

CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL IDENTITY THROUGH LANGUAGE: THE ENGLISH INFLUENCE IN PRODUCTION OF MSMES

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Abstract

This study explores the significant role of English language usage in the production practices of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMES) in Indonesia, particularly focusing on how this linguistic choice reflects social identity within a globalized context. By examining prevalent English terms in product naming—such as "Ready Stock," "Fresh Milk," and "Mango Iced Tea"—the research reveals a deliberate strategy among MSMES producers to position their offerings as modern and appealing to contemporary consumers, especially younger demographics. Interviews with MSMES stakeholders indicate a strong belief that incorporating English enhances product appeal and improves production quantity, underscoring the language's perceived association with quality and sophistication. This dynamic aligns with sociolinguistic theories regarding language as a marker of social identity, where familiarity with English signifies higher social status and aspirational lifestyles. The findings illustrate how MSMES navigates cultural negotiation, blending local heritage with global trends to construct a distinct identity that resonates with both local and international markets. Ultimately, this study highlights the interplay between language, culture, and identity, demonstrating how English usage serves not only as a marketing tool but also as a mechanism for fostering innovation and cultural exchange within Indonesia's culinary landscape. By situating their products within a global narrative, MSMES producers affirm their roles as adaptive and forward-thinking members of an increasingly interconnected world.

Keywords— Business English, English language usage, Micro, Medium Enterprises (MSMES), Small, Sociolinguistics, Social Identity.

Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are essential to the Indonesian economy, representing approximately 99% of all businesses and employing around 97% of the workforce (Reza Juanda et al., 2023). This substantial presence underscores their critical role in providing livelihoods and stabilizing the economy. MSMES contributes roughly 60% to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), demonstrating their significance in driving economic activity. Unlike larger enterprises, MSMES are often more resilient to global economic fluctuations, as they primarily serve domestic markets. This resilience is particularly important in a country like Indonesia, where economic disparities exist between urban and rural areas. Moreover, MSMES fosters innovation and entrepreneurship, acting as incubators for new ideas and products (Syarifuddin & Halim, 2022). Their flexibility allows them to adapt quickly to changing market conditions and consumer preferences, driving innovation in a way that larger organizations may struggle to achieve. This adaptability is crucial in the current landscape of digital transformation, where MSMES can leverage technology to optimize operations and expand their reach.

In addition to their economic contributions, MSMES promotes social cohesion and community development (It-Ngam et al., 2023). By supporting local economies, these enterprises help reduce regional disparities and foster a sense of community. They create social networks and contribute to local culture, embedding themselves within the societal fabric. This connection enhances the resilience of communities, equipping them to better handle economic challenges.

In the context of globalization, the use of English has become increasingly relevant for MSMES (Aben Ahmed, 2022). As the global lingua franca, English facilitates communication across diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. For Indonesian MSMES, proficiency in English can unlock numerous opportunities for growth and expansion. Access to international markets is one of the most significant advantages of English usage. As these enterprises seek to expand beyond local boundaries, English enables them to engage effectively with foreign customers, suppliers, and partners. This capability allows them to participate in global trade and tap into new revenue streams, securing better deals and partnerships.

Furthermore, English proficiency enhances the competitiveness of MSMES. It allows these enterprises to present their products and services more effectively in marketing and branding efforts aimed at international audiences. Additionally, English can facilitate collaboration with international organizations and participation in global supply chains, elevating the status and visibility of Indonesian MSMES on the world stage (Aben Ahmed, 2022).

Moreover, English serves as a gateway to knowledge acquisition. Much of the world's business literature, research, and online resources are available in English. By using English, MSMES can access a wealth of information that informs their business strategies, enhances operational efficiencies, and fosters innovation. This knowledge transfer is particularly important in rapidly evolving sectors, such as technology and e-commerce.

Using English in business contexts also fosters cultural exchange and enhances networking opportunities. Engaging with international stakeholders allows MSMES to learn from diverse business practices and cultures, leading to improved strategies and innovative solutions. Networking in English-speaking environments can open doors to collaborations, partnerships, and mentorships that would otherwise be inaccessible (Wijewardene et al., 2014).

The research question to be answered in this paper is how the use of English affects MSMES production in Bandung City. This question is critical in understanding the intersection of language and economic activity within the context of Indonesia's vibrant MSMES. As globalization continues to reshape business landscapes, the ability to communicate in English has become increasingly relevant for MSMES striving to compete both locally and internationally.

