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Tiarnita Maria Sarjani
 Br. Siregar¹
 Sri Rahayu
 Simanullang²
 Aprilia Hutabarat³
 Putri Olivia Munthe⁴
 Kaisyah Abellia Riadi⁵

BILINGUAL LEARNING APPROACHES TO IMPROVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Abstract

This study examines the role of bilingual learning approaches in improving English language development among Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD) students. As future educators, PGSD students are expected to demonstrate adequate English proficiency to support instructional practices, meet curriculum requirements, and integrate bilingual elements in primary school learning environments. This research employs a literature review method by analyzing relevant national and international journals, books, and educational reports that discuss bilingual learning, teacher preparation, and English language development. The findings indicate that bilingual learning approaches contribute significantly to strengthening students' linguistic competence, particularly in vocabulary development, reading comprehension, speaking confidence, and academic communication skills. Furthermore, the reviewed literature highlights that exposure to bilingual learning environments increases student engagement, motivation, and readiness to apply bilingual instruction in future classrooms. Therefore, integrating bilingual learning approaches is essential for preparing competent, adaptive, and globally oriented future elementary school teachers.

Keywords: Bilingual Learning, English Language Development, Teacher Education, PGSD Students, Literature Review

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran pendekatan pembelajaran bilingual dalam meningkatkan perkembangan bahasa Inggris pada mahasiswa Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar (PGSD). Sebagai calon pendidik, mahasiswa PGSD diharapkan memiliki kemampuan bahasa Inggris yang memadai untuk mendukung praktik pembelajaran, memenuhi tuntutan kurikulum, serta mengintegrasikan unsur bilingual dalam pembelajaran sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kajian pustaka dengan menganalisis jurnal, buku, serta laporan pendidikan nasional dan internasional yang relevan terkait pembelajaran bilingual, persiapan guru, dan perkembangan bahasa Inggris. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan pembelajaran bilingual berkontribusi signifikan dalam memperkuat kompetensi linguistik, terutama dalam pengembangan kosakata, pemahaman bacaan, kepercayaan diri berbicara, dan kemampuan komunikasi akademik. Literatur yang dikaji juga menunjukkan bahwa paparan lingkungan belajar bilingual meningkatkan motivasi, keterlibatan, serta kesiapan mahasiswa untuk menerapkan pembelajaran bilingual di kelas. Oleh karena itu, integrasi pembelajaran bilingual menjadi langkah penting dalam mempersiapkan calon guru sekolah dasar yang kompeten dan berorientasi global.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran Bilingual, Perkembangan Bahasa Inggris, Pendidikan Guru, Mahasiswa PGSD, Kajian Pustaka

INTRODUCTION

The rapid globalization of education has increased the importance of English proficiency for future teachers, including those enrolled in Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD)

^{1,2,3,4,5} Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Negeri Medan
 email: lian.nita2010@gmail.com ¹, rsri44288@gmail.com ², apriliahutabarat3@gmail.com ³
putrioliviamunthe@gmail.com ⁴ kaisyahabellia1@gmail.com ⁵

programs. In many countries, bilingual education has become a strategic approach to equip teacher candidates with the linguistic and pedagogical skills needed to navigate a world where English is widely used as a medium for academic communication, access to information, and professional development. As Indonesia continues to strengthen the quality of its education system, integrating bilingual learning into higher education particularly in teacher preparation programs has become increasingly relevant. PGSD students are expected to not only understand English but also to apply it effectively within instructional contexts, classroom communication, and curriculum enrichment activities for young learners.

In the Indonesian context, the implementation of bilingual learning at the elementary school level has gradually expanded as schools aim to develop students' global competencies from an early age. This shift indirectly demands that PGSD students, as future elementary school teachers, possess sufficient English language skills to support bilingual learning environments. However, several studies highlight that many PGSD students still struggle with English proficiency, particularly in academic vocabulary, reading comprehension, pronunciation accuracy, and oral communication. These limitations often stem from minimal exposure to English during lectures, the dominance of monolingual instructional practices, and limited opportunities to engage with authentic English language materials. Such challenges create a gap between the expected competencies of future teachers and their actual readiness to teach in a bilingual setting.

