

English as a Medium of Instruction: Voices of High School Students

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Indonesia : RSBI

- ✱ In 2005, the Ministry of National Education's Strategic Plan for 2005-2009 stated : *In order to improve the nation's ability to compete ... central government and the relevant rural district government [kabupaten] or urban district government [kota] [need to] develop 112 international standard primary, junior secondary, senior secondary and senior vocational schools throughout Indonesia.*
- ✱ Science, mathematics and core vocational subjects are taught using English; other subjects, apart from foreign languages, are taught using Bahasa Indonesia. In primary schools/*madrasah*, teaching science and mathematics through English begins in Year 4.
- ✱ The schools which have been encouraged to apply for international standard status are schools which are already outstanding.





✿ International standard schools receive a substantial subsidy from central government:

✿ Rp350 million per school for infrastructure improvement

✿ Rp100 million per school for headteacher and teacher improvement in junior secondary and senior secondary schools in 2007 and Rp70 million per school for headteacher and teacher improvement in vocational secondary schools in 2007; the total number of schools receiving this staff development element was 270

✿ Rp50 million per school for 350 schools in 2008.



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- ✿ The [programme for the] development of outstanding schools has a target that at least one senior secondary school/vocational secondary school in each rural district/urban district will have become an outstanding local school or an international standard school by 2014.
 - ✿ There are currently approximately 450 rural and urban districts in Indonesia. This implies therefore that by 2014 there should be approximately 1800 international standard schools throughout the country
 - ✿ Surabaya, 2011: 23 *RSBI*:
 - ✿ 8 public and 3 private senior schools, 7 vocational schools, 3 public and 1 private junior high schools, and 1 public elementary school.

The Role of English

- ✿ 'Globalisation' is often cited as the rationale for these programmes. 'Globalisation' is then associated with the use of English. 'Globalisation' is also closely associated with competition with other nations.

*COMPETITION WITH OTHER NATIONS = GLOBALISATION =
USING ENGLISH*


- ✿ The selection of the language of instruction is actually a vital decision for learners because they will be mainly affected by this selection.
- ✿ Therefore this study would like to address students' perceptions towards:
 - ✕ The use of English as medium of instruction in their schools.
 - ✕ The use of *Bahasa Indonesia* in their English-as-a-medium-of-instruction classes.

Methods


- ✿ The study was carried out in December 2011 – January 2012.
- ✿ 20 students (8 males and 12 females) who were studying at 4 different public junior high schools which are often attributed as *Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional (RSBI)*.
- ✿ The subjects were made up of 8 males and 12 females. All of them were on their second year.
- ✿ Questionnaires and in-depth interviews
- ✿ This small number of respondents is not aimed at generalizing but clarifying the idea (Patton, 2001).


Questionnaires

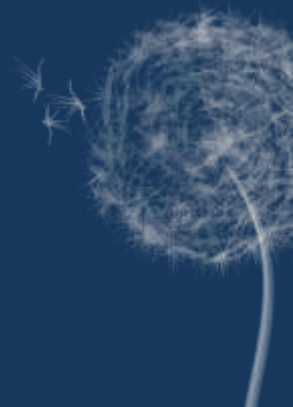
- ✿ 15 questions which were divided into two parts:
 - ✿ the profiles of the respondents (gender, English learning experiences, and where they are currently studying).
 - ✿ their perceptions towards the use of English and Indonesian in their content classes.

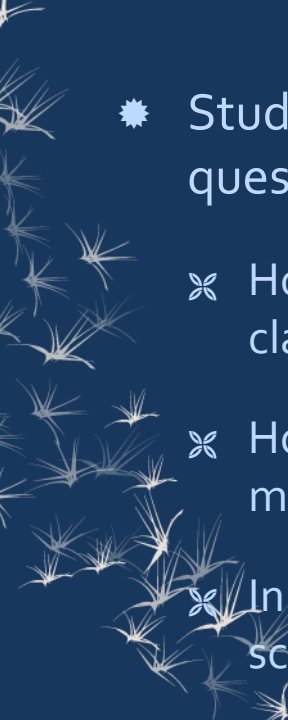


Part 2: students were asked to rate the following statements on the 3-point Likert Scale (1 - disagree, 2 – not sure, 3 - agree):

