

An Analysis of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Practitioners' Language Attitudes and Ideologies toward International Business Activities (A Perspective of Local and Global)

Tri Ananti Listiana^{1*}, Adestya Ayu Armielia², Setiono Sugiharto³, Yanti⁴

¹Universitas Multimedia Nusantara - Faculty of Business, Hotel Operations Study Program, and Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya; Email: tri.ananti@lecturer.umn.ac.id

²Universitas Multimedia Nusantara - Faculty of Business, Hotel Operations Study Program; Email: adestya.ayu@umn.ac.id

³Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya; Email: setiono.sugiharto@atmajaya.ac.id

⁴Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya; Email: regina.yanti@atmajaya.ac.id

*Corresponding Author: tri.ananti@lecturer.umn.ac.id

Citation: Listiana, T. A., Armielia, A. A., Sugiharto, S., & Yanti. (2025). An Analysis of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Practitioners' Language Attitudes and Ideologies toward International Business Activities (A Perspective of Local and Global). *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, 10(3), 721–736. <https://doi.org/10.64753/jcasc.v10i3.2479>

Published: November 27, 2025

ABSTRACT

Notwithstanding the importance of the English language, local languages are seen as crucial for achieving success in global business. Through qualitative interviews with three Small and Medium-sized Entrepreneurship (SME) practitioners who export Indonesian products internationally, this study examines the influence of globalisation on language ideologies and attitudes of Indonesian SME practitioners involved in international business. Besides English, participants emphasised the importance of national language (Indonesian), for domestic trade and governance, while regional languages such as Minangnese and Javanese languages also foster personal relationships, business networks, and economic trust that are also very important in their global business activities. This multilingual proficiency enhances business prospects and reinforces cultural identity as well as national pride. The findings also discovered the implications of linguistic and cultural sensitivity in enhancing international business success, contributing to understanding the interplay between language, globalisation, and business, highlighting the significance of language ideologies in the internationalisation of SMEs.

Keywords: Globalisation, Language ideologies, Language attitudes, English Lingua Franca, Local and global linguistic practices.

INTRODUCTION

Wallerstein's World-Systems Analysis posits that the interactions of space and globalization occur along a continuum of layered scales, through which social events and processes move and develop. Extreme local (micro) and extreme global (macro) are the ends of this continuum, with several intermediary scales in between (Blommaert, 2010). According to this theory, Blommaert (2010) states that a local is a space in which a World-Systems model is transposed to a specific region. It changes societies' political, economic, and cultural structures. Thus, global can be seen as the larger international scale on which the World Systems operate; small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) business trade is one of the fields most affected by globalization and bridges the local to the global. Because globalisation in business also affects people's ideologies and language use, it is important to examine how SME practitioners' language ideologies and attitudes fit into the world system of international networks from both local and global perspectives.

SME practitioners are one of the most important factors in shaping the SMEs for internationalisation. They serve as primary mediators between local and global business activities. The SME practitioners must constantly choose which language to use for which situations, depending on the interlocutor, who is also constrained by their linguistic repertoire. As Bourdieu stated in 1991, language is a market of symbolic capital and power, with people juggling for profit, and some people structurally having less capital than others. The confluence of particular discourses and registers, institutional frameworks, and professional practices, such as these SME practices, can lead to the emergence of language ideologies and attitudes (Irvine, 1989). The language ideologies shaped by SME practitioners thus reflect broader institutional and economic dynamics, reinforcing the central role of SMEs in linking local agency with global participation. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are widely recognized as engines of economic growth, especially within developing countries. In Indonesia, SMEs contribute significantly to the national economy, employing approximately 97% of the workforce (Larasati, 2022). Their potential to expand this contribution further lies in the strategic internationalisation of their operations and the glocalisation of their linguistic practices, adapting language use across both local and global contexts (Dominguez & Mayrhofer, 2017; Limanseto, 2022).

The internationalisation of SMEs is heavily dependent on language mobility and the use of communication technologies that enable participation in global trade (Utami et al., 2022; Utomo et al., 2025; Wijaya et al., 2025). To ensure long-term success and competitiveness, scholars argue that high-growth SMEs must engage with international networks early (Crick, 1999; Dewi, 2020; Natalia et al., 2020). In this context, language is not simply a tool of communication but also a semiotic resource through which SMEs participate in and shape global markets. These semiotic resources, comprising linguistic, symbolic, and communicative repertoires, are deeply embedded in global power hierarchies. High-status languages often dominate international business environments, while low-status languages are frequently marginalized, devalued, or ignored (Blommaert, 2006). Bourdieu and Thompson (1999) further argue that linguistic exchanges are inherently economic, functioning as symbolic capital that reflects and reinforces social hierarchies. International business communication is multimodal, combining linguistic and visual elements that are closely tied to human experience (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, 2001). However, access to and control over these semiotic resources are unevenly distributed, reinforcing inequalities in the global economic system (Blommaert, 2010).

Globalisation has intensified the need for a standardized medium of communication across borders, with English emerging as the dominant global *lingua franca* in trade and commerce. However, this linguistic convergence has raised important questions regarding the erosion of national and local languages. As Johnstone (2015) notes, globalisation simultaneously fosters linguistic homogenization and differentiation. This paradox aligns with Bauman's (1992, as cited in Johnstone, 2015) concept of the "globalisation paradox," where the forces that unify also produce fragmentation. For Indonesian SMEs, this means balancing the need to adopt English for international communication with the necessity of retaining Bahasa Indonesia and local heritage languages for domestic engagement and cultural relevance.

Multilingual competence is thus critical for Indonesian SMEs. Entrepreneurs must navigate a linguistically complex environment, using English to access global markets while maintaining fluency in Bahasa Indonesia and regional languages to engage with local artisans, employees, and regulatory bodies. This multilingual reality has led to a heightened awareness among SME practitioners of language's strategic value in business contexts (Terzen et al., 2017). Nurcahyo and Gharnaditya (2015) emphasize that English proficiency is not only essential for entering global markets, particularly within the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), but also serves as a strategic skill for competitiveness. Similarly, Widati and Mukhtar (2025) argue that language perceptions influence export performance, with linguistic skills acting both as communication tools and relational assets in international network-building.

Despite these strategic advantages, language remains a significant barrier for many Indonesian SMEs. Revindo et al. (2019) assert that aligning communication practices with global norms and fostering positive attitudes toward English and other target-market languages can substantially improve export potential. The role of cultural sensitivity and linguistic diversity is also gaining recognition in global business settings. Cogo and Yanaprasart (2018) call for a shift away from the ideological dominance of English and toward a plurilingual approach that better reflects the multilingual realities of international trade.

In today's global economy, effective communication demands more than linguistic proficiency; it requires intercultural competence, a recognition of linguistic diversity, and a global mindset. Internationalisation is no longer a purely linguistic or economic pursuit but a deeply sociocultural process (Terzen et al., 2017). Understanding how language ideologies and attitudes shape SME engagement in global markets is essential. Language functions not only as a medium of exchange in economic activity but also as a strategic resource for representing culture, creativity, and national identity in international contexts. As Terzen (2017) notes, language can both enable and constrain international trade, yet scholarly research on this topic in Indonesia remains limited.

