

## FORMS AND FUNCTIONS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTRES IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Received: December 2024 Revised: March 2025 Published: April 2025	<i>This research investigates language centres within Indonesia's higher education institutions, aiming to examine their forms, functions, and the challenges they face. Drawing on responses from 109 participants across 14 universities, the study highlights the legal basis of their establishment, with most centres relying on rector-issued regulations. The management structure emphasizes the central role of the Head of Language Centre, responsible for both administrative coordination and academic leadership. Findings reveal a broad range of language services, with Indonesian and English as core languages, supported by various regional and international languages. Educational functions feature prominently, including language training and certification. Language centres also contribute to research by managing language-related data and serve as key hubs for community service, extending their impact beyond the university setting. However, several challenges persist, including limited infrastructure and funding, repetitive programming, and human resource limitations. Future research should expand institutional coverage, apply diverse methodologies, and examine the influence of technological developments. To strengthen the strategic role of language centres, policymakers are encouraged to implement a standardized classification and accreditation system based on their varied forms and functions. Such a framework would promote quality assurance, institutional accountability, and allow universities to leverage accredited centres for academic advancement and eligibility for government-existing research grant schemes.</i>
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### INTRODUCTION

History in education has recorded how language laboratories, language centres, or self-access language centres struggle to gain their position and solidify their role, function, and status in and among the academic community in higher education institutions. Being founded as the consequence of the rapid significant changes within the life and dynamic of higher education across the world, and to meet the demand for foreign language mastery, what started as language laboratories, the centres have transformed into language centres and lately self-access language centres (SACs)(Critchley & Wyburd, 2021; Krauthaker, 2017a). According to (Diaz, 2012), the term self-access, in general, refers to the organization of learning materials and equipment made available and accessible to students without necessarily having a teacher present. Meanwhile, (Mynard & Strong, 2022), define SACs as a language learning that takes place outside a formal language classroom with some kind of support.

Language laboratories, developed in the fifties and sixties, are often regarded as the forerunner of language centres. They lay the foundations for the strong technical emphasis in language centres (Ruane, 2010). Towards the end of the sixties and early seventies, it is

generally believed that language centres like what we can still see at present time started to proliferate in universities. Their existence is to support and provide a different language learning environment within higher education institutions.

Projecting from its minimalist function description of a place to provide language education and training for non-specialist students, i.e. students not studying philology or specializing in literary, cultural, or linguistic studies, a group of European experts and applied linguists met at the University of Florence in 1990, created a confederation (the *European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education – CercleS*) and formulated the core functions of a language centre. They agreed that the centre is the place for (1) practical language training, especially for learners not specializing in language; (2) the use of appropriate technology for language learning; and (3) research and development in the field of language teaching and learning (Ruane, 2010).

In the nineties, during which second language pedagogy experienced huge changes, language centres found themselves in a challenging situation to anticipate the socio-political transformation that underwent. As the context of language teaching and learning shifted, the centres were forced to accelerate and strive to benefit the language learning experience. Governance, staffing, use of technology, and collaborative networks as strategic and managerial factors have become other foci, apart from pedagogy, that need to be addressed (Ruane, 2010).

Despite the juggling among and within the four issues, the collaborative networks among centres in European higher education institutions grew stronger by the millennium. Associations emerging in countries such as Germany, the UK, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Poland could only testify to the strength of the language centres movement throughout Europe. The struggle, however, has never been easier as it is depicted by the results of a more recent survey conducted in the UK Higher Education Institutions from 2014 to 2016. The observations and conclusions derived from the study reveal that despite the pedagogical benefits brought forth by the centres, major challenges in terms of resources and support are still encountered. Identifying several key points, such as space, equipment, staffing, mission, activities, and financial resources, the results show that there has not been any even format among these facilities (Krauthaker, 2017b).

Exactly similar conditions exist in Indonesia. The situation is made more unfortunate by the fact that the centre existence has unclear legal grounds and is mostly taken for granted within the higher education institutions in Indonesia. Nearly all well-established campuses in Indonesia have the centre as one of their units; and referring to the Education and Culture Ministerial Regulation Number 139 Year 2014, it might be included as an academic support unit or a learning resource unit and could be set up whenever needed; without any further adequate description and explanation about the status, role, and function of the unit. In practice, very rarely could we find the centres well developed to carry on the functions of language training and research and development.

