

Language Policy: Administrators and Teachers' view on English as Medium of Instruction Implementation in Indonesia

Eddy Haryanto

Faculty of Education, University of Jambi

Kampus Unja Pinang Masak, Mendalo Darat, Jambi 36361, Indonesia

*Email: eharyanto@yahoo.com

Abstract

International standard school program aims at improving quality of students in which implementing English as medium of instruction in the teaching and learning process in mathematics and science subjects. This paper presents the evaluation result of English as medium of instruction in an international standard school program implementation. Findings show that the administrators and teachers have met the qualification requirements of the Ministry of National Education of Indonesia except the TOEFL and proficiency in the English language. The administrators' perception of use of English as medium of instruction admitted that teachers could not fully use English as medium of instruction because they may not be proficient in the language. In focus group discussion, teachers did not implement the policy and fully aware that they are not proficient in English besides that it is difficult to deliver their content subjects through English. Therefore, the government should offer in-service training program for bilingual teachers which may be dubbed "English for science and Math Teaching".

Key words: English policy, international standard school (ISS), implementation, English as medium of instruction (EMI).

1.0 Introduction

Education development thrust has significant changed due to the increasing globalization and world economics competition among countries. Education has taken on greater strategic importance in the total human resources development. Restructuring and re-formulating of educational policy in terms of curriculum in all level be considered to offer highly competitive outcome of education. In response to these imperatives of global competitiveness, Indonesian government developed a new act on its educational system in 2003, which: "*the government and local government shall organize at least a unit of education at all levels of education, to be developed as a unit having international standard of education*" (No. 20, year 2003 on education system:26 – 27).

However, the program has been implemented since 2006 complaints against English as medium of instruction raised in the manner of teachers' proficiency of English. The purpose of this study is to consider the voices from the field of English as medium of instruction implementation. It is important to know the voices of teachers and administrators on how English is being implemented in the classroom, what are the main problems and challenges faced by teachers. This study is limited on the administrators and teachers' view only. Therefore, this study could provide a lens on current state on the micro level of bilingual program implementation which make controversial issue.

Thus, the voices of administrators and teachers in the field could be considered to sustain, strengthen the bilingual program in ISS, and further to improve it as well as facilitate the attainment of its objectives. These may offer the evaluation committee of ISS in the Ministry of Education on important inputs and empirical data that it may use in the process of evaluating the ISS program.

2.0 English Policy and Teachers' Proficiency

English policy has been implemented in Indonesia in 2006, since English has increasingly become the international language for business, science and technology, and international collaboration (Crystal, 2000; and Phillipson,1994). The international standard school program (ISS) is the 'answer' of English as a global language. Furthermore, ISS refers to use English as medium of instruction (EMI), and information and communication technology (ICT) in the teaching and learning process in mathematics and science subjects (Biology, Chemistry and Physics). In general, the ISS program in Indonesia is substantially positive to improve students' proficiency in English. As Rolstad, Mahoney, and Glass (2005) pointed out that "bilingual education programs are effective in promoting academic achievement, and that sound educational policy should permit and even encourage the development and implementation of bilingual education programs".

However, the effectiveness of English policy in this ISS program becomes a major problem for mathematics and science teachers. Many studies have been conducted on EMI as language policies (Vizconde, 2006; Ya, 2006; Grin, 2000; Benson, 1997; Barkhuizen & Gough, 1996; Freeman, 1996; Lee, 1993; Lewelling, 1991; Haugen, 1983). However, studies critically found out that English as medium of instruction will influence

teaching outcomes (Bandura, 1997), because as Hattie (2002) argues that the main contributor to students' achievement is teacher. Furthermore, she argues that teachers should be able to demonstrate the communicative command rather than knowledge of instruction, and teachers must be fluent and confident in the classroom (as cited by Wati, 2011). Studies have been investigated on the implementation of English in ISS show that most of teachers lack of English proficiency (Sultan, 2012; Haryanto, 2011; Coleman, 2010; Sundusiyah, 2010; and Kustulasari, 2009).

Not surprisingly, some evidence of Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) has been conducted of 260 ISS programs show that principals of the ISS programs has score less than 245, only ten percent got good results while International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test for ISS teachers show that eighty percent scored between 2.5 – 3.5, only twenty percent scored of 4.0 – 4.5 (Pena Pendidikan as cited by Sultan, 2012). Similarly, Depdiknas reported that the TOEIC test results of the ISS shows that 51 percent of head teachers are at the novice level and 30.5 percent are at the elementary level, while more than 40 percent of the Mathematics and Science teachers are at novice level and around 36 percent of them are in the elementary level (Hadisantosa, 2010).