To address this gap, the present study examines the intersection of language attitudes, ideologies, and international business practices among Indonesian SMEs. It explores how linguistic perceptions influence strategic decisions in global engagement. Specifically, the research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How are the language attitudes of SME practitioners shaped toward English, Bahasa Indonesia, and local heritage languages in the context of international business?
2. What language ideologies do SME practitioners hold concerning globalisation and international trade?
3. How do these linguistic attitudes and ideologies influence their strategies for SME internationalisation?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to contribute to the broader understanding of language as both a communicative and symbolic resource in the internationalisation of SMEs, particularly within the Indonesian context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From Marginalization to Central Concern

Thirty years ago, language was barely acknowledged in international business (IB) research. A review of nearly 500 English-language management texts revealed that only a few addressed language, and even then, only superficially (Holden, 1987). Since then, however, the role of language has shifted from the periphery to a central concern. Scholars now recognize that language permeates all aspects of international business; it shapes communication, influences organizational structures, and underpins knowledge creation (Piekkari et al., 2005; Piekkari & Tietze, 2011). Brannen et al. (2014) and Mughan (2015) emphasize that language is no longer optional but fundamental to understanding international business environments.

Current discourse on language in IB tends to focus on three key dimensions: (1) the role of national languages within multinational corporations (MNCs), (2) officially mandated corporate languages, and (3) English as the global lingua franca. These are examined through diverse analytical lenses, including linguascapes, which explore the tension between local and global languages, and studies that view mandated corporate languages as administrative mechanisms. A substantial body of literature has also debated whether English functions as a hegemonic force or a neutral tool within international business contexts (Tietze & Dick, 2013; Nickerson, 2015; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010).

Parallel to this, economic studies, though somewhat siloed, have treated language as a measurable variable. For example, linguistic structures such as future-time reference (Chen, 2013) and grammatical gender (Hicks et al., 2015) have been linked to economic behaviors, including saving rates, trade performance, and workplace dynamics. While this multidisciplinary engagement marks significant progress, it also reveals fragmentation. There remains a pressing need for integrative frameworks that bridge linguistics, economics, and international business.

This growing theoretical attention is mirrored in real-world business practices. In global commerce, communication is instrumental in achieving core business objectives such as negotiations, partnerships, and contracts. Much of this interaction takes place via telephone calls, meetings, presentations, and social engagements. Since the 1980s, English has played a dominant role in the globalisation of mergers and acquisitions (Crystal, 2003; Kankaanranta, 2009), enabling new forms of cross-border business and intercultural communication.

Recent studies confirm that English has solidified its position as the primary lingua franca in international trade, especially in multilingual negotiations (Jenkins, 2020; Cogo & House, 2021). In multicultural firms, including SME exporters, English is commonly used in core functions such as management, finance, accounting, and communication with foreign buyers. The increasing prominence of English has given rise to the concept of Business English, a specialized register used in global commerce to facilitate transactions among individuals and companies from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Nickerson, 2020; Ehrenreich, 2022).

Sociolinguistics of Globalisation in SMEs' International Business Activities

The dynamic relationship between the global and the local has become a central concern in understanding globalisation, particularly within the realm of international business. Earlier interpretations often conceptualised globalisation as a unidirectional flow, from global to local, implying the seamless transmission of global norms, values, and practices across borders. However, such perspectives tend to overlook the agency of local actors in shaping and negotiating these processes. As Mufwene (2002) contends, local engagement plays an active and constitutive role in globalisation. For example, multinational corporations such as McDonald's often incorporate local languages and cultural practices into their overseas operations, an illustration of how global strategies are

adapted through localisation (as cited in Blommaert, 2003). This suggests that globalisation should not be viewed as cultural homogenisation, but rather as a complex interplay between global and local forces.

In the context of international trade, small and medium enterprise (SME) practitioners exemplify this global-local interface. As intermediaries between global buyers and local producers, they enable the transnational flow of goods, services, and ideas. These entrepreneurs are not only economic actors but also carriers of linguistic and semiotic resources, participating in what Novak et al. (2006) term semiotic mobility, the transfer of communicative norms and language practices across sociolinguistic scales. Their language choices reflect both the pressures of global business norms and the transmission of local cultural values into international networks.

In Indonesia, SMEs increasingly seek to expand their role in global trade. For these enterprises, globalisation extends beyond economic integration; it encompasses daily social and cultural negotiations across local, national, and international contexts. This broader perspective contrasts with Nilson's (2010) narrower framing of globalisation as primarily economic exchange. Nilson argues that globalisation refers to the integration and democratisation of global systems, cultural, economic, and infrastructural, through international trade, digital communication, and cross-border investment. Indonesian SMEs, however, experience globalisation as a lived reality that is socially situated and linguistically mediated.

Linguistically, the movement across scales introduces shifts in the function, structure, and meaning of language. As language practices circulate globally, their indexicality, their capacity to signal social meanings, also transforms. What is considered effective or appropriate when communicating with one international buyer may not apply to another due to differing cultural norms and linguistic expectations. These changes occur within polycentric systems, where multiple centres of linguistic authority and normativity influence communicative practices (Revindo, 2017). English, while often functioning as the global business lingua franca, acquires varied indexical meanings depending on the sociolinguistic context. It may signal global professionalism and connectivity in interactions with international clients, but, conversely, evoke elitism or social distance when used with local suppliers or government officials.

Language Ideology and Language Attitude in SME International Business Activities

Language ideologies, though often unspoken, are embedded in social interactions and institutional practices. They can be inferred from the generalised language attitudes held by members of a community (Van Dijk, 2013, as cited in Wang & Hatoss, 2022). Studying these ideologies requires qualitative methods such as interviews and discourse analysis, which allow researchers to explore speakers' positioning, beliefs, and linguistic behaviour within specific social and professional contexts.

While much of the existing research focuses on language ideology in multinational corporations (MNCs), it offers valuable insights for SMEs. For instance, Sikandar (2016) examined language ideologies in multilingual corporate environments in Pakistan, while Woo and Giles (2017) explored intergroup dynamics in Californian MNCs. Yanka and Red (2020) investigated language ideology in intercultural contexts, focusing on the Arizona Tewa language. These studies, although not focused on international trade per se, reveal the importance of cultural pluralism over assimilation in fostering inclusive and productive multilingual workplaces.

Language diversity is also increasingly linked to professional success in international business. Knowles (2017) demonstrated that multilingual proficiency significantly influences decision-making and sales performance in global business settings. He encouraged interdisciplinary approaches, drawing from psychology, linguistics, and neuroscience, to understand language use in business. Supporting this, Saarenketo et al. (2018) and Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001) found that both management and non-management employees view English proficiency as a pathway to better employment, professional prestige, and upward mobility. Their findings affirm that English holds a dominant status in international commerce and is perceived as essential for career advancement and company success.