Indonesian practices of Self-Access Centres (SACs) are increasingly being recognized and implemented in Indonesian higher education institutions, particularly in language departments or centers. While the adoption rate and sophistication levels vary, some common practices can be observed: Location within Language Centres/Departments: SACs are typically housed within the university's language center or the foreign language department. This allows for easy access for students enrolled in language programs and sometimes the wider university community. Focus on English Language Learning: The primary focus of most SACs in Indonesia is on supporting English language learning, given its importance in academic and professional contexts. However, some institutions may also offer resources for other foreign languages.

Globally, well-established SACs adhere to several best practices to maximize their effectiveness in supporting autonomous language learning: Learner-Centred Design: The SAC

is designed with the learners' needs and preferences at the forefront. This includes comfortable and flexible learning spaces, a wide variety of resources catering to different learning styles and levels, and clear guidance on how to use the centre effectively. Comprehensive and Diverse Resources: A well-equipped SAC offers a wide range of materials in various formats, including: Print Resources: Up-to-date textbooks, reference materials, graded readers, magazines, and newspapers. Audio-Visual Resources: A rich collection of CDs, DVDs, podcasts, and streaming video platforms. Digital Resources: Access to online language learning platforms, interactive software, e-books, and language learning apps. Authentic Materials: Real-world materials like brochures, advertisements, news articles, and film clips.

Within the context of higher education institutions in Indonesia, the core functions of language centres, as aligned with those defined by *Cercles*, can be mapped onto the *Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi* (the Three Pillars of Higher Education): education, research, and community service. A language centre serves as a hub for foreign language education (Agustina et al., 2020; Jismulatif & Marzuki, 2018; Mufanti et al., 2019), and as a site for conducting and supporting language-related research (Carter, 2020; Gass et al., 2018; Schaffner, 2020). It also acts as a medium through which higher education institutions engage in community service activities (Porto, 2023). Beyond these core functions, language centres hold strategic potential within the Tri Dharma framework. They can enhance the internationalization of institutions through multilingual education, foster innovation in language pedagogy and applied linguistics research, and serve as bridges between academia and the broader community by providing accessible language services, training, and cultural programs. This positions language centres not only as functional units, but as strategic assets that can contribute significantly to institutional development and global engagement.

Despite the significant development of language centres in higher education institutions worldwide, research on the specific forms, functions, and challenges of these centres in the context of Indonesian higher education remains limited. Although previous studies have examined the role of language centres in Europe and other regions (e.g., Krauthaker, 2017b; Ruane, 2010), there is a notable gap in understanding how these centres operate within Indonesia's unique educational landscape. Existing studies often overlook the institutional and cultural factors that influence the establishment and management of language centres in Indonesia. Moreover, most research has focused on language teaching practices and pedagogy, while little attention has been given to the structural, functional, and managerial aspects of language centres in Indonesian higher education institutions.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the forms and functions of language centres in Indonesia, a country where these centres are still in a developmental phase and often lack formal recognition and support. While similar studies have been conducted globally, few have addressed the specific challenges faced by language centres in Indonesia, particularly in terms of governance, resource allocation, and institutional recognition. This research also investigates the degree to which language centres in Indonesian higher education institutions align with the *Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi* (the Three Pillars of Higher Education), focusing on how these centres contribute to education, research, and community service within the Indonesian context.

The importance of this study is clear in light of the growing demand for foreign language proficiency in Indonesia and the central role that language centres play in meeting this demand. Despite their potential, language centres in Indonesia face numerous obstacles that hinder their full development, such as unclear legal status, insufficient funding, and lack of institutional support. Indonesia is confronted with various challenges ranging from shortage of qualified English teachers, changes in language policy and limited exposure to English (Daud, 2024). This research will provide a comprehensive picture of the current state of language centres, which can inform policymakers, educators, and administrators in higher education institutions about the potential for improving and strengthening these centres.

Furthermore, this study aligns with global trends that emphasize the need for greater research into the organizational and functional aspects of language centres, especially as these centres evolve to meet the needs of modern language learners. By exploring the forms, functions, and challenges of language centres in Indonesia, the study will contribute valuable knowledge to the field of language education and help guide future developments in Indonesian higher education institutions. University language centres in Indonesia are central to enhancing the English language capabilities both students and academics and enable more effective participation in the global since and knowledge networks (British Council, 2023).