This situation creates more negative reputation in teaching and learning in ISS program because the results of standardized test for teachers do not meet the Ministry of Education of Indonesia requirements which minimum score of TOEFL is 500. Consequently, it could bring negative impact to students' achievement who study in ISS program as well as teachers. As Datnow, Hubbard, and Mehan (2002) pointed out critically that the policy makers should consider teachers as the centerpiece of educational change. In addition, teacher has a significant role in the teaching and learning process, particularly delivering and explaining the new concepts of knowledge to students that effective language for communication is needed. Furthermore, Cooney et.al (as cited by Kaphesi, 2003) argue that "communication breaks down when people do not have certain concepts". Therefore, students will misunderstand with the concepts, if the teachers are not fully adequate mastering the language.

The arguments lead to the conclusion that the policy implementation is misguided. The Indonesian government implement the policy creates new problems in the teaching and learning process particularly implementing EMI in mathematics and the sciences. The assumption is that the EMI and other required policy has not been translated yet into practical.

3.0 Research Questions

To address this issue, this study assessed the implementation of the international standard school (ISS) program in Jambi province, Indonesia. The data were analyzed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the socio-demographic characteristics of administrators and teachers in ISS program?
2. What is the administrators' perception on English as medium of instruction for teachers?
3. What are the teachers' view in implementing English as medium of instruction in the classroom?

4.0 Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive research design through which quantitative and qualitative data were obtained. These were used to describe the implementation of the ISS program in the school studied. Through a survey questionnaire, observation and focus group discussion, the needed data were gathered for this investigation. The survey questionnaire was used to draw the socio-demographic characteristics and the perceptions of the stakeholders on the implementation of English as medium of instruction in the ISS. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation were used to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and perceptions on EMI implementation. The focus group discussion (FGD) was undertaken to teachers to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one to one interview (Kitzinger as cited in Sim, 1998). The FGD involved 10 teachers who teach English, mathematics and the sciences. The FGD was focused on the issue of teachers' problems in implementing English as medium of instruction. The group is coordinated by a moderator and it took for one hour discussion in their school as an informal meeting. Since Titian Teras is the only ISS in Jambi, Indonesia, this was used as the main source of data for the study. Complete enumeration was done for the seventeen teachers teaching English, mathematics and the sciences and three of the four school administrators.

5.0 Results and Discussion

5.1 Administrators and Teachers' Socio-demographic Profile

Table 1 shows that the three administrator respondents of Titian Teras are composed of two male and one female, married and more than 40 years old. Also, all of them have master's degree. Their teaching experience ranged from 17 to 21 years. This means the administrators of Titian Teras could be described as

seasoned as they have been teaching for more than a decade before they were designated as such. Furthermore, data on their training with regard to the ISS program revealed that two had local training while one was trained abroad. As to their TOEFL, two undertook and passed the examination which could have qualified one of them to go for overseas training. Training is a process aimed at developing individual's potential, skills and attitude in order to enhance proficiency in the work. According to Schultz (2007), teachers yearn for professional development experiences that not only advance their skills and knowledge but also simultaneously probe their sense of purpose and invite deliberation about what matters most in good teaching.

In terms of teachers' socio-demographic characteristics more than half (58.8%) of the 17 teachers in the ISS were female (Table 2). Also, majority (76.5%) of the teachers were married (64.7%) and had age range of 25 – 43 years with a mean of 32.71. Data on their educational attainment revealed that most of them (76.5%) were with bachelor's degree while very few had master's degree (11.8%). Two did not indicate their educational attainment. This finding showed that Titian Teras has satisfied the regulation of the Ministry of National Education that requires every international standard school to have at least 10 percent of the teachers with master's degree. The data on length of teaching experience showed that the minimum experience of the teachers was one year while the maximum was 16 years with mean of 7.6 years. This means all except one have more than five years of teaching implying the teachers at Titian Teras are experienced teachers who have acquired competency in teaching. This confirmed further the fact that experience is one of the important factors in effective and productive teaching and that the longer teaching experience means better teacher performance. Moreover, since all except one of the ISS teachers have been teaching for more than 5 years, they are expected to have developed better instructional skills. It means that as teachers gain experience, they tend to have increasing concern about instructional tasks which eventually leads to improving their performance.

Training undertaken on ISS, almost all (94.1%) the teachers claimed they were given training about the ISS program. This suggests that Titian Teras conducts training for its faculty. The only teacher without training was perhaps the one with only one year teaching experience; hence, she/he could be awaiting for a chance to get trained.