First and foremost, the primary objective is to investigate the extent to which English is utilized in various aspects of MSMES operations, such as marketing, communication with stakeholders, and internal processes. Understanding the frequency and context of English usage will help identify patterns and practices that are prevalent among MSMES in Bandung City. This analysis will also shed light on the motivations behind adopting English in business contexts, including the desire to reach international markets, enhance credibility, or improve customer engagement.

Another key objective is to evaluate the correlation between English proficiency and production efficiency within MSMES. By assessing how English usage influences operational practices, the research aims to determine whether businesses that effectively employ English are better positioned to optimize their production processes. This includes exploring aspects such as information access, technology adoption, and the implementation of best practices derived from English-language resources.

Furthermore, the study seeks to analyze the impact of English on market competitiveness. This involves examining how the ability to communicate in English affects MSMES's ability to attract and retain customers, establish partnerships, and expand into new markets. By comparing production outcomes between enterprises that actively utilize English and those that do not, the research aims to provide empirical evidence of the benefits associated with English proficiency in enhancing business performance.

In addition to these objectives, the research intends to explore the role of English in fostering innovation within MSMES. This includes investigating how engagement with English-language materials and networks contributes to the development of new ideas, products, and services. By

understanding the relationship between English usage and innovation, the study can highlight the potential for language to drive creative solutions and improvements in production practices.

Literature Review

In this paper, Sociolinguistic Theory serves as the foundational framework for examining the impact of English usage on MSMES production practices. This theory provides valuable insights into how language functions within social contexts, particularly in relation to identity, culture, and economic activity.

Sociolinguistics examines how language varies and changes within social contexts, focusing on the interplay between language and factors such as class, ethnicity, gender, and age (Burnett, 2017). Language is not a uniform entity; it varies across social groups and settings in phonological, lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic dimensions. Researchers study dialects, sociolects, and idiolects to understand how language evolves within communities, revealing the complex relationship between linguistic choices and social identity (Hymes, 2020).

A key aspect of sociolinguistics is the role of language in expressing and constructing social identity (Burnett, 2017). Language serves as a marker of identity, signaling affiliations related to ethnicity, gender, and social class. In contexts like Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the use of English can reflect owners' aspirations and cultural identities while facilitating engagement with broader markets. This dynamic illustrates how language choices can indicate shifts in identity and group dynamics.

Sociolinguistics also explores language and power, highlighting how certain dialects or languages are perceived as more prestigious, reinforcing social hierarchies (Antoni et al., 2019). Concepts like code-switching and diglossia demonstrate the fluidity of language use, while the study of language attitudes reveals how perceptions influence language maintenance and shift. Overall, sociolinguistics provides a framework for understanding how English usage impacts social identity and reflects broader cultural and economic contexts in MSMEs.

One of the key concepts within Sociolinguistic Theory is language variation, which refers to the differences in language use among speakers based on various social factors such as region, class, gender, and context (Antoni et al., 2019). In the context of MSMES in Bandung City, understanding language variation is essential for analyzing how and why English is utilized differently across various enterprises.

For instance, some MSMES may adopt English to appeal to a more affluent customer base or to position themselves in a global marketplace, while others may use it for internal communication or to access information and resources. This variation in usage can significantly affect production practices, as businesses that strategically employ English may benefit from enhanced marketing strategies and improved operational efficiencies. The study of language variation thus allows for an exploration of how linguistic choices reflect broader social dynamics within the business environment.

Another crucial concept in Sociolinguistic Theory is social identity, which pertains to how individuals and groups define themselves through language. Language is not merely a tool for communication (Banda, 2005); it also serves as a marker of identity and belonging. For MSMES, the use of English can be a way to project a modern, professional identity that resonates with both local and international stakeholders (Farivar & Wang, 2022).

By employing English, MSMES can signal their aspirations for growth and global engagement, thereby shaping their social identity within the competitive landscape. This aspect of identity is particularly significant in a diverse country like Indonesia, where local languages and dialects coexist with global languages. The interplay between local identity and global positioning can influence how MSMES approaches production, marketing, and customer relations (Nursanti & Andriyanti, 2021).

The application of Sociolinguistic Theory, particularly the concepts of language variation and social identity, allows for a nuanced understanding of how English usage impacts MSMES production practices. By examining language choices in relation to social factors, the research can reveal how language shapes business strategies and operational efficiencies (Svendsen, 2018).

For example, enterprises that effectively leverage English might find themselves better equipped to navigate international markets, adopt innovative practices, and enhance their overall competitiveness. Conversely, those that struggle with English may face barriers that hinder their growth potential and limit their ability to engage with wider audiences.

