



## **Islamic Boarding Schools' Foreign Language Goals: A Dual-Language Sinking Model**

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### ***Abstract***

*This study explores the potential of the Dual-Language Sinking model for foreign language learning in IBSs. This review study further examines journals and books related to the ideal language learning model and competence pattern to meet the current IBS's language planning and policy goals. Finally, the findings demonstrated how Dual-Language Sinking as a model could develop language competence and how it can be implemented. The results of this study also indicate that competent language users can use their language skills and knowledge in their language activities. To develop students who are competent in language, the learning conditions must be designed as naturally as possible to resemble the students' first language environment. This can be achieved by implementing the Dual-Language Sinking bilingual program, i.e., using the target language as the instruction language in learning and students' daily lives so that the students will develop their language competence through their daily habits.*

*Keywords: Language Learning, Dual-Language Sinking, Teaching Model, Islamic Education*

## A. Introduction

Foreign language has been a crucial element in the current progressive Islamic education, especially in the Pesantren or Islamic Boarding Schools (hereinafter abbreviated as IBS) curriculum trend, and many IBS have set foreign language competency as a marketing strategy and a part of the education goals of the Islamic school institutions. It can be seen in the current empirical research on IBS, which cannot be separated from the development of language planning and policy in its language education strategy (Abdurrizal et al., 2022; Dariyanto et al., 2022; Fattah et al., 2022; Habiburrahim et al., 2022; Lestari & Pratolo, 2019; Ritonga et al., 2021; Ritonga & Nurdianto, 2022). In the case of general education in Indonesia, common foreign languages taught in Indonesia are Arabic, English, Mandarin, and French (Abduh & Rosmaladewi, 2019; Hamied & Musthafa, 2019; Kohler, 2019; Saud & Abduh, 2018; Zein, 2020). Among these foreign languages, Arabic and English have their own special roles.

English, for example, like many other educational institutions in this globalized world, has gained the privilege of being taught (Bolton, 2014; Zein, 2019; Zein & Stroupe, 2017) at various levels of education because of its strategic role. English was chosen because it is known as a lingua franca or a language that can be a bridge and an introduction for people who speak different languages (Teng & Lixun, 2020).

If English is chosen because of its strategic role, Arabic has a sacred role for Indonesian people. According to the report of the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Center (RISSC) in 2022, the Muslim population in Indonesia was the largest in the world and was equivalent to 86.7% of the total population of Indonesia. Thus, Arabic is an important language because the Muslim Holy Book, the Qur'an, is in Arabic. However, the current movement in Islamic education in Indonesia has shown how Arabic has changed from a literature language to a communication-based language, containing an economic and strategic role in addition to its sacred role, and how the educational institution has focused on speaking acquisition (Fattah et al., 2022; Redkin & Bernikova, 2016; Ritonga et al., 2021; Ritonga & Nurdianto, 2022; Wekke, 2015).

Currently, some scholars have explored how foreign language learning is oriented in IBSs (Habiburrahim et al., 2022; Ritonga & Nurdianto, 2022). For example, Ritonga et al. (2021) conducted a quantitative study on the orientation of

Arabic learning in IBSs or ma'had. The study suggests that even in the globalized era when employment skills are needed related to Arabic language education, they argue that both literature-based and communication-based learning outcomes are required.

Nevertheless, for many IBS, the researchers observed that some methods of teaching Arabic and English are still traditionally believed to be a subject of learning that emphasizes knowledge (Darwis, 2011). Learning is more focused on acquiring students' knowledge of the phonology, syntax, and morphology of a language. Later, students are expected to know how language works so that it helps them to understand the text.

To overcome the problems previously described, such as the alienation of IBS students from communication-based target language learning, a foreign language learning renewal program was born, i.e., the bilingual program (Griffith, 2014). Thus, language learning takes place contextually based on the language needs of the learner. A bilingual program is argued to overcome the alienation of students from the target language environment and provide them with a place to practice their language. The bilingual program also aims to prepare them to compete in the global world. Language is no longer memorized as dead symbols and structures but rather as a tool that can be used to convey ideas.

Therefore, this study explores the potential of the Dual-Language Sinking model for foreign language learning in IBSs. This review study further examines journals and books related to the ideal language learning model and competence pattern to meet the current IBS's language planning and policy goals.

