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## CLASSROOM TALK IN BILINGUAL CLASS INTERACTION

**Abstract:** This study reveals how the classroom talk was in the bilingual classroom interaction. The classroom talk comprises teacher and pupil talk – in which they cover teacher’s explanation, teacher’s question, teacher’s feedback, and modification to teacher’s speech; as well as pupil’s responses and pupil’s questions.

The research findings show that the language option used by the teachers in the bilingual classroom interaction was influenced by several factors, such as (1) teacher’s linguistic competence, (2) the views on the roles of the two languages in the bilingual interaction (3) teacher’s interpretation on the instructional language use prescribed by the school management, and (4) the teacher’s educational background.

The research findings on pupil talk show that the pupils generally adjusted their language option in responding to questions as the language used by the teachers in asking questions. Although the questions were translated into their mother tongue, pupils still assumed that the questions were actually in English. Similarly, the pupils strived to adjust the language of their questions as the language used by the teachers in explaining.

**Key Words:** classroom talk, teacher talk, pupil talk, bilingual class.

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

The use of language in a classroom has a greatly important role in the teaching and learning process. It is the vehicle for communication for both teachers and pupils in their daily classroom interaction. Teachers use it when they give instructions, ask questions, give feedbacks to pupils and manage the class. On the part of pupils, language is used to interact with their teachers and other classmates. They use it to ask questions, give responses to teachers’ questions and express their thoughts and opinions in the discussion. In a word, all dimensions of pedagogical processes in the classroom, from the provision of feedback

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through monitoring, the establishment of small groups, giving instructions and explanations, disciplining and questioning pupils involve language. Thus, the role of language in the communication between teacher and pupils is very important (Nunan and Lamb, 1996:60).

There are three features of classroom – as the part of educational institution that make communication so central (Cazden, 2001:2). *First*, spoken language is the medium by which much teaching takes place, and in which pupils demonstrate to teachers much of what they have learned. *Second*, classrooms are among the most crowded of human environments. Few adults spend as many hours per day in such crowded conditions. Classrooms are similar in this respect to restaurant and buses or subways. But in such places simultaneous conversations are normal, whereas in classrooms one person, the teacher, is responsible for controlling all the talk that occurs while class is officially in session – controlling not just negatively, as a traffic officer does to avoid collisions, but also to enhance the purpose of education. *Third*, and perhaps least obviously, spoken language is an important part of the identities of all the participants. Variation in ways of speaking is a universal fact of social life. Schools are the first large institution to which students come from their families and home neighbourhood, and in which they are expected to participate individually and publicly.

In the use of language in the classroom interaction, it seems that the talk is dominated by teachers (Malamah-Thomas, 1987; Viiri & Saari, 2006). Teachers begin talking when they greet the class and introduce the learning materials. The talk keeps on occurring when they explain materials and ask questions. In most of part of the teaching and learning stages, they have more time to talk. A classroom observation conducted by Nunan (1993:26) has revealed that teachers tend to do most of the talking. In content classroom (e.g. science, mathematic classroom) it has been found that teachers tend to talk for about two-thirds of the available class time, leaving just a third for learners. Even, in some language classrooms it has been shown that teachers talk for up to 89 per cent of the available time.

The success or the failure of a teaching and learning activity is partly determined by the use of language by teachers. The excessive amount of teacher talk in the inappropriate context can be a boring experience for pupils because they just passively sit down listening to the teacher, or feel being neglected. The time allotment for them to develop themselves in the classroom can be less than it should be. Besides the amount of teacher talking time, the inappropriate level of language that teacher uses can be another problem for them to comprehend the lesson. The way the teachers talk to pupils is one of the crucial skills, but it does not demand technical expertise (Harmer, 1998:3). It does, however, require teachers to empathise with the people they are talking to. They have to adapt the level of the language they use. In certain contexts, pupils should also be given time to demonstrate what they have got from the interaction. In the EFL context, some experts state that pupils should have significant opportunities to integrate oral and written language in the classroom, because these experience support and encourage the development of literacy

Another important thing to succeed teaching and learning activity is how the teacher manages parts of the pedagogic interaction. Interaction, in class or anywhere, has to be managed, as it goes along, no matter how much thought has gone into it beforehand. Even more important for teachers, though, and for language teachers in particular, is the fact that it has to be managed by everyone taking part, not just by the teacher, because interaction is obviously not something we just do to people, but something people do together, collectively. In a classroom, of course, it is usually considered normal for the teacher to 'run the show' - to make many of the managerial decisions about who should talk, to whom, on

what topic, in what language, and so on, but none of this alters the fact that everything depends on the learners' cooperation (Allwright & Bailey, 1991).

