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Students' Perception on Teachers' Bilingual Language in English Language Teaching

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Abstract: *Bilingual language in English language teaching (ELT) refers to the pedagogical approach where subjects are taught in both a student's native language (L1) in this case Indonesian and the target language, English (L2). This study aimed to find out the students' perception about the use of bilingual language by the teacher in class XI at SMAN 9 Pangkep. The researcher used a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions. The data was collected through observation, questionnaires, and interviews. The participants of questionnaire involved 83 students and 10 students in interview, they are from XI grade in SMAN 9 Pangkep. South Sulawesi. The findings revealed that students had positive perceptions of the teacher's use of bilingual language during the class, it facilitated their learning of English, making it easier for them to understand the material, enhanced their English skill, contributed to a more comfortable classroom environment and enhanced students' confidence to participate actively in class discussions.*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play multiple roles in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly when it comes to the use of bilingual language as a pedagogical strategy in teaching. Students' perception of this practices can significantly influence their understanding, comprehension, and overall learning outcomes. By examining how students react to their teacher who use bilingual language, teachers can better know their approaches for more effective language teaching.

Bilingual language, in the context of ELT, refers to the combination of a student's first language alongside English. This approach can bridge the gap between students' prior knowledge and new concepts being introduced. Many students perceive bilingual method as a tool that offers clarity, enabling them to grasp complex grammar or vocabulary that might be challenging in a purely English context (García and Wei, 2014). This statement indicates that students often feel more secure in their learning when they can connect new language constructs with their native language.

Moreover, students' perception of bilingual language based on their individual backgrounds, language proficiency levels, and academic goals (Baker, 2011). For example, students who are still in the early stages of learning language might see bilingual instruction positively, as it provides immediate understanding and reduces confusion. Those with more advanced levels of English proficiency, may see bilingual practices as an obstacle to their immersion and fluency development. They might prefer a more exclusive English-language environment that pushes them to communicate and participate in authentic tasks.

The effectiveness of using two language is also influenced by the context in which it is employed. Students appreciate when their teachers strategically switch between languages to reinforce language learning (Cook, 2008). Cummins (2017) notes that drawing attention to linguistic similarities and differences between students' languages enhances their learning by encouraging cognitive connections. Moreover, offering flexibility through the use of both languages can reduce anxiety and make students feel more included, particularly in challenging academic settings. This practice has been shown to foster a more inclusive and effective learning environment where students feel supported and are better able to engage with the material). For example, explaining a complicated grammatical structure in their native language before providing examples in English can enhance understanding on a deeper level. However, using bilingual language incorrectly or excessively can lead to perceptions of lowered expectations or a lack of thoroughness in the teaching process. Thus, it is essential for teachers to meet the needs of their students and create a supportive atmosphere for the development of English language skills.

Beyond comprehension, students' perceptions of bilingual language also include emotional and social aspect. When teachers utilize students' native languages, it may foster an inclusive classroom atmosphere, validating students' identities and cultures. This validation can enhance students' motivation and encourage participation, as they feel their linguistic backgrounds are recognized and valued. On the other hand, if one language dominates in the classroom and creates a sense of imbalance, students who have difficulty with English may feel isolated or inadequate (García & Wei, 2014).

Students' perceptions of teachers' bilingual language practices in ELT are shaped by various factors, including instructional effectiveness, emotional resonance, and cultural validation (García, & Sylvan, 2011). As teachers navigate the complexities of bilingual language use, it is important to consider students' diverse perceptions and experiences. By doing so, teachers can create instructional strategies that are more effective and empathetic, meeting the needs of all learners and promoting a conducive environment for language learning. In Indonesia, there are no official rules or policies about how to use language in teaching English. The choice of how language is used in English classes is decided by the teachers themselves.

There has been study about students' perception toward the use of bilingual language by the teacher. Some research by Nursanti (2023); Manik (2023) Dujmović (2007); Fang and Liu (2020) found that native language was effective in learning, it is helping the students in comprehending instructions, helping them to feeling comfortable while learning and helping to gain new vocabularies.

