

# An Analysis Of Bilingualism In Teaching And Learning English In Upt SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang

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## ARTICLE INFO

**Keyword:** bilingualism, English language learning, students' perceptions, bilingual approach

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to describe the application of bilingualism in teaching and learning English to VIII grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang, Sidenreng Rappang Regency. Bilingualism in this context refers to the use of two languages, namely Indonesian and English, in the learning process to help students' understanding of the material. This study used a descriptive quantitative approach with an instrument in the form of a questionnaire containing 15 statements compiled based on indicators of bilingualism in learning. The research subjects were 95 students of grade VIII who were selected based on purposive sampling technique with a margin of error of 5%.*

*The results showed that the majority of students had a positive perception of the implementation of bilingualism. A total of 64.21% of students were in the "Good" category, 15.79% in the "Very Good" category, 17.89% in the 'Less' category, and only 2.11% in the "Very Less" category.*

*Based on these results, it is concluded that the bilingual approach in teaching English in class VIII is quite effective. This study recommends that teachers continue to integrate both languages in the learning process and develop more varied bilingual strategies so that all students can get the maximum benefit.*



## INTRODUCTION

In the modern educational landscape, bilingualism has become a pivotal element in enhancing the learning experience, particularly in language acquisition. As the world becomes more interconnected, the necessity for individuals to master more than one language has never been greater. English, as the global lingua franca, plays a central role in this phenomenon, making bilingual education crucial for students. In Indonesia, the adoption of bilingual programs in schools, particularly in the teaching of English, reflects the growing recognition of the importance of bilingualism in preparing students for the global stage. However, the implementation of bilingualism in the classroom presents both opportunities and challenges that require in-depth exploration and understanding.

Bilingualism, defined as the ability to use two languages proficiently, can significantly improve students' cognitive abilities, academic performance, and cultural awareness. In Indonesia, the introduction of bilingual teaching strategies, especially in English language instruction, aims to bridge the gap between students' native language, Bahasa Indonesia, and English. While bilingualism is expected to offer a range of benefits, its effectiveness in the classroom depends on various factors, including students' proficiency in both languages, teachers' ability to effectively implement bilingual strategies, and the resources available within the school environment. Thus, investigating the application of bilingualism in schools is essential to understand its actual impact on students' learning outcomes.

The school environment at SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang offers a unique context for studying the implementation of bilingualism in English language teaching. This school has adopted a bilingual approach in its curriculum, integrating both Bahasa Indonesia and English in the learning process. However, there is a noticeable variation in students' language proficiency, and not all students may benefit equally from this approach. It is, therefore, important to examine how bilingualism is implemented at this school and whether it truly enhances students' English language learning.

In terms of effectiveness, bilingualism in teaching English can support students' understanding by providing them with the flexibility to switch between languages, especially when they encounter difficult concepts. By using both Bahasa Indonesia and English, teachers can ensure that students grasp the meaning of the content more effectively. However, the challenge lies in ensuring that students do not become overly reliant on their native language, which may hinder the development of their English proficiency. It is necessary to explore whether students can balance the two languages and whether this balance leads to improved learning outcomes.

The key to successful bilingual education lies not only in the students' ability to understand the content but also in their motivation and engagement with the learning process. Teachers play a crucial role in creating an environment where students feel comfortable using both languages. Teachers must be skilled in managing the use of two languages in the classroom, ensuring that it enhances rather than detracts from the learning experience. The balance between using Bahasa Indonesia for explanation and encouraging the use of English for communication is a delicate one that requires thoughtful planning and execution.

At SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang, the implementation of bilingualism has been met with varying responses from students. While some students appreciate the support provided

by the use of both languages, others may feel overwhelmed by the demands of mastering two languages simultaneously. Understanding the students' perceptions of bilingualism is essential for assessing the overall effectiveness of this teaching strategy. Moreover, this understanding can guide teachers in adjusting their methods to better meet the needs of all students.