In addition to the use of language in the classroom, nowadays there are some schools implementing the use of two languages in their classroom interaction. They implement bilingual education program, in which in their interaction teacher and pupils in the classroom are expected to use English and *Bahasa Indonesia*. Teacher uses the two languages in managing and teaching the class – particularly in content-subject classes with the great expectation that pupils can be facilitated to learn the subject content and the target language at a time. The trend of this program is particularly incited by the fact that English is very important to be mastered by everyone to be successful in many fields of life; and the school that has such a program - with 'plus' school ephitet, can have the use of it as a promotion to attract parents to send their children to the school. However, to implement the program is not easy for schools, except they can provide subject-content teachers who are competent in English orally and in written. Such teachers are really required because they have already mastered their own subjects. But some schools do a different thing to provide bilingual teachers - in the midst of being difficult to recruit subject teachers with good competence in English, that is employing English teachers to teach the subject-content.

It is interesting to see how teacher and pupil talk in the bilingual classroom setting. There are some reasons why it is interesting to observe in terms of their talks.

*First*, the option of language is influenced by the teacher's view on what function each language in the classroom carries. When the teacher thinks that it is important to verbalize the content of the subject in Indonesia, he or she will use Indonesian in explaining the content part of the subject. On the contrary, when the teacher considers important to expose the target language in the content, he or she may use partly English in explaining it (Zilm, 1990 as cited in Nunan, 1999:193).

*Second*, the use of two languages in the classroom will bring about the so-called code-switching or the alteration of the two languages in speaking. Teacher and pupils will sometimes shift from one language to another. When the two participants have problems in expressing something, they will tend to choose the stronger language, that is *Bahasa Indonesia*, for possible compensation of their difficulties in expressing it in English. But that is not the single reason of why they switch the code (Kartiah, 2006:1).

*Third*, translation method may be the wayout for the teachers to expose the linguistic input and explain the content in the same time. This can take longer time, and consequently there might be excessive teacher talk; and leave less time for students to talk or to do exercises. The interaction can be dominated by teacher by busily talking in English and then translating the talk (Kartiah, 2006:53).

*Fourth*, either of the used languages is inevitably dominant in the teacher-pupil interaction. It is dependent upon how each participant of the interaction views the use of foreign languages in the classroom, the nature of the classroom activity and the participants' competence in the language (Zilm, 1990 as cited in Nunan, 1999:193).

## B. Problem Statements

The problem statements of the research are formulated as follows:

1. How is the teacher talk in bilingual classroom interaction?
2. How is the pupil talk in bilingual classroom interaction?

## Previous Related Research Findings

There has been some researches on classroom talk conducted by different researchers all over the world. Most of them show similar results, that is the dominance of teacher talk. Some of them are mentioned below.

Allwright and Bailey (1991) reported their observations in many different classes, both in content area subject and in language instruction, that the findings consistently showed that teachers typically did between one half and three quarters of the talking done in classrooms.

Milal (1993) who conducted a research on the characteristics of teacher talk (TT) used in interaction with the learners of low language proficiency (LP) and of high language proficiency (HP) found that the speech rate that teachers addressed to LP was slower than to HP.

Cook (1991) cites figures from various sources about teacher talk; teacher talk takes up 77% of the time in bilingual classroom in Canada, 69% in immersion classes, and 61% in foreign language classrooms; 75% of the utterances in German classrooms from the teacher.

Nunan (1989) reveals that in content classrooms teachers use tend to talk for about two-third of the available class time, leaving just a third for learners. He also states that in some language classrooms, teachers talked for up to 89 per cent of the available time.