Albury (2020) offers a useful framework to distinguish between individual language attitudes and collective language ideologies. He contextualises these ideologies within broader social norms, historical developments, and political-economic systems. His concept of the "multilingual assumption," observed in Malaysia, resonates with the experiences of Indonesian SME practitioners who must balance the demands of English as symbolic and economic capital with the need to maintain solidarity through Indonesian and regional languages. Albury also highlights how English often becomes a marker of professionalism, while local languages are relegated to domains of trust and cultural identity. This tension is especially relevant in the Indonesian context, where linguistic diversity intersects with business practices in complex ways. Albury's notion of the "multilingual assumption," shown in Malaysia, reflects the intricate, multifaceted language practices of the SME participants in this research. Moreover, his analytical framework, which contextualizes language ideologies within global capitalist systems, provides a significant perspective for examining the emergence of English as both symbolic and practical capital, while regional languages are frequently marginalized to subordinate realms of trust and solidarity. His appeal for the

recognition of local knowledge systems underscores the significance of SME practitioners' linguistic beliefs and practices as a relevant area of investigation, especially within Indonesia's intricate sociolinguistic environment.

This research paper will be significant because minimal research has been directed toward the English language attitude and language ideologies among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) practitioners in Indonesia, especially in perspectives local and global. Increasing recognition of Indonesian culture and language in their target country of sales will increase the chances of selling the products they sell. Then these SME practitioners, who are also exporters, must have a positive language attitude and ideology towards national language and local heritage languages, even though they must also communicate effectively using English in their export and sales activities to target countries (Terzen, 2017). It is important to investigate what language attitudes and ideologies exist within the small and medium-sized entrepreneurs (SME) practitioners' language attitudes towards foreign language use, Indonesian, and local heritage language use in international business networks, especially from local and global perspectives.

METHODOLOGY

This case study uses a qualitative analysis method, with 3 SME practitioners selected based on three categories of how long they have been doing import-export business: beginners (1 year), middle (10 years), and experts (more than 19 years). The 3 participants are graduates from a famous university in Indonesia, majoring in Chemistry, Accounting, and Management. These SMEs produce and export a unique local product of Indonesia, which the researchers obtained from a group of SME exporters to several Middle Eastern countries, Africa, and Eastern Europe. The semi-structured interview questions were designed using a framework based on theoretical and empirical aspects of language ideology and the language attitude of SME practitioners (Garrett, 2010), covering areas of participants' perspectives, usage frequency, confidence, brand strategies, language ideologies, and perceived need for language policy regarding English, Indonesian, and local heritage language languages in international business contexts. To ensure validity, the interview questions were evaluated by two specialists in sociolinguistics and language education, namely those knowledgeable about multilingualism and language dynamics within the Indonesian corporate setting. The experts' feedback was utilized to evaluate the pertinence and lucidity of the questions, focusing specifically on the content's relevance to the Indonesian sociolinguistic setting and the export-import practices of SMEs.

The interviews were conducted by the researcher in Bahasa Indonesia. Subsequently, the transcripts were translated into English for the purpose of this international publication.

Prior to participating in this research, all participants signed a consent form, indicating their voluntary agreement to take part in the study. The data were studied, analyzed, and discussed using the theoretical and empirical aspects of: Identifying the language attitude of the SME practitioners in their business activity as the effects of globalisation on their business towards the international network, the SMEs' perception of the effects of globalisation on their business towards international network and business activity and how the English language, Indonesian language, and regional language ideologies are transmitted in their business activity. The list of questions asked during the interview is attached to the appendix of this research (Garrett, 2010).

Below is the linguistic repertoire table of SME practitioners who contributed to this research.

	Age (years old)	Gender	Type of business and product	The role in their SME	Market countries (International network)	Years of experience in the internationalisation of SMEs	Language abilities
Practitioner 1	45	male	Eco-friendly plastics, coffee, and an export aggregator	owner	Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, the Indian sub-continent	19 years	English, Indonesia, <u>Minang</u>
Practitioner 2	36	male	Furniture	owner	America, Europe, Africa, the Middle east	10 years	English, Indonesia, <u>Minang</u>
Practitioner 3	37	male	Banana crackers	owner	UEA, Russia, Sultanate of Oman, and Saudi Arabia	1 year	English, Indonesian, Javanese

After data familiarisation, the interview results were then coded (Garret, 2010) and, using a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019), were thematically analysed. Two themes emerged: English as a global business lingua franca as a motivation mechanism for economic progress, and all the languages used (English, local heritage language languages, and Indonesian) have equal importance for business leverage in terms of both the thematic aspects and the language ideologies of the three SME practitioners.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

English as a Mechanism for Economic Progress and Global Business Lingua Franca

How people use language is strongly influenced by the situation in which they find themselves. Blommaert (2005) argued that language knowledge is rooted in the situation and dynamically distributed across individuals as they engage in practices that can be seen from the three participants' language experiences. As shown in Table 1, the demographic information of the practitioners indicates variations in age, market reach, and language proficiency, with experience varying from 1 to 19 years in international business. The ability of these three practitioners to speak English has become one of their motivations for deciding to internationalise their SME at a certain point in time. With the background of working several years in a multinational company, Participant 1 and Participant 3 in this research decided to expand their own business with export, and they said their English formal knowledge was obtained from experience working at the MNC. While they get Indonesian as a lingua franca from school and the regional language from their families, the ability to speak the Indonesian language and the local heritage language has become a communication tool at certain times that makes it easier for them to negotiate with local suppliers, workers, and artisans, as well as lobby and expand networks with fellow entrepreneurs during their business activities. This study reveals that English language competence serves not only as a tool but also as a motivating factor for SME firm owners to pursue internationalisation. This differs from prior research by Islam et al. (2023), which predominantly characterises language limitations, such as inadequate English proficiency, as impediments to global expansion. Both this study and Islam et al. (2023) recognise the functional role of language in communication, documentation, and access to foreign markets; however, this research's finding offers a unique

perspective by framing language proficiency as a psychological enabler, a skill that enhances confidence and fosters a proactive inclination to engage internationally. This study indicates that English language proficiency is viewed as both functional and ideologically significant, symbolising worldwide legitimacy and preparedness, in line with the study of Wang & Hatoss (2022). This research recontextualises language from a barrier to a motivational mechanism, thereby enhancing both the theoretical and practical dimensions of current studies on SME internationalisation.

To answer Research Question 1, the language attitudes of small to medium-sized entrepreneurs (SMEs) practitioners towards English, the Indonesian language, and the local heritage language in international business networks are examined from both local and global perspectives. The participants are interviewed regarding their opinions on English and Indonesian. The results can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 1. Participants' Opinions towards English

Excerpts	Opinion towards English
Participant 1	<i>English is <u>very important</u> for me and my business because this is the primary language for <u>export</u>, with <u>this language</u>, I can add customers, so my profit will increase.</i>
Participant 2	<i>It is <u>very important</u> in running a business, especially in the export world, as a language of instruction that various nations can understand.</i>
Participant 3	<i>English allows me to get agreements and purchase agreements and understand <u>all things related to business documents</u>, business agreements, price agreements, and all the information related to my customers and business.</i>

(Interview questions developed according to Garrett, 2010).

