

## RESPONSE TO SETIONO SUGIHARTO

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First, I'd like to address the critique that I find most salient upon re-reading my article. You mention that I fail to address the linguistic diversity of Indonesia in my article, which may lead my non-Indonesian readership to assume a falsely monolingual and monocultural country. You're right; although I did so in an earlier version of the article, and also in the dissertation chapter where I discussed Indonesia's sociopolitical context more fully, I managed to lose that nuance in the final editing. This is a major regret, and if I could go back and do it again, I would. In my future scholarship—where I have more space and your critique in mind—I will assuredly do so, just as I have done in the past.

I do think, however, that your description of my work and the tone of my article as “smug” is unfair (and it seems unkind to call a colleague such a demeaning term, even if you disagree with my argument.) If you read my article closely, I too cite Pennycook (1994) (and Xiaoye You (2010)) to make the argument that English can no longer be tied solely to Western interests, and thus cannot be considered solely an imperialist language (See the final paragraph on page 295, where I make this argument using past literature). The whole point of my article, is, in fact, that English *is* re-purposed by my Indonesian research participants to further social justice within Indonesia, thus re-affirming their local religious identities. This re-purposing by my research participants is a strong argument *against* the notion that English is entirely imperialist. Any assertion that English is imperialist in relation to my research participants (not past scholarship) is in response to the fact that they both reported, in their interviews, that they were at one time or another explicitly called “agents of the West” by their religious communities. But I also show that despite any misgivings they had because of these accusations, they are quite willing to appropriate the capital that comes with using English for their Indonesian purposes (to promote gender justice and community literacy within Indonesia). As a researcher well-versed in qualitative research methodology, I was careful not to map

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Western imperialism onto my research participants; rather, I drew from my interview data and my research participants' understandings of English when I made my claims in relation to their literacy lives.

In regards to your claim that my research participants "exhibited a lack of ability to negotiate" because they're Javanese, I think my data speaks for itself. Although both are from Java (not all of my research participants are in my larger study), the whole point of my article is that they are quite *good* at negotiating with English, just as Canagarajah's (2011) research participant, Butaniah, is (I love his work!). My participants exhibit such negotiation not just textually, but extratextually as well; that's why I included Ringer's piece in my literature review, because he fails to account for extra-textual identity negotiation. I was using his article to show how our arguments differed, not to support my argument. In any case, I believe my article shows very clearly how my research participants appropriate knowledge garnered from English and re-purpose it to forward social justice in their communities. The very fact that they are activists in their communities belies the fact that they are "constrained" by their Javanese culture, as you say. They have agency and are not subject to their "culture," just as they are not subject to English itself.

And finally, the way you read my interpretation of Faqih's use of "Inshallah" (I know what this means, as I lived in Indonesia for quite some time) as "having nothing to do with religion" does not take into consideration the full picture I paint in the article. As I mention at the beginning of Faqih's portrait, Faqih is very aware that some audiences (like his feminist activist community) do not value the direct use of religious language in their writing communities. He discussed this at length in his interview and said explicitly that he chose not to use his religious way of writing in his activist and academic texts because he "writes to serve his community," whatever that community may be. Because he showed such rhetorical awareness, I view his use of "Inshallah" in his literacy narrative as a deliberate *choice* and as a testament to his deeply religious identity. Coupled with his literacy narratives, where he uses religion as a lens to think about his English, I think I can claim that religion does play a "powerful role" in his literacy life. (And, although I didn't include the information in this article, he is a kyai as well.)

To conclude, though I endorse your critique that I should have included information on how linguistically diverse Indonesia is, I'm not sure that you read my argument quite fairly. Like you, I believe that English is no longer solely a Western language, suited to only Western purposes; and most importantly, I show that these writers are agents, capable of appropriating language both textually and extra-textually to further their purposes.

## THE AUTHOR

Amber Engelson received her PhD from the university of Massachusetts-Amherst in 2010, and is currently a faculty member in the University of Denver Writing Program. Her current research interest centers on ways that global-local pedagogies can be incorporated into US composition classrooms to benefit both international and domestic students.

## REFERENCES

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