Inamullah *et al.* (2008) reported that more than two-thirds of the classroom talking time was devoted to teachers talking at the tertiary level with the teachers playing the dominant role. More than two-thirds of the teachers' talking time was devoted to direct talk, which showed the direct role of the teacher and indirect role of the students at the tertiary level.

Wilson (1999) as cited in Viiri (2006) studied different dialogues and found that teacher talk – either as teacher-led dialogue or as answer to student questions – was the dominant activity in the classroom.

Yongbing (2007) who investigated teacher-student talk in Singapore Chinese language classroom found that the teacher-fronted talk is the dominant feature of social organization of Chinese classroom activities.

From the findings above, teacher, as the holder of authority in the classroom still dominates the talks in the classroom, although the fact that he or she is not the only one in the classroom. As the consequence of this is that most of teachers take more time in talking, and leave pupils as listeners as much as teachers talk. In talking, as observed by Milal (1993) teachers suited their talking speed to the level of pupils' proficiency.

## Some Pertinent Ideas

### 1. Bilingual classroom interaction

Classroom is the place for teacher and pupils come together and involve in the teaching and learning process. When they meet, however, they do not go in 'empty-handed'. The Pupils bring with them their whole experience of learning and of life in classrooms, along with their own reasons for being there, and their own particular needs that they hope to see satisfied. And the teacher brings experience too, of life and learning, and of teaching. The teacher also brings into the classroom the syllabus, often embodied in a textbook. But no matter what they all bring, everything still depends on how they react to each other – learner to learner as well as teacher to learner, when they all get together in the classroom. The interaction is very important to create favorable atmosphere for learning (Malamah-Thomas, 1987; Allwright & Bailey, 1991).

In recent years, several researches in the field of second language acquisition reveals to a great extent the importance of classroom interaction that involves both input and output (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). The interaction hypothesis claims that it is in the interaction process that acquisition process occurs: learners acquire through talking with others (Johnson, 2002 as cited in Xiao-yan, 2006).

Van Lier (1989) states that if the keys to learning are exposure to input and meaningful interaction with other speakers, we must find out what input and interaction the classroom can provide. Ellis (2006) expresses that classroom interaction, both in the form of meaningful interaction, and the form of linguistic rules, may influence the rate of acquisition. Allwright and Bailey (1991) points out that interaction in the classroom has to be managed because it relates to the efforts to help pupils learn and take the benefit of learning.

### 2. Teacher talk

Nunan (1995) argues that teacher talk is important for the organization and management of the classroom because it is through language that teachers either succeed or fail to implement their teaching plans. Stubbs (1987:50-53) mentions eight functions of teacher's monitor on classroom talk, namely: (1) to attract or hold attention of the pupils, and therefore merely to prepare them the message still to come. Example: "Now, don't start now, just listen"; (2) to control the amount of time of pupil talk. Example: "Do you want to say something at this point"; (3) to check whether they have understood a pupil or confirm that they have understood. Example: "Do you understand, Aco?"; (4) to summarize something that has been said or read, or summarize the situation reached in a discussion or lesson; (5, to define or reformulate something that has been said or read; (6) to edit on something a pupil has said or written; (7) to correct or alter something a pupil has said or written; and (8) to specify topic or place some limits on the relevance of what may be said.

Observation in several different classes, both in content area subject and in many language instructions, consistently show that teachers typically do between one half and three quarters of the talking done in classrooms (Allwright & Bailey, 1991:139; Gebhard, 2000:70; Inamullah, 2008).

The excessive time used for teacher talk has been criticized by Moritoshi (2006) by putting forward five reasons of why teacher talk sometimes inevitably counterproductive and something must be limited as much as possible. *First*, a large amount of teacher talking time limits the amount of pupil talking time. For example, in a 40 minute class, if the teacher talks for a total of 25 minutes, that leaves only fifteen minutes for pupils. If there are thirty students in the classroom, it means that each student get less than one minute to talk. *Second*, a large amount of teacher talking time inevitably means long stretches of time in T/class mode. This is uninvolved for pupils and is likely to lead to a drop in a concentration and in pace. The lesson becomes boring and pupils “switch off”. *Third*, teacher talking means that the teacher is “telling” the pupils things that they could be working out for themselves – for instance grammar explanations and corrections. Monologue gives no real clue as to whether or not pupils have understood. *Fourth*, the work done by some researchers on discourse analysis is always distorted by the role imbalance of teacher and pupil – the teacher is expected to take the lead in initiating the topic, allocating turns, evaluating comments, while the pupils merely respond.

