

Exploring Students' Attitudes towards Bilingual Classroom Instruction

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Abstract

In this study, I investigate the impact of bilingual instruction on undergraduate students' learning experiences in a private university in East Jakarta. I employed qualitative research methods and conducted in-depth interviews with seven participants, whom I selected through purposive sampling based on their engagement with bilingual education. My findings reveal that students generally perceive bilingual instruction positively, emphasizing its role in enhancing their comprehension of complex concepts and participation in class activities. The use of both the mother tongue (L1) and the foreign language (L2) helped students overcome vocabulary limitations and boosted their confidence in language abilities. However, I also identified challenges, such as cognitive load due to frequent language switching and varying levels of language proficiency among students. I found that bilingual instruction fostered cultural awareness and intercultural communication skills, preparing students for real-world interactions in diverse cultural contexts. Furthermore, I emphasize the importance of integrating interactive materials and technology to make bilingual learning more engaging. While students appreciated the benefits of bilingual instruction, they also suggested improvements, including more targeted support for students with lower proficiency levels and ongoing professional development for teachers. I conclude that with proper support and instructional strategies, bilingual education can significantly enhance both academic performance and personal development, equipping students with critical skills for global engagement.

Keywords: Bilingual Instruction, Language Proficiency, Cultural Awareness, Student Engagement.

Introduction

Language plays a crucial role in all aspects of human life. In my research, I focus on how students are influenced by various factors during the process of learning a new language, which can potentially lead to bilingualism or multilingualism. These factors can be both internal, such as attitude, motivation, and beliefs, and external, including the surrounding environment, exposure to the target language, socio-cultural influences, the quality of language instruction, and support systems. As students progress in learning the new language, their attitude and motivation may evolve. In my study, I particularly focus on external factors, such as bilingual instructions used by teachers in the classroom, and how these factors influence the learning process of students.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), students often encounter significant challenges while learning a new language, which can create barriers to effective classroom learning. I suggest that teachers should not only encourage their students but also adopt strategies to incorporate the first language (L1) during teaching activities. One such strategy is the use of bilingual language, where L1 is used alongside the target language (L2). My aim in this research is to explore how the use of L1 can help students,

especially those with lower proficiency. The need for clear and understandable language instruction is essential for fostering effective communication between students and teachers. In line with Brown (2001), I believe that in EFL classroom settings, the use of L1 is becoming a valuable tool, provided that it is appropriately integrated to offer clear benefits in learning L2. Previous studies, such as that by Nurhayani (2016), have shown that immersion instruction using a bilingual medium can be effective in maintaining language skills.

In recent decades, numerous researchers (Jurado & Garcia, 2018; Bialystok, Craik, & Luk, 2012; Pokrivčáková, 2013; Chin, 2015; Diaz, 1985; Matlin, 1994; Kopturk, Odaciouglu, & Uysal, 2016) have explored bilingual education and its impact on language acquisition. Their findings indicate that bilingual education can help students who are less proficient in English to keep up with other subjects while they develop language skills in their native (non-English) language. Diaz (1985) and Matlin (1994) suggest that learners who are bilingual often have a better understanding of language structure, which enables them to communicate more effectively. Additionally, scholars such as Bialystok (1987) and Matlin (1994) have found that bilinguals possess heightened awareness of the flexibility in understanding across languages. This cognitive flexibility allows them to switch between tasks more efficiently. As Adesope et al. (2010) pointed out, bilingualism can also improve working memory, helping individuals retain and process information more effectively.

Through this study, I intend to explore undergraduate students' attitudes toward bilingual classroom instruction. Based on my research background, I have formulated the following research questions:

1. How do undergraduate students perceive the use of bilingual instruction in enhancing their comprehension and participation in classroom activities?
2. What challenges do students face when participating in bilingual classroom instruction, and how do these challenges affect their learning process?
3. How does bilingual instruction influence students' motivation, confidence, and overall academic performance?
4. In what ways does bilingual instruction enhance students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and cultural awareness?
5. What improvements can be made to bilingual instruction to better meet the needs of students with varying language proficiencies and enhance their learning outcomes?

