

A Review : The Implementation of Immersion Education in Bilingual Classroom in Indonesia

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Abstract

Immersion education program represents type of content based foreign language instruction which the majority of the academic content offered in the school is taught in English rather than as a subject. Immersion education program is designed to teach academic content in the target language but in a way that does not harm the learners first language intentionally. This paper aimed to review the literature on implementation of immersion education program in bilingual classroom in Indonesia. The researcher used qualitative literature study method in this study. In this study, researcher was looking for data or information related to how was the implementation and challenges that faced by the teachers in implementing immersion education programs in bilingual classroom in Indonesia. The result of this study provided that the information of how was the implementation and the challenges that faced by the teachers of immersion education program in bilingual classroom in Indonesia. It can be concluded that immersion education program could be an effective model in bilingual classroom in Indonesia for the high level students to improve students English proficiency and the main challenge that faced by the teachers in implementing immersion education program was lack of English proficiency.

Keywords : Immersion, implementation, bilingual, education

Introduction

Bilingual is defined as "able to speak two languages equally well because you have used them since you were very young" (Oxford, 2022). The term is expanded to include written language in bilingual education and communities. "The use of a second or foreign language in school for the teaching of content subjects" is known as bilingual education (Richards et al., 1992). On the other hand, immersion programs involve immersing students in a second or foreign language with the ultimate goal of helping them master both the language and other academic subjects, frequently from a young age.

Since English is the global language and is widely used for spoken and written communication in a wide range of fields, including technology, education, business, economy, tourism, social affairs, and etc, English has become the primary concern of expanding English-speaking countries, including Indonesia. For over twenty years, bilingualism has been established with English as one of the target languages. In addition to the linguistic and cultural diversity among the nations, bilingualism has emerged as a response to the increasing number of people who are migrating around the world and becoming multilingual at all societal levels in order to adapt to the changing global environment. This causes every nation in the world, including Indonesia, to take seriously the need to establish bilingualism for its citizens in order to equip the Indonesian people to deal with the global communication distractions caused by their inadequate command of the English language, which either directly or indirectly impedes the advancement of the rapidly developing fields of business, education, tourism, and information and technology. The creation of English-Indonesian bilinguals is also predicated on the idea that providing bilinguals with these benefits will help them deal with the development of academic concepts and skills

in both languages (Cummins, 1993,2000,2009). Because they have become used to having a systemic and schematic knowledge of the two languages, which they use to deal with any tasks they encounter in academic contexts, English-Indonesian bilinguals are thought to perform better academically than monolinguals (Margana, 2013). One method that can be utilized for teaching language is the immersion program. Canada is the pioneer nation to implement immersion language learning in bilingual education. Immersion education is a highly popular method in bilingual education these days.

The application of immersion education in bilingual classrooms in Indonesia will be covered in this article with a special emphasis on sharing how is the implementation and the difficulties they encounter when implementing this immersion education program in bilingual classrooms.

Methods

The literature review methodology uses in this study. Literature review is methodically reviews and evaluates relevant prior research on a particular topic or research question (Synder, 2019). This study investigated a number of articles about the immersion education program in bilingual classroom in Indonesia . The literature review technique maintains formal register, avoids subjective judgments, and uses clear, succinct language to promote the objectivity. It also assures that technical terms are defined, used consistently, and without the use of sentimental or biased language. The use of precise subject-specific vocabulary to convey meaning is maintained, along with a logical structure with causal connections between statements. The aim of literature review is to determine the significant gaps, contradictions, or recommendations the further study involving empirical research findings and theories about the specific topic with the result this literature review can enhance the understanding of the social phenomena being discussed (Hulland, 2020).

