

Bahasa Indonesia in UNESCO's 43rd general conference speech: a social practice analysis

Muhammad Alim Akbar Nasir^{1*}, Wilma Prafitri²

^{1,2}English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Mulawarman

Email: alim.akbar@fib.unmul.ac.id

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji sebuah pidato yang disampaikan oleh Abdul Mu'ti, Menteri Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Republik Indonesia, atas nama Pemerintah Indonesia pada Sidang Umum ke-43 UNESCO pada 4 November 2025, dengan menggunakan dimensi praktik sosial sebagai kerangka analisis. Data penelitian berupa naskah pidato resmi. Analisis dilakukan melalui pembacaan analitis terhadap pidato tersebut untuk menghubungkan pilihan bahasa dan isi pernyataan dengan legitimasi institusional, norma diplomatik, dan posisi Indonesia dalam tata kelola global. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia berfungsi sebagai bagian yang normal dan diterima dalam forum UNESCO, tidak hanya sebagai tindakan bahasa yang bersifat seremonial atau simbolik. Dalam konteks ini, Bahasa Indonesia digunakan sebagai bahasa yang praktis untuk komunikasi resmi dan dipertahankan sepanjang bagian-bagian utama pidato. Pidato tersebut membangun kredibilitas dengan merujuk pada pendidikan sebagai hak, menyajikan angka partisipasi, dan menyebutkan program-program kebijakan, yang menampilkan tindakan Indonesia sebagai selaras dengan tujuan global sambil mempertahankan nada diplomatik yang formal. Pidato tersebut juga menempatkan Indonesia dalam bidang-bidang yang berkaitan dengan UNESCO di luar pendidikan, termasuk sains, lingkungan, kebudayaan, dan komunikasi, serta mengikuti rutinitas diplomatik yang umum seperti menyampaikan terima kasih dan menunjukkan solidaritas. Penggunaan bentuk budaya Indonesia, pantun, pada bagian penutup sesuai dengan suasana formal, menunjukkan bahwa ekspresi budaya dapat hadir dalam forum sebuah internasional tanpa melemahkan kewibawaan resmi.

Kata kunci: praktik sosial, Bahasa Indonesia, UNESCO, wacana diplomatik

ABSTRACT

This study examines a speech delivered by Abdul Mu'ti, Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, on behalf of the Government of Indonesia at UNESCO's 43rd General Conference on 4 November 2025, using the social practice dimension as the analytical framework. The data consist of the official speech manuscript. The analysis relies on close analytical reading of the speech to connect language choices and statement content with institutional legitimacy, diplomatic norms, and Indonesia's position in global governance. The findings indicate that the use of Bahasa Indonesia functions as a normal and accepted part of the UNESCO forum, not simply as a ceremonial or symbolic language act. In this context, Bahasa Indonesia is used as a practical language for official communication and is maintained across the speech's substantive sections. The speech builds credibility by referring to education as a right, presenting enrollment figures, and naming policy programs, presenting Indonesia's actions as aligned with global goals while keeping a formal diplomatic tone. It also places Indonesia within UNESCO-related fields beyond education, including science, the environment, culture, and communication, and follows common diplomatic routines such as expressing gratitude and showing solidarity. The closing use of an Indonesian cultural form, *pantun*, fits the formal setting, showing that cultural expression can be present in an international forum without undermining official authority.

Keywords: social practice, Bahasa Indonesia, UNESCO, diplomatic discourse

A. INTRODUCTION

Language does not function merely as a neutral medium of communication but operates as a form of social practice through which power relations, ideologies, and institutional structures are produced and maintained. In critical discourse studies, this perspective is systematically stated in Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse, which conceptualizes discourse as

consisting of text, discursive practice, and social practice, with the latter linking discourse to broader socio-political and ideological structures (Fairclough, 1995). The social practice dimension situates discourse within historically specific social conditions, encompassing relations of power, institutional norms, and ideological processes, and treats discourse as part of social structures rather than as an isolated linguistic event. At this level, discourse both shapes and is shaped by society, enabling the examination of how discursive formations contribute to the normalization of particular worldviews, the legitimation of authority, and the reproduction or contestation of dominant social structures (Fairclough, 1995; Gulestø et al., 2025). This macro-level orientation is essential for critical analyses that move beyond text-internal features to explore how meanings are embedded within and reproduced by wider social practices.

