

**TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES IN
TEACHING CONTENT SUBJECTS THROUGH ENGLISH AS
A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT SINGAPORE
INDONESIAN SCHOOL PALEMBANG**

THESIS

**BY
ULFAH OKTAVIANI
06012681822010**



**MAGISTER PROGRAM OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents: (1) the background of the study, (2) the problems of the study, (3) the objectives of the study, (4) the significance of the study.

1.1. The Background of the Study

A teacher is an important agent in the success of education quality. According to UNESCO (2015), an education system is only as good as its teachers. Teachers are crucial to universal and quality education for all: they are core in shaping the minds and attitudes of the coming generations to deal with new global challenges and opportunities. Markley (2004) said that a good teacher and action to be taken on his/her part in the classroom play a vital role in provoking effective and efficient learning on the part of the students.

Student achievement relies predominantly on teacher quality. According to Hattie (2003), teachers are the most important school-based influence on student academic performance. Moreover, Wibowo (2014) found that teachers have a fundamental role in their learners' academic achievement and their quality can highly influence student outcomes.

According to EF EPI (English Proficiency Index 2019) Indonesian proficiency world rank in 2019 was the 60th out of 100 countries with a score 50.06, which indicates that Indonesia was at a low proficiency level. Meanwhile, according to Asia EF EPI Rankings (2019), The Indonesian Proficiency level was 13th out of 25 countries in Asia. This students' low proficiency level is in line with the Indonesian teacher's quality. According to the Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel (2015), the result of the competency examination indicates that the teacher's quality in Indonesia is still low and does not reach the required minimum standard. The average score of teacher competency in 2015 was 53.02 while the passing grade was 55 (Portal Pendidikan, 2016). This failure is caused by many factors and one of the factors is teachers' beliefs.

According to Combs (1979), the foremost critical single cause of a person's success or failure educationally has to do with the question of what the person believes about himself. Beliefs are propositions individuals consider being genuine and which are often tacit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, provide a basis for action, and are resistant to change (Borg, 2011, p. 370–371). For teachers, belief is the teacher's efficacy, knowledge, perceptions, and attitude about teaching, the subject matter to be taught, and the educational processes (Pajares, 1992).

Teacher's belief is considered to greatly influence teaching practice. According to Pajares (1992), a teacher's belief has a greater influence than the teachers' knowledge on the way they plan their lessons, on the kinds of decisions they make, and on their general classroom practice. Also, Johnson (1994) argues that teachers' beliefs play a critical role in how teachers learn to teach, how they interpret new knowledge about learning and teaching, and how that knowledge is translated into classroom practices (p. 439). In addition, Vibulphol (2004) found out that teacher belief about language learning influenced the classroom instruction of the pre-service teachers in selecting materials and activities, in using English as a medium of instruction, their instruction on vocabulary, and their focus on form or meaning.

The education sector has been influenced significantly by the globalization of English as a medium of instruction. There are a growing number of educational institutions in non-English speaking countries that have implemented EMI (Coleman, 2006) and this global trend has shown no sign of dwindling and has gained momentum in recent years that is likely to continue into the inevitable future (Dearden, 2014). Moreover, there are more content-area courses in tertiary EFL academic circumstances that are now offered through EMI (Nunan, 2003). Aside from the globalization of English, this can be the effect of the belief that a foreign language will be more effectively acquired if it is integrated with content rather than learned in isolation as a school subject (Blanton, 1992; Geneese, 1994). In other words, English should rather be used in 'real'

contexts than just learned formally. As stated by Krashen (1982), there are two processes, namely acquisition as a “natural” way of developing knowledge of a second language and learning as a conscious process where conscious rules about a language are developed. Of the two, the acquisition process is seen to be more effective. Therefore, recent language teaching methods have been directed toward involving both content and language teaching simultaneously.

In accordance with the globalization of English, in Indonesia, the government has implemented several programs related to EMI, one of them was the establishment of International Standard Schools (Sekolah Berstandar Internasional or SBI). According to the law of National Education System Article 50 Paragraph (3) of Law No. 20 the Year 2003, the Indonesian government emphasizes that every district/province government must hold an International Leveled School or at least one International Leveled School for every unit of the education institution. In SBI schools, English as a Medium of instruction is used in teaching content subjects such as Math and Science. Through this implementation, students are expected to have more opportunities to practice the English language (Bax, 2010). According to government policy which is stated in the Law of National Education System No. 20 the Year 2003 Article 33 Verse 3 about the use of foreign language in the teaching and learning process, it is said that a foreign language can be used as the medium instruction in a certain education unit to support the students’ language competence (National Education System, 2003).

However, there were limited schools in Indonesia that has implemented EMI. According to Kemendikbud (2019), From 149,435 primary schools in Indonesia, there were only 196 schools that have implemented EMI since they were SPK schools. This was because they were not aware of how important EMI is and the benefits of EMI. Besides, teachers and schools didn’t realize one of the factors that influence a teacher's quality is their belief. Related to this problem, the limited research about teacher’s beliefs towards the benefits of EMI in the primary

level especially in Indonesia also added to the list of the factors that caused lack of the awareness of the importance of EMI from teachers and schools.

In line with the regulations stated in the previous paragraph and the problem above, the researcher interested to conduct a research in primary level. In Palembang, since there was only one school which implemented EMI in teaching content subjects named Singapore Indonesian School therefore, the researcher was interested to conduct a research about teachers' beliefs and classroom practices in teaching content subjects through English as a medium of instruction at SIS Palembang.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

The problems of the study were formulated into the following questions:

1. What were content teachers' beliefs towards English as a Medium of Instruction at SIS Palembang?
2. How content teachers' beliefs reflected in their classroom practices?
3. What were the challenges that content teachers at SIS Palembang encountered in teaching content through English as a medium of instruction?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems above, the objectives of the study were:

1. to describe content teachers' beliefs towards English as a Medium of Instruction at SIS Palembang.
2. to find out how content teachers' beliefs reflected in their classroom practices
3. to find out what were the challenges that content teachers at SIS Palembang encountered in teaching content through English as a medium of instruction.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The results of this study were expected to give some contribution to EMI content teachers, schools, and other researchers. For content teachers and schools, this study was expected to make them aware of the benefits of EMI and source of the beliefs since this study provided teachers with information about beliefs and classroom practices. Besides, the result of the study can be used as a reflection of their teaching and learning practices in EMI class. Moreover, for the other researchers, the result of this study was expected to be useful references for those who would do research in a similar field.

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