Result and Discussion

Immersion Program

A wide range of techniques and strategies have been developed and applied throughout the history of teaching second and foreign languages to assist students in learning these languages. An immersion program has been one of the most innovative strategies to be introduced recently. In cooperative learning circumstances, which include immersion schools, students can learn a second language while simultaneously mastering academic subjects. This approach uses content instruction, the target language as a vehicle for learning from various subject areas, and instruction as the object of instruction. Language instruction is integrated with the teaching of content-related subjects, rather than occurring in a vacuum (Shaban Barimany and Varandi, 2012). Programs intended to teach content in the target language without (intentionally) harming the learner's L1 are referred to as immersion. The target language could be the language of the majority or a minority language that has gained social prestige and/or economic viability (Christopher et al., 2011). An immersion program is a method of teaching foreign languages where all of the required coursework is done in the target language. This implies that in addition to being the subject of instruction, the new language also serves as the medium (Dwi Ima. H, 2013). Immersion programs help students become more bilingual, improve their chances of finding work in the future, get ready for life in a global society, improve their cognitive skills, get a better understanding of different cultures, and get access to better educational opportunities (Ee, 2018). Immersion programs as a way to learn a language suggests an innovative approach to assisting students in certain circumstances with their language learning (Zhang, 2019). Immersion programs actively empower students to actively engage in language learning experiences by utilizing particular actions and activities (Postigo & González Jiménez, 2014). The delivery of the second language curriculum to learners who share the same first language in an immersed second language (SL) learning environment has been referred to as the immersion teaching mode (Luan, 2011). Only the second language is able to be used in the learning process while the students are "immersed" in the second language environment either entirely or partially.

Immersion programs are a popular method for teaching second or foreign languages worldwide, spanning various stages of schooling from kindergarten to senior high school or college. These programs use the target language without disturbing the learner's first language, aiming to develop cognitive abilities and language proficiency. However, successful implementation requires capable teachers. This article will discuss how is the implementation

and the main challenges faced by teachers in implementing immersion education in Indonesia. The goal is to ensure effective language learning and promote a better understanding of the target language.

Successful immersion programs have been defined by instruction that integrates the following essential ideas (Chowan, 1999):

- Children learn other languages best when their native language is not used for instruction
- Successful second language learning emphasizes comprehension rather than speaking at beginning stages and uses the insights of second language research in the development of all aspects of the program
- Learning occurs in a meaningful communicative context and use is made of subject-content instruction, games, songs and rhymes, experiences with arts, crafts, and sports
- Considerable planning goes into the use of visuals, realia, and hands-on activities
- Language learning activities are interdisciplinary
- Opportunities for movement and physical activity are incorporated
- Learning activities are geared to the child's cognitive level, interest level, and motor skills
- Learning activities are organized according to a communicative syllabus with focus on linguistic forms rather than according to a grammatical syllabus
- Learning activities establish the language as a real means of communication in authentic situations
- Programmes make provision for the reading and writing of familiar material as appropriate to the age of the pupils, even in early stages
- Learning is evaluated frequently and regularly.

In addition to the obvious strengths of being able to communicate with people in different languages as well as developing knowledge of different cultures and viewpoints, research has revealed three more advantages of learning a foreign language: increase cognitive skills, academic achievement, and higher test scores (Stewart, 2005). The other strengths of immersion program can be developing understanding of other cultures by learning the language. On the other hand, there also the weaknesses of immersion program such as it needs teacher preparation and lack of language practice.

Bilingual Education

The learners' linguistic backgrounds or the languages they are taught in can be used as criteria to determine whether a program is bilingual or multilingual in a given setting. The ability to communicate proficiently in a language other than your native tongue is commonly referred to as bilingualism (Walner, 2016). A bilingual education approach involves teaching a group of students in two languages, each with distinctive characteristics and relationship based on the course type, learning objectives, and contextual factors (Mcgroarty in Celce-Murcia, 2001:345). Bilingual and multilingual people are typically found in social groups, communities, regions, or nations. We indicate programs here which employ at least two languages consistently as instruction languages, including when teaching courses of study (Christoper, et. Al, 2011). A person who is proficient in speaking two or more languages at a given level is said to be bilingual (Grosjean,1995). In general, bilingualism is defined as a person's ability to understand and produce two different languages.

Adapted from Valdes and Figueroa (1994), bilinguals can be classified by :

- Age (simultaneous / sequential / late)
- Ability (incipient / receptive / productive)
- Balance of two languages
- Development (ascendant – second language is developing / recessive – one language is decreasing)
- Context where each language is acquired and used (e.g. school, home, etc)

Being bilingual has strengths and weaknesses. One of the experts who considers that due to the fact that the brain is unable to process two different language systems at the same time, bilingualism has a negative impact on children's language acquisition (Crystal, 2003). Stated differently, a child who is

bilingual will not acquire their first and second language as quickly. According to Kennison, who bolsters this theory, parents of bilingual children frequently worry that their kids will become confused while learning two languages at once and mix them up (Kennison, 2014). However, research done in 2015 by Thordardottir demonstrates that bilingual kids can function just as well as monolingual kids as long as they have equal exposure to both languages. Recent studies on bilingual children's cognitive performance indicate that bilingualism appears to improve the children's ability to process information quickly and adapt to changes in their environment. Furthermore, it is thought that bilingualism can delay cognitive aging in the long run. Besides these, other weaknesses of applying bilingual education are the erosion of heritage language and culture, and pressure on kids and parents to acquire both languages.