In light of these considerations, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of bilingualism in English language learning at SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang. By examining both students' and teachers' perceptions, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the practical implications of bilingual education. Specifically, it will investigate how bilingualism is implemented in the classroom, its impact on student learning, and the strategies employed by teachers to facilitate bilingual instruction.

The findings of this research will contribute to the ongoing dialogue on bilingual education in Indonesia, offering recommendations for improving bilingual teaching practices in schools. Furthermore, this study will provide a foundation for future research on the relationship between bilingualism and student learning outcomes, particularly in the context of English language education. By shedding light on the successes and challenges of bilingualism in the classroom, this study aims to enhance the quality of English language teaching and learning at SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang and similar schools in Indonesia.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The concept of bilingualism in education has been a subject of extensive research, particularly regarding its impact on students' academic and cognitive development. Bilingualism is often described as the ability to use two languages proficiently, both receptively and productively, in different social and academic contexts. According to Lado (1964), bilingualism refers to the capacity to use two languages with near-equal proficiency. While some scholars, like Bloomfield (1933), assert that bilingualism requires mastery of both languages at a native level, others, like Macnamara (1967), argue that basic proficiency in both languages is sufficient. In the context of education, bilingualism has been linked to various cognitive benefits, including enhanced problem-solving abilities, greater creativity, and improved memory, as students are constantly engaged in switching between languages and managing complex linguistic structures.

The advantages of bilingualism in educational settings extend beyond cognitive benefits to include improved language skills, particularly in literacy. Cummins (1979) introduced the concept of Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP), which posits that proficiency in one language can support the acquisition of another. His work suggests that bilingual learners who master basic skills in one language tend to transfer these skills to their second language, thus enhancing their overall cognitive and linguistic abilities. This theory supports the idea that bilingualism can serve as an effective tool in enhancing academic achievement, as students are not only developing proficiency in two languages but also building critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

In Indonesia, bilingualism in education has become increasingly prevalent, particularly in the teaching of English as a foreign language. Many schools have adopted bilingual teaching strategies, incorporating both Bahasa Indonesia and English in the classroom to improve students' language skills. Studies by Fajeri and Samsuri (2024) indicate that bilingual education, when properly implemented, has a significant impact on enhancing

children's linguistic awareness and cognitive flexibility, particularly in language acquisition. The ability to use two languages facilitates a deeper understanding of language structures and promotes greater sensitivity to nuances in both languages.

The implementation of bilingualism in schools, however, is not without challenges. As highlighted by Budiana et al. (2022), factors such as students' motivation, cognitive abilities, and prior language exposure can influence the success of bilingual education. Language interference, where elements of one language affect the other, is a common challenge in bilingual classrooms. Additionally, a lack of exposure to the second language outside the classroom and limited access to quality learning materials can hinder the development of proficiency in both languages. Therefore, teachers must adopt flexible teaching strategies that accommodate students' diverse language needs and learning backgrounds.

Sociocultural factors also play a significant role in the success of bilingual education. As Fishman (1976) notes, bilingualism in education is deeply influenced by the social context in which it occurs. In Indonesia, the use of both Bahasa Indonesia and English in the classroom must consider the local linguistic environment and students' familiarity with the languages. Teachers need to create an inclusive environment that values both languages and cultures, fostering a sense of pride and motivation in students to master both languages. Moreover, students' attitudes toward learning English can be shaped by the broader societal view of English as a prestigious language.

The role of the teacher in bilingual education is critical. According to Garcia (2009), bilingual teachers should not only be proficient in both languages but also adept at using pedagogical strategies that support bilingual learning. These strategies include code-switching, where teachers alternate between languages to help students understand complex concepts, and translanguaging, where students use all available linguistic resources to comprehend and communicate. By incorporating such strategies, teachers can bridge the gap between students' native language and the foreign language, ensuring that both languages are utilized effectively in the learning process.

