



## **Learning the Languages of Technology: Youth Multilingualism in Indonesian Vocational Education**

**Kristian Tamtomo**

**Department of Sociology, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta  
kristian\_tamtomo@mail.uajy.ac.id**

### *Abstract*

*In Indonesia, vocational education can often be seen as being in the front lines of global contact, in which youth as students directly face the demands of globalized industries and labor markets. Within vocational education, the use of multiple languages often plays an important yet unrecognized part in vocational training. This paper will discuss, based on ethnographic data from two vocational schools in Semarang, the way in which students use multiple languages, mainly Javanese, Indonesian, and English, as part of their process of learning vocational skills. The main argument I intend to present is that vocational schools teach students to use a specific technical variety or register of language which combines parts or sometimes fragments of multiple languages often for the purpose of technical communication and not necessarily for the purpose of linguistic competence. In using this multilingual register, youth as students are able to not only vernacularize or localize global forms of technological practice in their learning processes but also to participate, albeit marginally, in global or transnational communities of practice to which their vocational programs are oriented.*

*Keywords: multilingualism, globalization, youth, vocational education*