

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ENGLISH IMMERSION PROGRAM FOR FACING GLOBALIZATION ERA

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at describing English immersion program on Indonesian students as the second speakers. The writer uses Descriptive study to explain the concepts and significances of English immersion program. It describes how the immersion program is conducted and how the type, technique and strategy are implemented. The result of this study shows that the English immersion program gives many advantages. The students tend to have many kinds of vocabularies and English achievements. Immersion classes are expected to be the answer to the key issues to improve competitiveness in globalization era. That's why immersion class will equip the students with strategic ways to have good competence in English skills. The study also shows that immersion class is different from the traditional language course. It is due to the fact that traditional course uses target language as simply the subject material. Meanwhile, immersion class uses the target language as a teaching tool where students actively get involved in surrounding or "immersing" class.

Keywords: *English immersion program, Descriptive study, learning, globalization era.*

INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, English, as the world language for international communication and science, will be used for communication in many countries. According to Ramelan (1992:2-3) English as an international language is used to communicate, to strengthen and to fasten relationship among all countries in the world in all fields, for example in tourism, business, science, and technology. Considering the importance of English, people from various non-English speaking countries, including Indonesia, learn English as either a second or a foreign language. Therefore, bilingual learning is very

important for all, including Indonesian people.

The importance of bilingual program is supported by many findings. The research of bilingualism conducted by Pearl and Lambert (1962) showed that the bilingual children have more high score than the monolingual children. They stated that the bilingual children have flexible thinking and have good oral intelligence.

That research is supported by the next research conducted by Baker (1966). His research showed that the children who have bilingual language, have analysis ability of language and control ability of internal language better. On the other hand,

the research conducted by Bialystok (1987) showed that the children who have bilingual language are faster to change their words than monolingual children do.

Bialystok (2008), in the results of his studies, demonstrates that childhood bilingualism is a significant experience that has a power to influence the course and efficiency of children's development. Karahan (2005) also states that teaching foreign languages, particularly English, has always been supported in order to be effective in the international arena, to access modern scientific and technological innovations, to interpret and to improve these innovations, to gain knowledge about national and global values and to make comments on them. The point is that bilingual education is one possible solution for educating minority children. Although some children succeed without such intervention, others require the structure it provides.

DISCUSSION

1. Bilingualism

a. Definition of Bilingualism

According to Webster's dictionary (1961) bilingual is defined as 'having or using two languages especially as spoken with the fluency characteristic of a native speaker; a person using two languages especially habitually and with control like that of a native speaker' and bilingualism as 'the constant oral use of two languages'.

In the popular view, being bilingual equals being able to speak two languages perfectly; this is also the approach of Bloomfield (1935: 56), who defines bilingualism as 'the native-like control of two languages.

b. Definition of Bilingual Education

A classic definition of bilingual education is provided by Andersson and Boyer:

Bilingual education is instruction in two languages and the use of

those two languages as mediums of instruction for any part, or all,

of the school curriculum (Andersson, Boyer, & Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 1970).

Besides that, Colin Baker (2006:213) stated that bilingual education is education that uses and promotes two languages.

c. The Purposes of Bilingual Education

According to Baker (2000: 2) shows that some of the potential advantages of bilingualism and bilingual education currently publicized are:

a. Communication Advantages

- 1). Wider communication (extended family, community, international links, employment).
- 2) Literacy in two languages.

b. Cultural Advantages

- 1) Broader enculturation, a deeper multiculturalism, and two 'language worlds' of experience.
- 2) Greater tolerance and less racism.

c. Cognitive Advantages

- 1) Thinking benefits (creativity, sensitivity to communication).

d. Character Advantages

- 1) Raised self-esteem.

- 2) Security in identity.
- e. Curriculum Advantages
- 8) Increased curriculum achievement.
- 9) Easier to learn a third language.
- f. Cash Advantages
- 10) Economic and employment benefits.