1. I personally believe that the mastery of English is very important.
 2. I personally believe that English language and the western culture are superior to *Bahasa Indonesia* and the Indonesian culture.
 3. My teacher has become a better teacher for using English in teaching his/her subject.
 4. I understand my lesson better when my teacher speaks in English.
 5. My teacher delivers his/her lectures in English only.
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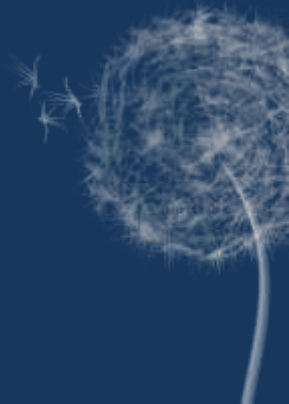
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6. My teacher uses *Bahasa Indonesia* in his/her English-as-a-medium-of-instruction classes.
 7. I am allowed to use *Bahasa Indonesia* in such classes.
 8. In general, I feel that *Bahasa Indonesia* should not be used in such classes.
 9. In general, I feel that English-as-a-medium-of-instruction policy is really beneficial.





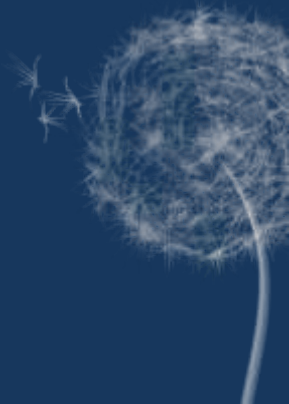
★ Students were also asked to provide opinions (answers) to the following questions:

- ✧ How did you feel about the use of English as the medium of instruction in your classes?
- ✧ How did you feel about the use of *Bahasa Indonesia* in your English-as-a-medium-of-instruction classes?
- ✧ In general, as a medium of instruction, which language do you prefer in your school? English or Indonesian?



Interview



- ✿ 6 students were randomly chosen for semi-structured interviews.
 - ✿ The interview questions were basically similar to the questions written for the questionnaires.
 - ✿ Each interview took about 15-20 minutes.
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The importance of English

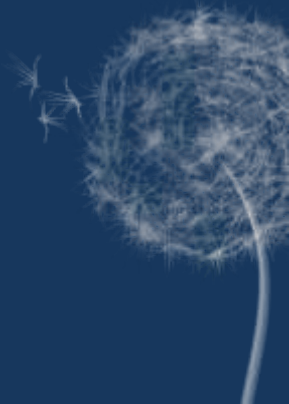
- ✿ English is essential for the advancement of knowledge.

“The majority of media publications including newspapers and magazines are in English. So if you want to finish the whole reading material and get the information that you want, you must be able to read in English”.

- ✿ It is needed for international communication.


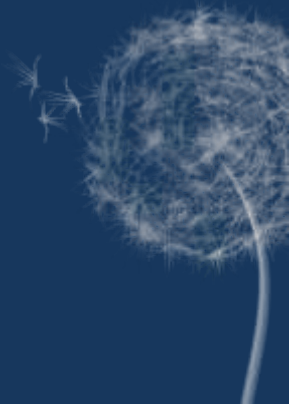
“English is spoken by millions of people. If you travel to other countries, you need English to communicate with the local citizens. If you work at international firms, you also need English because it is the medium of communication”.


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- ✿ All interviewees mentioned that they have learned the language at least for the past 10 years.
 - ✿ They also admitted that their family members have exerted profound influences on their learning motivations.
 - ✿ It was their parents and family members who requested them to study at *RSBI*. It seems that parents assume that the best way to teach English is to have much exposure to English.

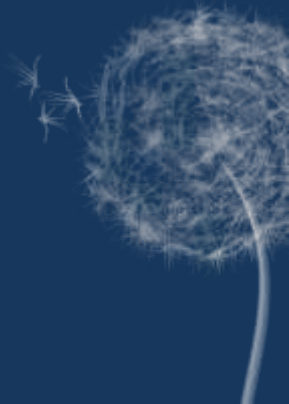


Students' perceptions towards the use of English as the medium of instruction

- ✿ The majority of interviewees though are not happy if only English is used because they find it hard to understand the school subjects if they are delivered in English.
- ✿ “I want to learn English, but I do not want to learn my school subjects using English. Considering my current level of proficiency, I find it hard to understand the lectures”.


