

TEACHER'S PERCEPTION ON BILINGUAL LANGUAGE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

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Abstract: Bilingual language in English Language Teaching (ELT) involves teaching using both student's native language (L1) and the target language, English (L2). This research aimed to explore Teachers' Perceptions toward the Use of Bilingual Language in English Language Teaching (ELT). This research employed qualitative research as research methodology and the descriptive research as research design to analyze the data. The data was collected through observation and interview. The participants involved three English teachers from SMAN 9 Pangkep. South Sulawesi. The findings revealed a positive perception of the teachers in SMAN 9 Pangkep who implement bilingual strategies in their teaching pedagogy. The teachers used bilingual teaching methods to make it easier for students to understand difficult ideas and to ensure they really grasped the material. By explaining complex concepts in both students' native language and English, teachers helped students feel less anxious or stressed. When students feel more comfortable, they are more open and receptive to learning a new language. This approach also helped students gradually adapt to using English, creating a smoother transition into full English usage. The research underscored the importance of employing bilingual practices in ELT to support language acquisition, boost student confidence, and cater to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of learners, ultimately contributing to a more effective and inclusive educational experience.

Keywords: teachers' perception; bilingual; ELT

Abstrak: Penggunaan Bahasa Bilingual dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, melibatkan Bahasa asli (L1) dan bahasa target, yaitu bahasa Inggris (L2). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi guru terhadap penggunaan Bahasa bilingual dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan pendekatan deskriptif untuk menganalisis data. Data dikumpulkan melalui Observasi dan wawancara. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini melibatkan tiga orang guru Bahasa Inggris dari SMAN 9 Pangkep, Sulawesi Selatan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya persepsi yang positif dari para guru di SMAN 9 Pangkep yang menerapkan strategi bilingual dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggris. Guru menggunakan metode pengajaran bilingual untuk memudahkan siswa memahami ide-ide yang sulit dan memastikan mereka benar-benar memahami materi. Dengan menjelaskan konsep-konsep kompleks dalam bahasa asli siswa dan bahasa Inggris, guru membantu siswa merasa kurang cemas atau tertekan. Ketika siswa merasa lebih nyaman, mereka menjadi lebih terbuka dan siap untuk belajar bahasa baru. Pendekatan ini juga membantu siswa beradaptasi secara bertahap dalam menggunakan bahasa Inggris, menciptakan transisi yang lebih lancar menuju penggunaan bahasa Inggris secara penuh. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya menerapkan praktik bilingual dalam ELT untuk mendukung akuisisi bahasa, meningkatkan kepercayaan diri siswa, dan menyesuaikan dengan latar belakang linguistik siswa yang beragam, yang pada akhirnya berkontribusi pada pengalaman pendidikan yang lebih efektif dan inklusif.

Kata kunci: persepsi guru; dua bahasa; ELT

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INTRODUCTION

People who lived in multilingual environments frequently acquire several languages at a young age, allowing them to interact across different social and cultural situations. In numerous areas, communicating in multiple languages is crucial for everyday interactions, commerce, and learning. Baker (2010) noted that nearly fifty percent of the global population employs multiple languages, indicating that multilingualism is a common phenomenon. This indicates the extensive prevalence of bilingual or multilingual communication, frequently shaped by elements like globalization, cultural variety, and movement. The bilingual approach, particularly in English Language Teaching, can help to enhance cognitive adaptability and problem-solving skills (Cummins, 2007).

Employing bilingual instruction as noted by Garcia and Wei (2014) significantly contributes to fostering a more inclusive and culturally sensitive educational atmosphere. This method enables students from diverse language backgrounds to sense that their language and culture are acknowledged and represented in the classroom. When students observe their own languages and cultural identities represented in their education, they tend to feel appreciated and included. This inclusivity enhances engagement, as learners develop a deeper connection to the material and are more inclined to participate actively in their education. Grasping the effects of bilingual methods aids educators in establishing enhanced learning settings that support both language abilities and intercultural understanding.