Ferguson *et al.* (1977) widened these distinctions and provided ten examples of varying aims of bilingual education:

- a. To assimilate individuals or groups into the mainstream of society; to socialize people for full participation in the community.
- b. To unify a multilingual society; to bring unity to a multi-ethnic, multi-tribal, or multi-national linguistically diverse state.
- c. To enable people to communicate with the outside world.
- d. To provide language skills which are marketable, aiding employment and status.
- e. To preserve ethnic and religious identity.
- f. To reconcile and mediate between different linguistic and political communities.
- g. To spread the use of a colonial language, socializing an entire population to a colonial existence.
- h. To strengthen elite groups and preserve their position in society.
- i. To give equal status in law to languages of unequal status in daily life.
- j. To deepen understanding of language and culture.

2. Immersion Program

Immersion program can be defined as a learning one or more subjects by

using foreign language as medium language (www.wikipedia.com). Unlike a more traditional language course, where the target language is simply the subject material, language immersion uses the target language as a teaching tool, surrounding or “immersing” students in the second language. In-class activities, such as math, social studies, and history, and those outside of the class, such as meals or everyday tasks, are conducted in the target language.

Pacific Policy Research Center (2010: 1) stated that language immersion is a method of teaching language, usually a second language (L2), in which the target language is used as both curriculum content and media of instruction.

According to Baker (2006) the immersion program is divided based on the age level. They are:

- a. Early immersion: Students begin the second language from age 5 or 6.
- b. Middle immersion: Students begin the second language from age 9 or 10.
- c. Late immersion: Students begin the second language between ages 11 and 14.

a. The Types of Immersion Program

According to Lenker and Rhodes (2007: 3-4) there are three types of immersion program. They are:

- a. In total immersion, almost 100% of class time is spent in the foreign language. Subject matter taught in foreign language and language learning *per se* is incorporated as necessary throughout the curriculum. The goals are to become functionally proficient in the foreign language, to master subject content taught in the

foreign languages, and to acquire an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures.

- b. In partial immersion, about half of the class time is spent learning subject matter in the foreign language. The goals are to become functionally proficient in the second language (though to a lesser extent than through total immersion), to master subject content taught in the foreign languages, and to acquire an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures.
- c. In two-way immersion, also called “dual-“or“bilingual immersion”, the student population consists of speakers of two or more languages. Ideally speaking, half of the class is made up of native speakers of the major language in the area (e.g., English in the U.S.) and the other half is of the target language (e.g., Spanish). Class time is split in half and taught in the major and target languages. These way students encourage and teach each other, and eventually all become bilingual.

b. Immersion Program in Central Java

Immersion class program in Indonesia, especially in Central Java, was held by the government in the year of 2002. It is held in order to prevent the educational problem in Indonesia. driven by noble intentions to improve the quality of education, Central Java Provincial government through Education and Cultural Services have an idea to organize the ideas immersion classes introduced from Park Ridge School, Australia. This idea came after a joint team of central java of Education held a study visit to Australia in July to August 2002. There, the team was very impressed

with the students who are studying Australia Indonesian who follow the process of learning all their subjects in Bahasa Indonesia. Immersion class is also applied to those who study Japanese and China language. Therefore, after returning from Australia, the team immediately planned establishment of English language immersion classes that apply to junior and high school students.

Government held immersion classes based on several laws, among others:

1. Amendments 2002 of constitution 1945,
2. Law No.20 of 2003 on National Education Systems,
3. Law No.22 of 1999 on Local Government,
4. Government Regulation No.25 of 2000 on The Authority of the Central Government and Provincial Authorities as Autonomous Regions,
5. Local Regulations of Central Java Province No.7 of 2001 regarding the formation, position, main tasks, functions and organizational structure services.