This research is crucial for bridging the gap between theory and practice in the realm of foreign language education, offering practical insights into the management, structure, and impact of language centres in Indonesia (Yeo, 2021). By providing a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by these centres and the opportunities for improvement, this study can help shape the future of language education in the country and support the development of more effective language learning environments in Indonesian higher education.

This study aims to explore the forms (or status), functions, and challenges faced by language centres in higher education institutions in Indonesia. Through an online survey, the study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the common forms (or status) of language centres in Indonesian higher education institutions? (2) What functions do language centres perform within these institutions? (3) What are the primary challenges faced by language centres in Indonesian higher education institutions?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employs a survey research design with the aim of describing the forms and functions of language centres in higher education institutions in Indonesia. The design allows for the collection of data from a large number of respondents, making it possible to generalize findings across a diverse range of institutions and settings. The research design provides a systematic approach to understanding the forms, functions, and challenges of language centres in Indonesian higher education institutions. In addition, this study is able to offer a well-rounded analysis that not only describes the current state of language centres but also uncovers the underlying issues and potential for future development. The use of a survey methodology ensures that the findings are based on a large, diverse sample, making them relevant to the broader context of language education in Indonesia. The adoption of a survey research design for this study is justified by its capacity for large-scale data collection, its systematic and structured approach, its suitability for descriptive research questions, its potential to uncover underlying issues, and its efficiency in reaching a diverse sample across the Indonesian higher education landscape. These advantages collectively contribute to the study's ability to provide a comprehensive and generalizable understanding of the forms and functions of language centers, thereby informing future developments in language education within Indonesia.

### **Research Respondents**

The research respondents in this study were 109 individuals from the universities in Indonesia who are involved in the management, administration, or operation of language centres across higher education institutions in Indonesia. These respondents represent a diverse sample of public and private universities throughout the country. The selection of respondents is crucial for ensuring the representativeness and reliability of the findings. The respondent's criteria are as follows: Position: The respondents hold positions such as language centre administrators, directors, managers, or educators directly involved in the operation of language centres. Institution Type: The sample includes both public and private universities to capture a broad spectrum of institutional types and their respective approaches to language centre management. Geographical Diversity: Respondents were chosen from universities across

Indonesia, including both major urban centres and smaller regions, providing insights into regional variations and challenges. By involving a variety of respondents from different universities, this study ensures that the findings are comprehensive and reflective of the broader higher education landscape in Indonesia.

### **Research Instruments**

The research instrument used for data collection is a structured online questionnaire designed to capture the essential aspects of the forms and functions of language centres in higher education institutions. The questionnaire is divided into three main sections: demographic data, the form of language centres, and the functions of language centres, with the following questionnaire structure:

**Demographic Data:** The first section collects basic demographic information about the respondents, including: Name, Position, Name of institution/university, and Location (city/region). This information helps to contextualize the responses and identify trends or patterns based on respondent roles or institutional types. **Forms of Language Centres:** This section explores the structure, legal standing, and resources of the language centres. Questions include: Legal standing or regulations underlying the establishment of the language centre, Organizational structure or staffing, Types of language services provided, Availability and nature of documentation related to language services, and Facilities and infrastructure supporting the language centre. These questions aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of how language centres are organized and supported at the institutional level.

**Functions of Language Centres:** This section addresses the primary functions of language centres, with questions focused on: Educational functions (e.g., language teaching and training), Research functions (e.g., language-related research initiatives), Social service functions (e.g., community outreach and public language services), Other language-related functions (e.g., language assessments or certification). These questions are designed to assess how language centres contribute to the broader mission of higher education, including their involvement in education, research, and community service.