I expect this research to contribute significantly to the field of EFL teaching and learning, particularly in the area of bilingual classroom instruction. By exploring students' attitudes and identifying the benefits and challenges they face, I aim to provide valuable insights for educators and program developers. My goal is to offer practical recommendations for enhancing teaching strategies that promote both language acquisition and cross-cultural understanding. Furthermore, I believe the findings from this study can inform curriculum development, ensuring that bilingual instruction is better aligned with students' needs and preferences. However, the scope of my study is limited to undergraduate students from a specific private university in East Jakarta, focusing on their experiences with bilingual instruction during one academic semester.

II. Review of Related Literature

A. The Nature of Attitude

There are several reasons why students may struggle with language learning, such as inadequate English background, low motivation, or a lack of confidence. One important affective factor in language learning is attitude (Skehan, 1989; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). Attitudes are crucial as they shape overt behaviors, allowing individuals to understand both the physical and social world (Albarracin, Wang, Li, & Noguchi, 2008). I define language attitude as one's disposition toward a language and its speakers (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Stern (1983) highlights that the effort students put into language learning is partly influenced by their attitudes. Wenden (1991) divides attitudes into cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements.

Based on my review of the literature, I believe that students with a positive attitude toward language learning and bilingual education are likely to experience better outcomes, while those with negative attitudes may struggle in their language learning. This is consistent with Shams (2008), who found that students with low English proficiency often have negative emotions or fear regarding classroom instruction. Consequently, I believe that a negative attitude combined with a lack of motivation can create a more challenging learning environment. On the other hand, having a positive attitude toward learning a language can be a productive way to start (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). Jurado and Garcia (2018) explored attitudes and motivation in bilingual education, finding that bilingual education positively impacted students' attitudes and motivation.

In conducting behavioral research in language learning, I build on Baker's (1992) comprehensive theoretical model. According to Baker, attitudes toward a language are important for its preservation, longevity, or extinction. I agree with Tahaineh and Daana (2013) that attitudes play a critical role in language development or degradation. Attitudes are internal states that influence learners' actions, and they are complex due to their many dimensions. Cognition, affect, and behavior are the three components of attitude (Garrett, 2010). I understand that these components shape learners' language behaviors, including how they interact with their society and express ideas. Attitudes can evoke emotional responses and influence behavior (Diaz-Campos, 2011). Moreno in Lanos (2014, p. 128) defines language attitudes more broadly, linking them to social attitudes toward language usage in society.

Fisman in Lakawa and Walaretina (2016, p. 90) outlines four aspects of societal language attitude: language loyalty, language pride, language norms awareness, and language usage. These aspects are critical in determining how strong a speaker's attitude is toward their language, whether it is used as a first or second language (Birdsong, 1995).

B. Bilingual Education

Carder (2007) suggests that bilingualism begins when we start to comprehend words from another language while speaking. In international schools, students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in both their native language and English by graduation. I observed that in Indonesian classrooms, students may predominantly use one language, with their native language less often employed. Slavin et al. (2011) explain that bilingual education differs from English immersion by providing instruction in subjects through the native language. Many Indonesian students speak multiple languages, such as a local

language and Indonesian, and may also speak foreign languages at the university level. I attribute bilingualism to internal factors, such as a strong desire to learn a new language, and external factors, such as family environment or advances in technology.

In this study, I use the term bilingual education to refer to the process of teaching and learning in which both L1 and L2 are used as the medium of instruction. Although not many studies have been conducted on bilingual education in the Indonesian context, there is research related to attitudes toward English ESP acquisition (Mikel & Ardeo, 2003). Their study suggests that both monolingual and bilingual students hold positive attitudes toward English. Lestari (2018) explored the effects of bilingual and monolingual instruction on students' attitudes and found a significant difference in students' speaking abilities. Dewi and Setiadi (2018) conducted a study on language choice and attitude in bilingual academic learning environments, finding that students generally held positive attitudes toward English. Similar studies in other countries (Schweers, 1999; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Nation, 2003) suggest that L1 should not be completely removed in L2 contexts.