Trainings are very important in enhancing knowledge or skill of a person in a given task or profession. These can increase productivity; develop new skills, and generate new knowledge, and teach the use of new tools correctly as well as methods; bring the trainee to that level of performance which meets the standard; and prepare people for advancement (Johnson, 1999). Moreover, Johnson (1999) also posited that training can become a functional part of the organization as it helps the organization to improve productivity. Likewise, Flippo (1998) asserted that training is important in increasing productivity.

In terms of Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) findings showed that majority (70.6%) of the teacher respondents did not take the TOEFL as only 29.4 percent indicated their TOEFL score. This means that the ISS has not implemented strictly the policy of the Ministry of National Education which states that teachers and administrators in the ISS should have taken TOEFL scored at least 500. It might be possible that some took the TOEFL but failed to get the required score. Performance in the TOEFL is an important factor to consider for teachers to get hired in the ISS.

The Ministry of National Education (2007) stated in its implementing guidelines that teachers and students are supposed to have a certain level of English proficiency. The guidelines provide a certain set of TOEFL score to be attained by the teachers and school administrators, and a passing score in the English subject for students. This finding was in contrast with that of Samthongklam (2010) who revealed that the English program in secondary schools in Thailand require teachers to have a good command in listening, speaking, reading and writing in English and a TOEFL score of 550 or IELTS of 5.5. It should be noted that TOEFL or IELTS is an aptitude English language test for those seeking admission to schools in English speaking countries or those intending to work there. It is a test of academic or professional survival in countries where English is the lingua franca.

5.2 Administrators' Perceptions on English as Medium of Instruction in the ISS

The administrators' perception on the use of English as medium of instruction for teachers had an overall mean of 3.39 described as "moderately agree". This indicated that the administrators admitted that the teachers could not fully use English as medium of instruction because they may not be proficient in the language. During the observation done for this research, most of the teachers tried to use English in explaining the lessons but they could hardly be understood. Even the students attempted to answer the teacher's questions in English with a lot of difficulty.

The highest mean score of 4.00 was given to "able to demonstrate a knowledge of Indonesia culture as regards history, geography, culture, and arts, etc". This does not speak well of the administrators perception because a foreign language is not needed to teach these subjects.

The lowest mean score of 3.00 (moderately agree) was given to "understand English language for communication". This means that the teachers in science and Math do not have a full grasp of English to use it

for communication and enhance student learning. This result was supported by the claim of teachers in the focus group discussion.

In line with its guiding principles, the International Standard School is mandated to use EMI in Math and the sciences. The problem is, as has often been mentioned, many teachers are not yet ready for it. Either the teachers have not adequately mastered the English language themselves or they are not sufficiently competent in the English language. Therefore, Coleman (2010) argues that the concerns become even more serious when the facts reveal that there are many cities and regencies that insist on using the label of “ISS - International Standard School” just to market the schools in their region.

5.3 Teachers’ View in Implementing English as Medium of Instruction

Since the ISS policy is mandated to use English in teaching mathematics and science subjects, it is important to know how teachers cope with limited of English proficiency. According to Kyeyune (2010), “a medium of instruction is an enabling tool”. He, further, explains that a medium of instruction is the way how to understand a new concepts, construct a new idea and values, and even to view a new world. However, teachers should struggle a lot to bring a new world and a new concept in teaching due to the lack of language proficiency. It reflects in the responses during focus group discussion. The FGD conducted is a part of knowing the actual problems happen in the classroom activity regarding to mandated policy. The following question as shown below:

Question: What can you say about the policy that requires mathematics and science subject teachers to use English as medium of instruction? Do you have any problem about this policy? Please explain your answer!

Teacher # 1 and 5: “ *If we use English as medium of instruction in teaching math and the sciences, it will create the problem in our interaction. Most of us disagree with this policy. Instead of we can introduce new concept with better understanding, the students got confused to understand the contents even most of our students struggle to understand to what we explained because we are not really proficient in English*”. (**Mathematics and Biology teachers**).

Teacher # 3 and 10: “ *It is very difficult to use English in teaching and learning process especially when teaching sciences. I have to struggle to arrange my sentences when I explain something in English instead I can explain very clear the contents of the subject, my student got confused unless we are proficient in English. In my opinion, It’s better to use Bahasa Indonesia than English. If I use Bahasa Indonesia, students actively participating in class discussion. So, the policy of using English as medium of instruction must be re-considered*”. (**Biology and Physics teacher**).