**Open-Ended Questions:** At the end of the questionnaire, the open-ended questions are included to gather additional qualitative data on: Funding or financial sources for the language centres, challenges or problems faced by the language centres, expectations for the future development of the language centres. These open-ended questions offer valuable insights into areas that may not have been fully addressed by the structured questions, allowing respondents to share their unique perspectives and experiences.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected from the questionnaire and open-ended questions were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The data analysis process follows the interactive model suggested by Miles et al. (1994), which includes stages of data collection, reduction, and display to ensure meaningful interpretation. The followings are the steps involved in analysing the data, they are: **Data reduction;** is the process of organizing and simplifying the raw data. It involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data from your collected information into more manageable and meaningful forms. **Data display;** is the process of organizing and presenting the data in an understandable and accessible format that makes analysis easier. This stage helps identify patterns, trends, and relationships; and the last step is the **Conclusion drawing and verification;** involve interpreting the data, looking for patterns, and verifying the conclusions drawn. This step helps ensure the validity of the findings and identifies emerging insights or areas for further study.

The quantitative findings provide an overview of the status of language centres across Indonesian higher education institutions, while the qualitative data offer rich contextual

insights. Both sets of data will be triangulated to offer a comprehensive picture of the state of language centres and the challenges they face.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

#### *The Form of Language Centres in Indonesia's Higher Education Setting*

In response to the question regarding the legal foundation of their language centres' establishment, the questionnaire results revealed that, of 109 respondents, 45 (42.9%) stated that their language centres' legal standing is based on the Undang-undang (law), while 14 respondents (13.3%) referred to Peraturan Presiden/Statuta (Presidential Regulation). Additionally, 25 respondents (23.8%) cited Peraturan Menteri (Ministerial Regulations), and 10 respondents (9.5%) pointed to Peraturan Dirjen (Directorate General Regulation). Furthermore, 79 respondents (75.2%) reported that the language centres' establishment is based on the Peraturan Rektor (University Rector's Regulation). The remaining respondents were unsure about the legal standing of their language centres.

When asked who manages the language centre within their institution, 75 respondents (69.4%) indicated that the Kepala Pusat Bahasa (head of the language centre) is in charge, while 28 respondents (25.9%) mentioned Koordinator (language coordinators). Sixty-three respondents (58.3%) reported that Tenaga Pengajar (teaching staff) manage the language centre, and 18 respondents (16.7%) mentioned that Tenaga Kebersihan (cleaning service) are involved in daily operations. One respondent (0.9%) mentioned the IT staff, and another pointed to Bagian Operasional (Operational Bureau). The remaining respondents were uncertain about who manages the centre.

Regarding the types of languages available in their language centre, 70 respondents (64.2%) reported that Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian) is offered, and 104 respondents (95.4%) cited Bahasa Inggris (English). Other languages mentioned include Bahasa Arab (Arabic) by 17 respondents (15.6%), Bahasa Daerah (local languages) by 9 respondents (8.3%), Bahasa Mandarin (Mandarin) by 8 respondents (7.3%), Bahasa Perancis (French) by 2 respondents (1.8%), Bahasa Jepang (Japanese) by 3 respondents, and a mix of Indonesian and English by one respondent (0.9%). The rest were unsure about the language offerings.

When asked if their language centres provide administrative documents, most respondents affirmed their availability. Common documents include organizational structure (97 Yes / 7 No), vision and mission/strategic plan (88 Yes / 11 No), activity programs (99 Yes / 4 No), and activity schedules (92 Yes / 5 No). Other documents include those related to learning resources (e.g., English, Arabic, Korean, and Japanese courses), testing instruments (e.g., TOEFL, UKBI), and regular administration and reports.

Regarding available facilities, most respondents confirmed their presence in the language centres. Common facilities include computers/laptops (95 Yes / 7 No), learning resources catalogue (77 Yes / 16 No), printed learning resources (98 Yes / 5 No), sound recording learning resources (78 Yes / 13 No), video learning resources (87 Yes / 8 No), learning software/apps/programs (79 Yes / 17 No), internet connection (93 Yes / 8 No), and headsets (75 Yes / 17 No). Additional facilities include learning tools such as LCD projectors, whiteboards, speakers, and tablets, as well as comfort-enhancing features like air conditioners, lockers, cabinets, tables, and chairs.

#### *The Functions of Language Centres in Indonesia's Higher Education Setting*

The functions of language centres in Indonesia's higher education setting can be categorized into four main areas: educational, research, community service, and other language-related functions. Based on survey data, the educational functions of language centres are further divided into nine sub-categories: language-related education and training, non-language-related education and training, language test-related activities, language competitions,

teaching practicum, language-related seminars and workshops, non-language-related certification, teaching media creation, and translation services.