## **B. Method**

This research employed literature review methods. The research aimed to explore and model the language competencies of IBS students, especially to frame the success criteria as competent language users. This research asked the following questions: first, what is considered a competent language user, and how should language learning be done as suggested in language educational research and literature? Secondly, what are the features of the proposed design, the *Dual-Language Sinking bilingual model*, and its implementation in learning, especially in IBSs?

This study is part of a bigger educational research project focused on the development and implementation of the *Dual-Language Sinking bilingual model* in some IBSs in a city in Indonesia. This literature review is part of the initial study of the project.

The research design used a literature review, i.e., a description of the theory, findings, and other research materials obtained from reference materials to be used as the basis for research activities. A literature review contains reviews, summaries, and the author's thoughts on several sources of literature (articles, books, slides, and information from the internet) on the topics discussed. The following is a list of the reviewed literature.

Table 1: List of the Literature

no	Name	Book
1	Zohrabi	"Teacher-Centered and/or Student-Centered Learning English"
2	Thomas F. Felton,	"Sink or Swim: The State of Bilingual Education in the Wake of California Proposition"
3	Ogba, Jacinta Onyekachi, and Oziomachukwu Akunna Ajemba,	Language Learning and Language Acquisition: A Study of Formal and Informal Communication Situations in the English Language
4	Richard and Rogers	Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching 2nd Edition
5	Rambe	Natural Approach
6	Rambe	Competency-Based Language Teaching
7	Nkweisthama	The Competency-Based Approach to English Language Education and the Walls between the Classroom and the Society in Cameroon Pulling Down the Walls

8	Nishad Abu Ayyash	Linguistic Competence, Communicative Competence and Interactional Competence
9	Mokoginta K	“Student-Centered Learning (SCL) Approach in EFL Classes”
10	Mohammed Q Shormani	“The Nature of Language Acquisition Where L1 and L2 Acquisition Meet”
11	Krashen	Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition
12	Jude Chia	Introducing the competency-based approach to ESL instruction in Cameroon
13	Jon Davison and Jane Dowson	Learning To Teach English in the Secondary School: A Companion to School Experience (Learning to Teach Subjects in the Secondary School series) (1997)
14	Har Wong	Competency-based English Teaching and Learning
15	Dongyun Sun	“From Communicative Competence to Interactional Competence” A New Outlook to The Teaching of Spoken English

The literature review data were then synthesized using a thematic method (Braun & Clarke, 2022) by grouping similar extracted data according to the results measured to answer the research objectives that matched the inclusion criteria, and then, they were collected and summarized in journals, including the name of the researcher, year of publication of the journal, country of research, research title, method, and summary of results or analysis findings of the contents in the research objectives and research results/findings.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

#### **1. The Case of Traditional Language Learning in Islamic Institutions**

Arabic has an essential role in shaping how a foreign language is taught in Indonesia. The educational aim of the institutions is to transmit classical Islamic sciences (Zein, 2020), such as jurisprudence, mysticism, theology, history, Quranic interpretations, logic, ethics, and philosophy, through a close reading of the books written by Islamic scholars. For example, one old technique that has been used to read the prescribed books is called *sorogan* (Maskuri et al., 2022). The learning activities include students reading the text, translating it, and explaining the meaning. Then, the students will be questioned about the grammatical rules of the text (Maskuri et al., 2022) and the reasoning behind the reading pattern using a specific grammar book taught in a separate grammar lesson. Overall, translation exercises and grammatical and semantic analysis are the main goals of learning a language (Kamal, 2020), thus privileging language as knowledge rather than a means of human interaction. It is the goal of this research to offer a possible program that may provide both language learning knowledge and communication tools.

## 2. Competency-based Approach

*Competency-based language teaching* emphasizes the learning objective and activities. It can adapt to the needs required of teachers and participants as well as the competencies of society (Butova, 2015). It means the competence expected from the graduates in the future by society. According to Williamson, competency-based language learning is a research approach that focuses on guiding students to do something with language rather than knowing about it (Williamson, 2007). Thus, how much students know about language is not the core of learning but how they acquire the skills and attitudes that enable them to use the language they are learning as a means of communication. Making language a means of communication is also at the core of the learning objectives set naturally (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). As defined by the natural approach, making language a means of communication is also the essence of objective learning. This approach views language as a life skill and makes communication activities part of the target language learning material (Rambe, 2013).