C. Bilingual Classroom Instruction

I define bilingualism as the ability to speak or use two languages, which arises from factors such as immigration, communication needs, and technological advancements (Bialystok, Craik, & Luk, 2012). Bilingual education helps students who are less proficient in English maintain academic progress while developing their language skills in their native language (Chin, 2015). Diaz (1985) and Matlin (1994) emphasize that bilingual learners may have cognitive advantages, such as a deeper understanding of language structure and improved communication skills. Bialystok (1987) and Matlin (1994) suggest that bilinguals have the flexibility to adjust their understanding across languages. According to Ben-zeev (1977), bilinguals demonstrate greater analytical abilities than monolinguals. Baker (2001) lists communication, cultural awareness, and cognitive skills as advantages of bilingualism.

However, I acknowledge the potential drawbacks of bilingual education. Chin (2015) notes that reducing exposure to English in bilingual programs may slow English acquisition. Additionally, bilingual education may segregate students from their peers, which can lead to social and academic challenges. Taylor and Taylor (1990) argue that bilingual learners may also struggle with pronunciation and decision-making in language.

In Indonesia, bilingual classroom instruction has not received much attention. However, several studies, such as those by Masduqi and Subiyanto (2021), Apriana and Sutrisno (2022), and Alawiyah and Novita (2023), provide insights into the implementation of bilingual education in Indonesia. These studies emphasize both the strengths and challenges of bilingual education in the country. Based on these studies, I aim to investigate undergraduate students' attitudes toward bilingual classroom instruction.

III. Methods

In this qualitative study, I aimed to explore undergraduate students' attitudes toward bilingual classroom instruction at a private university in East Jakarta. I chose a qualitative approach because it allowed me to deeply explore participants' experiences, providing rich, detailed data that might not be captured through quantitative methods. Guided by Creswell and Creswell's (2018) principles of qualitative research, I focused on understanding students' perceptions and experiences within their natural educational setting.

I selected seven undergraduate students through purposive sampling to ensure that the participants had direct experience with bilingual instruction, making them well-suited to provide relevant insights. Their selection was based on their exposure to bilingual education, ensuring that their responses effectively addressed the research questions.

I gathered data through semi-structured interviews, which offered flexibility while concentrating on key themes related to bilingual instruction. I designed the interview questions based on previous research (Jurado & Garcia, 2018; Lestari, 2018), covering topics such as students' attitudes, the challenges they faced, and how bilingual instruction influenced their academic performance and cultural awareness. Each interview lasted approximately 45-55 minutes and was conducted in a private setting, allowing participants to express their thoughts openly. I obtained participants' consent to audio-record the interviews, which I later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

To analyze the data, I employed thematic analysis, which allowed me to identify recurring patterns and key themes. I began by thoroughly reading the interview transcripts to familiarize myself with the content. I then coded significant phrases and ideas, grouping these codes into themes. The final themes reflected participants' perceptions of bilingual instruction, cognitive challenges related to language switching, and the benefits of bilingual learning, particularly in terms of academic performance and cultural understanding. I synthesized these themes into a cohesive narrative that directly addressed my research questions.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

In this section, I present the results from my study, which were derived from semi-structured interviews with seven undergraduate students. I analysed the data based on the research questions, which focused on students' attitudes toward bilingual classroom instruction. I categorized the findings according to each research question, supported by direct quotes from the participants to provide detailed insights into their experiences. These findings not only highlight the benefits of bilingual instruction but also identify the challenges students face in navigating both their mother tongue (L1) and the foreign language (L2) in classroom settings. In the following sections, I discuss each research question in turn, interpreting the results in light of the broader context of bilingual education and its implications for EFL teaching and learning.

1. How do students feel about the use of the mother tongue and foreign language in classroom instruction?

Most students responded positively to the use of both the mother tongue (L1) and the foreign language (L2) in classroom instruction. They felt that this approach helped them in understanding the material and participating more actively in the learning process.

Interviewee# A stated, *"I enjoy it because I know I have limited vocabulary, and bilingual instruction kind of helps me."*

This indicates that bilingual instruction is considered an effective tool for overcoming the language limitations that students have.