In the context of bilingual setting, teacher talks in two instructional languages – Indonesian (as the mother tongue) and English (as the target language). This situation may bring about the more allocated talking time for teacher. He or she sometimes has to explain one concept in the two languages, and it means more time needed.

It is now the question of what aspects teacher talk cover. Generally, teacher talk covers all utterances from the teacher in the context of teaching and learning. However, Nunan (1999, 1993) details the scope of teacher talk into some areas covering explanation, questions, feedback, correction and modification to teacher speech.

a. Explanations

Allwright (in Nunan, 1993) claims that many teachers’ explanation simply do not make sense. They provide some interesting examples in which the explanations are either confusing or simply wrong. It is important for a teacher to speak effectively in explaining the lesson since the main purpose of the explanation is to make pupils understand on what the teacher explains. According Wragg and Brown (1996) that an explanation should help others to understand (1) concepts (2) cause-effects, (3) procedures, (4) purposes, (5) relationship, and (6) process.

b. Teacher’s Question

Teachers’ questions have been the focus of research attention in both content classrooms and language classroom for many years (Gerot as cited in Nunan 1999:192). Most of the findings show that teachers ask many of questions during the classroom interaction. For example, in a study of the frequency of questions asked by elementary school teachers in the United States, Nash and Shiman as quoted by Gebhard (2000:71) discovered teachers ask between 45 to 150 questions every half hour. Additionally, in his observation to six teachers who were all at teaching at different contexts in Japan, Gebhard found they averaged 52 questions every thirty minutes during teacher-initiated activities. Similarly, Leven and Long (as cited in Brualdi, 1998) found that teachers ask between 300 - 400 questions each day. This indicates that a teacher should have a good skill of questioning to get more benefits as to give chance for the pupils speak in English and to check pupils’ understanding on the lesson. From

a study, Brown and Wragg (1997:25) quotes Strevén's finding that teachers asked about 400 questions, and that 65% of the questions concerning with the memorization of information from the textbook.

Some researches also show that certain types of questioning behaviour have persisted over many years. Borg *et.al.* (1970) in Nunan (1999:192) point out that factual questions to determine whether or not pupils know basic information are more frequent than higher-order questions which encourage pupils to reflect on their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, or which require them to follow through and justify a particular line of reasoning.

Tobin in Brown and Wragg (1997:51) revealed that waiting-time after asking and answering questions motivated pupils to answer, and more pupils responded with long answers, and asked questions. Rowe in Nunan (1999:193) found that, on average, teachers waited less than a second before calling on a pupil respond, and that only a further second was then allowed for pupil to answer before the teachers intervened, either supplying the required response themselves, rephrasing the question, or calling on some other pupils to respond.

In relation to the question asked by teachers in the classroom, there are five kinds of questions that are frequently asked as their purposes, namely: (1) display question, (2) referential question, (3) comprehension check, (4) confirmation question, and (5) clarification check (Gebhard (2000)). Of the five question types, it has been observed that, in contrast with interactions in the world outside, classroom interaction is characterized by the use of display questions to the almost total exclusion of referential questions. For example, Long and Sato (in Nunan, 1993:29) compared the types of questions asked by teachers in class with the types of questions used by native speakers when communicating with second-language speakers in non-classroom contexts, while in class, the opposite was the case.

Barnes (196) as cited in Xiao-yan (2006) examined the questions asked by the teachers and classified the questions into four types. The first type is questions concerning with factual matters, that is, the questions beginning with "what". The second type is questions of inference beginning with "how" and "why". The third type is open questions which do not require any inference. And the last type is question for communication, which could affect and control the behaviour of learners. Barnes further classified the second type into closed questions and open questions. Questions are closed because there is only one existing answer, while to open questions there are more than one answer.