Despite the growing body of work drawing on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model, some strands of this literature place greater emphasis on textual analysis and discursive practice, while the social practice dimension is sometimes addressed more briefly or treated primarily as contextual framing rather than as a sustained analytic focus, as suggested in methodological discussions and corpus-assisted work (Flowerdew, 2014; Baker et al., 2008). Recent applications of Fairclough's framework in policy and media analysis can reflect this pattern, where social practice is used mainly to situate interpretations of texts instead of being systematically examined in its own right (Carlon et al., 2025). In such cases, the social practice dimension may be less fully developed than the textual or discursive levels, which can narrow the analysis of how ideological formations and power relations operate beyond textual features (Fairclough, 1995). In response, this study foregrounds the social practice dimension to examine more directly how discourse is embedded in broader sociocultural dynamics, including ideology, hegemony, institutional authority, and processes of social change (Fairclough, 1995). This emphasis directs attention from linguistic patterning alone to the social conditions through which particular meanings acquire legitimacy; for instance, media discourses around harm reduction show how competing framings can align with policy preferences, institutional power, and public stigma within specific sociopolitical contexts (Carlon et al., 2025).

The present study focuses on a specific institutional speech as its object of analysis. At the 43rd Session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, Abdul Mu'ti, Indonesia's Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, delivered a national statement that marked several historically significant developments for Indonesia's cultural and educational diplomacy. By situating this speech within its historical and institutional context, this research aims to reveal how political discourse operates as a vehicle of ideology, power negotiation, and social meaning.

Therefore, this study adopts Fairclough's (1995) social practice dimension as its primary analytical framework in order to examine how discourse functions as a medium to express social practice. Focusing on this dimension enables the analysis to situate the speech within its historically and institutionally specific conditions of production, where discourse is embedded in relations of power, ideological processes, and institutional norms. Through this approach, the study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamic relationship between discourse and society, particularly in how ideological meanings are produced, legitimized, and circulated within formal institutional contexts such as international organizations. By focusing on the social practice dimension, the analysis foregrounds the role of discourse in shaping social realities, negotiating authority, and reinforcing or challenging dominant structures, rather than merely describing linguistic patterns. This analytical focus not only strengthens the social practice perspective of the study but also responds to the need for clearer and more consistent use of social practice theory in discourse research.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Bahasa Indonesia as an object of language policy and global positioning

Recent language policy research has reframed Bahasa Indonesia as a dynamic object of state planning, extending beyond its traditional conceptualization as a unifying national medium. Susanto et al. (2024) analyze contemporary Bahasa Indonesia policy and highlight the deliberate efforts by the Indonesian government to promote Bahasa Indonesia not only as a domestic lingua franca but also as an international language, particularly through institutional mechanisms such as the Language Development and Cultivation Agency (Badan Bahasa). This work positions language policy as an active site of governance where national goals intersect with transnational aspirations, demonstrating a shift from internal cohesion toward strategic global projection. From this perspective, Bahasa Indonesia's status is continuously constructed through formal policies aimed at expanding its reach and symbolic value in international contexts (Aulia et al., 2025; Susanto et al., 2024). Supporting this framing, recent analyses of the Indonesian government's strategy in internationalizing the language underscore how policy initiatives including linguistic diplomacy, international education programs, and use in international forums like UNESCO and ASEAN anchor Bahasa Indonesia within broader soft power and cultural diplomacy agendas (Aulia et al., 2025). Furthermore, contemporary research on language policy implementation highlights that legal frameworks and institutionalized teaching programs such as Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) are central to the translation of high-level policy into global practice, reinforcing the notion that Bahasa Indonesia's global role is as much a governance project as a sociolinguistic evolution (Susanto et al., 2024; Wijaya & Frost, 2025).