The effectiveness of bilingual methods in ELT is also influenced by contextual factors, including students' language proficiency, available resources, and institutional supports. In Indonesia, for instance, educators frequently encounter difficulties like oversized classes, limited teaching resources, and varied student language backgrounds. García & Baker (2011) state that adaptable methods in bilingual education foster both language growth and scholarly achievement by allowing students to utilize all their language assets. When bilingual education is applied flexibly, students are motivated to utilize their complete language skills, employing both their native language and the target language to comprehend new ideas and articulate their knowledge. This enables students to switch between languages when necessary, improving understanding and reinforcing knowledge. Bilingual education acknowledges the significance of students' home languages in understanding new information and utilizing existing knowledge, thereby facilitating more effective learning. In this manner, adaptable bilingual education enables students to achieve proficiency in several languages while also excelling academically, since they are not limited to utilizing just one language in the classroom.

According to García & Baker (2011), flexible approaches to bilingual education support both language development and academic learning by enabling students to use all of their linguistic resources. When bilingual education is implemented with flexibility, students are encouraged to draw on their full linguistic repertoire, using both their native language and the target language to make sense of new concepts and express their understanding. This allows students to transition between languages as needed, which

enhances comprehension and reinforces learning. By validating students' home languages, bilingual education recognizes the role that these languages play in processing new information and applying prior knowledge, ultimately supporting more effective learning. In this way, flexible bilingual education empowers students not only to become proficient in multiple languages but also to succeed academically, as they are not restricted to using only one language in the classroom.

Cummins (2007) also states that allowing the use of the native language in learning does not detract from acquiring English, but can instead reinforce cognitive and academic development. A study by Tang (2002) also revealed that teachers who support limited use of the native language in ELT believe it helps build students' confidence, while excessive reliance could hinder the development of English proficiency. These varying perspectives indicate that teachers' perceptions are shaped by a combination of factors, including their language ideology, professional training, and experience in bilingual settings. However, the extent to which teachers perceive this as a viable approach may depend on their familiarity with bilingual pedagogy and their perceived competence in using both languages effectively. This diversity in teaching environments and experiences makes teachers' perceptions an important factor in evaluating the success of bilingual programs.

There have been studies supporting teacher's perception on bilingual language in ELT, some researches are Yoskapela (2024) explored four EFL teachers' perspectives of translanguaging. Khodaifi (2021) revealed that both teachers and students have positive perception toward bilingual education in Pesantren. And Saputra (2020) found that teachers generally view Translation in Language Teaching (TILT) positively, seeing it as a helpful tool for enhancing foreign language learning. They believe that TILT aids comprehension by linking difficult concepts in the target language to familiar ones in students' native language, thus supporting early language acquisition.

Much of the existing research focuses on general teacher beliefs about bilingualism. Further research is needed to explore how these perceptions vary across different contexts, such as the age of learners, the specific language backgrounds of students and teachers, and the cultural setting of the classroom. For example, teachers' perceptions might differ significantly in international school settings compared to local schools within a predominantly monolingual community. (Bartolo, 2020) explores teachers' attitudes towards intercultural communication through ELF, which could offer insights into context-specific perceptions. By examining these perceptions, future research can provide insights into best practices for bilingual teaching, address existing challenges, and guide professional development programs that support teachers in optimizing bilingual strategies for English language learning. The researcher chose to conduct research in a SMA N 9 Pangkep, South Sulawesi, because students at this level are in a critical phase of their language development, especially in English lesson. Understanding how their local teachers perceive bilingual in English Language Teaching can provide context-specific insights that reflect the unique linguistic and cultural landscape of South Sulawesi. This is especially relevant in areas with varied language backgrounds, where the beliefs of teachers can greatly influence the execution of bilingual practices (Cummins, 2014). Therefore, this study aims to explore teachers' perception on Bilingual Language in English Language Teaching (ELT).