Interviewee# B expressed the same satisfaction, saying, *"I'm happy because I can express my thoughts in two different languages."* This emphasizes the comfort in expressing ideas in both languages.

Interviewee# D also supported bilingual instruction but emphasized that English should be prioritized: *"In my opinion, it is not wrong to mix the two languages in the PBI (English Education) study program courses, but English should be prioritized because students must be accustomed to using English."*

2. Are there any aspects of bilingual classroom instruction that are considered challenging or frustrating? If so, what are they?

Some students reported challenges they faced in bilingual instruction, particularly related to the need to switch from one language to another.

Interviewee# B explained that *"there are challenging aspects because we are required to understand and comprehend what the lecturer is saying, and we need to think in two languages."* This underscores the cognitive challenges students face in bilingual instruction.

Interviewee# C expressed that too much mixing of languages within one sentence can cause confusion: *"Sometimes I feel inconsistent or confused when using bilingualism in some situations if there's too much mixing in one sentence."*

3. How does bilingual instruction affect students' motivation to participate in class activities?

Most students reported that bilingual instruction had a positive impact on their motivation to engage in class activities.

Interviewee# B mentioned that *"I'm very motivated because it quickly helps me memorize a lot of new vocabulary,"* which shows how bilingual instruction can accelerate vocabulary learning and boost motivation.

Interviewee# D added that he felt more motivated when English was used more frequently: *"I'm more motivated if English is used more often because it aligns with my study program."*

4. Do students feel more confident in their language abilities because of bilingual instruction? Why or why not?

Bilingual instruction seems to have a strong impact on students' confidence in using both languages.

Interviewee# A acknowledged that bilingual instruction helped her overcome her vocabulary limitations and made her feel more confident: *"Yes, I am because I have limited vocabulary and bilingual kind of helps me."*

Interviewee# B also felt more confident: *"Yes, I'm confident because not everyone is able to be in a bilingual class, and it's not that easy to speak and think in two languages."*

However, some students felt less confident in certain situations, such as Interviewee# E, who still felt hesitant when she had to speak in a foreign language, although she also admitted that bilingual instruction helped her practice speaking.

5. How does bilingual instruction affect students' overall academic performance?

Students reported that bilingual instruction generally had a positive impact on their academic performance, especially in understanding complex concepts.

Interviewee# F mentioned that *"In learning, students can understand concepts better because bilingual instruction allows students to process information in the language they master best."*

Interviewee# E highlighted that bilingual instruction helps in various skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening: *"In various skills, reading, writing, speaking, and listening."*

6. How important do students feel it is for the study program to offer bilingual instruction?

Most students felt that bilingual instruction is very important in both academic and future career contexts.

Interviewee# B stated that *"it is very important because bilingualism makes students accustomed to listening and speaking, as well as builds confidence."*

Interviewee# D also emphasized the importance of bilingual instruction, especially in the era of globalization: *"It's important, especially in the current era, where foreign language education, especially English, needs to be maximized."*

7. Can students describe situations where bilingual instruction helped them better understand complex topics?

Many students provided specific examples of how bilingual instruction helped them better understand complex topics.

Interviewee# B revealed that she needed further explanation in her mother tongue to fully understand the material presented: *"In situations where I listen to explanations like presentations by lecturers or my peers, sometimes I need further understanding in my mother tongue to fully grasp it."*

Interviewee# G noted that discussing specific topics requires the use of bilingual instruction to truly understand the material: *"When discussing specific topics that require bilingualism."*

8. How does bilingual instruction compare to monolingual instruction in terms of student engagement and interest in the subject?

Students had varying views on how bilingual instruction compares to monolingual instruction in terms of their engagement and interest.

Interviewee# A stated that she sometimes prefers monolingual instruction: "*I prefer monolingual because I must prefer it sometimes,*" indicating that in certain contexts, one language instruction is more effective for her.