While national policy articulates broad goals, studies grounded in classroom and community practices demonstrate that the lived realities of language policy are negotiated through multilingual interactions. Research in Indonesian educational contexts shows that Bahasa Indonesia operates within a complex multilingual ecology, where teachers and learners strategically draw on Indonesian, local languages, and English to manage explanation, participation, and classroom authority, often reshaping policy intentions through translanguaging and other situated language practices (Liando et al., 2023; Rusdiansyah et al., 2025). This policy practice gap is further evident in implementation research showing how micro level actors such as teachers exercise agency in interpreting policy demands under local constraints, producing outcomes that do not map neatly onto top down language planning goals (Yusra et al., 2022). In general, these studies challenge structural accounts by demonstrating that the authority of Bahasa Indonesia is mediated through day-to-day pedagogical work and contextual negotiation, where language choice reflects practical classroom needs and shifting power relations among languages rather than straightforward compliance.

In parallel, a study on Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA), which means Bahasa Indonesia for foreign speakers, illustrates how language policy intersects with globalization and cultural diplomacy. International scholarship demonstrates that Bahasa Indonesia policy explicitly frames the teaching of Indonesian to non-native speakers as part of a broader strategy of internationalization and global engagement rather than merely an extension of domestic language education (Susanto et al., 2024). Recent applied linguistics research increasingly focuses on learner diversity and classroom experience. As Eerdemutu et al. (2024) implied language learning in different classroom contexts and languages, highlighting the role of student engagement and social interaction in supporting learning. Taken together, these studies indicate that the internationalization of Indonesian through BIPA is best understood as a policy-driven educational

project aligned with cultural diplomacy objectives, where curriculum and pedagogical planning anticipate multilingual learner repertoires beyond national borders.

Overall, recent literature suggests that Bahasa Indonesia should be analytically treated as a strategic object of policy whose meaning is negotiated across multiple sites, from national planning agencies to classrooms and from curriculum frameworks to diplomatic platforms. Although earlier research centered on domestic standardization and national identity, contemporary work foregrounds how language policy is co-constituted through global positioning efforts that align with both national interests and international norms. Yet, there remains a gap in systematic analysis of how Bahasa Indonesia is discursively constructed within global governance forums as social practice, for example in UNESCO speeches. Filling this gap requires integrating insights from policy implementation, multilingual education, and language diplomacy to understand how institutional discourse transforms policy directives into symbolic capital on the global stage.

Based on recent studies on language policy and global positioning, this study draws on the idea that Bahasa Indonesia can be understood as a policy focus shaped through ongoing government and institutional efforts, not only as the result of natural language change. Instead of stopping at broad policy goals and program descriptions such as internationalization and BIPA, attention is shifted to global forums by treating a UNESCO General Conference speech as an important place where policy becomes real in practice through official communication. Bringing together work on national language planning, policy implementation in everyday settings, and language diplomacy provides a clearer basis for examining how institutional speeches in international forums can turn policy aims into visible legitimacy and a clearer national position.

2. Social practice

In current discourse studies, “social practice” is widely used to treat language as something people *do*—a form of social action—rather than a neutral channel for describing reality. From this view, discourse is both shaped by social structures and involved in reproducing or contesting them, including power relations and ideological assumptions. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) helped formalize this orientation by connecting textual choices to discursive processes and to the wider social conditions in which texts circulate (Fairclough, 1995). This has contributed to a methodological preference for analyzing institutional texts and speeches in terms of what they accomplish in specific settings, including how they manage authority and normativity.

Multimodal CDA makes this orientation easier to demonstrate empirically because it traces how meaning is built across modes and across turns of interaction. Wilczek-Watson & Brickley (2025), for example, treat stance-taking, legitimation, and othering as routinized practices through which participants position identities and moral boundaries in online interaction. Their discussion draws on Morales’s (2023) account of digital harm as a socially organized process shaped by interactional norms and ideological framing, rather than by isolated events. The emphasis falls on repetition, uptake, and the kinds of evaluations that become easy to reproduce once they are established.

Policy discourse studies show the same logic in more formal institutional settings, where texts do administrative work by distributing responsibilities and defining legitimate participation. Phenwan et al. (2025), in their analysis of Scottish dementia policies, track how policy texts allocate agency, legitimate governance arrangements, and background certain stakeholder perspectives. Building on Brookes’s (2021) concept of “landscapes of assumptions,” they describe how ideological positions can be embedded in language that appears technical, procedural, or humanitarian. What becomes analytically interesting is less the explicit claim of a policy and more

the assumptions it treats as already agreed upon.