Several studies have examined the practical applications of bilingualism in English language teaching. For example, a study by Cesaria et al. (2023) found that bilingualism enhances students' ability to comprehend academic terminology and concepts, making learning more accessible. In their study of bilingual students in higher education, they observed that bilingual learners could better understand course material when it was explained in both English and their native language. This finding aligns with the results from SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang, where bilingualism has been shown to facilitate students' comprehension of English, especially for those who find it difficult to understand solely in English. Bilingualism in education offers a range of cognitive, academic, and social benefits. The successful implementation of bilingual education, however, requires careful planning, skilled teachers, and a supportive learning environment. Studies have shown that bilingualism can significantly enhance language acquisition, academic achievement, and cognitive flexibility. However, challenges such as language interference, lack of exposure to the second language, and the need for effective teaching strategies must be addressed. This literature review highlights the importance of bilingualism in English language education and underscores the need for further research to explore its practical application in diverse educational settings, particularly at the junior high school level.

## METHOD

This study employs a descriptive quantitative research design to analyze the implementation of bilingualism in teaching and learning English at SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang. The main objective of this research is to describe the extent to which bilingualism is applied in the English classroom, its impact on students' learning outcomes, and the perceptions of both students and teachers regarding the use of two languages, namely Bahasa Indonesia and English, in the learning process. A descriptive quantitative approach is chosen because it allows for a comprehensive analysis of the existing conditions without manipulating any variables, thus providing a clear picture of the phenomenon under study.

The research population consists of 125 students from grade VIII at SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang, who are currently enrolled in the English language program. The participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which is a non-random sampling method used to select individuals who are most likely to provide relevant and rich data for the study. The total sample size was determined using the Slovin formula, which indicated that 95 students would be sufficient for the study, ensuring a 5% margin of error with a confidence level of 95%. Additionally, the study also includes English language teachers who are directly involved in the bilingual teaching process at the school.

The primary data collection method for this research is the questionnaire, which was distributed to the 95 students. The questionnaire consists of 15 statements designed to measure the students' perceptions of bilingualism in the classroom. The items in the questionnaire were developed based on the key indicators of bilingualism, such as language proficiency, frequency of language use, and students' attitudes towards bilingual learning. The statements in the questionnaire are evaluated using a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 4 (Very Often) to 1 (Never), allowing the researcher to assess the frequency and intensity of the students' experiences with bilingualism in the classroom.

To supplement the quantitative data, qualitative data was collected through interviews with English teachers. These interviews aimed to gain deeper insights into the teachers' experiences with implementing bilingual teaching strategies and their perceptions of the effectiveness of bilingualism in enhancing students' understanding of English. The interviews followed a semi-structured format, allowing for flexibility in exploring the teachers' thoughts and experiences while ensuring that key topics were addressed. The interviews were conducted with two teachers who are responsible for teaching English in the eighth-grade classrooms, providing a diverse range of perspectives on the use of bilingualism in teaching.

The data collected from the questionnaires and interviews were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. The responses from the questionnaires were coded and transformed into numerical values based on the Likert scale, and then the total scores for each student were calculated. The scores were then converted into percentages, and the results were classified into categories: Excellent (86%-100%), Good (61%-85%), Fair (36%-60%), and Poor (15%-35%). This classification allows for a clear understanding of the overall perception of bilingualism among the students.

For the qualitative data, the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using

thematic analysis, which involves identifying patterns or themes within the responses. The themes that emerged from the interviews provided additional context to the quantitative data, shedding light on the teachers' perspectives on the challenges and successes of implementing bilingualism in the classroom. By triangulating the quantitative and qualitative data, the study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of how bilingualism is perceived and implemented in the learning process at SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang.

