. *English Today*, 35(1), 48–53. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026607841800010X>
- Zein, S. (2020). *Language policy in superdiverse Indonesia*. Routledge.
- Zein, S., Sukyadi, D., Hamied, F. A., & Lengkanawati, N. S. (2020). English language education in Indonesia: A review of research (2011–2019). *Language Teaching*, 53(4), 491–523.
- Zentz, L. (2012). *Global language identities and ideologies in an Indonesian university context* [PhD Dissertation, The University of Arizona].
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/1e7db0178c70099b0db41e6af6b18f40/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>
- Zentz, L. (2014). “Love” the local, “use” the national, “study” the foreign: Shifting Javanese language ecologies in (post-)modernity, postcoloniality, and globalization. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 24(3), 339–359.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jola.12062>
- Zentz, L. (2017). Statehood, scale and hierarchy: History, language and identity in Indonesia. *Multilingual Matters*. <https://doi.org/10.21832/ZENTZ8460>
- Zhang, W., & Hu, G. (2008). Second language learners’ attitudes towards English varieties. *Language Awareness*, 17(4), 342–347.