As we can see from Table 2, Participants reflected on their opinions about English as a standard language and communication tool in international business. Participant 1 directly linked English competence to the potential for enhanced business profitability, explaining that English enables communication with international clients and so broadens market access. This discovery suggests that participants viewed English as a means to enhance competitiveness and economic prosperity. This aligns with previous research emphasising English as a type of linguistic capital that facilitates access to global markets and opportunities (Bourdieu, 1991; Guo, 2021) and corresponds with contemporary research that designates English as the primary lingua franca in international corporate communications (Nickerson, 2020; Cogo & House, 2021; Ehrenreich, 2022). Other studies assert that English is the predominant medium for negotiations, documentation, and intercultural interactions, and it also acts as an established standard within international organisations (Bolton & Kuteeva, 2020; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2020). Furthermore, English competence is widely regarded as a type of linguistic capital that facilitates access to global markets and professional credibility (Bourdieu, 1991; Guo, 2021).

Participant 2 emphasised the significance of English as a universal language among nations, assuming it is crucial for international trade and export operations. This underscores the view of English as a lingua franca, an accessible means of communication facilitating international commerce and collaboration. Recent research confirms this perspective, emphasising that English has emerged as the predominant lingua franca in global commerce, particularly in scenarios involving multilingual negotiations (Jenkins, 2020; Cogo & House, 2021). Table 2 also presents how languages are dynamic depending on their function and spaces and illustrates the changing nature of languages based on their functions and contexts. This indicates that the function of English in international corporate communication is not static but varies based on specific settings, like negotiations, paperwork, or human interactions. Cogo and House (2021) assert that English as a commercial lingua franca is significantly dependent on the context, exhibiting adaptability to various communicative functions and organisational environments.

Participant 3 underscored the necessity of English for comprehending and generating business documents, contracts, and agreements. In addition to verbal communication, English was acknowledged as essential for the legitimacy of professional and legal proceedings in international trade. Academics have observed that English is frequently regarded as the "tool" language for international contracts and corporate legitimacy, especially in export and trade ties (Nickerson, 2020; Ehrenreich, 2022).

All participants confidently stated the significance of English for the success of their companies, consistently associating the language with profitability, accomplishment, successful negotiations, and mutual comprehension with international clients. Their viewpoints as SME leaders aiming to penetrate foreign markets underscore their acknowledgement of their professional responsibilities and the essential function of English in enabling global interaction. Participants overwhelmingly recognised English as the sole language capable of bridging communication barriers, facilitating cross-border transactions, and enhancing export activities, despite their corporate contexts being rooted in various linguistic and semiotic resources. This viewpoint aligns with Ehrenreich's (2022) assertion that English serves as the primary medium in global commercial communications and with Nickerson's (2020) remark that English, as a lingua franca, is the most accessible means of communication in multinational settings. Cogo and House (2021) assert that the significance of English in business is rooted in its versatility across various communicative contexts, whereas Guo (2021) defines English proficiency as a type of linguistic capital that directly correlates with economic benefit. Consequently, participant interviews uniformly demonstrated that English is not simply a neutral instrument but an essential asset and resource in international commerce.

The prominence of English in contracts, agreements, and discussions underscores its function as a gatekeeping tool. Pennycook (2017) notes that English ability frequently serves as a prerequisite for engagement in global networks, therefore conserving its supremacy in professional and economic domains. Recent literature highlights that English fluency is a crucial prerequisite for credibility in global business operations, particularly in international law and export industries (Cogo & House, 2021; Guo, 2021). The participants in this study confirm that English proficiency is associated with legitimacy and credibility in international trade.

The participants consistently exhibited favourable sentiments regarding English, linking it to professionalism, global recognition, and socio-economic advancement. This supports Crystal's (2003) claim that English has emerged as a global language through its utilisation in worldwide commerce, technology, and diplomacy. Other recent empirical research also supports this perspective, demonstrating that proficiency in English is significantly linked to employment, reputation, and professional mobility in globalised economies (Ehrenreich, 2022; Bolton & Kuteeva, 2020).

English, Local Heritage language, and Indonesian Language have the Same Importance for Business Leverage

The English and Indonesian languages are both important and standard for their business, consisting of a structured set of grammatical structures and rules. This view led to perceiving languages for deploying their business and prosperity as controlled by the power of other parties with whom they deal in their international business activities. According to Blommaert (2006), this view leads to looking at language as an object of normative control by institutional regimentation and leads to centres of control and authority.

Table 2. Participants' opinions towards the Indonesian language

Excerpts	Opinion towards Bahasa Indonesia
Participant 1	<i>It is also important because this is the language I use to communicate formally with suppliers and partners in Indonesia.</i>
Participant 2	<i>It is important as the language that I use when communicating with the government in Indonesia and regional provinces and the language of instruction for my employees and to build the relationship in our country. Also, for negotiation to get efficient prices and correspondence with the supplier.</i>
Participant 3	<i>As the main language in communicating with various parties in Indonesia, including the government, when we take care the bureaucratic matters, permits, and correspondence.</i>

Interview questions were developed according to Garrett (2010).

As shown in Table 3, we can analyse that these SME practitioners cannot be merely global because their business activities always need the local people and local language to be involved with each function, differences, and authenticity (Urry, 2002). For example, with the government when they deal with trade permits to send goods,

migration permits, and all legal matters relating to their business. Also, other local entrepreneurs, such as suppliers of raw materials for their products, their domestic business partners, and their workers and artisans. Because of this, locals are equally compelled to employ semiotic resources that would effectively index localness. Localness can be utilized as a “commodity” (Heller, 2003). The four fields (SMEs, buyers, government, and local suppliers) sites use different semiotic resources to look local. In SME business activities in this research, a conscious effort is exerted to make it more local. They can also bring localness to the global environment by selling products made in the country to international buyers through their network and global business activities. Local suppliers in international business activities conducted by SMEs on the global market are essential to the international business industry because they increase the accessibility of local products to international businesses. However, local suppliers and manufacturers cannot be solely global because cultural products are always generated locally. It is distinctive and genuine (Urry, 2002).

Table 3. Participants’ Opinions towards Local Heritage Language.

Excerpts	Opinion towards local heritage language
Participant 1	<i>The position for me is often more important than Indonesian for delivering point 2 out of the box. The business approach sometimes requires us to show that we quite understand the local language of the interlocutor, so it also is very important for diplomacy, for example, and this does not only apply to the local language in Indonesia but also to some vocabulary words locale in the customers’ countries or target market, not only English that we need as a businessperson.</i>
Participant 2	<i>Regional languages are used only a little in business but more in personal relationships. But sometimes, it is used to build trust with various parties in the country. Less impact on a company's ability to compete in international business but facilitating production processes and other technical matters, personal relationships, or close relationships with related parties.</i> <i>For the furniture and furniture business, I always use English because even for the domestic market, I do not have a market yet, so my market is only in English, then our brand is only in English. We do not have brands in Indonesian and in local heritage language languages.</i>
Participant 3	<i>But, since my workers and some of my Indonesian suppliers use it almost all the time speaking with local heritage language (Javanese), then whenever I meet them, I use my Javanese as well, and it influences the price that they will give me as their buyer. So, the function is to build trust in certain people involved in my business.</i>

(Researchers' source. Interview questions were developed according to Garrett, 2010).