A similar emphasis appears in research on political reporting and official communication, where genres have stable expectations and recurring rhetorical moves. Ma & Crosthwaite (2026) describe government work reports as performative discursive practices that construct national image and authority across time, including through recurrent evaluative patterns and selective representations of achievement. Power & Crosthwaite (2022) examine crisis communication as a process of organizing public sense-making, including the framing of responsibility and the management of uncertainty under institutional constraints. These studies treat “official communication” as a situated genre with predictable affordances rather than as neutral information transfer.

CDA research on protest and conflict has often used legitimation as an entry point because moral evaluation is routinely built into how actors and actions are named. Abbas et al. (2025) examine legitimation and delegitimation as discursive processes through which actions are made morally acceptable or unacceptable in public argumentation. Drawing on Yasmin (2024), they identify recurring strategies such as authorization, moral evaluation, and rationalization as ways of structuring judgment and aligning audiences. The analysis typically proceeds by tracing how these strategies cluster, recur, and become plausible within particular political contexts.

In conclusion, this line of work positions social practice not as an abstract label but as an operational stance that links textual patterning to institutional action across settings. A UNESCO General Conference speech is a useful case because it is produced within a highly regulated international genre, delivered under diplomatic constraints, and designed for uptake by multiple audiences with different stakes. Drawing on discourse studies that treat social practice as what institutions do with language, this study builds on an approach that sees official texts as actions shaped by rules, authority, and familiar speech routines, rather than as neutral information sharing. Social practice is used to examine how legitimacy is built and how official claims sound reasonable through alignment with institutional goals, the use of policy evidence, and repeated diplomatic rituals. This framing creates a direct bridge between social practice theory and the analysis of global forum speeches, showing how language choice, structured commitments, and cultural forms can support authority and recognized participation in multilateral settings such as UNESCO.

C. METHOD

Fairclough’s (1995) social practice approach in Critical Discourse Analysis serves as the framework for this study’s analysis of a text, which is a speech given by Abdul Mu’ti on November 4, 2025, during UNESCO’s 43rd General Conference (KEMDIKDASMEN, 2025). The analysis follows an interpretive qualitative procedure guided by Fairclough’s focus on discourse as social practice. The speech is read closely in several rounds to map its main parts and the sequence of ideas. Attention is then directed to patterns in how the text presents actors and relationships, expresses responsibility and roles, uses evaluation, and frames certain assumptions as already agreed. Analytic decisions are recorded in brief notes during each round of reading to keep the procedure consistent and to ensure that interpretations remain tied to the wording of the speech.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Textual Data and English Translation from the speech

No.	Original Speech Data	English Translation
1	“on behalf of the Government of the Republic of	

Indonesia”	
2	“I will now continue this statement in Bahasa Indonesia,”
3	“a bridge of unity across our archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, 700 local languages, and 1,300 ethnic groups.”
4	“a bridge of understanding among nations.”
5	“penuntun moral dan sumber pengetahuan global”
6	“kompas etika bagi peradaban dunia”
7	“pelajar, pendidik, jurnalis, dan relawan kemanusiaan”
8	“angka partisipasi sekolah anak usia 7–12 tahun dan 13–15 tahun masing-masing telah mencapai 99,19 persen dan 96,17 persen.”
9	“pendidikan adalah hak dasar setiap anak dan tidak boleh ada satu pun yang tertinggal,”
10	Pendidikan Bermutu untuk Semua
11	Gerakan Semesta
12	“pembelajaran mendalam yang menekankan praktik pembelajaran yang lebih berkesadaran, bermakna, dan menggembirakan,”
13	“pengenalan kecerdasan artifisial, coding, serta penguatan pendidikan karakter,”
14	“peningkatan kapasitas dan kesejahteraan guru sebagai agen pembelajaran dan agen peradaban,”
15	“makan bergizi gratis,”
16	“sekolah rakyat bagi anak-anak dari keluarga miskin.”
17	“program digitalisasi pendidikan dan Rumah Pendidikan”
18	“Man and the Biosphere”
19	“Global Geopark”
20	“Situs Warisan Dunia”