METHOD

This research utilized a qualitative descriptive approach, widely acknowledged for investigating perceptions and lived experiences in the field of educational research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative approaches allow the researcher to gain comprehensive insights into teachers' perception on bilingual language usage in English Language Teaching, particularly through interviews and classroom observations. Semi-structured interviews offer teachers the freedom to articulate their beliefs and experiences using their own language, and also permit the interviewer to ask deeper questions based on topics that arise (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Observations, in contrast, gather real-time information, offering an additional perspective on how bilingual language usage occurs in reality. Observational data provide essential context and corroborate interview answers by demonstrating the use of bilingual language in real teaching instances (Patton, 2015).

The research was conducted in September 19 – September 20, 2024. It involved three English teachers in SMA N 9 Pangkep, South Sulawesi. The data was collected through observation, and interviews. The researcher observed 90 minutes or two hours of learning activities in the English class to assess the use of Indonesian by the teachers. Meanwhile, the interview which consists of five questions aimed to gain in-depth explanation and description on the use of bilingual language by the teacher in ELT. The interview data were all transcribed and analyzed for repeating key features which were related to the use of bilingual language by the teacher in ELT.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings related to the research questions on teachers' perception on bilingual Language in English Language Teaching (ELT). The analysis was structured into two distinct sections. The first section presented the findings from classroom observations on how the teacher utilized Indonesian during English lessons. The second section explored the insights gained from interviews about the use of bilingual language in English Class from the English teacher in class XI at SMAN 9 Pangkep.

Observational data indicated that the bilingual method promoted a nurturing and engaging educational atmosphere. The teacher frequently switched between Indonesian and English, especially when responding to inquiries or directing students during activities. It was shown during an English Class on descriptive texts, students were encouraged to explain a specific topic in English, but the teacher would occasionally switch to Indonesian to clarify instructions or elaborate on complex concepts. This approach allowed students to participate more confidently, as they were able to ask questions and express ideas without the barrier of a language they were still mastering.

The teacher's bilingual approach also included specific questions in Indonesian to assess students' understanding and engagement, such as “Apa yang kalian pahami dari kalimat ini?” (What do you understand from this sentence?) and “Ada pertanyaan sebelum lanjut?” (Any questions before we continue?). These interactions indicated that students were more responsive when questions were asked in Indonesian, implying that using both languages reduced the affective filter and enhanced their eagerness to participate. Additionally, by repeating important points in both languages, the teacher strengthened students' understanding and created a bridge for transitioning to more English use over time. This method aligns with a scaffolding approach in language

learning, where students are progressively guided from familiar language contexts to more challenging language tasks. Furthermore, the teacher observed students' understanding by employing phrases such as “Ada yang sudah bisa membacanya?” (Has anyone been able to read it?) and “Dengar dulu, baru kalian lanjutkan?” (Listen first, then continue). These expressions served to actively engage students and ensure they were following along. Additionally, Indonesian was used for giving instructions, such as “Nurhikmah akan membaca paragraf pertama” (Nurhikmah will read the first paragraph), “Sebelum Anda membaca, I will read first” (Before you start to read, I will read first) which reinforced clarity and comprehension of the tasks at hand.

The teacher's bilingual strategy proved to be an effective method for enhancing student comprehension and engagement in the English language classroom. By utilizing targeted questions and instructions in both Indonesian and English, the teacher not only lowered the affective filter but also created an inclusive environment where students felt more comfortable participating. This approach facilitated a smoother transition from their native language to English, allowing for gradual skill development and increased confidence in language use. The careful balance of language use enabled students to grasp complex concepts while remaining actively engaged in the learning process. Overall, the integration of bilingual practices in ELT not only supports language acquisition but also fosters a supportive classroom atmosphere conducive to effective learning.

The second method was interview. The interviews were conducted to complement the observation. By engaging in one-on-one discussions, participants were able to articulate their thoughts and feelings more openly, revealing nuances that quantitative data might not capture. This qualitative approach allowed teachers to reflect on specific instances where the use of Indonesian facilitated the students' understanding of English lesson, thereby highlighting the practical implications of bilingual instruction in their learning process. Furthermore, the interviews provided an opportunity for students to voice any challenges they faced, contributing to a more comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of bilingual strategies in promoting language.