The most prominent function of language centres is language-related education and training, which is conducted by all language centres in Indonesian higher education. This includes both local and national language education, as well as foreign language education, with English being the most offered foreign language, followed by Arabic, Japanese, Mandarin, and Dutch. Additionally, language centres provide non-language-related education and training, such as scientific article writing and training for lecturers wishing to study abroad.

Language centres also focus on language tests and preparation, with TOEFL tests and preparation being the most common, followed by other language proficiency tests. Many language centres organize language competitions, primarily in English, but also in other foreign languages. In addition, they serve as venues for practicum-related activities, such as micro-teaching and teaching practice for students. Language centres also host language-related seminars, webinars, and workshops for both internal and external participants. Another function of language centres is offering non-language certifications, such as Microsoft Office Specialist certification, due to the availability of adequate computer facilities. Furthermore, language centres enable lecturers and students to create teaching media, such as videos, which can later be used in the teaching process. The final educational function of language centres is providing translation services.

Survey data also reveals that language centres play a vital role in supporting research activities within higher education. They store extensive data related to teaching and learning processes, as well as proficiency test results across various languages and test instruments. This data can be utilized for research in areas such as language, education, assessment, educational management, educational technology, and educational psychology. Language centres offer comprehensive support for researchers, assisting in research planning, data collection, analysis, report writing, article writing, and publication. Some respondents also noted that language centres serve as venues for journal management processes, highlighting their central role in supporting research in Indonesian higher education.

Language centres also contribute to community service, a key function of higher education in Indonesia. These activities can be conducted on-site or off-campus and are closely linked to the educational functions of the centres. On-site activities include language teaching and training for non-campus members, such as school students or the general public. Some language centres also provide public language testing services for non-campus individuals, typically free of charge. More complex community service activities include collaborations with non-governmental organizations to develop tourist villages and 'Kampung Bahasa' (language villages). These initiatives involve longer-term programs and require more extensive planning and resources.

### ***The Problems Encountered by Language Centres in Indonesia's Higher Education Setting***

Survey results identified six main categories of problems faced by language centres in higher education: infrastructure, facilities, programs, funding, human resources, and student participation. In terms of infrastructure, respondents highlighted the need for a dedicated building for the language centre, separate from other campus buildings. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of having a library focused on language-related resources. Many respondents also noted that a language lab should be a key feature of the centre, along with a representative supporting area, such as a waiting room. Regarding facilities, two primary needs were identified: learning media and resources, such as books, dictionaries, and workbooks. The third issue concerns the activity programs offered by language centres. Respondents pointed out the limitations in language services, the monotony of programs, and the lack of credit-bearing programs. These factors appear to negatively affect student participation, possibly due to a lack of cooperation with third parties that could provide more engaging and diverse

programs. Funding is another significant challenge for language centres. Several respondents mentioned that institutional support for funding is insufficient, which hampers the centres' ability to maintain facilities and organize programs. The need for financial support from various sources is critical to ensure the centres can operate effectively. The final problem pertains to human resources, specifically the quantity and quality of tutors, translators, technicians, and supporting staff at the language centres.

## **Discussion**

### ***The Form of Language Centres***

Language centres play a vital role in the academic environment, and their structural foundation varies across institutions. This section discusses the common forms and legal standing of language centres, shedding light on how they are recognized and organized within the broader framework of higher education in Indonesia. The findings through the survey revealed that respondents have different answers regarding the legal standing of their language centres' establishment, where five major forms of legal standing were identified: Law, Presidential Regulation, Ministerial Regulations, Directorate General's Regulation, and University Rector's Regulation. These varying legal foundations reflect the complexity and diversity of governance in higher education institutions across the country.

In addition to legal differences, the structural forms of language centres vary significantly in terms of management systems, language services, documents, and infrastructure. Some language centres are managed centrally by university administrations, while others may operate more independently under specific faculties or departments. The types of language services offered, such as foreign language courses, testing services, and language proficiency certifications, also differ across institutions, influenced by institutional priorities and resources. Furthermore, the availability and quality of supporting documents, such as organizational structures, activity programs, and schedules, vary between language centres, often reflecting the level of institutional support and funding they receive. Infrastructure also varies, with some language centres offering state-of-the-art facilities such as language labs, multimedia rooms, and dedicated classrooms, while others may lack such specialized resources.