In another study, Brock (in Nunan, 1993:29) investigated the effects of referential questions on ESL classroom discourse. The study was carried out with four experienced ESL teachers and twenty-four non native speakers; two of the teachers were trained to incorporate referential questions into their classroom instruction while two were not.

#### c. Feedback on learner performance

Feedback, another essential teaching component, is information about the accuracy or appropriateness of a response (Eggen and Kauchack, 1997). During the teaching and learning process, feedback is often used to respond to what a pupil has performed.

There are some ways in which feedbacks can be classified, but one of the most frequent and simplest distinctions is between positive and negative feedback. For many years, behaviorist-

inspired research has found that positive feedback is much more effective than negative feedback in changing pupil behaviour. Positive feedback has two principal functions: to let pupils know that they have performed correctly, and to increase motivation through praise (Nunan, 1999; Eggen and Kauchak, 1997).

Weinstein (1989) as cited in Xiao-yan (2006) that children learned how 'smart' they were mainly from teacher's feedback in the form of marks, comments, and the degree and type of praise and criticism. Wheldal and Merret (1987) cited a large number of studies showing that rewards such as praise, are far more effective than punishment. The evidence on punishments tend to reveal that not only are they ineffective in bringing about positive change, but they can often have the opposite effect. Therefore, they have even built an approach to teaching based on the principle which they term "positive teaching" and which they claim to be highly effective (Xiao-yan, 2006).

Most theorists and practitioners agree that favorable feedback about performance has a positive effect on subsequent performance. Knowledge of poor results for children could be devastating, so we should try to strike at the right level with each child to ensure high success rates. Nevertheless, we should avoid the fallacy of trying to pretend that a child's performance is good when it is not. This only leads to low personal standards. By insisting on realistic goals and thus ensuring some measure of success for each child, we are increasing the likelihood of reinforcement (Xiao-yan, 2006).

In his functional analysis of feedback, Brophy (1981), cited in Nunan (1999) provides 12 guidelines for effective praises, namely: (1) It is delivered contingently; (2) It specifies the particulars of accomplishment; (3) It shows spontaneously, variety, and other signs of credibility; suggests clear attention to the pupil's accomplishment; (4) It rewards attainment of specified performance criteria; (5) It provides information to pupils about their competence or the value of their accomplishments; (6) It orients pupils toward better appreciation of their own task-related behaviour and thinking about problem solving; (7) It uses students own prior accomplishments as the context for describing present accomplishment; (8) It is given in recognition of noteworthy effort or success at difficult task; (9) It attributes to effort and ability, implying that similar success can be expected in the future; (10) It fosters endogenous attribution (pupils believe that they expend effort on the task because they enjoy the task and/or want to develop task-relevant skills); (11) It focuses pupils' attention on their own task-relevant behaviour; and (12) It fosters appreciation of, and desirable attribution about, task-relevant behaviour after the process is completed.

#### d. Teacher's correction

Inevitably pupils will make mistakes of learning in the process of learning; and it is the task for the teacher to point out pupils' mistakes as well as provide correction. In correction, some specific information is provided on aspects of the pupils' performance, through explanation, or provision of better or other alternatives, or thorough elicitation of these from the pupils (Xiao-yan, 2006).

Ur (2000) points out we should go for encouraging, tactful correction. The pupils has reliable intuitive knowledge about what kind of correction helps most, that is, learner preferences are on the whole a reliable guide.

Generally, teachers always adopt the following techniques to correct pupils' errors (Ur, 1996:249):

1. The teacher does not react at all.
2. The teacher indicates there is a mistake, but does not provide any further information about what is wrong.
3. The teacher says what was wrong and provides a model of the acceptable version. That is explicit correction.
4. The teacher indicates something was wrong, elicits acceptable version from the learner who made the mistake (self-repair).
5. The teacher indicates something was wrong, elicits acceptable version from another member of the class.
6. The teacher asks the learner who made the mistake to reproduce the corrected version.
7. The teacher provides or elicits an explanation of why the mistake was made and how to avoid it.

Despite the perceived importance of error correction, and notwithstanding the considerable amount of research on the subject, there is still a good deal of controversy on some key questions, such as: when should errors be corrected? How should they be corrected? Who should correct errors? To what extent should self-correction be encouraged? Which errors should be corrected?