In examining the role of English usage within MSMES in Bandung City, it is essential to review existing literature that explores language use in similar contexts. This review highlights key findings and insights from previous studies that inform the current research, particularly in relation to language, business practices, and socio-economic dynamics.

Numerous studies have documented the significance of language in business communication, particularly in a globalized economy. Research by Reza et al. emphasizes that effective communication in English is crucial for small enterprises aiming to compete internationally (Reza Juanda et al., 2023). Their findings indicate that businesses with higher levels of English proficiency experience better market access and customer engagement. This aligns with the objectives of the current paper, which seeks to explore how English affects production practices in MSMES.

Another relevant study by Olney investigates the correlation between English language proficiency and economic performance among small businesses in Southeast Asia (It-Ngam et al., 2023). The authors found that firms with proficient English speakers reported higher sales growth and improved operational efficiencies. This supports the hypothesis that English usage can enhance production capabilities within MSMES, providing a framework for analysis in the current research.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the work of It-Ngam et al. discusses how language choices reflect and construct social identities in business settings (It-Ngam et al., 2023). Holmes posits that language is not merely a communication tool but a significant factor in shaping organizational culture and identity. This concept is particularly relevant for MSMES, as businesses in Bandung may use English to project a modern, professional identity, thereby influencing their production practices and market strategies.

Further literature by Antoni delves into language variation and its implications for market engagement (Antoni et al., 2019). He argues that the ability to communicate in multiple languages, including English, allows businesses to connect with diverse customer bases, thereby enhancing their market reach. This idea is pertinent to the current research, as it emphasizes the importance of English in facilitating interactions with both local and international clients, impacting production and overall business success.

While the benefits of English usage in MSMES are well-documented, some studies also highlight the barriers faced by small enterprises. A study by Liu et al. reveals that lack of English proficiency, limited access to language training, and socio-economic factors can hinder MSMES from fully capitalizing on the advantages of English (Liu & Habil, 2022). Understanding these barriers is crucial for the current research, as it contextualizes the challenges that MSMES may encounter in their production practices.

The existing literature provides a robust foundation for understanding the complex relationship between language use and MSMES production practices. By synthesizing insights from studies on language in business contexts, English proficiency, and sociolinguistic identity, the current research aims to fill gaps in knowledge related to the specific dynamics of MSMES in Bandung City. This review not only guides the research methodology but also situates the findings within broader discussions about language, economic development, and the role of micro and small enterprises in global markets.

Research Method

The research design of this paper employs a qualitative approach, aimed at mapping and providing a comprehensive overview of English usage in MSMES production through a sociolinguistic lens. This methodology is particularly suitable for exploring the nuanced ways in which language influences business practices and social identities within the context of MSMES in Bandung City (Maher et al., 2018).

The population for this study consists of MSMES located in Bandung City, which encompasses a diverse array of industries, including food and beverage, fashion, handicrafts, and technology (Reza Juanda et al., 2023). Given the vast number of MSMES operating in the area, a random sampling technique will be utilized to ensure a representative selection of participants. This approach will facilitate the collection of varied perspectives on English usage across different sectors and business contexts, enhancing the richness of the data.

Data will be collected through two primary methods: questionnaires and interviews (Supyani & F, 2021). A structured questionnaire will be distributed to MSMES owners and employees to gather quantitative data on English usage. The questionnaire will include questions related to the frequency of English usage in various business contexts, such as marketing, customer interactions, and internal communications. Additionally, it will assess participants' self-reported proficiency in English and their perceptions of the language's impact on their business operations.

The questionnaire is structured to gather essential information regarding English language usage among MSMES. It consists of several key sections:

1. **Demographic Information**
This section collects data on respondents' business type, size, years in operation, and educational background, providing context for analyzing correlations with English usage.
2. **Frequency of English Usage**
Respondents indicate how often they utilize English in various business contexts, including marketing, customer interactions, and internal communications. This section quantifies the prevalence of English in daily operations.
3. **Location of English Usage**
This part explores where English is predominantly used, such as in product titles or marketing materials. Understanding these locations reveals the strategic intent behind the adoption of English.
4. **Perceived Impact of English Usage**
Respondents evaluate how English affects production quantity, quality, and overall business performance. This section aims to correlate language usage with operational outcomes.