a moral guide and a source of global knowledge
an ethical compass for world civilization
students, educators, journalists, and humanitarian volunteers
the school participation rates for children aged 7–12 and 13–15 have reached 99.19 percent and 96.17 percent, respectively
education is a basic right of every child and no one should be left behind
Quality Education for All Semesta Movement
deep learning that emphasizes learning practices that are more mindful, meaningful, and enjoyable
the introduction of artificial intelligence, coding, and strengthening character education
improving teachers’ capacity and welfare as agents of learning and agents of civilization
free nutritious meals
community schools for children from poor families
the education digitalization program and Rumah Pendidikan (Education House)
Man and the Biosphere
Global Geopark
World Heritage Sites

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 21 | “pada tahun 2024, Indonesia menjadi tuan rumah Forum Air Dunia ke-10” | in 2024, Indonesia hosted the 10th World Water Forum |
| 22 | “Indonesia juga meyakini bahwa kebudayaan adalah jiwa kemanusiaan dan fondasi perdamaian” | Indonesia also believes that culture is the soul of humanity and the foundation of peace |
| 23 | “untuk melindungi dan memajukan keberagaman melalui program pelestarian berbasis masyarakat dan pendidikan warisan budaya.” | to protect and promote diversity through community-based preservation programs and heritage education |
| 24 | “Indonesia juga mendukung penuh mandat UNESCO di bidang komunikasi dan informasi,” | Indonesia also fully supports UNESCO’s mandate in the field of communication and information |
| 25 | “memperkuat perlindungan keselamatan jurnalis serta memperluas literasi media dan informasi, khususnya bagi kaum muda dan pelajar.” | strengthen the protection of journalists’ safety and expand media and information literacy, especially for youth and students |
| 26 | “Izinkan saya mengucapkan terima kasih dan penghargaan kepada Madam Audrey Azoulay atas kepemimpinannya dalam memajukan misi UNESCO yang penuh tantangan,” | Allow me to express my thanks and appreciation to Madam Audrey Azoulay for her leadership in advancing UNESCO’s challenging mission |
| 27 | “Indonesia berdiri bersama seluruh negara anggota untuk memperkuat UNESCO sebagai ruang kolaborasi global yang berlandaskan saling percaya, saling belajar, dan saling menghormati.” | Indonesia stands with all member states to strengthen UNESCO as a space for global collaboration based on mutual trust, mutual learning, and mutual respect |
| 28 | “Dari Jakarta ke Samarkand, kota bersejarah nan menawan. Jika manusia bergandeng tangan, dunia indah penuh kedamaian,” | From Jakarta to Samarkand, a charming historic city. If people join hands, the world is beautiful and full of peace |
-

This study finds that the use of Bahasa Indonesia in Abdul Mu’ti’s speech at UNESCO’s 43rd General Conference functions as a social practice of institutional enactment and normalization, rather than as a symbolic or celebratory linguistic act. Delivered within a formal multilateral setting and explicitly articulated “on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia,” the speech positions the speaker as an institutional representative whose discourse is shaped by organizational authority and established procedural norms. The explicit procedural transition, “I will now continue this statement in Bahasa Indonesia,” further indicates that the language choice is enacted

as a routine institutional practice, signaling its legitimacy within the conference framework rather than foregrounding it as an object of symbolic promotion.

The explicit transition statement, “I will now continue this statement in Bahasa Indonesia,” marks a controlled shift in the speech without justification or apology. From a social practice perspective, this absence of metadiscursive explanation is significant, as it indicates that Bahasa Indonesia is treated as a legitimate and unproblematic medium of communication. Linguistic legitimacy, therefore, is not rhetorically argued but procedurally enacted, contributing to the normalization of the language within the conference context.

The speech frames Bahasa Indonesia as a mediating language across multiple social scales. At the national level, it is presented as a unifying medium within Indonesia’s diversity, described as a language that has long served as “a bridge of unity across our archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, 700 local languages, and 1,300 ethnic groups.” At the international level, this function is explicitly re-scaled when Bahasa Indonesia is characterized as “a bridge of understanding among nations.” This reframing aligns the language with UNESCO’s discourse of multilingual governance and intercultural dialogue, reinforcing its institutional compatibility without requiring overt advocacy or symbolic emphasis.