To implement this approach, there are learning patterns proposed to become signs and guidelines for carrying out learning activities. It is hoped that students can

achieve the expected competencies. Among the learning patterns that have been collected are:

- a. Focus on performance (Nsai & Jude, 2021)
- b. In the early stages, learning themes are focused on objects or themes closest to the students' lives (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).
- c. Learning conditions must be meaningful and natural. The teacher must create space so students can practice using and practicing their language; thus, their language competence develops (Wong, 2008).
- d. Teachers must avoid creating a tense learning atmosphere or making students uncomfortable (Krashen, 1981).
- e. Focus on *life skills* (Boukhentache, 2020)
- f. Centered on the needs of learners. Objectives, materials, and study time are designed based on the students' needs.

### **3. Basis for Development of the *Dual-Language Sinking Bilingual Model***

The previous section discussed the ideal learning patterns and situations to achieve the expected language competencies; this chapter will review the theories that form the basis for developing the *Dual-Language Sinking bilingual model*.

#### **a. Learning Model**

In the field of education, several terms are considered by some people to have the same meaning, namely methods, models, strategies, and techniques. Some people often think of them as the same, and there are overlapping interpretations. In this discussion, the researchers will not elaborate on the meaning of each of these terms; the researchers only discuss the term learning model, which is the focus of the research.

Trianto (Afandi et al., 2013) mentions the concept of a model as a plan or pattern used by a teacher to design classroom learning. The definition proposed by Trianto provides an understanding of the model as a source and reference for implementing learning activities. The model organizes and includes all the components needed for learning.

## **b. Bilingual Program**

*Bilingual* programs can function as an artificial language environment where students can get exposure to the target language as naturally as possible and as real as possible in the environment. The *bilingual* program will give students the experience of living in an environment within the target language's speech group.

Before discussing the developed *bilingual model*, the authors will first introduce the concept of *bilingualism* so that, later, the objectives of this program can be understood. Many have defined bilingualism, such as Wallner, who stated that *bilingualism* is an individual's ability to speak a language other than his mother tongue (Wallner, 2016).

Grosjean and Haugen, as quoted by Dwi Jayanti, also define the term *bilingual*. According to Grosjean (1998), *bilingualism* is the ability to use languages regularly or habitually. Haugen (1932) adds the ability to use these two languages with the ability to produce meaningful utterances (Jayanti & Sujarwo, 2019). Language, according to Grosjean, is a habit, not a speech produced by students because of the demands of the program that take place at certain times.

In the *bilingual program*, institutions have planned and measurable programs to implement foreign languages in everyday life (Fitranti, 2021). In addition to practicing everyday language, the institution carries out support activities to assist students' communicative competence, including enrichment programs, sentence exercises, conversation exercises, and language camp activities to cadre students as language agents intensively (Yuliani, 2022). This supports the improvement of students' language skills.

## **c. The Root Model of Dual-language Sinking**

The bilingual program is composed by combining existing *bilingual* models and then developing them into a new, complementary *bilingual model*. The model being developed is called *Dual-Language Sinking*, a combination of the *Dual-Language Immersion* and *Submersion* or "Sink or Swim" models with several adjustments. Furthermore, in the discussion of each of these sub-chapters, it will be examined more deeply.

### 1) *Dual-Language Immersion* Models



*The Dual-Language Sinking* model is a combination of the two existing models. This model brings together two models that are already solid in the practice of bilingual education. The first model that became the basis for the development of this model is the *Dual-Language Immersion model* (hereinafter abbreviated as DLI). DLI has been present in bilingual teaching for quite a long time.

The word *dual* in the name of this model means two; the *Dual Language Immersion model* is a bilingual model that presents two languages in learning activities (Tedick & Lyster, 2020). Two languages become the instruction language in the curriculum and are presented in the same portion (Brisk, 2006). In fact, one language has no more presentation than the other, although both can have different forms.

Cognitive reasons are also believed to be another reason for the popularity of this model. People who master two languages, based on laboratory tests, are believed to have better verbal and non-verbal skills than those who only master one language. The memory it has can also work better, have better performance, and have more controlled concentration (Bialystok & Craik, 2010). Regarding verbal abilities, bilinguals are believed to have the advantage of understanding the language structures and components more effectively, making them better readers and writers in two languages (Steele et al., 2018).