Based on these results, there is significant diversity in the form and structure of language centres across Indonesian institutions. This finding is not unique to Indonesia; the unstandardized format of language centres has been identified as a challenge in several countries, including those in Europe and North America (Critchley & Wyburd, 2021; Krauthaker, 2017a; Ruane, 2003). The lack of a unified framework can lead to inconsistencies in the quality of services provided and pose challenges in ensuring equal access to language learning resources for all students. This diversity, while allowing for institutional flexibility, also calls for greater standardization and coordination to optimize the impact of language centres within the academic community.

### ***The Functions of Language Centres***

The survey also revealed that the functions of language centre can be categorized into three main functions, they are educational function, research function, and community service function. Concerning the programs conducted in the language centres, the findings revealed that the majority of respondents stated that the language centres serve some programs such as TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC, EPT test and preparation for students and lecturers who plan to have further study, intensive English course (IEC) translation and interpreting training, workshop on foreign language and technology-based learning, writing for research and publication training, as well as Indonesian and Arabic class for students and public. These findings are in line with (Gromik, 2015), who states that SACs can serve several programs, ranging from Academic English writing for engineering students, English communication skills for music students, and academic writing skills. Meanwhile, the findings of (Morrison, 2008), revealed that SAC plays

four main roles, they bring together language learning and independent learning, enabling the learner to improve both linguistic proficiency and independent learning skills, providing the necessary resources, and providing learner support.

Another finding showed that the research function of language centres includes but is not limited to writing for research publications for students and lecturers, research interviews, collecting data venue, and research and publication dissemination. Previous studies also mentioned that language centre is a place where teachers and researchers work together to facilitate large action research projects (Gass et al., 2018). Meanwhile, the community functions of language centres are mostly used for teaching practice for pre-service teachers and apprentices for students (Karacan & Kesen Mutlu, 2023). Other language-related functions can be in the form of conducting speech and debate competitions, and translation and interpreting training. The case of the self-access language centre (SALC), (Gardner & Miller, 2011), confirms that the centres may contribute to developing a more global purpose of SALC and its role in developing independent learning.

### ***The Problems Encountered by Language Centres***

The results of the questionnaire showed that language centres in Indonesia have been established and operated by a very limited number of staff and human resources, with less budget allocation but high expenses. Besides, in several institutions, the language centre is not the main focus of the university but is the supporting facility. Therefore, language centres have inadequate facilities, and attach, for instance, to the main building of the library, and language laboratory. Krauthaker (2017b) state that self-access language centres (SALCs) in higher education institutions should possess adequate facilities because the facilities work actively on creating a language learning community and may encourage students to spend more quality time in the centres. Learning language through SAC is one of the ways to promote Indonesian learners' foreign language mastery, especially the English language (Agustina & Mukhtaruddin, 2019; Ma'arif et al., 2020; Vetiana, 2019). Laufer (2008) also mentioned that English is important for Indonesia and the reason most frequently put forward for this is that English is a global or international language.

Gardner and Miller (2011) state that self-access learning plays an important role in language education in many parts of the world because language centres are the most common facilities used to promote the learners' language competence. In the present study, the respondents perceived the importance of language centre in Indonesia. Therefore, the respondents expected that the university, as the operator, would pay more attention to the development of the centres by providing more operational budget, facilities, and human resources, and collaborating with other stakeholders. The present findings support (Gromik, 2015), who states that it is necessary to receive the appropriate governmental funding to operate the centre.

Indasari and Gailea (2021), urge that institutions need to set up SAC and provide supporting facilities which enable students to get additional knowledge and practice to improve their skills. It is also expected that Rector will deploy special staff to manage the language centre independently and have some collaborate with other language centres overseas. Indeed, SAC plays an important role in enhancing learners' knowledge and skills in foreign languages. That is why the existence of SACs as a resource for achieving learning around the world, for instance, Mexico, as part of this globalized world, has invested a great amount of time and money in establishing several SACs all over the country, mostly at public universities, including the University of Veracruz (Diaz, 2012). The development of language centres is one kind of response to the new demands (Ruane, 2010). Having great facilities and qualified staff in charge of language centres will bring a positive impact on all stakeholders, including students, lecturers, and the community around the institution, and enhances their knowledge and skills in

foreign languages, and technology-based learning which in turn supports the development of the university in the years to come.

