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### 1.1 The Threat to Linguistic Diversity from National and Global Languages? The Case of Indonesia

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Indonesia is a linguistically complex country with most Indonesians being bilingual or multilingual, speaking Bahasa Indonesia - the national and official language - plus one or more of the 700 vernacular languages, plus a language with external roots (such as Arabic or English). This linguistic complexity is not just a matter of numbers and diversity but also of politics as the different languages have differing resonances for differing groups within Indonesia in this post-colonial and transnational age. Unsurprisingly, therefore, language policy has never been a simple issue in this country. For example, whilst many rural schools struggle to introduce students to Bahasa Indonesia as a medium of instruction as well as the national language, many urban schools have been so successful in introducing Bahasa Indonesia that there is now real concern about the diminishing presence of other local languages. Amidst these complexities, in 2003, the Indonesian government, as a long-term strategic goal of enabling Indonesian youth to become more competitive globally, introduced English as the medium of instruction (EMI) in the so-called International Standard Schools (ISSs). Critics argued that this level of foreign language use not only posed a threat regarding students' national identity but also introduced linguistically-framed inequity of opportunity into the school system. For this reason, EMI was terminated in 2013. In this talk, I explore some of the linguistic complexity in Indonesian educational policies and practices, consider some implications of the use of Bahasa Indonesia and English for Indonesian linguistic diversity, and the

agenda of preserving the rich linguistic heritage of the country. Lessons learnt from Indonesian case may provide useful insights for other countries with similar wealth of linguistic heritage where the national or international language is used as the language of instruction for all pupils regardless of which vernacular language they speak.

**Key words:** Threat, Linguistics Diversity, Indonesia.