



## THE TEACHER’S LIVED EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING CONTENT SUBJECT AT AN IMMERSION SCHOOL

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### Abstrak

*This study aimed to describe and explain the mathematics teacher’s lived experience in delivering materials using English as the medium of instruction. This study covered five aspects of lived experience, which are understanding, belief, feeling, intention and action. This study used the qualitative approach and the case study as the design of the study. The subject of the study was a mathematics teacher who taught seven grade students at an immersion school. To collect the data, the writer used observation and interview as the instrument as well as some related documents as the secondary data. The teacher’s understanding was interpreted through her mastery of the subject of the study and the language acquisition. The teacher believed that she could teach the students well and do her best, however inconfidence, nervousness, and feeling under-pressure of teaching emerged several times. From the teacher’s understanding, belief, feeling, and intention, it could influence the teacher’s action in the classroom. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the teacher’s preparation is important for teaching. It brings big influence to the students, especially the students’ comprehension of the materials. Therefore, the teacher should be well prepared before she teaches in the real class.*

### INTRODUCTION

Globalization era supports people to learn other languages. Learning the other languages, especially the international language, helps the people to communicate with other people from different country. English as the international language becomes a popular language and easily spread out all over the world because of some factors such as, economic factors, tourism, education, and cultural exchange. Some big countries, which are using English as the first language, influence the other countries to use English as the media of communication. English is listed as the official or co-official language of forty two countries and is spoken extensively in other countries where it has no official status (Genc, 2010:143). Therefore, many people are motivated to learn English and practice it in their daily life. By having good English skill, the people could survive in global competition.

English is also known as lingua franca because people who have different language background in many countries use English to share their idea and information. The existence of lingua franca provides many advantages to

many people. Graddol (2000:16) defines English as lingua franca as the language used for communication by people from different linguistics backgrounds. Many countries use English as the media of communication. This fact is proven by the increasing of English users all the time because not only the natives who use English as their media of communication but also for the people who use English as second language or a foreign language. Graddol (2000:16) defined English users into three circles, namely inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle. In this case, Indonesia is categorized as the expanding circle user country. Indonesian people use English as a foreign language. English as a foreign language is used by many people for their media of communication, especially by the students who study at an international school or the people who speak to foreigner. Many foreigners come to Indonesia for studying in several universities, having investment in several economic sectors, or having vacation since many beautiful places as the tourist destination.

Indonesia as one of the expanding country shows that the government supports the use

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of English at school. Many schools in Indonesia adopt English as the medium of instruction in the classroom, especially the international school, national plus, and immersion school. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is adopted to improve the students' foreign language proficiency. CLIL brings new insight to improve the education in this country. CLIL has been seen as one such educational approach with this potential (Vazques and Maria, 2013:68). In other words, CLIL can be seen that students learn the language for content subject. They learn the language for specific terms related to their subject at school.

In this case, English is chosen as the language for teaching the content subject. English is the language which dominates the scene, be it as a foreign language in Europe and many parts of Asia, or a second language in North America but also parts of Africa and Asia (Dalton-Puffer, 2007:1). English language and content subject put side by side in learning process. It is more effective for the students to learn the language through the lesson at school because the students practice the language at school every day. The students can improve their language ability through their habit, always speaks in English at school.

Immersion schools that exist in Indonesia are one of the proofs that Indonesia adopts English as the medium of instruction in the classroom. Foreign language immersion programs, also referred to as one-way immersion programs, are designed for English-speaking students (Lenker and Rhodes, 2007:1). Immersion school provides better facilities for the students to acquire English skill. The teacher uses English as their instructions for some subjects like mathematics, science, English as a second language, and social studies. In immersion school that I conducted the research, the students use English to communicate during the school ours except when they have subject guided in *Bahasa Indonesia* or other languages.

In order to support this program, the experienced teacher integrates content and language with the special terms or register that is needed. The implementation of CLIL programs requires the content teacher to be responsible for teaching content subjects through the foreign language (Vazques and Maria, 2013:70). The experienced teacher who masters the language is important so that the objectives of this program could be achieved. It becomes crucial if the program is not supported by the experienced teacher because the teacher has important role

to reach the goal of education. The teacher could determine the students' achievement in the classroom.

In this case, the teacher must be selected based on their knowledge in each lesson that they will deliver to the students, considering the means of teaching is delivering material or guiding the students. Brown (2007:7) stated that teaching is defined as showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instruction, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand. By mastering the content of the subject, have more knowledge, and having ability in delivering the materials, the teacher could transfer their information to the students. The content teachers in an immersion school had to be skillful teachers who are able to teach in English because they have to deliver the lesson in English. They are the experienced teacher who integrates content with special terms or registers and English as the first foreign language in Indonesia.