There is even controversy over whether errors should be corrected at all. Krashen as cited in Nunan (1993), for instance, claims that error correction, like grammatical explanation, is of little benefit for long-term acquisition.

e. Modifications to teacher speech

A study conducted by Milal (1993) shows that type of teacher talk exposed to learners of low language proficiency and to learners of high language proficiency is different. Another study conducted by Pica and Long (1986) as quoted by Nunan (1993:25) found out that ESL classroom conversation differed from conversations out of the class in a number of ways. Similarly, Gaies (1977) as cited in Allwright and Bailey (1991:139) tape-recorded a group of teachers-in-training talking in two different situations: (1) with their peers, and (2) with their own students in practice teaching assignments. The way teachers modifies their speech in the language and bilingual classrooms can be identified in what Chaudron (as cited in Nunan, 1999:191; and in Xiao-yan, 2006) summarizes the following points:

1. Rates of speech appear to be slow
2. Pauses, which may be evidence of the speaker planning more, are possibly more frequent and longer.
3. Pronunciation tends to be exaggerated and simplified.
4. Vocabulary use is more basic.
5. Degree of subordination is lower.
6. More declarative and statements are used than questions.
7. Teachers may self-repeat more frequently.

### 3. Pupil talk

Malamah-Thomas (1987) states that the interaction is not just action followed by reaction. However, it means acting reciprocally, acting upon each other.

Xiao-yan (2006) views that interaction positively contributes to successful learning. He states that pupils will learn most successfully when they are given ample opportunities to interact in conversation. So in this sense, we can say how a lesson progresses and whether it is successful largely depend on the interaction between pupils and the teacher.

There are four elements of pupil talk as a result of pupil's interaction with the teacher and classmates. They are: (1) pupil's question, and (2) pupil's responses.

a. Pupil's question

There are some types of questions that a student may ask in the classroom, but most of the questions are asked by pupils because some reasons. *First*, they want to know further for the information that the teacher has explained. *Second*, the teacher's explanation is not clear, and pupil needs more information for it. *Third*, they want to make sure that the teacher really means with certain information.

b. Pupil's responses to question

According to Gebhard (2000), the teacher needs to consider wait-time in relation to creating chances for pupils to engage in meaningful interaction. Wait-time is a period of silence, both before and after a pupil responds to a question, that gives learners in a class time to think (Eggen and Kauchak, 1997). As a result, a usual pattern of classroom interaction emerges: the teacher ends up asking many questions, only pupils who can respond quickly do so, and the teacher ends up reacting to the pupils' responses (Gebhard, 2000).

Eggen and Kauchak (1997) state that by increasing waiting-time to about 3 to 5 seconds, learning will increase in three ways. *First*, the length and quality of pupil responses improve. *Second*, failures to respond are reduced, and voluntary participation increases. The *third*, equitable distribution and participation from minority students improve.

Gebhard (2000) expresses that when teachers extend their wait-time after asking a question, pupil participation increases as follows: (1) the average length of pupils' responses increases; (2) pupils ask more questions; (3) pupils react to each others' comments; (4) the number of correct responses go up; and (5) More inferences are made by pupils.

Similarly, Nunan (1999) notes several effects of the extending of wait-time from three to five after asking questions, namely: (1) There was an increase in the average length of pupil responses; (2) Unsolicited, but appropriate, pupil responses increased; (3) Failures to respond decreased; (4) There was an increase in speculative responses; (5) There was an increase in student-to-student comparison of data; (6) Inferential statements increased; (7) Pupil-initiated questions increased; and (8) Pupils generally made a greater variety of verbal contributions to the lesson.

What are stated by Eggen and Kauchak (1997), Nunan (1999) and Gebhard (2000) show the important effects of giving sufficient wait-time for pupils to respond the questions asked by the teacher. The interval time between a question to the answer should be between three to five seconds. If it is less than the time, teachers may fail to get responses from the pupils.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### A. Research Design

The design of this research is qualitative descriptive. The purpose of qualitative research are broad in scope and center around promoting a deep understanding of a particular phenomenon, such as environment, a process, or even a belief.