Teacher # 2: *I agree to the opinion that English be re-considered as medium of instruction in the classroom, because we know that we are not English speaking country and we don’t use English very often like our neighborhood countries. Why we have to force ourselves if we are not proficient in English? It is good to learn English and proficient in English, but for the context of using English as medium of instruction in teaching mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics is really not appropriate because most of us are poor in English besides that government should be ready with teachers competency in English before implementing the policy.* (**Chemistry teacher**)

Teacher # 8: *English is not our language, why we have to suffer our students and ourselves in transferring the knowledge which most of teachers and students do not fluent in English? Including me, I can’t speak English well. I joined general English training since this school recognized as international standard school. Within three month I joined the extensive English course for teaching as a result is nothing. The training is general English such as daily communication while we need specific competency. Actually, the policy is really good to carry out English as medium of instruction because our students can compete in global level however it takes time we can’t make the policy within a minute without preparing well the human resources* (**Physics teacher**)

Teacher # 6: *The problem in implementing the policy is that our teachers and students are not ready for English. I am teaching English, but I cannot use English within the classroom all the time, because some of our students do not fully understand. So, I have to repeat many times to what I said then I have to translate them into Bahasa Indonesia otherwise they don’t understand at all. So, repetition of the sentences is really frequent and spending more time to translate. One more thing, either central and local government should offer English specific purposes training for teaching math and sciences, and do monitoring and evaluation for teachers’ development in English regularly. TOEFL and IELTS are not enough to know teachers’ proficiency.* (**English teacher**)

The responses from seven teachers in the FGD agreed that not to carry out the policy of using English as medium of instruction. Teachers rejected on English policy and fully aware that they are not proficient in English. It is necessary to consider before implementing the policy that the government be ready with human resources particularly teachers who are really knowledgeable in English. When observed in the classroom, teachers really struggle to explain their content subject of using English unless English teacher can speak fluently. However, English teachers claim that it is also difficult to deliver their content subjects through English. They have to pause their explanation for a while just to think what right sentences or terms must be used in their explanation. Many times they have to switch their language from English to Bahasa Indonesia otherwise students would not fully understand to what teachers said.

The finding is supported by Tan and Lan (2010) in their research teaching mathematics and sciences in Malaysian classroom found that language switching happens more frequently. Similarly, SCMP in Biggs (1990) in his research on effects of language medium of instruction on approaches to learning argue that “the majority of schools use English as the medium of instruction although most students are not sufficiently proficient in the language they are trying to learn; they are compelled by this weakness to spend much of their time memorizing the English words to fulfill their study objectives to the extent they fail to grasp neither the English nor the Chinese language well”. Therefore, Chomsky (in Mitchell & Myles, as cited by Nel and Muller, 2010) explains that “the logical problem of language learning is caused by messy and fragmentary input, making abstract concepts based on limited examples of languages”.

Furthermore, in this study most of mathematics and science teachers are aware on their proficiency level of English and problems as discussed earlier on the perceptions of the administrators, and FGD among teachers that teachers are not ready yet for this policy. This finding similar to Hadisantosa (2010) that “most local teachers are not prepared for teaching their subjects using English as a medium of instruction. The English proficiency of the teachers of math and science teachers is very low”. Moreover, Hadisantosa in her research finding pointed out that teachers are not confident in teaching math and science using English. she argues that teachers have problems with scientific terminology as well as in classroom instruction and teachers might be good when teaching their subjects in Indonesian, but teaching these same subjects in English is a different matter.

As Nel and Muller (2010) critically pointed out that language has crucial role in teacher education programs and children’s learning. Furthermore, Blanco (1977) argues that teachers in bilingual classroom should be able to provide instructional variety of language, it is not sufficient for greeting and pronouncing name because proficiency in target language is a must. In line with teachers’ competency needed by bilingual teachers, more than thirty five years ago Blanco recommended that English proficiency is a basic competency for bilingual teachers, in the preparation program of candidate of bilingual teachers should develop certain attitudes concerning the education is linguistically diverse, knowledge on basic linguistic and cultural competencies, and teaching skills or pedagogical competencies. Similarly, Menken and Antunez (2001) suggested that critical areas of knowledge for preparation of bilingual teachers included knowledge of pedagogy, knowledge of linguistics, and knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity.

To answer the problems of EMI implementation in ISS program, it could happen that teachers are not confident to use English in the teaching and learning process due to lack of training on English. Probably, if teachers use English, they cannot deliver their subject effectively. To be fair, during observation in the classroom only one mathematics teacher can speak English ‘fluently’ and interact with students very well. The teacher explained concept in English was understood by students although sometimes teachers translate into Bahasa Indonesia. It means if teacher is proficient in English, teaching and learning process would run effectively in terms of communication and instruction.