In conclusion, bilingual education have applied in some countries in the world. Bilingual is the ability for acquiring two languages which the native language and the target language in purposes of academic content. Bilinguals are divided into several classifications based on their ages, ability, balancing of two languages, development and the context where the languages are used. Obviously it also follows by the strengths and weaknesses of applying this approach.

Implementation Immersion Education In Bilingual Classroom

In Indonesia, bilingual or immersion education is used at various educational levels. Kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and even college students were the initial individuals to experience it. This literature review have provided a selection of articles from various school stages in Indonesia that are specifically about the implementation of immersion education in bilingual classrooms. These articles were offered to examine how immersion education is being implemented in bilingual classrooms in Indonesia, as well as the process and the primary obstacles they encounter when implementing this program.

The first study is from Nuryani and Nafia Wafiqni (2020) entitled *The Study of Language Use in Bilingual Classroom Learning (Study in MIN 1 Ciputat)*. The writer examined how the teacher used language in a bilingual classroom and discovered that the purpose of using foreign languages in these two learning exercises is to get students comfortable speaking and hearing them. Students' language proficiency usually improves as a result of these exercises.

The second study is *Teachers' Perspectives Towards the Implementation of Bilingual Immersion Program in Indonesia Private Schools* from Haris Ma'ruf and Huyi Intan Sari (2020). The writer learned about the instructors' opinions regarding the immersion program. As a result of teaching an immersion class, the teachers' frustration level was discovered. This irritation was always related to a poor command of the English language. According to this study, the biggest obstacle faced by students and non-English language teachers in immersion classes at SMA Islam Sultan Agung 1 Semarang was a lack of proficiency in the English language.

The third study is from Ersya Ananda Sirait, Hariati and Wenti Amalia (2022) with the title *The Implementation of Bilingual Education in Senior High School In Indonesia*. The results of this study, which examined the implementation of bilingual education in senior high school, indicated this approach was highly beneficial. Naturally, a bilingual education system had a positive effect on these students' future education since, in the modern workforce, language proficiency was the primary evaluation factor. The language was also crucial if you want to pursue a college education and apply for an international scholarship.

The fourth study is *The Implementation of Bilingual Education System (Indonesia-English) in Frater Private Junior High School Maumere* from Marselus Yumelking (2018). This study focused on using immersion programs to implement bilingual education. According to the findings, the school would prepare for a number of issues, including the availability of teachers who could be substituted by enrolling in workshops or intensive English courses, teacher compensation, a language survey given to parents of students about the language used at home, and the use of nationality language. It was intended to enhance the successful execution of immersion programs in bilingual education.

The fifth study is from Komang Ary Purwanti, Pande Agus Adiwijaya, and I Putu Suyoga Dharma entitled *The Implementation of Bilingual Education at Bali Bilingual School Kindergarten*. The purpose of this study was to determine how bilingual education was planned for the teaching and learning process at Bali Bilingual School kindergarten, how it was implemented particularly for early

childhood education and how the program was evaluated during the teaching and learning process at Bali Bilingual School kindergarten. It was discovered that there were inefficiencies in the planning, teaching-learning process, and learning evaluation of the bilingual education implementation in the kindergarten at Bali Bilingual School.

These articles offered a wealth of information regarding the implementation of immersion programs in bilingual education in Indonesia, covering a range of topics including school types, stages of implementation, and research scope. These variations may provided some insight into the viewpoints of the teachers, the difficulties encountered, and the state of the immersion program's implementation in Indonesian bilingual education.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the articles of implementation of immersion program in bilingual classroom in Indonesia has many different findings. First, the school have to prepared or planned well how is the program will be implemented, starts from the teacher, students, schools, and material. Second, the implementation of immersion program in bilingual classroom was appropriate for the high level students such as senior high school students. It was very good to be implemented at senior high school because it could develop their language abilities, linguistics competencies and had good impact for their future. Immersion program was effective to be applied for the high level students such as junior or senior high school students but it was not effective to be implemented in the kindergarten or elementary school. Last, based on the discussion above it ould be found that immersion program in bilingual education made the teachers frustrated of the challenge that faced in implementing this program. The main challenge that faced by the teacher is lack of English proficiency in the classroom. This problem has to be solved to get the best result of implementing immersion program in bilingual education in Indonesia.

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