As I mentioned in the background of the study above, immersion school needs the competent teachers who master the guided subject in teaching and learning process. However, the teacher also needs to have competence in delivering the material to the students. The teacher's competence in transferring their knowledge is also supported by the comprehension of the language that is used as the medium of instruction. The integrating content and English as the medium of instruction in the classroom encounters some problems for the teacher and students since they have to use English which is different to the general English in teaching and learning process. On one hand, the teacher has to teach the content which should be achieved by the students, on the other hand language development of the students also becomes the integrated language and content teacher's responsibility.

Since this study concerns with the teaching and learning mathematics in immersion school, the skillful teacher is needed to help them in delivering the material. The teacher is chosen by considering background of education, it is related to their major of education, but they can deliver the material in English. Unfortunately, many content teachers are unsure about the way they should perform in the CLIL or bilingual class (Vazques and Maria, 2013:70). Therefore, the researcher intends to investigate the teacher's lived experience in teaching content subject.

In accordance with the explanation above, lived experience needs more attention because of its complexity, this study attempts to answer re-

search questions of (1) what is the teacher's lived experience in teaching mathematics in English at Immersion school? (2) What are the problems faced by the teacher in teaching mathematics in English at immersion school? (3) How does the teacher solve the problems arise in teaching mathematics in English at immersion school?. These questions are addressed to meet the objective of the study which is to describe and explains the mathematics teacher's lived experience in delivering materials using English as the medium of instruction at immersion school, the problems and solutions that teacher has in teaching mathematics in English.

### METHODS

The phenomenological study was guided theory to answer the questions of this research. A phenomenology research is aimed to gain a better understanding of nature and quality of phenomena as they present themselves (Willis, 2008: 56). In this case, the writer is describing a phenomenon, Marshall and Rosman (2006: 96) see that as a case study. According to Borg and Gall (2003:436) case study is done to shed light on a phenomenon, which is the process, events, persons, or things of interest to the researcher. To get the data from this study, the writer employed several instruments they were Observation, questionnaire and depth interview.

In this case, the observation conducted to get the important data in the holistic context of teaching mathematics at an immersion school by the teacher who has mathematics major background but he/ she teaches in English. The observation was used to observe the teaching learning process and the students' activities. In doing the observation, the researcher did pre-observation to make the researcher be familiar with the class situation. Then the next observation was class observations where the teaching and learning mathematics in progress.

In this case, the researcher applied open-ended interview. Interviews conducted as the means to get the data because the primary data in the form of participants' narrative. Interviews are used to describe and interpret the teacher's lived experience in teaching mathematics in English and to avoid the misleading interpretation and to keep the closeness with the participant. Interviews, as the data gathering instruments of this research, guided by interview blueprint and based on construct definition, categorization, and derivation of indicators.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

To get the data from this study, the writer employed several instruments they were Observation and depth interview. The main information is taken from observation, the researcher came to each class to know the real teaching and learning. The second is taken from interview to confirm the field notes.

The description and the interpretation of the teacher's lived experience in teaching mathematics at immersion school were mainly discussed into three category, they were the teacher's understanding of the lesson plan, the teacher's understanding in teaching mathematics at immersion, and the last was the teacher's understanding about English acquisition. The teacher has arranged the lesson plan based on the school format. From the lesson plan it could be seen that she did not put all the main points of lesson plan proposed by Akhyak, Idrus and Bakar (2013) it that lesson plan a teacher should describe the objectives of the learning, select materials, organize materials, learning method and strategy, learning source, media and tools, assessment and evaluation as well as the time allocation.

In this case is mathematics, the teacher could understand all of the materials. She has learned all the materials when she studied in college since she was graduated from mathematics program. In addition, the teacher understanding of the subject is also proven by the unpredictable questions by the students. Sometimes the students have good questions that is hard to be answered and the teacher was ready to give explanation to the students.

Here, the teacher also showed her understanding of English as the media of communication in immersion program. The teacher tried hard to speak in English all the time whether she has some problems when she spoke in English. Especially in front of the students, the teacher always speaks in English. She did not want to give bad example to the students by using Indonesian word.

According to the teacher's understanding, teachers who taught content subjects in immersion program also need to acquire English as the main media of communication. In this case, the teacher seemed that she acquire English for communication. The teacher spoke using English whenever met the students and taught the students in the class. It was supported by the rule that no one allowed to speak in Indonesian during the lesson that was delivered in English,

especially for the teacher. The teacher has to give good example by speaking English all the time.