## 2) Submersion or “Sink or Swim”

Another bilingual model that guides the researchers in developing this model is *submersion or “sink or swim.”* In language, “*sink*” or *swim* means to sink or to swim. In this model, individuals with limitations in one language must immediately adapt to that language. There are two options for mastering a language they do not master, i.e., *sinking* or *swimming* (Ima, 2013). What is meant by *sinking* is students’ inability to interact with the target language, and *swimming* is their ability to experience the learning process with the target language and their efforts to interact with the target language.

This model was first offered as an alternative to bilingual programs due to the urgent need to get a job at that time. Spanish immigrant parents in the United States were dissatisfied with the *bilingual program*, which was still dominated by their first language, namely Spanish, and only introduced English slowly. The parents believed that their children would be successful in getting jobs in garment factories or other jobs with learning carried out in English only (Felton, 1999).

The pressure from the parents later led to the birth of the *submersion model or sink or swim*. This model requires students who speak a foreign language to quickly adapt to the target language by applying it as the instruction language.

### 3. Conception Model of the *Dual-Language Bilingual Sinking*

The *Dual-Language Sinking bilingual* model is offered by language programs so that it can bridge ideal learning activities for learning foreign languages. In the program offered, students learn the target language in situations that resemble the target language's natural environment and aim to develop their language competencies.

#### *Dual-Language Sinking Bilingual Model and Its Purpose*

As previously explained, this model is a development of the two existing *bilingual models*. The word "*dual language*" in this model means that there are two languages, the target language or languages students in the program will master. These two languages are taught in a balanced way, getting the same portion of time and having the same learning support facilities.

Then, the choice of the word "*sinking*" from this model is taken from the second model, namely the *submersion "sink or swim"*. This model invites students to interact using the target language directly. If they cannot follow the language used, they will drown; otherwise, if they manage to merge themselves with the target language, they will swim to save themselves.

Moreover, the choice of the word "*sinking*" or drowning may be felt negatively, but drowning here is defined as an initial condition in which everyone who learns a new language will definitely experience a situation where he or she cannot interact with that language. Every individual will experience stuttering to be able to communicate in the target language. This is the meaning of the first "*sinking*" that researchers want.

The second "*sinking*" meaning of this word is that the two foreign languages that are the target of learning will sink or melt within the learners. These two languages will serve as communication tools that will help meet students' daily needs and answer their life challenges in the future. *Sinking* also means a situation where the two

target languages have become identities for the learners and are united in their linguistic activities.

#### **4. Supporting Theories Development of the *Dual-Language Sinking Model***

The condition of students' reluctance to speak the target language, language input, and language environment are the theories that form the basis for the development of this model.

##### a. Period of Silence

*Sinking* in the *Dual-Language Sinking model* developed by the researchers means drowning. What is meant by drowning here is the condition of a learner who cannot carry out verbal interactions the first time he lives in a language environment or in a speech group that is different from his mother tongue.

The period of silence is a phase in which an individual refuses or is not willing to communicate verbally using the new language, and they have not been able to produce their language actively but rather try to process it (Krashen, 1981).

Frequently, individuals who do not want to communicate verbally in the target language understand the utterances they hear and understand the meaning of events that occur around them. However, due to the discomfort of speaking a new language, it is difficult for the individual to express it verbally.

In learning activities, the attitude of not wanting to communicate with the target language at the beginning of the learning period is common (Bligh & Drury, 2015). This is an attitude adopted by some individuals due to being in an environment where they suddenly do not speak their mother tongue, which they have spoken every day since infancy.

According to the natural approach, when students refuse to respond or do not want to communicate with the target language in the early stages of learning, the teacher cannot force them to utter a single utterance. The natural approach sees this as a natural thing that may happen to some people (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In the case of babies, they do not use words to respond to adults. Nevertheless, they respond in other ways, such as smiling, chattering, pointing, or moving their body parts (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

b. Input Hypothesis

This model focuses on continuous input from students, even though they do not yet know the languages exposed to them. Within the IBS environment, in the classroom and small study groups, students will always listen to language that they may already understand, and that may be new to them.