From Table 4, it can be analysed that localness can also be constructed by linking aspects of Indonesian SME practitioners’ culture and their regional roots (Gunawan et al, 2020). For example, participants 1 and 3 went to their business destinations. Their roots include their religion, history, culture, ways of living, and experiences. The way they build a business relationship, however, is influenced by the culture of their origin. Sometimes they found it easier to build trust because of the similarity of religion, for example. And sometimes, they met fellow people from the same tribe in the buyer's country, making their business activities easier there. According to participant 1, many entrepreneurs can speak Minang and use it when discussing with him, so he uses his ability to talk about this language to explore ideas and strengthen relationships, also expanding the networks among fellow international entrepreneurs who can speak Minang and come from Minang too. They can also get more efficient prices with their local language skills with traders in the suburbs of Indonesia. By this, they can get products of high quality but at competitive prices to enter the world of international trade. In this case, as a part of SME's global activities, the participants simultaneously function as “a marker of ethnonational identity” and history. Localness is constructed by linking aspects of regional culture from where the products are made to be bought by foreign buyers (Gunawan et al, 2020). For example, coffee from Solok, Minang, is still traditionally cultivated by farmers for generations and has been organic for a long time because it has never been fertilised. This, of course, can be an added value for this coffee product in the international market.

Table 4. Participants’ opinions about the use of languages to leverage their product brand to the international market.

Excerpts 2	The use of language choice to leverage their brand
Participant 1	<i>For marketing in the country, brands in Indonesia are very important. However, for marketing or export abroad, brands in English are very important and influential because sometimes foreign partners even suggest a specific name for the brand of a product, and that can be in English or the local country language, for example, Red Ginger which in Arabic means “Alzanjabil al-Ahmar” when we market it to the kingdom of Oman. Coffee is the same, the names of our coffee products are very much adapted to the terms of the destination country, “Tariq Coffee” because Tariq is the name of our investor from Oman, and he wants his name to be our brand.</i>
Participant 2	<i>For the furniture and furniture business, I always use English because I do not have customers from the domestic market, so my market is only in English, then our brand is only in English. We do not have brands in Indonesian and Regional Languages.</i>

Participant 3	<i>Brand selection is very important in marketing our products in target countries. Because our partners always have another name for our brand, which they choose from their language. For example, our Banana Chips are marketed in Arabic using the brand "Hulwa", which means "sweet".</i>
---------------	--

(Researchers' source. Interview questions and table developed according to Garrett, 2010).



Picture 1. Packaging examples of the SMEs' products with their brands.

The results of interviewing the participants, as seen in table 5, affirmed that the use of various semiotic resources and the effective use of English creates a good image for the SME business; this is especially true in business contexts where English can enhance competitiveness and credibility. For example, SMEs' local products utilize semiotic resources that effectively index localness. The packaging and brands of these products also use local names as product characteristics, for example, Jahe Merah. Even though they wrote the international name on the packaging, Red Ginger, the brand still provided the local brand of the product, Rajahe. Certain products, such as teak wood furniture, with the international brand still "Ibuku" and "Santai Furniture", shell crafts, and rattan, are also related to local historical values and the history of its SME's company, creating index localness (www.archifi.com, 2020). Moreover, the SME's history and culture obliged them to utilise more local resources than worldwide ones. These material structures and community contexts influence super-diversity because they establish criteria for the credibility of resources. In addition, they determine which resources can be utilised inside their business for international business. This is in line with what Saarenketo, et al (2018) said in "A Global Mindset Still a Prerequisite for Successful SME Internationalisation?"

This research on Indonesian SMEs engaged in export and import activities highlights the critical importance of language in branding and marketing inside foreign markets. Participants emphasised the necessity of modifying their brand names for various markets. A participant noted that international collaborators frequently propose brand names in English or local dialects, as seen in "Red Ginger" being translated to "Alzanjabil al-Ahmar" in Oman, and "Tariq Coffee," named after an Omani investor. Likewise, "Hulwa" is used as the brand for banana chips in Arab markets, signifying "sweet." These changes highlight the localisation of brand names to align more effectively with the cultural and linguistic standards of the target market. This pragmatic approach to language utilisation illustrates an awareness of the necessity to synchronise products with regional anticipations. While Saarenketo et al. (2018) emphasise the significance of a global mentality for achieving success in international business, specifically highlighting how managers' receptiveness to cultural variations improves their capacity to manoeuvre across varied international marketplaces. This research results show the particular language tactics employed by Indonesian SMEs. In contrast, Saarenketo et al. emphasise the overarching managerial traits that facilitate the international success of SMEs, including adaptability and decision-making in difficult contexts. They highlight a global perspective as an essential element; yet, their study fails to examine in depth the practical implementation of language adaptation in branding.

The result of our study emphasises the direct correlation between language choices and market demands, demonstrating a pragmatic and collaborative branding strategy. Participant 2 concentrated on using English exclusively for their brand, as their market is wholly worldwide. This straightforward branding contrasts with the adaptability needed in other instances, such as modifying brand names for local markets. Saarenketo et al. examine how efficacious decision-making choices amongst uncertainty can assist SMEs in navigating overseas markets, although they do not specifically address branding and language adaptation.

Ultimately, while Saarenketo et al. (2018) highlight the significance of cultural awareness and the necessity for managers to comprehend and address the intricacies of international markets, this research prioritises market-specific language adaptation as an essential requirement for global success. Indonesian SMEs adeptly modify their branding to align with cultural and linguistic contexts, demonstrating a profound comprehension of the significance of market-oriented initiatives. Their global perspective facilitates international decision-making, but it is the linguistic adaptability in branding that directly affects how these SMEs interact with overseas consumers, a point not explicitly discussed in Saarenketo et al.'s research.

In contrast with the brand Banana Chips above, it uses Arabic and English as its brand, even though it is produced in Lampung, Indonesia. This can be done as a marketing strategy; this can also be considered an attempt to respond to the globalising context of the industry in Lampung. This brand does not even include local heritage language but has a very global style in using the Hulwa and Banana Chips as its brand. The multimodal realisations of the semiotic resources in the Hulwa Banana Chip product underlying aspirations of the SMEs international industry to construct Lampung as a global place (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). This reinforces the idea that globalisation is, in effect, a brand and packaging, and the global citizen as the global market is both a role and authority of deciding the semiotic resource in the packaging or brand to help the product leverage the international business successfully. Hence, globalisation becomes a goal that must be achieved through semiotic constructions. Linguistic markers in this brand complement these semiotic resources.

Table 5. The interview results related to the frequency.

Participant 1	<i>I use English every day for my business purposes and activities. The Indonesian language is about 3-4 days a week. While the local heritage language for business can be 2-3 times per week since I have several business partners from the same region.</i>
Participant 2	<i>I use English every day for my business purposes and activities. The Indonesian language is very rare, probably once or twice a month. While the local heritage language rarely did.</i>
Participant 3	<i>I use English every day for my business purposes and activities. The Indonesian language is like 4 times a week. Local heritage language probably 4 or 5 days a week. At the same time, the use of local heritage language for business is probably twice or four days a week.</i>

(Researchers' source. Interview questions were developed in accordance with Garrett, 2010).

Table 6. Participants' confidence level in using English, Indonesian language and local heritage language in their international business activities.