Immersion classes at Central Java intended to develop and improve the quality of education. In addition, it is also to produce good quality and international perspective of human resources. Whereas, the purpose of immersion class in Indonesia are:

- a. Improving student's and teacher's foreign language competence, especially English.
- b. Improving students and teacher's skill, competence, knowledge and view.
- c. Developing school's competence and human resources.
- d. Improving the ability to face the international competition by creating competitive competence (Dinas

Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan,
2004: 12)

3. The Model of Instruction by using The English Immersion Program

Based on the research was conducted by Andayani (2007), in the model of instruction using the English immersion program, the training was designed on the basis of theory and comparison with other countries. The materials used in the English training for immersion class:

a. General English

Current instruction of English is conducted contextually with presentations of actual and available examples around us. The objective of this method of instruction is that the students have an idea of the use of the language in their daily situations. The ability to communicate well requires acceptable and well-conceived language use. As basis of general understanding and mastery of English, a teacher needs the ability to master the parts of speech, lexis, phonology, and functions.

b. Describing Language Skills (*Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Listening*)

In the teaching of language skills, we know the four skills taught. The writing and speaking skills are regarded as productive skills while the listening and reading skills are regarded as receptive skills. In the course of development, the teaching of the four skills has ceased being separated and has become integrated. Brown (2001) also states that the integration of the four language skills need to be applied in order that no imbalance occurs in students in mastering the four language skills.

c. Vocabulary

The teaching of vocabulary in classes of English needs to be developed in order that students could communicate

freely, correctly, and purposefully. In vocabulary study, the teacher is hoped to be able to use appropriate and contextual media in order to be clearly understandable to students. Vocabulary study also covers word parts, prefixes, suffixes, inflections, compounds, blends, inventions, clippings, acronyms, and loan words. All are studied in stages and with continuity in order that they could be related to one another.

c. Classroom English for Bilingual Instruction

The bilingual class is intended to enable students to master English easily because of being accustomed to using it daily. In the process of instruction, the bilingual class uses English as medium of instruction with efforts to develop its use from time to time.

d. Making Lesson Plans

A lesson plan is a plan of instruction used by the teacher in order that the objective of the instruction could be achieved well. In composing the lesson plan, communicative language should be used so that the lesson plan automatically could be used by other teachers teaching the same subject.

The other hand, there are following 10 methods used by immersion teacher (Baker, 2001 :364) :

- a. Providing plenty of contextual support for the language being used (e.g. by body language — plenty of gestures, facial expressions and acting);
- b. Deliberately giving more classroom directions and organizational advice to immersion students. For example, signaling the start and the end of different routines, more explicit directions with homework and assignments;
- c. Understanding where a child is at, thereby connecting the unfamiliar with the

familiar, and the known with the unknown. New material is linked directly and explicitly with the child's present knowledge and understanding;

- d. Extensive use of visual material. Using concrete objects to illustrate lessons, using pictures and audio-visual aids, giving the child plenty of hands-on manipulative activities to ensure all senses are used in the educational experience;
- e. Obtaining constant feedback as to the level of a student's understanding. Diagnosing the level of a student's language,.
- f. Using plenty of repetition, summaries, restatement to ensure that students understand the directions of the teacher;
- g. The teacher being a role model for language emulation by the student,;
- h. Indirect error correction rather than constantly faulting students. Teachers ensure that the corrections are built in to their language to make a quick and immediate impact;
- i. Using plenty of variety in both general learning tasks and in language learning tasks;
- j. Using frequent and varied methods to check the child's level of understanding.

CONCLUSION

From those explanations above, it can be concluded that bilingual program have many advantages for the students. First, it stimulates comprehensive second language acquisition. One of the important characteristics of such a program is that the second language is introduced as a holistic system intended to communicate meaning. Students taking the program are usually introduced to academic vocabulary and language structure that are all covering, from the most simple to the most complex. Second, the program improves fluency. Fluency implies automation. Students taking the program could speak the target language, without experiencing significant difficulty, particularly about matters concerning academic topics and class routines. They are capable of using a variety of academic vocabulary. Third, the program supports the development of language comprehending strategies. The students taking the program are made to get used to process language particularly on the basis of its meaning or by paying attention to the meaning of content utterances.

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