

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN RINTISAN SEKOLAH BERTARAF INTERNASIONAL (INTERNATIONAL STANDARD SCHOOL) IN INDONESIA

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Abstrak: Sebagai upaya peningkatan daya saing bangsa, pemerintah Indonesia mempersiapkan sumberdaya unggul melalui program pendidikan yang diselenggarakan oleh sekolah yang disebut sekolah bertaraf internasional. Program tersebut sejalan dengan amanah UUD 1945 dan UU No. 20 tahun 2003. Namun demikian, program yang selalu dikaitkan dengan pendidikan bilingual ini tidak serta merta dapat dilaksanakan dengan mulus mengingat banyak faktor yang terkait dengan implementasi sekolah bertaraf internasional. Artikel ini diawali dengan pembahasan tentang prinsip dasar pendirian sekolah bertaraf internasional baik dari perspektif teori pendidikan maupun konstitusi. Pengalaman implementasi program di beberapa negara juga dibahas pada artikel ini. Solusi alternatif sebagai salah satu upaya mengeliminasi kendala pada implementasi sekolah bertaraf internasional dibahas pada bagian akhir artikel ini

Keywords: bilingual education, rintisan sekolah bertaraf internasional (international standard school)

INTRODUCTION

The idea to put English as the medium of instruction is essentially based on the theory which was introduced by Krashen (1985) well known as Input Hypothesis. In some extents, as stated by Nolan (2001), the Input Hypothesis is similar to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which is the difference between the child's capacity to solve problems on his/her own capacity to solve them with assistance. This hypothesis postulates that students acquire language in only one way. Basically, Input

Hypothesis is due to the L1 development which perceives that the development from a learner's current stage of L1 development, I, to the next stage, i+1, is achieved through the learner comprehending language which contains linguistic components at i+1. This theory is transferable to the context of L2 or foreign language acquisition. As Krashen (1985) claims that for acquisition, whether L1 or L2, to occur the student should be exposed to large amounts of comprehensible input.

Based on this underlying assumption, maximizing learners' exposure to the target language (EFL/ESL) will be very beneficial to the learners. Given more learning opportunity by exposing the learner to the target language is so called immersion model. Johnson and Swain (1997) assert that immersion is a learning situation where learners with a high-status L1 are taught through the medium of the L2 in classes containing only such learners, usually by bilingual teachers. In such situation of learning, the learners are forced into the mainstream of L2 (English) then this model is well know as bilingual education.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

In many countries where English as a foreign or second language, the immersion program which is implemented in the form of English medium of instruction (EMI) is enacted based on the National Policy on Education. In 2003, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) announced an action plan that aims to produce Japanese citizens who can function effectively in English in international setting (Taguchi & Naganuma, 2006). This policy becomes the legal foundation of the enactment of EMI in Japan. While in Indonesia, the implementation of EMI is due to the issuance of national Education Act No. 20/2003 which mandates that the central and/or local government should develop at least one school at every level of education into a national school which has international standard (Haryana, 2007). This kind of school which is known as Sekolah Bertaraf internasional (International Standard School), as it is defined in Standar Nasional Pendidikan (National Education Standard), should adopt and adapt other education standards even

those of other countries. The end of the goal of the implementation of the program is to create internationally smart and competitive Indonesian people who are able to compete and collaborate globally and the output are expected to be able to master the key of global competencies.

The consequence of the policy, on behalf the authority of education in Indonesia, Dinas Pendidikan (local education office) forces the school to pioneering the establishment of Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional or SBI (International Standard School). On the other hand, the schools enthusiastically join the competition to reach the predication of SBI which seemingly, to their perception will raise the prestige of the schools. Indeed, the establishments of such school should follow some procedures and through gradual steps, for instance to be SBI, a school firstly should be validated as National Standard school. Based on the data, recently in every kabupaten or kota (district or municipality) there have been on average 3 Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional or RSBI (Internasional Standard School to be). For example, in Malang, SMA 1, SMA 3, and SMA 5 have been decided as RSBI (Jawa Pos, 2009).