On the other hand, Interviewee# D preferred bilingual instruction because it helps improve his bilingual skills: "*I prefer bilingual instruction because I still want to improve my bilingual skills.*"

9. How does bilingual instruction help students improve their foreign language skills?

Students reported that bilingual instruction greatly helps in improving their foreign language skills.

Interviewee# B stated that "*By getting used to listening to explanations from lecturers or friends in a foreign language,*" they find it easier to absorb the foreign language being used.

Interviewee# F also noted that bilingual instruction helps in expanding their vocabulary in the foreign language: "*Bilingual instruction can increase vocabulary in the use of English.*"

10. Do students think that bilingual instruction makes them more aware of different cultures? Can they give examples?

Students generally felt that bilingual instruction increases their awareness of different cultures, often through differences in language and grammar.

Interviewee# D mentioned that bilingual instruction increases his awareness of other cultures, especially in terms of accents and grammar: "*Bilingual instruction makes me more aware of cultural awareness.*"

Interviewee# C gave an example that bilingual instruction helped her better understand the culture associated with the language being studied: "*Yes, for example, when learning about culture, there are some languages that may not be familiar or have never been heard before that can be mixed with the mother tongue to make it easier to understand.*"

11. How does bilingual instruction affect students' ability to communicate effectively in both languages?

Bilingual instruction seems to improve students' ability to communicate effectively in both languages, although the effectiveness can vary.

Interviewee# D stated that bilingual instruction made him more confident and skilled in using a foreign language: "*Bilingual instruction made me more skilled and confident in communicating in a foreign language.*"

Interviewee# G added that using two languages in instruction helps in explaining difficult topics: "*Because using two languages, I can understand better when discussing difficult topics.*"

12. In what ways does bilingual instruction enhance students' critical thinking and problem solving skills?

Some students reported that bilingual instruction helped them in enhancing their critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Interviewee# E revealed that in essay writing courses, bilingual instruction helps in critical thinking and evaluating various perspectives: *"When critiquing something in a foreign language, I feel it is more polite than in my mother tongue."*

Interviewee# D noted that bilingual instruction makes him more critical, especially due to exposure to Western culture, which emphasizes freedom of speech and open discussion: *"English makes me more critical because I am exposed to Western culture, which is more critical because they uphold freedom of speech."*

This shows that through bilingual instruction, students not only learn the language but are also exposed to different ways of thinking and cultural norms, which can enhance their critical thinking skills.

13. How does bilingual instruction prepare students to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds?

Bilingual instruction prepares students to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds by providing them with the necessary language skills and cultural awareness.

Interviewee# B mentioned that bilingual instruction makes her accustomed to interacting using both languages, which helps in intercultural interactions: *"Because bilingualism is implemented in the classroom, I become accustomed to interacting using both languages."*

Interviewee# D added that the foreign language skills gained from bilingual instruction help in understanding and appreciating cultural differences when interacting with people from various backgrounds: *"By learning English, I can communicate with people from different cultures, whether online or offline, like when I went to Vietnam and used English to communicate with locals."*

14. Can students share experiences where bilingual instruction helped them understand cultural contexts better?

Some students provided concrete examples of how bilingual instruction helped them understand cultural contexts better.

Interviewee# E recounted that during the SEAMO TVET program, bilingual instruction helped her communicate with students from the Philippines, understand their culture, and sing Indonesian children's songs, providing deeper insights into cultural contexts: *"During SEAMO TVET, our final project was to make a video discussing the cultural background of the Philippines, and vice versa, Filipino students sang Indonesian children's songs."*

Interviewee# C also noted that when communicating with friends from different cultures, bilingual instruction helped her learn new words and understand the cultural context of different languages: *"When I communicated with friends from different cultures, I*

encountered words that I had never heard before, and I learned from that by using bilingualism."

This example illustrates how bilingual instruction can bridge linguistic gaps and enhance students' understanding of cultural nuances through practical, real world interactions.

15. Do students feel that bilingual instruction encourages collaboration and the exchange of ideas among students from different backgrounds? How so?

Most students felt that bilingual instruction encourages collaboration and the exchange of ideas among students from different cultural backgrounds.

