

WHAT CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD THE SCHOOLS OR TEACHERS TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHEN IMPLEMENTING ENGLISH-INDONESIAN BILINGUAL PROGRAM IN THEIR SCHOOLS?

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ABSTRACT

English-Indonesian bilingual education (BE) program has been implemented in Indonesia for several decades, starting from primary school to tertiary education both by public and private educational institutions. Unfortunately, many stakeholders have questioned about the result of the implementation of the program in Indonesian schools especially in public or government schools. This article presents five strategies that schools or teachers need to be taken into account if they want to achieve successful English-Indonesian bilingual program, namely: (1) sufficient bilingual teacher supply; (2) ongoing teacher professional development; (3) communicative classroom strategies; (4) English in the school context; and (5) collaboration between language and content teachers.

Keywords: *English-Indonesian Bilingual Program, implementation, school, teacher*

INTRODUCTION

Bilingual education (BE) nowadays becomes one of the most popular second language acquisition (SLA) approaches. In bilingual education program, the second/foreign language is used as medium of instruction to teach content subjects, such as mathematics and science. Tedick and Cammarata (2012, p. 28) argue that BE is “a curricular and instructional approach in which nonlinguistic content is taught to students through the medium of a language that they are learning as a second, heritage, indigenous, or a foreign language”. By using target language as medium of instruction, the students are expected to achieve the content goals as well as to develop their second/foreign language skills.

Many linguists have discussed the advantages of BE Program (e.g Swain & Johnson, 1997; Swain & Lapkin, 1982). Swain and Johnson (1997) found that the students who participated in BE program in Canadian schools performed better in their second language achievement compared to their counterpart in normal school. In addition, Admiraal, Westhoff & deBot (2006), studying CLIL teaching in secondary school in the Netherlands, found that students in CLIL programs

performed better in terms of oral proficiency than their counterparts in non-CLIL programs.

However, the results of BE implementation in the international context is not uniform. In Malaysia, for example, a study by Ali, Hamid, and Moni (2011) reported that participation in a BE program did not significantly improve students' L2. Similarly, in Indonesian context, a study by Sundusiyah (2010) and Sumintono (2013) discovered that BE (RSBI) program at public junior and senior high schools did not successfully implemented. In addition, at university level, Baa (2018) found that the result of BE program (ICP) in the Faculty of Mathematics and Science of Universitas Negeri Makassar was still unsatisfying based on the lecturers' perspectives.

For this reason, the next section discusses the strategies that should be taken by the schools or bilingual teachers if they want to successfully implemented BE program in their schools, namely: (1) sufficient bilingual teacher supply; (2) ongoing teacher professional development; (3) communicative classroom strategies; (4) English in the school context; and (5) collaboration between language and content teachers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Sufficient Bilingual teacher supply

The first thing is there is a critical need to provide sufficient, well- qualified, linguistically competent bilingual teachers. One important initiative is to revitalise the role of the institution conducting teacher training to ensure that bilingual teacher candidates are being developed. Flores, Keehn, and Pérez (2002) recommended that university bilingual teacher preparation programs can help to alleviate the shortage of bilingual teachers by identifying the 'human capital' within the community they serve. However, this is not a recommendation that can be easily achieved in Indonesian secondary school context. In many cases, it is found there are limited numbers of highly proficient English speakers living locally, and most of these would either not qualify for employment in the public service or would have far more lucrative employment options in the private sector.

Ongoing teacher professional development

One of the key factors detracting from Bilingual Program implementation in the Indonesian Bilingual Program (RSBI) was teachers' limited English proficiency. This was evident in teaching strategies, which did not focus on students' language development, but tended to focus exclusively on basic content delivery. As a result, classroom teaching did not support students' language development optimally. Whilst the Ministry of National Education has provided some training for teachers as part of BE program implementation, several issues are still apparent. The first concerns the approach to and content of teacher training. Therefore, it is recommended that the Kementerian Pendidikan (Ministry of Education), as the institution concerned with policy making and

implementation, should pay more attention to the content of language training, as well as ensuring equal opportunity for all selected bilingual teachers to attend training on bilingual teaching. Ongoing teacher professional development is critical in order to improve the quality of English use in English-Indonesian BE implementation in Indonesia.

The integration of foreign language and content often creates special challenges for learning. Tedick and Cammarata (2012) identified two main problems in BE instruction. Firstly, the teacher may not understand the interdependence between academic learning and language learning, and even if they do, they have difficulty in identifying the language that should be taught and knowing how to teach that language effectively. In addressing this situation, according to them, bilingual teacher preparation is strongly recommended.

It was found to be quite possible for participating students to be confused or misunderstand some lesson elements as a result of their teachers' limited English proficiency. Therefore, good BE teaching is absolutely essential in BE classrooms. Swain (1998) problematizes the issue by arguing that:

Good content teaching is not necessarily good language teaching ...content teaching needs to guide students' progressive use of the full functional range of language, and to support their understanding of how language form is related to meaning in subject area material. The integration of language, subject area knowledge, and thinking skills requires systematic monitoring and planning (p.68).