Bilingual Education in Some Countries: The Fact and Controversy

In some countries, EMI is the part of bilingual education area specifically two-way bilingual education (TWBE) or two-ways immersion (TWI), such as in Japan, China, and some other Asian countries in which English is not the mainstream of language learners. In the English speaking countries such as United States and Canada, EMI is applied in the mainstream of English to the learner whose L1 is non-English (Spanish, German etc). EMI in the concept of bilingual education is one of the most controversial topics in the field of education. In simplest, bilingual education, whether transitional or maintenance, is an instructional approach that uses the child's native language (L1) to make instruction meaningful. The controversy about bilingual education centers around the role of L1 instruction whether English language learners (ELLs) should receive instruction in English-only or they should receive instruction in their L1 until they are able to comprehend English or the schools should continue to develop the ELLs' L1 skills even after they have become proficient English speakers.

There have been some studies conducted concerning with English-medium of instruction (EMI) for subject matters especially science and math. Makinde and Olobade (2006) conducted a study to investigate the effect of Yoruba and English media of instruction on students' achievement in Biology in selected Lagos State secondary schools of Nigeria.

The other study EMI in English mainstream was conducted by Lopez and Tashakkori (2006) who investigated the effects of two types of bilingual programs (two-way and transitional), commonly is called TWBE. Then, a study of EMI where English as the foreign or the second language was done by Taguchi and Nagano (2006) who tried to examine students' transitional processes in English Education from the context of high school English classes to the context of an English-medium university. The other research on this concern was done by Smolicz and Secombe (2004) in Philippine which had slightly different focus i.e., the learners' feeling which was shown by the activation of language and attitude to the languages they acquired.

Unfortunately, those studies which were conducted through various kinds of methodologies and aspects of investigation mostly did not give the expected results. The findings of the studies proved that the education program which were run, especially those covered in the studies, could not made the learners' competence of the program differ significantly from that of common or conventional one.

IS BILINGUAL URGED TO BE IMPLEMENTED?

The use of English as the medium of instruction of subject matters or content areas as the form of bilingual education still triggers controversies in the field of education up to the present days especially in Indonesia. On the other hand, based on the educational policy which is supported Education Act, Indonesian government has strived to implement the model of instruction (EMI) with various reasons, which in my opinion tend to be political one. Though, bilingual education is a part of government's policy, everything concerns with the program should be prepared appropriately. The availability of infrastructure and the readiness of

the parties involved in the program should be prepared well and considered seriously. Teachers as the forerunners of the program should be put on the top of the priority of the preparation.

So far, there is no study, especially in Indonesian context, which is conducted to dig up about the fact of the effect of English-medium of instruction to the learners' achievement. Whereas, this kind of instruction which becomes the model of bilingual education has been run in many schools. Therefore, it is highly recommended to conduct the study in Indonesian context which extremely has different culture. The result of the study will provide a lot of beneficial information about the fact of the education, especially its cultural aspect which in the next turn will be useful as the basis of the plan and action of the establishment of bilingual education as the soul of SBI (International Standard School). Undisputedly, research will say the truth and the fact of everything being investigated.

CONCLUSION

As a matter of fact, bilingual education is not new issue already especially in the Western hemisphere. But this model triggers controversies in the field of education, especially among the experts of the field. In some countries, this education program have not given satisfactory results. In Indonesia, based on the Education Act 2003, the government of Indonesia has endorsed some schools (at least 1 school in every district or municipality) to be International Standard School. The society and schools which are overwhelmed with euphoria respond the policy enthusiastically. But, the implementation of this education has produced many problems, especially in the level of execution of the program, such as the teachers' difficulties and failure in running the instruction as what is being expected. It is not too late to improve the quality of the implementation of the program. The most promising effort to improve it is conducting research for it provides the most scientific and logic approach to academic judgment even decision. Bilingual education is very probable implemented in Indonesia as long as it is prepared appropriately and wisely.

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