Through the design, the researcher collected, analyzed and interpreted a variety of data to reveal classroom talk – teacher and pupil talks in bilingual classroom interaction in YPS Primary School.

In terms of the approach, the research used *Discourse Analysis*. This is concerned with the description and analysis of spoken interaction. (McCarthy, 1991: 12). The spoken interaction, as the emphasis of this research covers the teacher talk and pupil talk in bilingual classroom interaction.

### B. Research Site and Participants

The school – Sekolah Dasar (SD) YPS Lawewu, where this research was conducted is one of elementary schools managed by *Yayasan Pendidikan Soroako* – an educational institution which is financially supported by PT INCO, an international nickel-mining company. It is located in Soroako, East Luwu Regency.

By applying the national curriculum, the school has been trying to implement its bilingual program, as one of its academic excellence – since 2008. In the academic year 2009/2010, it ran 8 bilingual projects comprising 2 classes in both grade 1 and grade 2, as well as 1 class for each of the next grades – grade 3 to 6. Beside the program, the school still ran their monolingual program by using Indonesian as the sole language of instruction. Totally, it had 18 classes for the program.

The bilingual project classes in the school were classified into two groups: lower primary classes (grades 1 to 3) and upper primary classes (grades 4 to 6). In the lower primary classes, pupils learnt the integrated subjects through themes. In the upper level (grades 4 to 6), they learnt some subjects which were exposed in two languages, namely: mathematics and science. The pupils in other subjects still used monolingual interaction, that is Indonesian.

The teachers of the bilingual program were initially taken from different schools owned the foundation - through 'teacher-reshuffling' program in 2008 with the specific requirement was that they were competent in English. Some of the teachers were the graduates of the English Department, others were from non-English department. Some of them were promoted to teach in the program because they have already had previous experience of teaching in national-plus schools – a type of school that uses bilingual in their classroom interaction. Those selected teachers teach the content subjects, eventhough some of them did not have experiences in teaching those subject before.

#### The Selection of Participants

There were totally seven bilingual homeroom teachers available in the academic year 2009/2010, but five of them were taken as the participants of the research. The five teachers

and their classes (pupils) were taken from grade 2 to grade 5. The other two bilingual homeroom teachers who were not taken as participants were: one teachers in the first grade level, and one teacher in the sixth grade level.

### **Research Instruments**

As the nature of qualitative research as stated by Creswell (1994:163) and Danim (2002:60), the researcher acted as the primary data collection instrument in this research. To assist the researcher who acted as the main instrument of this research, he employed some data analysis guideposts to acquire the desired data. Other supporting instruments used in this research were interview guide and field notes. Interview guide contained some questions for teachers and pupils to get desired data, while field notes were employed to note direct information in the classroom which is regarded important to support other data.

#### **C. Techniques of Collecting Data**

Data was collected through observation and interview.

In observation, data obtained by simply watching the participants. The emphasis during observation was on understanding the natural environment as lived by participants, without altering or manipulating it (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006:413). During the observation, the researcher acted as an external observer in which he was not directly involved in the situation being observed.

In interview, data were taken by interviewing the bilingual teachers and their pupils to acquire additional information related to the use of languages in the classrooms. Some information might be valuable in understanding better on a variety of phenomena found in the bilingual classrooms. To get the desired data, structured interview was used.

#### **D. Techniques of Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted by using the interactive model of Huberman and Miles covering three stages: (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification (Huberman & Miles in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:429; and Iskandar, 2008: 222).

### **Conclusion**

In bilingual classroom interaction, the teachers used two distinct languages – English and Indonesian. The use of either of the languages is much affected by some factors: the teachers' views on the roles of the two languages assuming in the bilingual classroom; the teachers' linguistic competence, the ratio of instructional languages prescribed as well as their educational background. Hence some teachers predominantly used English, others exposed more English than Indonesian.

In explaining, the teachers asked a lot of questions. When the questions were not comprehended by the pupils, the teachers sometimes translated the questions, and even sometimes did self-answer. The questions that were frequently asked by the teachers were comprehension check and word-meaning check. The two questions were intended to ensure that the pupils followed what the teachers were explaining (Stubb, 1987:50).