The interviews with the teacher revealed a strong endorsement for the use of bilingualism in the English classroom, as they articulated the various benefits this approach brings to the learning process. The teacher emphasized that incorporating both Indonesian and English not only aids in clarifying complex concepts but also fosters a more engaging and supportive learning environment. For instance, Ms. Misra noted, Waktu menjelaskanka kosa kata baru dalam Bahasa Indonesia terlebih dahulu, siswa jadi tidak bingung narasa dan lebih mau berpartisipasi ketimbang pakai full Bahasa Inggris, mungkin karena mereka tidak begitu paham maksudnya. (When I explain new vocabulary in Indonesian first, students are less confused and more willing to participate, rather than using full English in instruction, because the students can't understand the meaning).

Ms Misra highlighted the importance of scaffolding in language instruction. Ms. Misra highlighted the importance of scaffolding in language instruction, emphasizing that this approach is essential for supporting students as they navigate the complexities of learning a new language. Scaffolding refers to the strategic assistance provided by teachers to help students build on their existing knowledge and gradually develop their language skills. By breaking down lessons into manageable parts and providing clear explanations in students' first language, she enables them to grasp difficult concepts without feeling overwhelmed.

Additionally, Mrs. Fachma shared experiences where students showed increased confidence and comprehension, stated; Ketika mengajarkan descriptive text di kelas XI, saya rasa pakai Bahasa Indonesia digabungkan dengan Bahasa Inggris ditambah pakai Bahasa daerah membantu siswa menganalisis teks lebih baik. Karena memang disini anak- anak banyak pakai Bahasa daerah sama Bahasa Indonesia. (When teaching descriptive text in class XI, I feel that the use of Indonesian language and English, along with incorporating regional languages, helps students analyze texts better. This is because the students here often use their regional language alongside Indonesian).

The statement emphasized the significant role that bilingualism and the inclusion of regional languages play in enhancing students' reading comprehension skills. By using both Indonesian and a local dialect, teachers can create a more relatable and effective learning experience for their students. This approach acknowledges the linguistic diversity of the students, allowing them to engage with the material in a way that resonates with their everyday communication.

Last, Mrs. Aisyah expressed that this method allows for better communication and understanding of instructions, thus creating a comfortable atmosphere for learning. She noted that by incorporating both English and Indonesian in her teaching, she can clarify instructions more effectively, ensuring that all students understand what is expected of them. This clarity reduces confusion and frustration, which can often hinder the learning process. For example, during a recent lesson on writing essays, Mrs. Aisyah introduced the assignment by first explaining the main components of an essay in Indonesian. By doing so, she provided students with a solid foundation before transitioning to the specific vocabulary and structures they would use in English. This bilingual approach not only reinforced their understanding of the task but also built their confidence in using English for academic writing. Mrs. Aisyah also emphasized the importance of creating a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. When students feel at ease, they are more likely to participate actively and ask questions if they are unsure about something. For instance, when students hesitated to share their ideas in English, she encouraged them to express their thoughts in Indonesian first. This approach not only alleviates anxiety but also fosters a supportive environment where students feel valued and understood.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings from this study illustrate the positive impact of bilingualism in English Language Teaching (ELT) as perceived by teachers at SMAN 9 Pangkep. Through classroom observations and interviews, it became evident that the incorporation of both Indonesian and regional languages fosters a supportive and interactive learning environment, allowing students to engage more confidently with the material. The teachers in SMAN 9 Pangkep used bilingual teaching methods to make it easier for students to understand difficult ideas and to ensure they really grasped the material. By explaining complex concepts in both students' native language and English, teachers helped students feel less anxious or stressed. When students feel more comfortable, they are more open and receptive to learning a new language. This approach also helped students gradually adapt to using English, creating a smoother transition into full English usage. By alternating between languages, teachers could verify students' understanding and encourage them to feel more confident in their English skills over time. Overall, this research underscores the importance of employing bilingual practices in ELT

to support language acquisition, boost student confidence, and cater to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of learners, ultimately contributing to a more effective and inclusive educational experience.

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