

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The developments of science and technology have brought many changes in almost all aspects of life that demand a quality system of international scale. So that everyone is expected to have knowledge and skills in order that they can compete in the era of globalization. The demand has brought about consequences and the impacts to the government and educational institutions to create qualified generations. English, as an international language, is very important to follow the developments in this creative and innovative era. English takes a strict role in mastering the science. Students as young generations must have the ability of that international language in order to make them more competitive. Many education experts and government felt essential to teach English intensively and continuously to the high school students even since elementary school.

Students are expected to be able to speak in English well so that they are capable of governing the global science and technology development. Hence, school as an educational institution takes important roles to create the students, as generations, to be competitive, active and creative to respond the developments.

One of the alternatives considered capable of meeting this challenges the implementation of bilingual education program a class with two introductory languages namely Indonesian and English that is so-called bilingual education. The bilingual program is applied in teaching Math,

Chemistry, Biology and Physics through English. This is considered to accelerate students in acquiring English as a foreign language in anticipating the development and technology, as well as to support the establishment of the International Standard School. This is based on the law no. 20 of 2003, article 50, verse 3 which states that government and/or local governments conduct at least one unit of education at all levels to be developed into an international standard educational unit. It means that every school unit has opportunity to establish the school itself to be an international standard unit. It is intended to create the students to have good ability, particularly English speaking ability, so they are capable of applying the science and technology in the global era, and it can be arrived through the application of bilingual programs.

Lately, there have been many schools which apply bilingual program, so-called bilingual education. The aim of bilingual applications in education is to increase students' ability in English with the output in the mastery of knowledge and technology development. Depdiknas (2007) in Arnyana (2008) proposes that the purposes of bilingual education program are 1) to increase the mastery of the materials, and 2) to increase the students' English ability either in scientific or non-scientific forum.

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.

In Indonesia, bilingual education has recently been a trend to find schools with bilingual program, meaning that applying the use of two languages in teaching a content subject. Cummins (2000) in Santoso (2006) states from data of four other experts that there is a tendency the bilingual program students obtained better achievements than those in monolingual program. In the context of the Indonesian multilingual society, where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL), such bilingual program has become a significant breakthrough, encouraging the use of English in non-English subjects (known as subjects across curriculum).

Bilingual education has become a prestige for a number of educational institutions in Indonesia. There are many schools that use a bilingual system in teaching and learning activities. The government, specifically the Department of National Education, has launched a program called “bilingual program” in which several subjects (Math, Chemistry, Biology and Physics) are taught in English. The objectives of this program are to produce graduates whose command of English is high and to produce graduates who have high competence in several subjects (Math, Chemistry, Biology and Physics) in accordance with the development of those subjects. Bilingual program has become a significant

breakthrough, encouraging the use of English in non-English subjects (known as subjects across curriculum).

SMP Panca Budi, for instance, is one of school which applies bilingual program. This school has two different classes – regular classes and bilingual classes. In the regular classes, the teaching learning process adopts the curriculum standard which is decided by government (the ministry of education). Just as regular classes, bilingual classes still adapt the curriculum standard determined by government as well, as applied in the regular classes. Only there are some additions in conducting the curriculum. Bilingual classes are given additional subjects to support the bilingual classes, such as Arabic subject, English and conversation in English two hours each week for themastery of the materialandthe addition of competence. In addition, sciences such as Math, Chemistry, Biology and Physics are also given two hours each week and are taught by two languages (Indonesian and English). This program is intended to accelerate the students in studying English as a foreign language in facing the development of science and technology in the global era.

However, it is acknowledged that the opening of bilingual classes in this country is still facing obstacles. There are still problems about the implementation of bilingual instruction programs which need to think it over. Among these are still limited English language skills of bilingual Math, Chemistry, Biology and Physics teachers. Besides, in fact, thus far there is no yet an appropriate model of teaching bilingual to the students' conditions. There are still many schools that do not yet understand the implementation of a proper approach or model of

teaching bilingual based on the classes' conditions. For instance, the school where this research will be conducted namely SMP Panca Budi Medan and SMP Negeri 1 Medan. Based on the preliminary observation and interview conducted in mini tour, it can be inferred that the schools have not found yet a proper bilingual education program to teach the bilingual classes. This is due to the lack of the understanding of schools, particularly the bilingual teachers about the information of the bilingual education programs. The schools often apply an unsuitable model in teaching bilingual classes, namely the use of Indonesian and English interchangeably with unbalanced proportion.

Consequently, the use of these two languages, Indonesian and English, often makes wrong concept to the materials which have been being studied, and the aims of bilingual program are not achieved well, that is to increase the students' ability in the material mastery, and their English prosperity. Based on the preliminary observation, the inappropriate implementation does not bring any significant increase to the students' knowledge. The students still get difficulties in understanding the contents of the subjects (Math, Chemistry, Biology and Physics), and have low English proficiency.

As a matter of fact, to drive good bilingual classes, schools need to consider the policy of models for organizing bilingual education. Schools should design a program to improve students' English skills. In conducting the bilingual classes, the school also needs to consider the teachers' qualification and ability. They must be able to use English well as a medium of instruction in teaching and learning process. They are expected to be able to teach their subject contents by two

languages (Indonesian and English). Therefore, the school must be able to prepare the teachers to teach a bilingual program.

The application of bilingual classes is not as simple as possible. There are many things that need to be considered in conducting it, such as students' linguistic skills, teachers' competence and models applied in teaching and learning activities.

In accordance with the explanation above, the writer is eager to conduct a research about the implementation of bilingual education program at SMP Panca Budi Medan and SMP Negeri 1 Medan. It is aimed to investigate the tendency of bilingual education program which is applied by the schools, how it is conducted in the schools, and why the schools apply the program the way it does.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background described in the previous, the problems are formulated as follows:

1. What bilingual education programs do the schoolstend to apply?
2. How do the schools apply the bilingual education programs?
3. Why do the schoolstend to apply the bilingual education programs the way they do?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem of the study above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To findthe types of bilingual education programsthe schools tend to apply.

2. To investigate how the schools apply the bilingual education programs.
3. To investigate why the schools tend to apply the bilingual education programs the way they do.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

Referring to the problems of the research above, this study will focus on the investigation on the tendency of the types of bilingual education programs applied by the teachers in teaching bilingual classes. This also concerns about the analysis on how the programs are applied in teaching-learning process, and why the teachers apply them in the teaching of bilingual classes as they do.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

The findings of this study will be expected to be useful as:

1.5.1 Theoretically

1. A contribution for those who want to carry out further study in relation to language planning, particularly bilingualism.
2. A reference in order to seek further information dealing with bilingual education. This study is expected to be able to provide valuable information for those who want to study more about bilingualism concerns.

1.5.2 Practically

1. To guide information for the schools in applying bilingual education. This research is expected. This research is expected to be able to guide schools which adopt bilingual program.
2. To help lead bilingual teachers in the teaching and learning activities in bilingual classes. This study is expected to be able to lead teachers in implementing bilingual education program in the teaching of bilingual classes.