Bearing in mind the important roles and functions of SACs, a great number of universities in overseas established language centres for multi-purposes. The presence of SACs in higher education is high demand recently and will grow steadily in overseas institutions. It is in line with (Morrison, 2008) who states that SACs have been increasingly established worldwide, particularly in Europe, South America, and Southeast Asia, as well as in the number of international publications and conferences focusing on issues relating to SALL. (Cira & Lopez, 2020), believe that we need to pay attention not only to the quality approach in the provision of their services but also to the fundamental transformation in their managerial strategies. (Priyatmojo & Rohani, 2017) support this statement by addressing that SACs should have good management which involves not only the department but also from faculty and university.

Language centres play an important role and bring a positive contribution to foreign language learning and teaching. By having great infrastructure and facilities, both hardware and software, SACs will be a great place for learners to enhance their knowledge and skills. Moreover, learners can utilize free available online products such as Edmodo, Moodle, Skype, Wikispaces, Pbwork, and Tumblr with their creativities and modifications for learning objectives (Priyatmojo & Rohani, 2017). Meanwhile, Saud and Abduh (2017), believe that in the global era, the role of foreign languages in a nation has become an important issue. They went on to say that foreign languages can be used for international purposes and particular activities about the specific target of foreign languages.

The world of teaching and learning English as a foreign language can be facilitated by the presence of SACs. However, (Ruane, 2010), states that there will be some challenges to face regarding the SACs, including but not limited to language centre management and planning, and accreditation. He went on to say that it has been evident for some time that the introduction of some form of an accreditation system for language centres in European higher education is long overdue. In the Indonesian context, it is the right time to formulate rigid policies and regulations about SACs for their operation to meet all stakeholders' needs and purposes shortly. (Poljakovic, 2011), suggest that universities should develop language policies that contribute to more harmonious cooperation between language centres and other departments at universities. Apart from internal affairs, it is necessary to network in large numbers by working hand in hand with international partners to know how and what the effective way of promoting their expertise and visibility.

### **Suggestion for the Framework of Language Centre Accreditation**

The suggested framework for language centre accreditation in Indonesia could be divided into three main categories: Superior, Accredited, and Unaccredited. Each category would be based on a set of criteria that ensures the quality and sustainability of language centres within higher education institutions. The framework of language centre accreditation can be seen in Table 1 as follows: .

Table 1  
The Framework of Language Centre Accreditation

Aspect/ Accreditation Status	Superior (A-Level Accreditation)	Accredited (B-Level Accreditation)	Unaccredited (No Accreditation)
Legal Standing	Clear and strong legal framework, such as compliance with the relevant national laws, regulations, and university rector's decree.	Sufficient adherence to relevant national and institutional regulations, though some areas may need clarification or updates.	Unclear or incomplete legal status and lack of a formal regulatory framework.

Aspect/ Accreditation Status	Superior (A-Level Accreditation)	Accredited (B-Level Accreditation)	Unaccredited (No Accreditation)
Staff Competence	Highly qualified teaching staff with advanced degrees and professional certifications, along with a robust staff development program.	Staff members hold necessary qualifications and show potential for professional growth, but some may not have advanced certifications or degrees.	Insufficiently qualified staff, with few or no advanced degrees or certifications, and a lack of continuous professional development programs.
Infrastructure	State-of-the-art facilities, including dedicated language labs, multimedia resources, and comfortable learning spaces.	Basic but functional facilities, including classrooms with necessary teaching tools, though lacking more advanced or specialized equipment.	Poor or inadequate facilities, lacking essential resources such as language labs, multimedia tools, or sufficient teaching spaces.
Technology Integration	Advanced use of digital tools for learning, including e-learning platforms, self-access materials, and digital language assessments.	Integration of technology, but limited to basic tools or supplementary use rather than a comprehensive digital learning system.	Minimal use of technology, with no clear integration of digital tools for teaching or language learning.
Program Diversity	A wide range of language courses, certifications, language proficiency testing, and international collaboration opportunities.	Language programs are in place, but the range of languages and certifications may be narrower compared to superior centres.	Few language courses offered, with a limited scope for language proficiency tests or certifications.
Research and Community Services	Active engagement in research activities and a strong presence in community service, such as language teaching for the public or in collaboration with NGOs.	Some involvement in research and community outreach, but may lack a formal strategy or focus in these areas.	Little to no engagement in research or community service activities, and a lack of partnerships with external organizations.
Students' Satisfaction	High levels of student participation and satisfaction, including positive feedback from graduates regarding their language proficiency and academic performance.	Adequate student engagement, but room for improvement in terms of student retention and involvement in extracurricular activities.	Low student participation and poor feedback, with a lack of incentive programs or student engagement strategies.

