

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes a brief explanation of the introduction to the area of this study. It includes background of the study, reasons for choosing the topic, statement of the problems, scope of the study, aims of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

Any discussion of bilingual education today cannot be isolated from the consideration of globalizing, international tendencies which mean, in effect, that the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century is perceived as being far more interconnected than ever before.

In response to the growing need of preparing students for this global shift, various non-English speaking countries in the world, including Indonesia, endeavor to improve their education. One of the attempts is to carry out international standard education. Indonesian Ministry of Education (2008) describes the quality international standard education as an education which is able to reach national and international standards of quality. To reach these standards of quality, the government developed new policies regarding the international standard education. In 2003, the Legislative passed the Act Number 20 about the National Education System (in Bahasa Indonesia abbreviated as Sisdiknas). Under this act, the central and local governments are obliged to develop at least one education unit (school) at

every level to meet international standards. The implementation of the act, the Department of National Education, General Director of the Primary and Secondary Education Management will carry out quality education services and produce graduates that are recognized by the national and international society (Kemendiknas, 2008). One of the realizations of this quality education service is by carrying out International Standard School or commonly known as Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional (SBI). In fulfilling the quality standards of SBI, some schools prepared themselves by improving the quality of their education. These preparing schools are commonly called Pilot International Standard School or Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional (RSBI).

According to Kemendiknas (2010), SBI is a national school that carries out education on the basis of National Education Standard (SNP) and international standards of quality. SNP is a national standard that stands on eight main components: content standard, process, graduate's competence, educator and educational resource, facility and infrastructure, management, funding and educational assessment.

Completing these eight SNP requirements for SBI is the main indicator. The additional indicators refer to educational standards of the OECD (*Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development*) countries or other developed countries. In the learning process, according to SBI guidelines, mathematics and science (IPA) should be taught in bilingual: Bahasa Indonesia and English. Meeting the required standards is

certainly not an easy job, especially for schools in rural areas. In order to meet these requirements the school should run small classes of around 24-30 students with the combination of Indonesian and English as a medium of instruction. At the first year the proportion of the use of Indonesian and English is 75% and 25%, at the second year 50% and 50% and at the third year 25% and 75%.

These substantial changes have recently become a ‘hot’ issue among education practitioners. Some question subject teachers’ proficiency in English, saying that they are not yet ready to follow this policy in their classrooms. This is particularly because the use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) needs thorough considerations.

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) itself is a recently adopted practice. The main idea of EMI is to combine the conventional instruction of content-area subjects with foreign language-learning: instead of the mother-tongue, a foreign language is used as a ‘tool’ for communication in different subjects (Haagen-Schützenhöfer and Mathelitsc, 2009). EMI is now being implemented in some schools in Indonesia, especially in RSBI and SBI regarding the policies—since SBI is not the main concern of this study, it is not discussed here. The teachers in RSBI should use bilingual, both Bahasa Indonesia and English instead of using only Bahasa Indonesia as their medium of instruction. In fact, this aroused people to question recent subject teachers’ proficiency in English—this is mainly due to the common assumption that English is a ‘scary’ subject, difficult not only for students

but also other subjects' teachers besides English. They also question students' capability in absorbing materials if they are delivered in English. Indonesian ex-ministers of Education, Daoed Joesoef, in a local newspaper stated, "The mathematics results of our children will not change to become better, even if it is taught in its original language (English), compared to mathematics taught in Bahasa Indonesia" (Hastanto from Suara Merdeka, 2009). Simon Marcus Gower, a headmaster of a private high school in Jakarta also stated that bilingual education in Indonesia remains a fantasy (Jakarta Post, 2002).

Some studies (Leung & Wong, 2005, Morgan & Morris, 1999, and Alexander, 1996), however, showed that perception is one of the important factors reflecting to the teaching practice. Therefore, to understand the task at hand, it is important for education practitioners as well as policy makers to understand the perceptions, knowledge, attitudes and readiness of these teachers towards the teaching of content material of other subjects in the new medium of instruction.