As the speech progresses, the normalized use of Bahasa Indonesia is sustained while the discourse shifts to global moral positioning. UNESCO is explicitly constructed as a moral and epistemic authority when it is described as “penuntun moral dan sumber pengetahuan global” and as “kompas etika bagi peradaban dunia” amid global challenges such as climate crises, conflict, and widening inequalities. Humanitarian concerns are articulated through UNESCO-compatible domains, particularly the protection of education, culture, and human dignity in conflict zones, as seen in calls to safeguard “pelajar, pendidik, jurnalis, dan relawan kemanusiaan” and to restore damaged educational and cultural facilities. At the level of social practice, this framing demonstrates the strategic use of multilateral institutional discourse to advance ethical claims within sanctioned boundaries, avoiding geopolitical confrontation while reinforcing UNESCO’s normative mandate.

The presentation of national education data and policy initiatives further illustrates how normative alignment is reinforced through evidence of domestic practice. This is reflected in the reporting of school participation rates, where Indonesia states that “angka partisipasi sekolah anak usia 7–12 tahun dan 13–15 tahun masing-masing telah mencapai 99,19 persen dan 96,17 persen.” This statistical evidence is embedded within a broader normative claim that “pendidikan adalah hak dasar setiap anak dan tidak boleh ada satu pun yang tertinggal,” which is operationalized through policy frameworks such as Pendidikan Bermutu untuk Semua and Gerakan Semesta. At the level of social practice, these references function to legitimize Indonesia’s moral positioning by demonstrating coherence between ethical assertions and measurable domestic implementation. Rather than operating as self-promotion, the inclusion of quantified data and named policy initiatives establishes policy credibility, enabling Indonesia to participate authoritatively in UNESCO-mediated global discourse on educational rights and inclusion.

The structured articulation of education policy priorities reflects UNESCO’s holistic conception of education as encompassing cognitive, technological, social, and material dimensions. This is explicitly realized through the prioritization of “pembelajaran mendalam yang menekankan praktik pembelajaran yang lebih berkesadaran, bermakna, dan menggembirakan,” alongside the “pengenalan kecerdasan artifisial, coding, serta penguatan pendidikan karakter,” the “peningkatan kapasitas dan kesejahteraan guru sebagai agen pembelajaran dan agen peradaban,” the provision of “makan bergizi gratis,” and the development of “sekolah rakyat bagi

anak-anak dari keluarga miskin.” At the level of social practice, this structured enumeration functions as discursive synchronization between national governance and global institutional ideology, demonstrating policy coherence rather than rhetorical ambition. The subsequent reference to “program digitalisasi pendidikan dan Rumah Pendidikan” as mechanisms to reach children in daerah terpencil further positions Indonesia as responsive to both technological transformation and structural inequality, thereby reinforcing its institutional legitimacy within UNESCO’s normative framework.

Beyond education, the speech extends Indonesia’s institutional positioning into the domains of science, environmental governance, culture, communication, and information. References to UNESCO programs such as “Man and the Biosphere, Global Geopark, and Situs Warisan Dunia” situate Indonesia within established epistemic and programmatic networks sanctioned by the organization. The statement that “pada tahun 2024, Indonesia menjadi tuan rumah Forum Air Dunia ke-10” functions as evidence of agenda-setting capacity, signaling a discursive shift from participation toward institutional leadership. At the level of social practice, these references operate to construct Indonesia as an active contributor to global governance architectures rather than a peripheral policy adopter, reinforcing its legitimacy within UNESCO’s multilateral framework.