Table 1 provides a clear classification of language centres based on their performance across key areas, offering institutions a pathway to improve and work towards higher standards of quality. By using this framework, institutions can better allocate resources, improve teaching practices, and ensure their language centres remain competitive and effective in fostering language learning and academic success.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the diverse landscape of language centres in Indonesia's Higher Education Institutions, focusing on their form, function, and the challenges they encounter. The findings reveal a variety of legal bases for the establishment of language centres, with a majority relying on rector regulations. The management structure predominantly places the responsibility on the Head of Language Centres, emphasizing the central role they

play. The availability of language courses, facilities, and infrastructure, such as internet access, projectors, and study room, showcases the comprehensive support offered by these centres. Furthermore, the study uncovers a strong emphasis on educational functions, encompassing language-related training, certification, and research activities. Language centres are also found to play a pivotal role in supporting community service initiatives, extending beyond campus boundaries.

Based on the conclusion, the following policy implications can be drawn for the Indonesian government: First, Standardization and Legal Framework: The reliance on rector regulations for establishing language centers suggests a need for a more unified national legal framework. The government could consider formulating a specific regulation or guideline at the ministerial level to standardize the establishment, operation, and governance of language centers across all higher education institutions. This would ensure a baseline level of quality and recognition; Second, Investment in Resources and Infrastructure: The mention of available resources like internet access, projectors, and study rooms indicates a foundation to build upon. The government could incentivize or provide grants for higher education institutions to further invest in and upgrade the infrastructure and technological resources of their language centers to meet the evolving needs of language learners; Third, Leveraging Educational Functions for National Goals: The strong emphasis on educational functions like training, certification, and research aligns with national goals of improving language proficiency. The government could collaborate with language centers to implement national language proficiency standards and utilize them as key partners in delivering language training programs aligned with national development priorities; Fourth, Quality Assurance and Accreditation: To ensure the quality and effectiveness of language centers, the government could consider developing a national accreditation framework specifically for these centers. This would provide a mechanism for evaluating their performance, identifying areas for improvement, and recognizing centers that meet certain quality standards; and the last one is Integration into Higher Education Strategic Planning: The government should encourage higher education institutions to integrate their language centers into their overall strategic plans, recognizing them as vital units for enhancing the internationalization of the institution and the global competency of their graduates.

### **Recommendations**

Specific recommendations can be made for the Indonesian government, they are: 1) Develop a national-level legal framework specifically for the establishment and operation of language centers in higher education institutions, moving beyond reliance on individual rector regulations to ensure consistent standards and recognition. 2) Allocate dedicated and sustainable funding mechanisms for language centers in public and private higher education institutions, recognizing their crucial role in improving language proficiency and supporting internationalization efforts. 3) Establish a national accreditation system for language centers, similar to study program accreditation, to ensure quality standards, promote continuous improvement, and enable universities to leverage their accredited centers for promotional purposes and potential government support. 4) Implement national-level initiatives to support the professional development and training of language center staff, addressing the shortage of qualified language instructors. 5) Recognize and support the role of language centers in community service initiatives through government programs and funding opportunities, encouraging their engagement beyond the university campus. 6) Facilitate collaboration and networking among language centers across Indonesia to share best practices, resources, and expertise in language education and management. 7) Integrate language centers more strategically into national policies aimed at enhancing foreign language proficiency, particularly English, to improve Indonesia's global competitiveness and support international collaborations in education and research. 8) Conduct a comprehensive national survey of

language centers in higher education to gather detailed data on their resources, programs, challenges, and impact, informing evidence-based policy decisions and resource allocation.

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