In-depth interviews will be conducted with a subset of MSMES holders to gain qualitative insights into their experiences with English usage. These interviews will allow for a deeper exploration of themes such as motivations for using English, challenges faced, and the perceived benefits of English proficiency in relation to production practices. The qualitative data collected through interviews will complement the quantitative findings from the questionnaires, providing a holistic understanding of the subject matter. In addition to the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews facilitate in-depth discussions on specific themes related to English usage in MSMES. Key questions include, impact on Production Quantity: "How do you perceive the use of English terminology in your business? Has it influenced production quantity?" Impact on Production Quality: "Has the use of English terminology affected product quality? Can you provide examples?" General Perceptions: "What motivated you to adopt English in your practices? Do you believe it aligns with your brand identity?". These questions encourage participants to share their experiences and insights, enhancing understanding of the factors influencing English usage in MSMES.

By integrating quantitative data from the questionnaire with qualitative insights from the interviews, the research instruments provide a comprehensive view of how English impacts production and business identity within MSMES in Bandung City. This approach allows for a nuanced analysis of the role of language in shaping stakeholder experiences and business outcomes.

Results and Discussion

The demographic data and characteristics of respondents offer a comprehensive profile of MSMES in Bandung City. The sample predominantly consists of medium-sized enterprises,

with a smaller representation of small and micro businesses. This distribution underscores the importance of medium enterprises as significant contributors to the local economy. Moreover, nearly all respondents have been operating for over three years, indicating a level of stability and experience within the market, while a small fraction reflects the ongoing emergence of new ventures.

Regarding the types of businesses represented, half of the respondents are involved in the beverage industry, with a smaller percentage operating in the food sector and other categories. This concentration in the beverage market suggests a specific trend within Bandung City that merits further exploration. Additionally, almost all businesses target local markets, emphasizing the importance of community engagement and local economic development for MSMES. This focus also points to potential opportunities for expansion and diversification into broader markets.

Table 1. The English Usage (Proper Names) in MSMES Production

Words/ Phrases
Arumi outer crop
Avotime
Exo tea
Goodday Freeze
Old Chang Kee
Point Laundry
Pride chicken
Thai Tea
Xeriarstore

Table 2. The English Usage (Common Names) in MSMES Production

Word/ Phrases	Word/ Phrases	Word/ Phrases
All day breakfast		
All size		
Apple iced tea	Chocolate iced tea	Happy Drink
Avocado tea	Coffee	Hot chicken
Banana Milk	Coffee series	Ice lemon tea
Bbq chicken wings	Crispy Chicken Katsu	Juice
Blackpepper	Crispy Chicken Steak	Juice fresh
Blueberry	Culture of Java	Lemon honey iced tea
Bread	Dalgona Fresh Milk	Lemon tea
Bubble	Delicious	Lychee ice tea
Cappucino iced tea	Egg	Mac & cheese
Cheese	Fresh	Mango iced tea
Chicken Egg Roll	Fresh Juice	Mango Yakult
Chicken katsu	Fresh Milk	Milk
Chicken Pop Corn	Fruit series	Milk tea
Chicken Sauce Barbeque	Full Cream Plain	Onesite
Chicken Sauce Lava Hot	Good Looking Bad Attitude Is	Ready stock
Chicken sausage	Nothing	Spaghetti
Chicken wings	Good Milk	Strawberry
Chili oil	Green tea	Surprisingly good
Chocochips		

The research conducted on the language utilized by MSMES reveals a significant presence of English words and phrases within their product offerings. Commonly featured English terms include "Ready Stock," "Fresh Milk," "Mango Iced Tea," and "Chicken Sauce Barbeque." These

phrases are often integrated into product names and marketing materials, reflecting a blend of local and international influences. This strategic incorporation of English not only aims to attract a diverse consumer base but also serves to enhance the perceived quality and modernity of the products. As such, English becomes a key element in the branding of MSMES products, positioning them as contemporary and appealing in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Notably, the usage of English in MSMES production is predominantly found in common names rather than proper names. While these English terms often have direct translations in Bahasa Indonesia, the decision to retain the English versions underscores a deliberate choice by MSMES producers. This linguistic strategy reinforces their social identity as enterprises that aspire to be seen as global and up-to-date. By opting for English, MSMES producers signal their engagement with contemporary trends and international standards, allowing them to position themselves favorably within a competitive market landscape.