Through his input hypothesis, Krashen introduces a hypothesis believing that the target language acquisition will only occur if students gain knowledge at a higher level than what they have mastered. This hypothesis has the formula  $(i+1)$ .  $(i)$  is the input of language, information, or material, while  $(1)$  is the competency level from before (Krashen, 1989). If the input is increased by two levels  $(i+2)$  from the ability of the students, they will experience difficulties while learning, but if the input is still the same as what was learned before  $(i+0)$ , the students will feel bored.

Krashen's input hypothesis provides reinforcement that the exposure students get at IBSs will help them develop their language competencies.

c. Environment as a Means of Language Acquisition

The language environment is a special feature of the development of the *Dual-Language Sinking model*. This model was developed with the assumption that a young child can acquire his first language well in a natural context where he hears and then speaks that language in his life. On the basis of this assumption, the researchers based this study on a natural approach, proposing that learning a foreign or second language must be designed to resemble the setting or situation experienced by a child when acquiring his first language.

Based on this assumption, the environment in which students live is a very influential factor in their language development. Here, the environment is an important parameter determining the success of students' absorption of the target language (Dulay et al., 1982). If there is no exposure to the target language that students receive in their learning environment, the process of learning the target language will experience obstacles or even not occur at all.

Input will become more meaningful if students experience it directly and are involved in the language community; they are learning (Baroto, 2017). When students live in the language community they learn, they will unconsciously acquire

language in their daily activities. Unknowingly, their understanding and competence in the target language will also develop.

Additionally, conversations between two or more people are natural, as is verbal communication that occurs in dormitories, libraries, canteens, or others. Students involved in verbal communication are aware that they are giving and receiving information. Even though they use the target language in this conversation, they do not realize they are processing their language skills (Dulay et al., 1982).

Creating a natural language environment is also supported by BF Skinner's theory of behaviorism. He called language a series of habits (Shormani, 2014). An individual acquires language through repeated stimuli from the environment. Then, he responds by actively imitating and repeating what he hears from his environment so that it becomes a habit.

Skinner believes that environment and habituation influence a person's language skills. He based his theory on babies acquiring language from the people around them, imitating, and repeating it. It is because of this that Skinner emphasizes the importance of habituation and repetition in language learning.

Therefore, teaching a foreign language means creating an environment so that students can be actively involved in the functioning of their target language in spoken and written discourse. This language environment can be created by implementing a *bilingual program* in which all individuals or any elements close to students only speak the target language. Such an environment will create a natural language learning process that occurs within the conscious threshold of the learner.

### **5. Features of the *Dual-Language Sinking Model***

In the following, the researchers present the distinctive features of the *Dual-Language Sinking model*, which will be developed in activities at IBSs and learning activities:

- a. Arabic and English are taught in equal portions, and Arabic is used as the instruction language and in daily life at the IBS.
- b. The ultimate goal of the bilingual program is to master language competence actively and communicatively, orally and in writing.

- c. Learners who experience periods of silence should not be forced to produce utterances in the target language.
- d. Teachers and administrators have a vital role as facilitators in this program, whose job is to provide media, facilities, and sources of language input needed by students to communicate.
- e. Input and exposure to the target language are the main keys to the success of the *bilingual program*.
- f. The materials taught in class are in the form of material that supports the daily speaking needs of students, after which they can be continued with themes that support their future.
- g. Assessment to find out the students' language progress must be done with a performance test.

## **6. An Overview of the Implementation of the *Dual-Language Sinking Model***

### **a. Systematic Model (Syntax)**

This model can be applied to students who are truly beginners and have minimal knowledge of the target language. Teaching can be started by providing vocabulary related to students' daily lives, such as the vocabulary of items in the room, school equipment, and the names of the rooms in their environment.

This vocabulary is carried out using the audiolingual method, in which students hear the teacher say the words being taught and then repeat them. At this stage, the goal that is expected to be achieved by students is to know the target language of the objects around them.

After being given the vocabulary, on the weekends, the students are asked to assemble the vocabulary in a simple sentence that the teacher has previously exemplified. Students who have not been able to compose complete sentences or have difficulty should not be forced; the teacher only needs to provide examples and continuous input to these students.

In this regard, teachers and institutions provide a place in the form of extra activities for students whose language level is already qualified. These extra activities are

designed in a variety of ways so that students can choose what activities suit their interests and tendencies and the fields they will be working on in the future.