Based on the observation, 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 language learning. Their perceptions of teachers' bilingual language practices are particularly important because they are getting ready for further education or joining the workforce, where proficiency in English is crucial. Investigating how instructional effectiveness, emotional resonance, and cultural validation shape their experiences in this environment will provide valuable insights into how bilingual practices can be optimized to enhance language acquisition and academic success. Therefore, the purposes of this research are to investigate students' perception on Teachers' Bilingual Language in English Language Teaching (ELT).

RESEARCH METHOD

The research utilized a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions. This approach aligns with the paradigm outlined by Malik & Hamied (2016), which emphasizes the importance of combining these data types for deeper insight. The use of both forms of data ensures that the strengths of each method are maximized, compensating for any potential weaknesses that might arise from relying solely on one method. Creswell (2016) also supports this, noting that mixed methods capitalize on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research. The research was conducted in September 19 – September 20, 2024. It involved 83 students from XI grade. The participants come from SMAN 9 Pangkep. South Sulawesi. The data was collected through observation, questionnaires, and interviews. The questionnaire was adapted and simplified based on similar studies conducted by Manik (2023). Prior to administering the questionnaire, the researcher observed 90 minutes or two hours of learning activities in the English class to assess the use of Indonesian. Meanwhile, interview was conducted to 10 students. 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.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings related to the research questions on Students' perception of teachers' bilingual Language in English Language Teaching (ELT). The analysis was structured into three distinct sections. The first section presented the findings from classroom observations on how the teacher utilized Indonesian during English lessons. The second section examined students' perceptions regarding the use of Indonesian by their teacher in the English classroom, which was gathered through responses to questionnaires. Finally, the third section explored the insights gained from interviews about the teachers' bilingual Language in English Language Teaching.

First, Observation. Based on classroom observations, the teacher frequently utilized Indonesian for a variety of instructional purposes to enhance understanding and facilitate learning. Primarily, Indonesian was employed to clarify explanations and ensure students grasped the material being taught. The lesson observed was narrative text, students were asked to read

passages aloud, emphasizing correct pronunciation. The teacher often introduced new vocabulary by first explaining its meaning in Indonesian, which was then followed by an English translation. This practice aligns with the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), which aims to improve reading comprehension by focusing on text translation. GTM is effective in clarifying vocabulary, verifying comprehension, and providing a rationale for language tasks, thereby enhancing the learning experience (Richards & Rodgers, 2016). 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.

Using the native language in this manner supports the view that language learners, particularly at the beginner level, benefit from such strategies. According to Prodromou (2002**)**, the use of the first language can ease the cognitive load on learners, making it easier for them to understand and examine the task in learning.

Second, Questionnaire. The following section presents the analysis of student perceptions of teacher's use of bilingual language in EFL classes based on the questionnaire's results. It consisted 10 questions, 83 students of XIth grade in SMA N 9 Pangkep. The questionnaires are given in Indonesian language to make sure the students understand the meaning of the questions. Based on the result of the questionnaire, the students responded positively or expressed agreement with all the statements in the questionnaire. Based on statement student point of view, it showed that most students feel positively about the use of Indonesian in their English classes. For example, 79% strongly agree that it helps them learn English, while 91% strongly agree that it improves their writing skills. Similarly, 53% strongly agree that it enhances their speaking fluency, though 8% disagree, indicating a small group may feel it hinders full immersion in English. Overall, students find that using Indonesian helps them grasp the lessons more effectively, especially when dealing with complex ideas.

Regarding comfort and understanding, 51% strongly agree that using Indonesian makes them feel comfortable and motivated to learn, although 33% strongly disagree, suggesting that some students may prefer an English-only environment. In terms of comprehension, 53% strongly agree and 81% agree that it helps them understand the material easily, and 72% strongly agree and 81% agree that it aids in understanding English sentences. A small percentage, 8%, disagreed with these points, possibly indicating they feel less challenged or immersed when Indonesian is used.