Interviewee# E stated that bilingual instruction allows students to interact with classmates from different cultural backgrounds and learn about their cultures, which in turn encourages the exchange of ideas and collaboration: "*Yes, because with bilingual instruction, I can express myself in different languages.*"

Interviewee# F added that bilingual instruction creates a multicultural environment that allows students to learn from each other and share their unique perspectives: "*Bilingual instruction usually attracts students from various cultural and language backgrounds. It creates a multicultural environment where students can learn from each other and share their unique perspectives.*"

16. How does bilingual instruction influence students' interest in learning about other cultures?

Students generally reported that bilingual instruction increased their interest in learning about other cultures.

Interviewee# D mentioned that bilingual instruction made him more interested in understanding other cultures due to the increased access and resources, thanks to his improved English skills: "*Bilingual instruction makes me more interested in understanding other cultures because the access and resources I have increased as my English skills improved.*"

Interviewee# C noted that bilingual instruction encouraged her to learn more about other cultures, especially through art and media such as films and music: "*By understanding culture through music, films, and other forms of art.*"

17. In what ways does bilingual instruction contribute to students' personal growth and development?

Bilingual instruction appears to significantly contribute to students' personal growth and development.

Interviewee# B felt that bilingual instruction had improved her confidence and her ability to express herself in both languages: "*In terms of confidence.*"

Interviewee# D also felt that bilingual instruction made him more competitive and confident in his English language abilities: "*Bilingual instruction makes me more confident in my English abilities and makes me more competitive.*"

Based on the interview results, I found that bilingual instruction has a significant impact on multiple aspects of student learning. Most students expressed appreciation for the bilingual approach, as it helps them understand the material better, boosts their motivation and confidence, and expands their cultural awareness. However, I also identified ongoing challenges, particularly the need to strike a balance between language usage and provide additional support from universities. Moreover, I believe professional development for teachers is essential to ensure the effectiveness of bilingual instruction.

Discussion

1. Student Perceptions of Bilingual Instruction

One of the most significant findings of my study is that students generally have a positive perception of bilingual instruction. Many students expressed that using both their mother tongue (L1) and a foreign language (L2) in classroom settings helps them understand the material more effectively and participate more actively in discussions. For instance, students like Interviewee A and Interviewee B noted that bilingual instruction aids in overcoming vocabulary limitations and allows them to express their thoughts in both languages. This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the cognitive benefits of bilingualism. Studies have shown that bilingual individuals often demonstrate better cognitive control and flexibility, which help in academic settings where multiple languages are used (Bialystok, 2011; Adesope et al., 2010). The ability to switch between languages not only aids comprehension but also enhances students' engagement with the content, as they can utilize their full linguistic repertoire to grasp complex concepts.

However, my study also revealed challenges associated with bilingual instruction. Some students, like Interviewee B and Interviewee C, mentioned the cognitive load involved in constantly switching between languages, which can sometimes lead to confusion or frustration. This challenge is consistent with the documented "cost" of code-switching, where frequent switching between languages results in increased cognitive demands and slower processing times (Prior & Gollan, 2011).

2. Impact on Academic Performance

I found that bilingual instruction positively influences students' academic performance, particularly in understanding and retaining complex concepts. Students like Interviewee F and Interviewee E highlighted that the ability to process information in both languages allows them to comprehend and master difficult topics more effectively. This finding supports Cummins' (1979) Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis, which posits that skills developed in one language can transfer to another, enhancing overall academic performance.

Additionally, I observed that bilingual instruction fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For example, Interviewee E mentioned that bilingual instruction in essay writing courses helped her critically evaluate different perspectives, while Interviewee D noted that exposure to Western cultural norms through English-language instruction made him more open to critical discourse. This suggests that bilingual instruction not only facilitates linguistic development but also promotes higher-order thinking by exposing students to diverse ways of reasoning and cultural frameworks.

However, I recognize that the effectiveness of bilingual instruction in improving academic performance may depend on various factors, including students' proficiency in both languages and the instructor's ability to balance language use. My study revealed that students' confidence in their language

abilities significantly impacts their engagement and performance in bilingual settings. Those who felt more confident, like Interviewee D, benefited more from bilingual instruction, whereas students who lacked confidence, like Interviewee E, experienced hesitation and self-doubt. This underscores the importance of providing targeted support for students with varying language proficiencies to ensure that all learners can benefit from bilingual education.

3. Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Communication

Another critical aspect of my findings is the role of bilingual instruction in enhancing students' cultural awareness and intercultural communication skills. Most students reported that bilingual instruction made them more aware of different cultures and helped them develop the skills needed to interact with people from diverse backgrounds. For example, Interviewee D and Interviewee C mentioned that bilingual instruction exposed them to different cultural norms and practices, which they found enriching and enlightening.

These findings are consistent with the concept of "cultural competence," which refers to the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures (Deardorff, 2006). In my view, bilingual instruction inherently involves cultural exchange, as language is deeply tied to cultural identity and values. By engaging with multiple languages in the classroom, students also engage with the cultural contexts embedded within those languages, broadening their cultural horizons.

Furthermore, I observed that bilingual instruction fosters collaboration and the exchange of ideas among students from different cultural backgrounds. Students like Interviewee E and Interviewee F noted that bilingual instruction creates a multicultural environment where they can learn from each other and share unique perspectives. This finding supports previous research suggesting that multicultural and multilingual classrooms are conducive to collaborative learning, as they bring together diverse viewpoints that can lead to more creative and inclusive problem-solving (Banks, 2001).

4. Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Despite the many benefits, I identified several challenges that need to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of bilingual instruction. One of the main challenges is the cognitive load associated with managing two languages simultaneously. As noted by students like Interviewee B and Interviewee C, the constant switching between languages can be mentally taxing and may lead to confusion or reduced engagement. This finding suggests a need for instructional strategies to mitigate the cognitive demands of bilingual learning.

Another challenge I identified is the varying levels of language proficiency among students. While some students, like Interviewee D, thrive in bilingual settings, others struggle due to limited proficiency in the foreign language. This variability creates disparities in learning outcomes, as students with lower proficiency may find it difficult to keep up with instruction. To address this issue, I recommend that instructors differentiate their teaching and provide additional support to students who need it, such as targeted language exercises or supplemental materials.

Moreover, students suggested that bilingual instruction could be more engaging and relevant if it incorporated more interactive activities and the use of technology. Interviewee E and Interviewee C proposed incorporating current events, multimedia tools, and interactive platforms like Quizziz to make learning more dynamic and interesting. This aligns with research that emphasizes the role of technology

in enhancing language learning by providing interactive, multimedia-rich environments catering to different learning styles (Chapelle, 2003). Finally, I found that professional development for teachers is crucial to the success of bilingual instruction. Students recommended that teachers receive ongoing training in effective bilingual teaching strategies, the use of technology, and culturally responsive pedagogy. This recommendation aligns with existing literature that highlights the importance of teacher training in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of bilingual education (de Jong, Harper, & Coady, 2013).

Conclusion

In this study, I explored undergraduate students' attitudes toward bilingual classroom instruction. My findings reveal that most students have a positive view of bilingual instruction, as it helps them understand complex concepts more effectively and engage actively in classroom discussions. By using both their mother tongue (L1) and a foreign language (L2), students felt more confident in expressing their ideas and overcoming vocabulary limitations. However, I also found that students experience cognitive challenges, particularly in switching between languages, which sometimes leads to confusion and frustration.

Furthermore, I observed that bilingual instruction positively impacts students' academic performance and critical thinking skills. Many students highlighted that the use of both languages helps them process information and develop intercultural communication skills. Despite these benefits, I recognize that students with lower proficiency in L2 require additional support to fully benefit from bilingual instruction. Based on these insights, I recommend that educational institutions provide more targeted interventions for students with varying language abilities and offer professional development for teachers to improve the effectiveness of bilingual teaching.

In conclusion, my study underscores the potential of bilingual instruction in enhancing both academic and personal outcomes in EFL contexts. However, it also highlights the need for more strategic approaches to address the challenges of bilingual learning, ensuring that all students benefit from this instructional method.

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