The speech’s forward-looking commitments extend to pelestarian kebudayaan, literasi media dan informasi, serta perlindungan keselamatan jurnalis, articulated through the assertion that “Indonesia juga meyakini bahwa kebudayaan adalah jiwa kemanusiaan dan fondasi perdamaian” and its commitment “untuk melindungi dan memajukan keberagaman melalui program pelestarian berbasis masyarakat dan pendidikan warisan budaya.” These cultural commitments are complemented by the declaration that “Indonesia juga mendukung penuh mandat UNESCO di bidang komunikasi dan informasi,” alongside a concrete pledge to “memperkuat perlindungan keselamatan jurnalis serta memperluas literasi media dan informasi, khususnya bagi kaum muda dan pelajar.” At the level of social practice, the articulation of these commitments situates Indonesia within UNESCO’s normative regime of cultural protection, informational freedom, and human security, reinforcing its institutional legitimacy within multilateral governance structures.

The concluding expressions of appreciation and solidarity perform essential institutional rituals that reaffirm collective legitimacy and continuity, as reflected in the acknowledgment “Izinkan saya mengucapkan terima kasih dan penghargaan kepada Madam Audrey Azoulay atas kepemimpinannya dalam memajukan misi UNESCO yang penuh tantangan,” followed by the affirmation that “Indonesia berdiri bersama seluruh negara anggota untuk memperkuat UNESCO sebagai ruang kolaborasi global yang berlandaskan saling percaya, saling belajar, dan saling menghormati.” The closing pantun, “Dari Jakarta ke Samarkand, kota bersejarah nan menawan. Jika manusia bergandeng tangan, dunia indah penuh kedamaian,” integrates Indonesian local wisdom into formal diplomatic discourse by symbolically linking Jakarta and Samarkand. At the level of social practice, the use of pantun reflects the circulation of local cultural values within global governance discourse, allowing Indonesia to express cultural identity while remaining consistent with UNESCO’s ideological commitment to cultural diversity. This inclusion illustrates UNESCO’s blended discursive environment, where formal governance and cultural heritage coexist. Importantly, the pantun does not weaken institutional formality but adds a human dimension to it, showing that local cultural expression can function as a valid source of meaning in multilateral settings and remains compatible with UNESCO’s emphasis on diversity, mutual respect, and collective legitimacy.

Across the speech, the sustained and unmarked use of Bahasa Indonesia is analytically significant not because it is foregrounded, but because it is maintained across stages of institutional

interaction. The language is employed to articulate moral positioning, policy frameworks, institutional commitments, leadership aspirations, and diplomatic rituals without interruption or justificatory framing. When examined through the lens of social practice, this continuity indicates that linguistic legitimacy is produced through routine procedural enactment within a regulated multilateral setting, rather than through explicit symbolic promotion. The presentation of policy data, ethical commitments, and cultural forms such as pantun similarly operates as socially situated action shaped by UNESCO's governance norms, enabling Indonesia to align national policy with institutional values while projecting authoritative participation. Taken together, these patterns show how procedural moves, genre routines, and institutional alignment function as mechanisms through which legitimacy and authority are built in global governance discourse. This reinforces the value of treating social practice as a central analytical focus in institutional speeches, rather than as descriptive context.

E. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the use of Bahasa Indonesia in Abdul Mu'ti's speech at UNESCO's 43rd General Conference is best seen as a social practice that does institutional work, not as a symbolic celebration of language. In a formal international meeting, the speech presents the speaker as an official representative of the Indonesian government and treats the language choice as part of normal conference procedure. Bahasa Indonesia is used throughout the speech to deliver key parts such as moral statements, policy points, commitments, and formal diplomatic messages. This shows that the language gains acceptance through normal use in an official setting, rather than through direct argument or promotion.

The speech also uses Bahasa Indonesia to connect national and international messages. It presents the language as a tool for unity inside Indonesia's diversity and then links that idea to an international message about cooperation and mutual understanding that matches UNESCO's support for multilingual and intercultural communication. The speech strengthens its position by linking values and goals with education numbers and named policy programs, which makes Indonesia's claims sound grounded and consistent with global goals while keeping a formal tone. It also places Indonesia in UNESCO-related areas beyond education, including science, the environment, culture, and communication, and follows common diplomatic routines such as expressing appreciation and showing solidarity. The closing pantun shows that an Indonesian cultural form can appear in a formal international forum without reducing the seriousness of the speech, and it supports the wider point that language and culture can be used as practical resources for participation in global meetings.