To find out whether students have mastered language competence actively, teachers must always conduct tests to measure their development. The test must be a performance test and can be carried out through various fun techniques, such as questions and answers, discussions, and competitive activities.

These learning phases can be understood using the following figure:

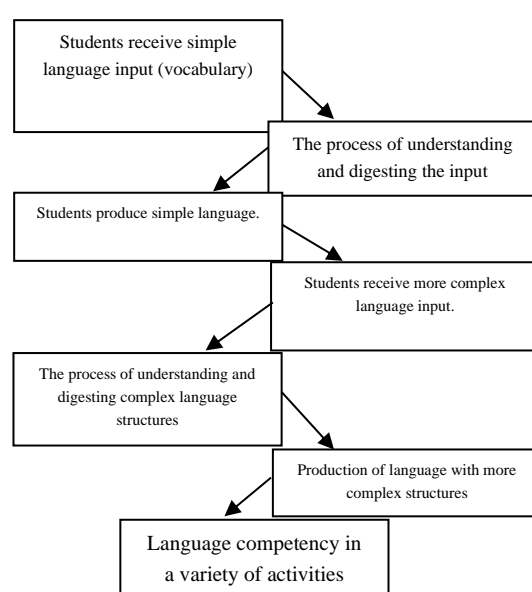


Figure 1. Learning phases

#### b. Learning System

The model will support student-centered learning, meaning that learning activities are designed to meet the needs of students as individuals who will play a role in society. Therefore, the themes taught are themes close to their lives and themes supporting their expected future employment.

#### c. Teacher's Role in Learning

The teacher has two very important roles in the designed program, namely as a facilitator and a teacher. The facilitator has to aid and prepare facilities and media

that help students acquire language competence. As a facilitator, the teacher must design any media that can support the language learning of students.

As a teacher, the teacher also functions as a source of target language input for students. As a teacher, he/she must design interesting and fun learning activities and provide opportunities for them to display their language. In the end, the teacher must carry out the duties of an assessor. In that role, the teacher must measure the students' language development through tests and provide follow-up activities.

#### d. Support System

Several components are needed to support the successful implementation of the proposed model. The success of the model is driven by the existence of qualified teachers who can create a natural and comfortable learning atmosphere for students. In addition to having linguistic competence, teachers should also have pedagogic competence. Apart from teachers, there are also administrators with the task of guiding students in the beginner class. The administrators could be students from the upper classes who are more competent in the target language. They are selected by the teacher, guided through special training or programs, and tasked with being mentors for other students.

In this case, the IBS institutions' role is to design facilities to support students' language mastery, such as preparing a language environment, labeling certain objects in the target language, and providing reading resources that students can use.

#### e. Learning Impact

The model is expected to increase students' language competence. The language competence in question is not only in the form of students' understanding of structure and their ability to understand texts but also in the ability to function their language actively in various conditions.

Specific skills that require language competency are also developed. In this model, students practice developing their language competence through various activities, such as speeches, storytelling, hosting events, and others. This model was developed to give students the awareness that language learning begins with their need to



fulfill their daily needs and its usefulness in their lives later when they become part of society.

#### **D. Conclusion**

A competent language user is argued to have the mastery of four competencies, not only interpretive and linguistic competencies but also interactive and communicative competencies. These competencies will be achieved if language learning takes place naturally, like a child who acquires his/her first language. As such, language learning needs to be designed to resemble the environment and conditions for students to acquire their first language.

Based on the explanation above, the Dual-Language Sinking bilingual model was proposed. This bilingual model is designed by applying the target language as the instruction language and the daily activities of students at IBSs. Bilingualism in question is using two target languages alternately within a certain time. By implementing this model, students will get exposure to the target language every day, and it is hoped to help them master the language more quickly. Students at the beginning of their studies or those with low abilities are not forced to speak directly; they are given time to digest the language and respond when they are ready. Language can be taught as themes, starting from everyday themes to more complex themes, needed by students when pursuing further education or in their future employment.

To apply this model, IBSs and teachers need to design learning activities as naturally as possible, allowing students to be involved in them and function in their target language. Apart from teachers, IBS institutions need to involve administrators with qualified target language skills to become mentors for other students and a source of language input. IBSs also need to design a boarding school environment so that students can get exposure to the target language in each of their activities by providing reading materials, information boards, or others in the target language.

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