This choice reflects an awareness among MSMES stakeholders of the symbolic capital associated with English language use. In many contexts, English is perceived as a marker of modernity, sophistication, and quality. Thus, by incorporating English terms into product names and descriptions, MSMES producers not only cater to consumer preferences but also construct a narrative that aligns their brands with global aspirations. This phenomenon can be analyzed through the lens of sociolinguistics, which examines how language choices are intertwined with social identity and cultural positioning. The preference for English serves as a linguistic indicator of a broader societal shift, where familiarity with English is increasingly associated with higher social status and an aspirational lifestyle.

Moreover, interview results reveal that most MSMES stakeholders believe the use of English in their products has a significant impact on their business outcomes. Many respondents asserted that incorporating English terminology not only attracts more customers but also enhances the overall appeal of their offerings. They noted that English usage is perceived as a marker of quality and modernity, which can lead to increased production volume. This belief underscores the importance of language as a strategic marketing tool, reinforcing the idea that linguistic choices can directly influence consumer purchasing behavior. By presenting their products in English, MSMES producers signal their engagement in a modern, global conversation, enhancing their appeal to consumers who value contemporary and trendy offerings.

Furthermore, this linguistic strategy fosters inclusivity and encourages cross-cultural exchanges, which can lead to innovative culinary fusions. The blending of languages reflects an understanding that food is not just a product but a medium for cultural expression and connection. The use of English within MSMES product names symbolizes a broader trend

towards the globalization of local markets, wherein the fusion of languages serves as a means of differentiation and brand recognition.

The increasing incorporation of English terminology within MSMES food menus also mirrors broader societal trends and the evolving linguistic landscape in Indonesia. As English continues to permeate various domains, including commerce and gastronomy, its adoption by MSMES signifies an acknowledgment of the language's status as a marker of modernity and progress. This shift in language usage may indicate a transformation in consumer preferences, where familiarity with English is associated with higher social status or an aspirational lifestyle. Thus, the linguistic choices made by MSMES producers not only attract customers but also contribute to the construction of a collective social identity that embraces both local heritage and global influences.

This dynamic interplay between local and global languages fosters a unique cultural synthesis, wherein traditional practices are reinterpreted through contemporary lenses, ultimately enriching the Indonesian identity. Such exchanges can inspire new flavor combinations and culinary techniques, further enhancing the culinary scene and promoting a deeper appreciation for diverse food traditions.

Beyond the commercial implications, the linguistic practices observed among MSMES producers highlight the intricate relationship between language, culture, and identity. The blending of English and local language in product names encapsulates a cultural negotiation where local producers strive to maintain their indigenous identity while engaging with global trends. This linguistic hybridity fosters a sense of belonging among consumers who identify with

both local and international culinary experiences, reinforcing the social identity of the MSMEs community as innovative and adaptive.

Ultimately, this phenomenon enhances marketability and serves as a platform for cultural exchange, allowing for the celebration of local heritage in a globalized world. As these products gain popularity, they inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs to explore and redefine their cultural narratives through food, further enriching the tapestry of local gastronomy. The implications of this linguistic strategy extend beyond mere commercial success; they represent a profound engagement with the complexities of identity in an increasingly interconnected world. By positioning their offerings as modern and up-to-date, MSMEs producers not only cater to specific market segments but also affirm their place within a global narrative that values innovation and cultural dynamism. This strategic use of English not only enhances market presence but also enriches the social fabric of the community, reflecting a collective aspiration towards modernity and global integration.

Conclusion

The strategic use of English within MSMEs production underscores a significant intersection of language, culture, and social identity in the context of globalization. By incorporating English terms into product names and marketing strategies, MSMEs producers not only enhance the appeal of their offerings but also signal their alignment with contemporary consumer trends and international standards. This linguistic choice reflects a conscious effort to construct a modern identity that resonates with younger consumers, particularly students, who associate familiarity with English with sophistication and quality.

Moreover, the findings of this study highlight how language serves as a powerful tool for cultural negotiation within the MSMEs community. The blending of English and local language allows producers to maintain their indigenous identity while simultaneously engaging with global trends, fostering a unique cultural synthesis. This dynamic not only enriches the culinary landscape of Indonesia but also promotes innovative culinary fusions that celebrate both local heritage and modern influences.

Ultimately, the implications of this research extend beyond the realm of marketing; they offer a profound insight into the evolving nature of social identity in an increasingly interconnected world. By positioning themselves as contemporary and globally aware enterprises, MSMEs producers contribute to a broader narrative of adaptation and resilience, reflecting a collective aspiration towards modernization and cultural dynamism. This engagement with English as a marker of identity not only enhances marketability but also enriches the social fabric of the community, illustrating the vital role of language in shaping business practices and cultural expression in a globalized society.

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