The research design also includes ethical considerations to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the data. Prior to participation, both students and teachers were informed about the purpose of the study, and written consent was obtained from all participants. The data collected will be used solely for academic purposes, and the identities of the participants will remain anonymous throughout the research process. Additionally, the research adheres to ethical guidelines by ensuring that the participation of both students and teachers is voluntary, and they are free to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Finally, the findings from this research will provide valuable insights into the practical implementation of bilingualism in English language education. The study aims to inform teachers, schools, and policymakers about the effectiveness of bilingual teaching strategies in improving students' language skills and academic performance. It is anticipated that the results of this study will contribute to the development of more effective bilingual teaching practices and provide recommendations for enhancing the bilingual education program at SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang and similar institutions.

## **Result and Discussion**

The data for this study were collected through a questionnaire administered to 95 eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang, as well as interviews with English teachers. The questionnaire, designed to measure students' perceptions of bilingualism in English language learning, used a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from "Very Often" (4) to "Never" (1). The results were analyzed and classified into four categories: Excellent (86%-100%), Good (61%-85%), Fair (36%-60%), and Poor (15%-35%).

The analysis of the questionnaire results reveals that the majority of students, 64.21%, fall into the "Good" category, indicating that they perceive bilingualism as moderately effective in enhancing their English learning experience. A smaller proportion of students, 15.79%, rated the bilingualism approach as "Excellent," suggesting that a significant minority of students experience a high level of effectiveness in their bilingual learning environment. Conversely, 17.89% of students rated their bilingual learning experience as "Fair," and only 2.11% categorized it as "Poor," indicating that there is a small portion of students who struggle with the bilingual approach.

**Category Percentage Number of Students**

Excellent	15.79%	15
Good	64.21%	61
Fair	17.89%	17
Poor	2.11%	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>95</b>

The findings indicate a generally positive perception of bilingualism among the students, with the majority recognizing its utility in their English language development. The data suggest that bilingualism, specifically the use of both Bahasa Indonesia and English, facilitates students' comprehension and learning in the classroom.

Interviews with two English teachers further complemented the data from the questionnaire. Teachers reported that bilingualism is applied in a flexible manner, with both languages being used to explain difficult concepts and to provide clarification when necessary. The teachers noted that the bilingual approach has helped students, particularly those with lower proficiency in English, to feel more comfortable and confident in their learning. Both teachers emphasized the importance of balancing the use of English and Bahasa Indonesia, ensuring that students were not overwhelmed by the use of a foreign language.

Additionally, teachers shared that the bilingual strategy encourages student engagement by allowing them to use their native language as a bridge to understanding new concepts. According to the teachers, students who were more proficient in Bahasa Indonesia seemed to benefit the most, as they could rely on their first language to understand the content before transitioning to English. This observation aligns with Cummins' (1979) theory of Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP), suggesting that proficiency in one language can support the learning of another.

In terms of overall effectiveness, the combination of both quantitative and qualitative data suggests that bilingualism, while beneficial for the majority of students, still faces challenges. For a small number of students who fall into the "Fair" and "Poor" categories, the bilingual approach appears to be less effective, possibly due to insufficient proficiency in either language. These findings indicate that there may be a need for more targeted support and differentiated teaching strategies to address the diverse needs of students in bilingual classrooms.

**Discussion**

The findings of this study highlight the generally positive impact of bilingualism on English language learning at SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang, but also reveal challenges faced by some students. The majority of students in the "Good" and "Excellent" categories perceive bilingualism as an effective method for learning English. This supports the idea that bilingual education, when properly implemented, can enhance students' comprehension and engagement, particularly in a foreign language classroom. The positive responses from students align with previous research indicating that bilingualism helps learners to better understand and engage with academic content, as bilingual students are able to leverage both languages to make sense of new information (Cummins, 1979).

One key finding of this study is that the use of Bahasa Indonesia as a support language in the bilingual approach helps bridge the gap for students who may not

be fully proficient in English. This is consistent with the theory of linguistic interdependence, which posits that skills acquired in one language can transfer to another, especially when both languages are used in tandem. By allowing students to use their native language, teachers provide a safety net that boosts students' confidence, reduces anxiety, and facilitates their understanding of English-language concepts (Cummins, 1981).