During teaching mathematics in immersion school, there were some problems found by the researcher. The data taken from the analysis of the documents in this case was lesson plan, observation, and depth interview. The first problem is the data from the lesson plan. In terms of the document of lesson plan, it seemed that the teacher understand the lesson plan based on the school format. However the lesson plan was not clear and specific enough since the teacher only mentioned the day and date, objectives, procedures, bible integrated, and homework. It will be hard for the other teacher if they want to apply the lesson plan since it does not mention the strategy used. In order to solve the problem, the teacher's lesson plan was made based on the school format. It was simpler compared to lesson plan points suggested by Akhyak (2013). In one hand, the lesson plan based on school format helped the teacher to finish their lesson plan faster so that they could manage their time wisely.

The other problem is related to the teacher and students in teaching and learning process. The teacher has difficulties in using mathematics terms. Sometimes, the teacher has difficulties in choosing the best terms for several words. Therefore the teacher has to check the right terms to avoid the misunderstanding. Since the teacher sometimes had difficulties to find diction, sometimes it made the students confuse because they had to think more so that they could understand the teacher. Sometimes the students told the diction to the teacher in the classroom so that it made the teacher felt uncomfortable. And then she remained the students if they want to correct the teacher words or pronunciation they have to speak respectfully. The solution related to the teacher's problem in finding the diction and pronunciation. It is better for the teacher to memorize new vocabulary and check the pronunciation by herself. She could do self-learning so that she could enrich more vocabularies and avoid the same mistake.

Related to teaching mathematics in immersion school, the teacher's belief is identified through the teacher's judgments or opinions about teaching mathematics. In the first time, the teacher believed that immersion students were fluent in English and they were smart. Therefore, the teacher prepared herself in teaching so that she could teach the students well. Since the teacher was the language learners she needed to adapt to the students. However, the teacher believed about the students could support the te-

acher to learn English harder.

In this case is related to the teacher's feeling when she taught the students using English as the media of communication. At first, the teacher was nervous whenever she taught the students. She was worry if she made some mistake when she delivered the material or when she communicated with the students. The teacher's feeling sometimes caused some problems in teaching and learning process. When the teacher felt inconfidence and nervous in the classroom it could make the teacher could not concentrate in teaching the students. Therefore, the teacher has to overcome and control her feeling so that teaching and learning process could run well. In this case, the teacher tried to cooperate with the students and became their friends so that she could reduce her nervousness in the classroom.

Intention in this case is the mathematics teacher's intention toward her goals in teaching the students. The first is her intention to herself. As a mathematics teacher who has to deliver the material in English, she has to acquire the language used. Therefore, she tried hard to learn English as soon as she can. She has to be fluent in English when she taught the students. It was important because most her students studied in immersion program since they were elementary school students. In this case, the students have good English ability because they were accustomed to use English for many years.

In this case, the teacher's action in mathematics could be seen from her effort to improve her ability related to teaching and learning process. The first was improving her ability to speak in English since she has no background of English study. After the teacher accepted to be mathematics teacher in her school, she directly taught the students because she joined with the school in the middle of semester. There was no English training for the teacher to learn English in general and English for mathematics. The teacher has to learn by herself in order to improve her fluency.

Actually, it was not easy for the teacher to learn the language individually. She needed someone to give her guidance so that she could learn faster. In this case, the teacher learned English by herself. She was joining English class and English for mathematics when she studied in mathematics program. It means that the teacher did not learn English from zero point. She has an experience in learning English. In order to improve her ability in English, she read many books to enrich her vocabulary. She made a vocabulary list since she struggled hard to memorize many

mathematics terms and new vocabulary for English in general. When she got problem and need more explanation, she asked to her coworker.

The second was her action to teach the students. In order to improve the students' achievement, the teacher did many strategies to attract the students. She did not want her limitedness or her inexperience in teaching mathematics in English brought negative influence for the students. She tried to find fun way of teaching, for example by giving game related to the materials for the students. It is expected that the students could enjoy the lesson and did not get stress. She tried to be more communicative with the students.

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Related to the teacher's understanding, the teacher showed that she realized as a professional teacher she has to make good preparation and good teaching. In preparing the lesson, the teacher has done their lesson plan in a good way. Actually the teacher believed that she could teach the students well and the students could cooperate well. However she was not confident enough to teach the students since she has to teach the students in English since she was inexperience to use English as the medium of instruction. Therefore the teacher set goals and decide suitable action for the students. In this case the teacher tried to improve her ability in English by learning by teaching.

Based on the conclusions above, the writer has several suggestions in relation to the research. The first suggestion is to the government. The government should provide training center for the content subject since there are many schools uses English as the medium of instruction. And then, the school also need facilitate the teacher so that they could improve their English.

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