When it comes to vocabulary and focus, 56% strongly agree that Indonesian helps them understand new English vocabulary, and 23% strongly agree and 47% agree that it keeps them focused on learning English, though 8% disagree with this. Additionally, 58% strongly disagree that using Indonesian causes confusion, showing that most students do not find it confusing, but

26% do feel that switching languages could disrupt their learning process. These results showed that most students find the use of Indonesian in English classes to be beneficial in their learning experience, particularly in comprehension and motivation, although a small percentage expressed confusion or disagreement.

Third, Interview. The interviews were conducted to complement the findings from the questionnaire analysis and to provide a deeper understanding of students' perceptions regarding the teacher's use of bilingual language in the English classroom. The aim was to gather qualitative insights that could reinforce the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires. The interview questions focused on various aspects of language use in the classroom, including students' experiences and feelings about the teacher's bilingual approach, the effectiveness of using both Indonesian and English, and any challenges they encountered. This combination of methods helps to create a more comprehensive picture of the teaching dynamics and student responses. The interview was conducted with 10 students at class XI from SMAN 9 Pangkep using Indonesian language to make sure, the students' selected understand the questions well

The interview results indicated that students find the use of bilingual language in their English classroom to be beneficial for their learning process. The mixed perceptions highlight the need for teachers to strike a balance between using students' native language and encouraging immersion in the target language as learners progress. This approach can optimize comprehension while fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment. According to the interview results, all students had a positive perception of the teacher's use of bilingual language in the English classroom. They expressed their agreement with the incorporation of bilingualism in their learning environment. Furthermore, their reasons for supporting this were diverse, reflecting their personal feelings, thoughts, and experiences. Some reasons were:

1. Iye, nabantuka, karena gampang i di pahami, kalau pakai dua Bahasa tidak nakasih bingungki (Yes, it helps me to understand if the teacher uses bilingual language, it makes me not confused)
2. Karena pakai Bahasa indonesiaki sehari- hari jadi gampang i dimengerti materi (Because we are using Indonesian language every day, so it helps me to understand the material well)
3. Iye, lebih banyak kosa kata baru yang kutau, karena bu guru pakai Bahasa Indonesia baru najelaskan (Yes, I know more new vocabularies, because the teacher is using Indonesian language then explain it to English)
4. Tidak nakasih bingung jeki (It makes me not confused)
5. Iye saya setuju (Yes I agree)

The term "positive" in this context refers to the students' belief that the use of both English and Indonesian offers advantages for learning English in the classroom. The data and findings indicated that bilingual language usage positively impacted students' understanding, as they found it easier to comprehend the instructions and materials presented by the teacher. Using bilingual language effectively helps students understand teachers' instructions, creates a comfortable classroom environment, and facilitates vocabulary acquisition. Satriah (2019) also supported the idea that bilingual language use is highly beneficial in the English learning process.

It enables students to grasp the material better and enhances communication between teachers and students.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the teacher employed a bilingual approach, combining the first language (L1) with the target language (L2) in the English classroom. The findings indicate that students had positive perceptions of the teacher's use of bilingual language during in English Language Teaching (ELT). This conclusion is supported by the data from questionnaires and interviews, which revealed that students responded favorably to the bilingual approach. It facilitated their learning of English, making it easier for them to understand the material presented by the teacher and new vocabulary. Additionally, it enhanced their speaking and writing skills, allowed them to manage their time more effectively, and helped teachers save instructional time. This approach also contributed to a more comfortable classroom environment, boosting students' confidence to participate actively in class discussions. They felt less hesitant to ask questions or respond to the teacher's inquiries. Overall, students perceived the use of the teacher's bilingual language positively, recognizing its various benefits. However, there is a need to balance the use of both languages so that students become more accustomed to and confident in using English. Adjusting the frequency and context of using both languages can help improve the effectiveness of the bilingual method and have a greater positive impact on students' English language development.

For future research, it is recommended to replicate this study with a larger sample size to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, subsequent research should focus on identifying the most effective ways to implement L1 to maximize learning outcomes while reducing reliance on L2.

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