Participant 1	<i>Very confident that three languages, including writing, speaking and presentation skills</i>
Participant 2	<i>Confident enough in those three languages, including writing, speaking and presentation skills.</i>
Participant 3	<i>Still less confident in English (including presentation skills), but very confident in using Indonesian and my local heritage language. I have experienced being misunderstood by foreign businessmen in the target country because my English is wrong. And I think I need to improve my writing skills as well as my presentation skills in English.</i>

(Researchers' source. Interview questions were developed in accordance with Garrett, 2010).

According to the opinions regarding their confidence in language skills, participants 1 and 2 felt that their general business English skills were confident enough. These feelings are influenced by the length of time they have been in the world of international exports. The number of experiences greatly influences a person's behaviours and feelings toward their language skills.

For participant 3, his general English skills, including writing, speaking, and presentation skills, were the most important skills he would like to improve because his activities required him to apply all those English skills effectively daily. These are essential skills needed to bring his business successfully into the international market. On the other hand, not one of the participants considered general business reading and listening as English skills that they need to enhance.

And from table 8 below, participant 3 also mentioned that he encountered a communication problem with business partners in English listening, especially with non-native English speakers. The respondents revealed that non-native English accents were difficult to understand or to assume meanings. This obstacle in communication led to missing information and misunderstanding details in conversations. Vocabulary was another frequent issue mentioned by Participant 3, which is why he was using the Language Consultation Service in the first year of his involvement in international business activity.

Table 7. The interview results regarding the need for training in the language policy (grammar structure) for employees and the machine translator/service.

Participant 1	<i>As a business language, of course, English must be used correctly following the correct structure and grammar rules also business and entrepreneurship terminologies, especially in written communications such as correspondence, email, contracts, and social media. But when it comes to speaking, sometimes it's not too important, well except during presentations because, during presentations, English must be formal. If you have daily business conversations, you don't need to be too formal. I have never used a translator service. And yes, if recruiting employees, they must be able to speak good and correct English.</i>
Participant 2	<i>Yes, it must be in formal, good, and correct English. With good sentence structure, there will be no misperception with the buyers and foreign business partners. I never use a translator, but I use Google Translate or other translation tools, for example, AI (artificial intelligence) for my business correspondence, writing a letter or business agreement.</i>

	<i>For presentations, I usually prepare myself with notes and practices to guarantee that my English is formal and correct. In the future, I hope my employee or my children who will continue my business can use English fluently and properly to build trust and good company performance.</i>
Participant 3	<i>I ask myself to use good and correct English in terms of structure and grammar as well as formality. I ever experienced misunderstandings and miscommunication with foreigners, and because of that, I sometimes used language consulting services as well, occasionally when I started my business last year. Now I feel that I can learn on my own because there are many online tools. For employees, of course, I will be happy if they can speak English both speaking and writing.</i>

(Researcher's source. Interview questions and table developed according to Garrett, 2010).

All participants explicitly expressed the necessity for English improvement during the interview due to its high use in business presentations and business correspondence. Target market countries in SME international business activities are not merely spaces that shape their repertoires but are also spaces that they can alter depending on whatever goals they may have. Presenting successfully will help them to achieve the goals of their business, profit, and increase sales. By preparing the notes and practices before presenting, as Participant 2 expressed, and as Participant 3 said that he never used a language consultation service. They utilised the Google Translate machine translator or other AI tools for their communication during the export business activities.

Language Ideology of SME Practitioners towards Globalisation in Business

Structured ideology emerging from the participants in this study, as seen in Table 8, is the importance of using proper and good grammatical, as well as structured Business English and vocabulary. Participants 1, 2, and 3 realised that writing skills and presentation skills are very important to deliver by using good English in business internationally. It is believed by all the participants that English is a vital factor in choosing future employees. Participant 2 even mentioned his dream that one day his son, who will continue his business, can also speak good English so that his business in the future will be more successful than today. Participant 1 believed that his good professional English was inseparable from his experience in international business for 19 years. There are repeated expressions in strong favour of English as the medium of their business, so they never stop learning and improving their English ability continuously through networks, consultation, and online tools, so their correspondence and communication with international buyers can be maintained and reflect the high quality and best performance of their company and themselves as the SME leaders.

To effectively penetrate the market and successfully bring their product to be bought by foreign buyers, the three SME leaders must ensure that they can connect the local (place) to the global (international buyer). In addition to Revindo (2017), SME leaders are expected to have a diverse array of language techniques to balance the local and global realities in which they find themselves and their businesses, for example, by recruiting employees that have high English skills, using translator, consultation regarding the language, improve their writing skills and presentation skills, like happened to participant 3.

The SME leaders show the nature and extent of multilingualism in international contexts. Their linguistic repertoire is as diverse as their race and nationality, personal relationships, formal education and training, professional experience, and thirst for knowledge. Given their diverse backgrounds, it is not surprising that their linguistic repertoire is similarly diverse. This is comparable to Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic habitus, a set of language dispositions, norms, and values that a person acquires via daily actions and continues to develop.

Moreover, individuals, particularly those who are extensively influenced by globalization processes like international business activities and other economic forces and migration, may have a "truncated" repertoire (Blommaert, et al., 2005), which is the result of "very specific variations of language and literacy." demonstrates "a fragmented and very diversified trajectory of life and environment" (Blommaert, 2010).

Table 8. Participants' interview results regarding language ideologies towards English for their international business activities.

Excerpt 3	
Participant 1	<i>A language is an important tool for expanding my business. But knowledge and content matter more. So, language is important for conveying ideas and thoughts to establish business relations, but the quality of our products and knowledge about the product, the markets and the culture are also important. I do not mind learning any language if it is needed to develop my market and business. Right now, to be honest, I want to learn French because currently I am now expanding my market to Africa, and most countries in Africa use French as their official language.</i>
Participant 2	<i>English is the most important language and has a significant impact on my business because everything in my business is done in English. And I also do not mind learning the local language of my target market country because I know it really "hits" for them because learning the language means I want to know the culture of the target market country and buyers very like it, my relationship becomes closer with them, so they are happy to do business with me.</i>

Participant 3	<i>English is the international business language. My products can penetrate foreign markets because communication is established in English, from advertising emails, social media, correspondence, and telephone. Even when we met in person, we only used English. We express our idea, thought, will, expectation and feeling in English in our international business.</i>
---------------	---

(Researcher's source. Interview questions and table developed according to Garrett (2010).

All the participants agreed that English has remained the one and only language of choice for all international business activities for the three participants, as SME practitioners in their international network. Thus, English proficiency and successful business in an international area or space are viewed as synonymous among these three participants. This link appears strong in Indonesia's business practitioners, reflected by the three participants, and has endured despite efforts to promote local products with their history and cultural uniqueness. According to all participants, English will continue to retain promising business growth. Their international buyers highly regard English, shaping their ideology that English is important to their business. All the participants stated that they would choose future employees based on their English skills. All participants recognised the importance of English to economic development; it will build trust if used properly in their marketing efforts, both online and in direct marketing meetings. In this respect, English is a gateway to improved socioeconomic prospects on a national scale.

Participants 1 and 2 viewed English as representing "culture" and "expertise" due to their long experience in an international business network, and it is also explicitly expressed by participant 3 in the previous table that he still needs to improve his English because he has just jumped into international business for a year.

Table 9. Participants' interview results regarding language ideologies towards the Indonesian language and the local heritage language.