1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic

As it is elaborated above, completing these eight SNP requirements brings about critical problems. Firstly, the precise curriculum contents supporting the move are not yet in existence. Aziez (2010) stated that the gross guide is merely a stipulation that school proposed curriculum must contain SNP + X. SNP stands for Standar Nasional Pendidikan (National

Education Standard), while the 'X' here is defined simply as enforcement, enrichment, development, extension, and intensification of the SNP curriculum through adaptation and adoption of foreign standards which are considered to have an internationally recognized quality, such as Cambridge, International Baccalaureate (IB), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). He said that this unclear curriculum is deemed by many as showing that this policy does not have a clear and measurable concept. Secondly, the use of English as a medium of instruction by teachers of science and mathematics are considered too unrealistic, at least for the current condition. Indonesian English teachers themselves are now still facing criticism as having less than adequate English performance.

Pandian (2009) wondered in similar concern, "When the competency of English teachers themselves become questionable, what more can we expect of teachers of mathematics and science? These teachers who are not language specialists will have to cope with the double demand transmitting content as well as language. Will they be able to cover their subject area in an accurate and efficient manner?"

Therefore, it is the purpose of this study to get clearer depiction of the situation in terms of English as a medium of instruction. This is especially important because language plays an important role in delivering and molding concepts (Aziez, 2010). Hence, he added, the use of English as a medium of instruction by 'unready' subject teachers may lead not only to

failure of concept delivery, but also to misconceiving of ideas conveyed. Abrupt change in the medium of instruction may also create cultural shock to the students (Aziz, 2009). Furthermore, numerous studies (Gambrell, 1996; Chakravarthy, 1997; Pandian, 1999) have stressed the roles of teachers in influencing the behavior of students. It is therefore crucial for this study to also explore perceptions, attitudes and readiness of both teachers and students in the issue.

1.3 Statements of the Problem

On the basis of the above background, this study tries to answer these following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers and students on the use English as a medium of instruction?
2. What problems that are encountered by teachers and students in the use of English as subject delivery medium?
3. What factors that are contributing to the problems in the use of English as medium of subject delivery?

1.4 Scope of the Study

Based on the aforementioned problems, the scope of this study is to find out RSBI schools teachers' and students' perceptions on the use of English as a medium of instruction in their classrooms. Nevertheless, the

context of the study is limited on the use of English as a medium of instruction in mathematics and science class.

1.5 Aims of the Study

The main concerns of this study are:

1. To find out the perceptions of teachers and students on the use of English as a medium of instruction,
2. To find out the problems encountered by teachers and students in the use of English as subject delivery medium, and,
3. To find out the factors contributing to the problems in the use of English as medium of subject delivery.

1.6 Significance of the Study

a. Knowledge in the area

This study concerns with teachers' perceptions on the use of English as medium of subject instruction as well as the implementation in the teaching and learning activity. Therefore, the result of the study can possibly be used to measure the teachers' comprehension on the task at hand and could be useful for later teacher evaluation for institutional purposes.

b. Policy makers

The result of the study hopefully will contribute to the policy makers' consideration in developing next policies regarding the International Standard School or anything related to that.

c. Practitioners

The study is expected to contribute in evaluating the teachers' English proficiency in the pilot international standard schools studied or other pilot international standard schools in general. The finding hopefully will be useful to make a reasonable judgment for further improvements for teachers and other educational resources.

The result of the study expectantly would also be able to motivate their science and mathematics teachers to improve their competency in English language and consequently help the students in solving their problem in learning other subjects through English.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This paper consists of five chapters. Each chapter is subdivided into subtopics that will further elaborate the investigated issues.

Chapter 1 is the introduction of the paper. It contains the nature of the study; the background of the study, the research questions, aims of the study, the significance of the study, clarification of terms, and the organizations of the paper.

Chapter 2 is the theoretical foundation covering the concept of perception, English as a medium of instruction (EMI), criticism of using EMI, the importance of using EMI in EFL classroom, teachers' and students' perception on EMI, teachers' role in teaching learning process, and Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix (FLOSEM). The theories presented in this chapter will serve as the basis of the study.

Chapter 3 is the research methodology. In this chapter, formulation of the problem, research design, population, sample, data collection procedure, and data analysis will further be discussed.

Chapter 4 is about the findings and the discussion. The findings and the discussion of data obtained from teachers' and students' questionnaires, teachers' self-assessment and interview will be elaborated.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion and suggestions.

Reference ends the paper.