Furthermore, in terms of training as mentioned in the FGD (teacher # 8) that teachers have intensive general English training within three months. However, three months is not enough to master a new language or using TOEFL and IELTS standards to measure teachers’ proficiency in English (teacher # 6). The policy of central government should consider a continuous training to update their proficiency in English which cover in-service training program for English specific purposes math and sciences particularly communication, pedagogy, and classroom management strategy in second language teaching as well as evaluation of English development for mathematics and sciences teachers. Menken and Antunez (2001) recommended for areas of bilingual training that “bilingual teachers need to be trained in best practices in order to convey their knowledge to students, the complexities of linguistics and language learning are essential knowledge for bilingual educators, linguistically diverse students are also culturally diverse, and have a unique set of needs that can be addressed within teacher preparation programs”.

Therefore, it is clear that the level of English proficiency and confident of teachers should be updated otherwise this become a big burden in teaching and learning process. Bilingual training program is a recommendation for this study that is to be considered as the basis to evaluate teachers and students proficiency in English. Bilingual training program should collaborate with local university, department of national education in provincial level, and central government to formulate a language planning course which cover planning the English course for specific purposes including linguistics aspect and culturally diverse, and constructing English standard

evaluation program on in-service training for teachers' English development which include selection strategy for new teachers in terms of English standard recruitment besides that bilingual training program has a purpose to analyze the strengths and weaknesses, and the needs of teachers to improve their proficiency and performance in teaching math and sciences of using English as medium of instruction.

Thus, this study reveals that the English policy implementation in ISS program has not fully implemented well based on the policy guidelines of the ministry of education. As Nunan critically pointed out that "a number of Asian countries invest a great deal of their resources in English learning often at the expense of the curriculum but evidence suggest that they have not achieve fully the desired results" (as cited by Vizconde, 2006).

6.0 Conclusions

The human resources particularly the administrators and teachers have met the qualification requirements of the Ministry of National Education except the TOEFL and proficiency in the English language. The administrators' perception of use of English as medium of instruction was 'moderately agree'. This indicated that the administrators admitted that the teachers could not fully use English as medium of instruction because they may not be proficient in the language. In the focus group discussion, teachers rejected the policy implementation of using English as medium of instruction. Teachers show the rejection on the policy and fully aware that they are not proficient in English. It is necessary to consider before implementing the policy that the government should be ready with human resources particularly teachers who are really knowledgeable in English. For developing teachers' English proficiency, they may be enjoined to participate in trainings to teach science and math using English which maybe dubbed "English for Science and Math Teaching" since they suggested willingness to get trained in English. This study was limited to only one ISS program in Indonesia, further studies can be undertaken using other ISS program in other schools across the country for more comparison of language policy implementation of this program.

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Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the administrators of Titian Teras

CHARACTERISTICS	FREQUENCY (n=3)	PERCENT
Gender		
Male	1	33.3
Female	2	66.7
Total	3	100.00
Age		
41	1	33.3
45	1	33.3
50	1	33.3
Total	3	100.00
Civil status		
Married	3	100.00
Highest educational attainment		
Master's degree	3	100.00
Length of teaching experience		
17	1	33.3
20	1	33.3
21	1	33.3
Total	3	100.00
ISS training		
No	1	33.3
Yes	2	66.7
Total	3	100.00
Where training given		
Abroad	1	33.3
Not indicated	2	66.7
Total	3	100.00
TOEFL		
No	1	66.7
Yes	2	33.3
Total	3	100

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of the teachers

CHARACTERISTICS	FREQUENCY	(n=17)	PERCENT
Gender			
Female	10		58.8
Male	7		41.2
Total	17		100.00
Age			
Minimum	25		
Maximum	43		
Mean	32.71		
Standard Deviation	5.181		
Total	17		
Length of Teaching Experience			
Minimum	1		
Maximum	16		
Mean	7.56		
StandardDeviation	3.898		
Total	17		
Civil status			
Single	4		23.5
Married	13		76.5
Total	17		100.00
Highest educational attainment			
Bachelor's degree	13		76.5
Master's degree	2		11.8
Others	2		11.8
Total	17		100.00
ISS project training			
No	1		5.9
Yes	16		94.1
Total	17		100.00
TOEFL			
Yes	5		29.4
No	12		70.6
Total	17		100.00

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