The relatively low percentage of students in the "Poor" category (2.11%) suggests that the bilingual approach has generally been well-received. However, the 17.89% of students in the "Fair" category highlights that some students still face challenges in fully benefiting from the bilingual approach. These students may lack sufficient proficiency in either Bahasa Indonesia or English, making it difficult for them to fully engage with the material. For these students, additional language support or differentiated instruction might be necessary to ensure they are not left behind. This aligns with Suharsimi's (2017) argument that successful bilingual education requires careful consideration of students' language proficiency levels.

Teachers' perspectives on bilingualism further reinforce the findings from the student surveys. The teachers noted that the bilingual strategy allowed for flexibility in instruction, providing students with multiple pathways to understanding the material. This approach is in line with the concept of "translanguaging," where both languages are used fluidly to enhance comprehension and facilitate learning (Garcia, 2009). The use of bilingualism as a pedagogical tool, rather than as a rigid method, ensures that students can interact with the material in a way that best suits their individual language abilities.

Although bilingualism has proven effective for the majority of students, there is a clear need for teachers to tailor their methods to better address the needs of all students, particularly those with limited proficiency in either language. One strategy could be to provide additional scaffolding, such as visual aids or supplementary language exercises, to help students bridge the gap between the languages. Additionally, more focused training for teachers on how to manage bilingual classrooms effectively could further improve the implementation of this strategy.

The study also suggests that bilingualism may not be equally beneficial for all students, particularly those with limited exposure to English outside of the classroom. These students may not have sufficient opportunities to practice and reinforce their English skills, limiting the effectiveness of the bilingual approach. Therefore, future research should explore the impact of external factors, such as exposure to English media or extracurricular activities, on the success of bilingual education.

Despite these challenges, the overall positive results of the study suggest that bilingualism, when implemented effectively, can enhance students' English language skills and increase their academic success. The integration of both languages helps to create an inclusive learning environment that acknowledges the linguistic diversity of the students. By continuing to refine bilingual teaching strategies and providing additional support for struggling students, SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang can further improve the effectiveness of its bilingual education program. This study contributes to the growing body of research on bilingualism in education by examining its implementation and effectiveness in a specific school context. The findings underscore the potential of bilingualism to improve students' English proficiency and academic performance, while also highlighting the need for differentiated instruction to support students who face challenges in

bilingual classrooms. Further research could expand the scope of this study by exploring the impact of bilingualism on students' long-term language acquisition and academic success.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the implementation of bilingualism in teaching and learning English at SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang, focusing on students' perceptions and the effectiveness of using both Bahasa Indonesia and English in the classroom. The results indicate that the majority of students found bilingualism to be an effective approach for enhancing their understanding of English. A significant proportion of students rated the bilingual approach as "Good" or "Excellent," highlighting its positive impact on their language acquisition process. Teachers also reported that using both languages in the classroom facilitated students' comprehension, particularly for those with lower proficiency in English.

However, the study also revealed that a small proportion of students, categorized as "Fair" or "Poor," experienced difficulties with bilingual learning. These students may lack sufficient proficiency in either Bahasa Indonesia or English, hindering their ability to fully benefit from the bilingual approach. This suggests the need for additional support, such as differentiated instruction and targeted language interventions, to ensure that all students can successfully engage with the bilingual curriculum. The findings of this research support the use of bilingualism in English language teaching as an effective strategy for improving students' comprehension and engagement. Nonetheless, for the approach to be universally beneficial, schools must address the challenges faced by students with lower language proficiency through tailored support and further teacher training. The results contribute to the ongoing discourse on bilingual education and offer practical recommendations for enhancing bilingual teaching practices at SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang and similar institutions.

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