Participant 1	<i>Indonesian is the official language in our country. I, like people in other professions, use Indonesian with fellow Indonesians. Domestic correspondence and communications always use the Indonesian language. If with foreigners, I use a foreign language. If with business friends who come from the same area as me, namely Minang, then I use Minang language. We are used to helping each other in our international business.</i>
Participant 2	<i>Indonesian is the official language of Indonesia. It seems impossible that if we use Indonesian properly and correctly, we can advance our business. Of course, Indonesian is important and should be formal for business correspondence with governments and suppliers. Minang language is my local language, and I am originally from Bukit Tinggi. My mother tongues. It is important to me daily because I want to be close to my family members and childhood friends. If you are in business, you also need it occasionally.</i>
Participant 3	<i>Indonesian is our national language, and of course, it is important for my business. I asked permission in Indonesian and to buy local ingredients in Indonesian. My native language is my language with my family and loyal workers. Some of my important partners also use local heritage language with me.</i>

(Researcher's source. Interview questions and table developed according to Garrett, 2010).

This conviction, which associates English proficiency with global success, illustrates a firmly rooted image of English as equivalent to international commercial prospects. These results align with, but also differ from, the critical viewpoints articulated by Cogo and Yanaprasart (2018), who contend that the concept of English as the "language of business" is a socially created idea perpetuated by globalization, multinational firms, and Western-centric business education. They argue that English's dominating standing is not due to intrinsic language superiority, but rather a result of historical power dynamics and the hegemonic dissemination of Western capitalist models. This study reveals that SME practitioners implicitly accept English as the key to international success, while Cogo and Yanaprasart emphasize the dangers of monolingual ideologies, which perpetuate linguistic inequality and marginalize multilingual resources. The comparison exposes a notable tension. Practitioners in this research consider English essential for fostering trust with international consumers and ensuring sustained growth, thereby perpetuating the worldview challenged by Cogo and Yanaprasart. Conversely, the interview data indicate that participants appreciate Indonesian and their local dialects for fostering domestic networks, establishing trust with suppliers, and preserving social connections. This indicates that, in reality, multilingualism is already a fundamental component of SME company operations, despite the ideological preference for English above all other languages.

Collectively, these data indicate that although English competence undoubtedly promotes international interaction, a more equitable strategy that recognizes and incorporates multilingual capabilities could improve both commercial results and cultural inclusivity. This reflects Cogo and Yanaprasart's advocacy for embracing plurilingualism and acknowledging the multilingual dynamics of global commerce. This study's findings confirm the predominance of English in the experiences of SME practitioners and underscore the necessity for critical reflection on the role of local and national languages in sustaining business practices, despite their underappreciated status in the prevailing ideology that regards English as the most important language of business.

The three participants expressed their nationalism through the results of the interview regarding the national language and their sense of pride in their local heritage language skills, even though there are repeated expressions in strong favour of English as the primary medium of their business. They also mentioned explicitly that the Indonesian language and local heritage language are only used in the secondary activities of their business activities in relation to domestic activities to support their overseas activities. But of course, it plays an important role in making SMEs profit because these local language holders can provide cheaper prices for production materials if they have a good relationship with SMEs and trust these SMEs' practitioners.

Language as Capital in SME Internationalisation

Our findings reinforce Terzen et al.'s (2017) argument that language is not merely a technical tool, but a strategic resource embedded within international business practices. In this context, English functions as both symbolic and economic capital, serving as a prerequisite for accessing global markets and establishing legitimacy. However, our study extends this understanding by revealing that English also serves as a psychological enabler, fostering entrepreneurial confidence, an aspect that Terzen et al. only implicitly address. While Terzen et al. critique the dominance of English and advocate for greater recognition of multilingual realities, our research provides empirical support for this perspective by documenting multilingual practices among Indonesian SME practitioners. Participants fluidly code-switch between English, Bahasa Indonesia, and local heritage language depending on context, audience, and communicative goals. This behavior reflects the plurilingual and adaptive strategies that Terzen et al. promote, highlighting the real-world complexity of linguistic navigation in international business.

Language Ideologies and Power Dynamics

Our study also illustrates how language ideologies, perceptions of language in relation to power and authority, manifest in the lived experiences of SME practitioners. This aligns with Terzen et al. (2017), who note that English is often ideologically framed as a superior and more professional language. Participants in our study reinforced this view, expressing that English fluency enhanced their international credibility and opened access to global opportunities.

At the same time, our findings highlight the strategic use of regional and local heritage languages as tools for trust-building and negotiation, especially in interactions with local suppliers, artisans, and domestic institutions. This suggests that power is not exclusively constructed through global languages, but also through contextually relevant local linguistic resources. These dynamics offer strong empirical support for Albury's (2020) multilingual ideology framework, which posits that professionals in multilingual societies must continuously balance the symbolic capital of English with the relational power of local languages.

Furthermore, language use was found to be integral to branding strategies. Participants did not merely translate product names into English but also adapted them into the local languages of their target markets (e.g., Arabic), ensuring cultural and linguistic resonance. This practice operationalizes semiotic theory in the context of SME branding, providing applied support for Kress & Van Leeuwen's (2001) theoretical assertions regarding the communicative power of visual and linguistic design.

Finally, participants in our research demonstrated strategic language deployment, using English to meet legal and professional standards while leveraging local languages to build rapport and negotiate favorable terms. This highlights the dual function of language in SME internationalisation: facilitating economic gain and enhancing institutional and interpersonal alignment, confirming Knowles' (2017) and Saarenketo et al.'s (2018) view of English as both symbolic and functional capital in global commerce.

CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted the pivotal role of multilingual competence in shaping the internationalisation strategies of Indonesian SMEs. Proficiency in English enables SMEs to access global markets, enhance competitiveness, and establish a foothold in international trade. At the same time, national and local languages serve as vital forms of cultural capital, reinforcing relationships with suppliers, employees, and other domestic stakeholders. The findings suggest that SME practitioners do not passively operate within this linguistic environment; rather, they actively and strategically navigate it. Leveraging digital platforms and translation technologies, they mobilize linguistic resources to bridge local and global business contexts.

Language, in this sense, functions not only as a communication tool but also as both economic and symbolic capital. SME practitioners engage in what Blommaert (2010) terms *language mobility*, the movement and reassignment of linguistic resources across sociolinguistic spaces and scales. Through their work in international markets, they reposition the value and function of their language repertoires, enabling the promotion of uniquely Indonesian products, cultures, and identities within global circuits. This linguistic mobility both reflects and reshapes the political, economic, and cultural dynamics of globalisation.

Furthermore, this study reinforces the idea that SME internationalisation is a socio-linguistic process. The strategic organization of language use is shaped by practitioners' work experience, international exposure, personal goals, and access to digital tools, including AI-assisted translation services such as Google Translate. These tools facilitate real-time communication with international buyers and clients, making language choices more flexible and adaptive. The three SME participants in this study exemplify how greater global engagement and cross-border mobility contribute not only to the expansion of their businesses but also to the strengthening of local linguistic and economic value.