In giving feedback, the teachers mostly used positive ones rather than the negative ones. The focus of the oral feedback was on the success of pupils using English and of mastering the content of the lesson.

In relation to the pupil talk in the bilingual class interaction, the pupil generally adjusted the language option in responding as the language used by the teachers in posing questions. They responded the questions in Indonesian when they were asked in the language. Conversely, by using some formulaic utterances, they answered the questions in English when the teachers' questions were posed in the language. The response adjustment in English was done by the pupils when their linguistic responses and knowledge were available. Their linguistic responses were mostly formulaic speech. The absence of either or both of them resulted in "zero-word" response or no-response

In asking questions, the pupils asked more questions related to the lesson when the questions were posed in their home language – *Bahasa Indonesia*. They just asked "word-meaning" to assist them in responding the questions. Those questions were basically the type of formulaic speech. They still had problems to construct questions in English to explore the lessons since they still have limited vocabulary.

### Recommendations

Referring to the findings on the classroom talk in bilingual class interaction, the researcher proposes the following recommendations:

1. The teacher should vary the sources of linguistic inputs - e.g. interaction with textbooks written in English, films as the level of their linguistic competence, so that the pupils can take benefits from the different source of linguistic inputs. They can compare the input and internalize the correct input. This can also reduce the teacher's dominance in IR/F pattern, in which this pattern just gives more opportunity for the advanced and confident pupils (Ur, 1996:237)
2. The use of translation in asking question should be avoided. The teachers can modify the questions to be somewhat simple so that it can be comprehensible. If not, the teachers can make use of the visual relia or context to clarify the questions (Otto, 2006:79). Besides, the wait-time should be lengthened to give them opportunity to analyze the questions. The failure of acquiring responses from the pupils can be caused by the less wait-time provided to them.
3. The teachers should minimize using the expression *Do you understand?* to check the pupil's comprehension, since it is very rare for learners to admit that they do not understand. The teachers should keep regular eye contact with the learners while explaining, instead- to identify the pupils who do not understand the lesson yet. Another way is by posing specific questions about the information or explanation that has been given (Lewis and Hill, 1986:48)
4. The teacher should avoid self-answer to give the chance for the pupils to respond the questions. This can be done by giving more wait-time to respond. By giving longer time, the responses of the pupils can increase both quantitatively and qualitatively (Slavin, 1994:278; Cazden, 2001:94-95; Nunan, 1999:193, and Allwright & Bailey, 1991:108).
5. The teacher is recommended to provide or expose the pupils with useful expressions that they can use in their daily interactions. Formulaic speech can assist the pupils in acquiring the second language (Wong and Fillmore, in Ellis (2003:85-90). The formulaic speech serves as the basis for creative speech. That is, the learner comes to realize that

- utterances initially understood and used as wholes consists of discrete constituents which can be combined with other constituents in a variety of rule-bound ways (Ellis, 2006:169). The case of Wes, the subject of Schmidt (1983), is a good example of how the formulaic utterances can be the channel for the learners acquire the target language (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1992:69).
6. The emergence of “zero-word” response from the pupil is likely to indicate the absence of either or both of the conditions: the unavailability of linguistic response and knowledge. This should be an alarm for the teachers to modify their speech or re-explain the concepts. Therefore, the teachers should ensure the source of the “no-response” and take measures to help the pupils overcome their problems. If the “zero-word” response is chiefly caused by the linguistic problem, the teachers can slow down their speech, simplify the word-choice and syntactic structure, or use visual relia to make the teacher’s question comprehensible. If the “no-response” is caused by the lack of understanding on the lesson, the teacher should repeat the explanation using other techniques or ways which can facilitate the pupils understand the content of the lesson (cf. Otto, 2006:79).
  7. The teachers need to be developed in terms of their competence both in the target language and in content knowledge. Their educational backgrounds are sometimes insufficient to support them in teaching a mixture of subjects in the bilingual classrooms. Therefore, self-development is undoubtedly necessary to overcome their shortcomings. Besides, the linguistic competence should be also improved to facilitate them teaching the content through English confidently. Ideally, the teachers are strongly competent in the subject, and have good commands of English to deliver the subject in English.

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