REFERENCES

Abbas, A. H., Atatfa, O. A. W., Mohammed, S. H., & Kadim, E. N. (2025). Legitimation and de-legitimation of American pro-Gaza student protests: A critical discourse analysis. *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.102076>

Aulia, C., Argenti, G., & Marsingga, P. (2025). The Effectiveness of the Indonesian Government's Strategy in Internationalising the Indonesian Language. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, Oktober, 11(10), 46–60. <https://jurnal.peneliti.net/index.php/JIWP/article/view/11711>

Brookes, G. (2021). Empowering People to Make Healthier Choices: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Tackling Obesity Policy. *Qualitative Health Research*, 31(12), 2211–2229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323211027536>

Carlson, H. A., Hebden, H. M., Christie, N. C., Tuchman, F. R., Moniz-Lewis, D. I. K., Boness, C. L., Witkiewitz, K., & Hurlocker, M. C. (2025). “Either way, they will use. And so, probably, would you:” A critical discourse analysis of harm reduction portrayal in United States opinion news media. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2025.104801>

Eerdemutu, L., Dewaele, J. M., & Wang, J. (2024). Developing a short language classroom engagement scale (LCES) and linking it with needs satisfaction and achievement. *System*, 120, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103189>

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.

Gulestø, R. J. A., Ågotnes, G., & Glasdam, S. (2025). ‘Ageing in place’ in Norway – A Fairclough-inspired discourse analysis of a white paper. *Health and Place*, 94. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2025.103497>

KEMDIKDASMEN. (2025). *Pidato Mendikdasmen Abdul Mu’ti pada Sidang Umum UNESCO* [Video recording]. www.youtube.com. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YcmL4hp4Znw>

Liando, N. V. F., dallyono, R., Tatipang, D. P., & Lengkoan, F. (2023). Among English, Indonesian and local language: Translanguaging practices in an Indonesian EFL classroom. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(1), 204–216. <https://doi.org/10.17509/IJA-L.V13I1.58270>

Ma, L., & Crosthwaite, P. (2026). Constructing China’s national image through political discourse: A corpus-based diachronic analysis of government work reports (2001–2025). *Applied Corpus Linguistics*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acorp.2025.100179>

Morales, E. (2023). Ecologies of Violence on Social Media: An Exploration of Practices, Contexts, and Grammars of Online Harm. *Social Media and Society*, 9(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231196882>

Phenwan, T., Sixsmith, J., McSwiggan, L., & Buchanan, D. (2025). Exploring advance care planning discourses in scottish dementia policies: A critical discourse analysis. *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101302>

Power, K., & Crosthwaite, P. (2022). Constructing COVID-19: A corpus-informed analysis of prime ministerial crisis response communication by gender. *Discourse and Society*, 33(3), 411–437. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09579265221076612>

Rusdiansyah, Gunawan, W., Kurniawan, E., & Hakim, M. A. (2025). Navigating inconsistencies: The challenges of implementing multilingual education policy in rural Indonesia. *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101601>

Susanto, G., Pickus, D., Espree-Conaway, D., Suparmi, Rusiandi, A., & Noviya, H. (2024).

Indonesian language policy and perspectives on its implementation in promoting Bahasa Indonesia as an international language. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 11(1), 2364511. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2364511>

Wijaya, R. A., & Frost, K. (2025). Evaluating the logic of a policy-driven national language test in Indonesia: A critical discursive investigation of the Test of Indonesian Proficiency (UKBI). *Language Testing*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02655322251351710>

Wilczek-Watson, M., & Brickley, K. (2025). “Cupcake vegans,” “cult vegans,” and “animal abusers”: Multimodal critical discourse analysis of stancetaking towards ‘aggression’ in online interactions about veganism. *Discourse, Context and Media*, 67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2025.100921>

Yasmin, M. (2024). (De-)Legitimizing War: a linguistic analysis of Indian and Pakistani civil and military conflict discourses. *Critical Military Studies*, 10(1), 61–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2023.2188997>

Yusra, K., Lestari, Y. B., & Hamid, M. O. (2022). Teacher agency and the implementation of CEFR-like policies for English for tourism and hospitality: insights from local vocational high schools in Indonesia. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 23(3), 233–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2021.1965739>