Finally, the findings support Bourdieu and Thompson's (1999) argument that linguistic exchanges are inherently economic. The international operations of SMEs demonstrate that language use is embedded in economic practice, where linguistic capital can be leveraged for competitive advantage. As SMEs form and maintain networks across cultural and geographic boundaries, their language ideologies, practices, and attitudes are shaped by, and in turn shape, the global marketplace.

In summary, the internationalisation of Indonesian SMEs is not only a matter of market strategy but also a deeply linguistic and cultural process. To thrive globally while sustaining local relevance, SMEs must continue to cultivate multilingual competencies, balancing English proficiency with the strategic use of national and local languages. This approach enhances their global participation while reaffirming the cultural and economic value of Indonesia's diverse linguistic landscape.

REFERENCES

- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bauman, R. and Briggs, C. (2003). *Voices of Modernity*. Cambridge University Press. Bauman, Z. 1991. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Blommaert, J. (2006). *Language ideology*. *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, (6) 510-522.
- Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A critical introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bolton, K., & Kuteeva, M. (2020). English as an academic and business lingua franca: Investigating attitudes and ideologies. *World Englishes*, 39(2), 202–218. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12475>
- Chen, M. K. (2013). The effect of language on economic behavior: Evidence from savings rates, health behaviors, and retirement assets. *American Economic Review*, 103(2), 690–731.
- Cogo, A., & House, J. (2021). Business English as a lingua franca: Research developments and implications. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, 10(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jelf-2021-0001>
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Crick, Dave (1999) *Understanding how small and medium-sized exporters use language*. *Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*. An International Journal MCB University Press, e Montfort University, Leicester, United Kingdom.
- Dewi, H. (2020). Valuasi bisnis baru dan optimal capital perusahaan jasa industri (maklon) bagi UMKM keripik kemasan (Studi kasus: PT Krispindo). *ULTIMA Accounting*, 12(2), 254–269.
- Ehrenreich, S. (2022). English in international business: Theories, practices, and challenges. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 53(5), 832–849. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-021-00497-6>
- Garrett, Peter. (2010). *Attitude to Language*. Key Topics of Sociolinguistics. Cambridge University.
- Gunawan, S., Syarif, R., Nurhayati, P., Asnawi, Y. H., & Joewono, H. H. (2023). Local wisdom-based social responsibility of Balinese SMEs to improve competitiveness. *Jurnal Aplikasi Manajemen dan Bisnis*, 9(1), 141–158.
- Guo, Y. (2021). Linguistic capital and economic outcomes: English in global business practices. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 12(4), 621–645. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2020-0020>
- Heller, M. (2003). *Globalization, the new economy, and the commodification of language and identity*. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*. 7(4), 473–492. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2003.00238>.
- Heller, M. (2010). *The commodification of language*. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 39(1), 101– 114. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.10495>
- Hicks, D. L., Santacreu-Vasut, E., & Shoham, A. (2015). Does mother tongue make for women's work? Linguistics, household labor, and gender identity. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 110, 19–44.
- Jenkins, J. (2020). *English as a lingua franca in the business world: New perspectives*. Routledge.
- Kankaanranta, A., & Planken, B. (2010). BELF competence as business knowledge of internationally operating business professionals. *Journal of Business Communication*, 47(4), 380–407.
- Kress, G. R., & Van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *Reading images: the grammar of visual design*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: the modes and media of contemporary communication*. London and New York: Oxford University Press.

- Kostić-Bobanović., and Novak (2006) *The Effect of Foreign Language Abilities and Cultural Competencies on the International Success of SMEs*. Management International Conference. Pula, Croatia. 2006
- Knowles, Deborah. (RV). *Foreign language use among decision-makers of successfully internationalized SMEs*. Westminster Business School, University of Westminster, London, UK
- Knowles, Mughan., and Llyod-Reason (2006) *Utilization of foreign languages by the decision-makers of successfully internationalized SMEs*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited's Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development was published in 2002.
- Kurniasari, F., Gunawan, D., & Utomo, P. (2022). Factors influencing small medium enterprise's behavior in adopting e-fulfillment services. *International Journal of Professional Business Review*, 7(5), e0675.
- Larasati., A.A. (2022). *Menko Airlangga Ungkap Manfaat Jika UMKM Naik Kelas, Apa itu?* <https://ekonomi.bisnis.com/read/20221028/9/1592564/menko-airlangga-ungkap-manfaat-jika-umkm-naik-kelas-apa-itu>.
- Natalia, M. A., Kurniasari, F. T., Hendrawaty, E., & Oktaviani, V. M. (2020). Pengaruh literasi keuangan terhadap inklusi keuangan dengan menggunakan *social capital* sebagai variabel mediator. *ULTIMA Management*, 12(1), 16–33.
- Nickerson, C. (2020). English as a lingua franca in international business contexts. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 40, 117–135. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190520000023>
- Nurchahyo, R., & Gharnaditya, D. (2015). Prepare SME in facing AEC 2015 through English training program to obtain the export market. *The Winners Journal*.
- Nickerson, C. (2015). The death of the non-native speaker? English as a lingua franca in business communication: A research agenda. *Language Teaching*, 48(3), 390–404.
- Nilson., Therese. (2010). *Good for Living? On the Relationship between Globalization and Life Expectancy*. World Development.
- Pennycook, A. (2017). *The cultural politics of English as an international language*. Routledge.
- Piekkari, R., & Tietze, S. (2011). A world of languages: Implications for international management research and practice. *Journal of World Business*, 46(3), 267–269.
- Piekkari, R., Vaara, E., Tienari, J., & Sa'ntti, R. (2005). Integration or disintegration? Human resource implications of the common corporate language decision in a cross-border merger. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16(3), 330–344.
- Revindo, Muhammad Dian. (2017) *Internationalisation of Indonesian SMEs*. A thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Economics. Lincoln University.
- Revindo, M. D., Gan, C., & Massie, N. W. G. (2019). Factors affecting variation in SMEs' export intensity. *Gadjah Mada International Journal of Business*, 21(1), 1-20.
- Sikandar, Aliya. (2016). *Language ideologies in a Multilingual Corporate Setting*. Department of English University of Azad Jammu, Pakistan.
- Terzen., H, Terjesen., S, Harzing., A. (2017). *Language in International Business: A Review and Agenda for Future Research*. Management International Review.
- Tietze, S., & Dick, P. (2013). The victorious English language: Hegemonic practices in the management academy. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 22(1), 122–134.
- Widati, S., & Mukhtar, S. (2025). Understanding How Export Stimuli, Export Knowledge, Product Standards, and Marketing Strategies Shape the Export Performance of Indonesian MSMEs. *Journal of Digital Business and Global Economy*.
- Woo, D., and Giles, H. (2017). *Language attitudes and intergroup dynamics in multilingual organizations*. International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management, Department of the Communication University of California, Santa Barbara.
- Sixuan Wang & Anikó Hatoss (2022). *When the linguistic market meets the tea business: language attitudes, ideologies, and linguistic entrepreneurship in the Blang community in China*. Current Issues in Language Planning. DOI: 10.1080/14664208.2022.2047514
- Urry, J. (2002). *The Tourist Gaze, London: Sage, 2nd edn.* The Natural and Built Environment, London: Belhaven Press.
- Yanka, Amalia., and Ed Rex (2020) *Language Ideology in Cross-Cultural Communication*. International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR), International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)