Therefore, various scholars (Flores et al., 2002; Lotherington, 2001; Maasum, Maarof, Zakaria, & Yamat, 2012; Varghese, 2004) have recommended the importance of professional development as one solution to improve teacher qualifications. Hoare (2011) argued that bilingual teachers should have access to professional development to become more 'language-aware' so that content lessons also become language lessons (p.185). Varghese (2004) noted that professional development "can act as an important initial catalyst for a dialogue about the different evolution and orientations of the various stakeholders involved in bilingual teaching" (p.235).

Communicative classroom strategies

In order to improve teacher productivity, many studies have proposed the value of a more student-centred approach (Hannafin, Hill, & Land, 1997; Lea, Stephenson, & Troy, 2003). Krueger (1994) has emphasised further that instructors must plan for experiences that provide for student-to-student communication when teaching content through a second language because "students need frequent and sustained opportunities to produce language, best provided through collaborative group learning activities" (p.165).

It is necessary to have more training for Indonesian English-Indonesian BE teachers in effective teaching strategies. Research suggests several areas needing

improvement in relation to communicative classroom strategies, as well as promoting approaches to develop these teaching strategies through professional development. For example, Broner and Tedick (2011) argued that BE teachers need more language awareness, which involves thoughtful, purposeful task design that builds in both content and language expectations, for example, clear language and content objectives for particular tasks. It is important for teachers to make their task expectations clear to students and to take the time to review the necessary language forms in meaningful and contextual ways before students begin their group work. In addition, Broner and Tedick (2011) proposed that the whole-class instruction phase was very important and it is in this phase of the lesson that

teachers should further exploit language learning possibilities through modeling, giving corrective feedback and setting high expectations for language production rather than simply allowing demonstration of content learning through one-word or short-phrase answer (p.183).

Teachers should also design tasks to direct students' attention to form, encourage their reflection on language, and provide for the opportunity to identify errors and correct them (Kowal & Swain, 1997; Lyster, 1998a, 1998b).

Cooperative learning promotes many learning opportunities which are not found in the traditional classroom. However, Zakaria and Iksan (2009) have demonstrated that the integration of cooperative learning in science and mathematics faced several challenges: the burden of teachers finding time to prepare new materials; their lack of familiarity with cooperative learning methods; and students' lack of skills in group work. Clearly, considerable attention is required to support active group learning that fosters an understanding of science and maths concepts. Staff development should focus on the needs of teachers to develop an understanding of principles and practice of cooperative learning as an element in their pedagogy (Zakaria & Iksan, 2009).

Allwright (2005) makes a strong case for teachers to gather data in their own classrooms to explore the effectiveness of their pedagogical practices. Although this is time consuming, such an exploration can provide useful information about the kinds of rich interactions that take place among learners during collaborative tasks, and this may lead to the creation of strategies for enhancing language learning. This exploration might be accomplished also by teachers observing each other and giving feedback.

English in the school context

Exposure to a target language is critical to second language development (e.g. Steven, 1983; Swain & Lapkin, 1982). Several previous studies highlight that English-Indonesian BE implementation in Indonesia was the lack of opportunities for the students to engage in and practise their English skills, and

this in turn impacted negatively on BE program implementation. This finding is contrary to the common image of the bilingual education environment in other contexts, where the use of target language in the school environment is strongly encouraged. Many language policy and planning studies (Ali et al., 2011; Kaplan & Baldauf Jr., 2003; Kirkpatrick, 2012) identified a gap between policy and practice. In order to make the policy successful in implementation, it is critical that factors leading to this lack of support for L2 should be resolved.

Collaboration between language teachers and content teachers

Many teachers who taught at BE program claimed that there was no support from English language specialist teachers to the BE teaching and learning process or to the use of English outside the classroom. They wished that there could be more support from language teachers through their use of English more frequently.

English speaking expertise within the broader teacher community is not being harnessed to benefit the BE program or create a more dynamic English environment within the school. Therefore, the fostering of greater collaboration between language teachers and content is strongly recommended. Gajo (2007, p. 565) has recently argued that “Close collaboration between language and subject teachers is necessary in order to establish a list of content-obligatory content-compatible language elements, the former coming mainly from the subject curriculum and the latter from the language curriculum”. This further reinforces earlier work by Snow, Met, and Genesee (1989, p. 204), which concluded that “It is unlikely that desired levels of second or foreign language proficiency will emerge simply from the teaching of content through a second or foreign language. The specification of language learning objectives must be undertaken with deliberate, systematic planning and coordination of the language and content curricula” .

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, the re-introduction of BE Program at government schools in Indonesia such as former international standard schools (RSBI) is still possible to achieve better result if the schools, teachers, and policy makers take into account the five strategies above. By paying more attention to all those aspects, hopefully the results of English-Indonesian BE Program at public schools might be more successful in the future.

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