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- ★ Teachers' proficiency is also a problem to the implementation of English-as-a-medium-of-instruction-policy.
 - ★ 16 out of 20 respondents think that their teachers are not becoming better because they use English as the medium of instruction.
 - ✧ "My teachers obviously have very limited English proficiency. It is very difficult to understand their English. They make many grammatical mistakes, have limited vocabularies".
 - ★ All teachers still use *Bahasa Indonesia* in their teaching.
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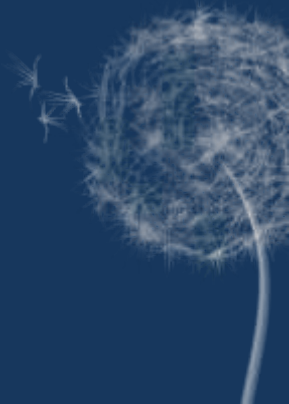
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- ✿ Adopting English as a medium of instruction may have no necessary connection with western language and cultural imperialism.
 - ✿ 12 students remained neutral regarding the question of whether English language and culture are superior to Indonesian language and culture.



Students' perceptions towards the use of Bahasa Indonesia in their English-as-a-medium-of-instruction classes


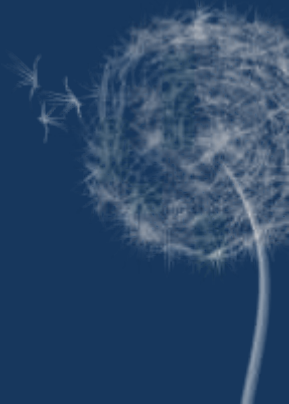
- ✱ Code mixing is seen as a common phenomenon which is, in the students' opinion, used
 - (1) to further describe the English terminology,
 - (2) to deliver lectures when teachers have difficulty in delivering lectures in English and
 - (3) when students do not understand the lectures delivered in English.

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- ✿ English is used only when their teachers read directly from the notes or power point presentation.
 - ✿ Others admitted that more proficient instructors would mix English and Indonesian when they saw that their students did not understand the lectures in English.
 - ✿ “Yes I agree that English is important and by having English as the medium of instruction we can get much exposure. But considering our and teachers’ present level of language proficiency, I think we are not ready to implement such policy. It is better to use *Bahasa Indonesia*”.



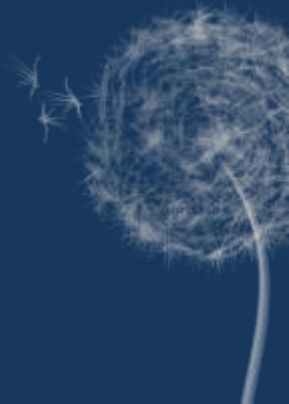
Students' perceptions towards the use of English and Bahasa Indonesia in their content classes



- ✿ The policy of implementing English as a medium of instruction has exposed them more to English language.
- ✿ However it brings negative effects
 - (1) students do not understand the subjects taught,
 - (2) they need to take informal courses to improve their English.


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- ★ “I think using English as a medium of instruction is different from learning English”.
 - ★ Interviewees suggested the use of *Bahasa Indonesia* and English in teaching school subjects because they believe that such approach will increase their understanding.
 - ★ Igboanusi (2001) : both mother tongue and English should complement each other in the teaching and learning tasks.
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Conclusion



- ✿ English is viewed as an entity which can be separated from western culture. The medium is still the same but the message may be completely different.
 - ✿ Students prefer to use *Bahasa Indonesia* in their classroom although at the same time they are aware of the importance of English.
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- ✿ Learning English is different from using English as a medium of instruction.
 - ✿ The President of *Ikatan Guru Indonesia (IGI)* : “If we want our students to be more proficient in English, we need to enforce the teaching of English itself, not to use it as the medium of teaching other subjects”.
 - ✿ Teachers who will use English to deliver their lectures must have high language proficiency as well as pedagogical competency.
 - ✿ “TOEFL test is not an instrument to measure a teacher’s pedagogical competency”.
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✿ Schools, teachers and/or policy makers need to be more proactive to accommodate parents' point of view.

✿ Future studies :

✿ use a wider sample population from both private and public schools in East Java province or in Indonesia.

✿ focus on teachers' perceptions towards the use of English and *Bahasa Indonesia*.

✿ observe the perceptions towards the use of English in people's daily lives → because of the growing use of English in Indonesia nowadays.



THANK YOU



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