Moreover, the availability of bilingual teaching models within PGSD programs remains inconsistent. While some institutions integrate English in specific courses, others rely heavily on Bahasa Indonesia as the primary instructional language. This inconsistency limits students' opportunities to experience bilingual learning naturally and meaningfully. The absence of systematic bilingual exposure also reduces students' motivation and confidence in using English for academic and professional purposes. Therefore, understanding how bilingual learning approaches can be effectively integrated into teacher education becomes crucial in improving language outcomes for PGSD students.

A large body of international research emphasizes that bilingual learning supports cognitive flexibility, enhances linguistic awareness, and improves learners' ability to process information in multiple languages. In addition, bilingual environments provide richer language input, promote active engagement, and allow learners to make meaningful connections between languages. However, despite the growing body of evidence supporting bilingual education, studies focused specifically on bilingual approaches in Indonesian PGSD programs remain limited. Existing literature tends to concentrate on bilingual practices at the elementary or secondary school level, leaving a gap in understanding how bilingual learning strategies can be implemented effectively within teacher preparation.

Given these issues, this study conducts a comprehensive literature review of national and international journals, books, and educational reports to analyze the role of bilingual learning approaches in enhancing English language development among PGSD students. By synthesizing findings from various sources, the study aims to provide insights into the potential benefits, challenges, and practical implications of integrating bilingual learning into teacher education. Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of bilingual learning as a pedagogical foundation for preparing future elementary school teachers who are not only linguistically competent but also capable of fostering global perspectives among young learners.

METHODS

This study employs a library research method to analyze the role of bilingual learning approaches in enhancing English language development among Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD) students. Library research, or literature-based research, focuses on collecting, reviewing, and synthesizing information from existing scholarly works rather than obtaining data directly from the field. This method is appropriate for exploring educational concepts, evaluating previous findings, and identifying theoretical patterns related to bilingual learning in teacher education.

The sources used in this study include national and international journals, academic books, policy documents, and educational reports relevant to bilingual learning, teacher preparation, and English language development. The literature selection process involved several stages: identifying research topics and keywords, searching digital academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and national repositories, screening publications based on

relevance and credibility, and synthesizing theoretical insights from the selected works.

Data analysis was conducted through thematic analysis, in which the researcher categorized findings into key themes such as the benefits of bilingual learning, challenges faced by PGSD students, and implications for teacher education. This analytical approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of how bilingual learning strategies can support the linguistic and pedagogical development of future elementary school teachers.

By relying on diverse and reputable academic sources, this study provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the significance of bilingual approaches in PGSD programs and contributes to the broader discussion on improving English language competence among teacher education students.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Linguistic Benefits of Bilingual Learning for Elementary Teacher Education Students

Findings from the literature review indicate that bilingual learning provides highly significant linguistic contributions to PGSD (Elementary School Teacher Education) students. National and international studies consistently emphasize that exposure to two languages Indonesian and English within academic contexts enables students to better understand linguistic structures, retain vocabulary over the long term, and develop their language abilities in a more systematic manner.

Multiple studies highlight vocabulary development as one of the primary benefits of bilingual learning. When students routinely interact with English academic materials such as journal articles, textbooks, lecture presentations, or instructional guidelines, they gradually expand their repertoire of academic and practical vocabulary. Using vocabulary in authentic contexts accelerates the language acquisition process and enhances students' ability to apply these terms across various academic tasks.

In addition, bilingual learning significantly improves reading comprehension. Exposure to English academic texts helps students understand scholarly writing styles, the structure of argumentative paragraphs, and the use of technical terminology in educational contexts. Students who regularly read international sources tend to have stronger analytical skills and are better able to connect global concepts with educational practices in Indonesia.

In terms of oral skills, bilingual learning also strengthens speaking confidence. Interactions conducted in English through classroom discussions, presentations, microteaching sessions, and other academic activities create an environment that encourages students to practice speaking actively. Students' willingness to express ideas in English increases as exposure and opportunities for practice become more frequent. Studies show that students who routinely communicate in bilingual contexts demonstrate improved pronunciation, increased speaking fluency, and lower tendencies to experience language anxiety.

Beyond these aspects, bilingual learning also reinforces the academic communication skills of PGSD students. Abilities such as writing academic papers in English, preparing scholarly presentations, and explaining instructional concepts using English are integral components of professional competence for future teachers. A bilingual environment helps students develop the academic language required in classroom settings, seminars, and broader academic communities.

Overall, these linguistic benefits demonstrate that bilingual learning serves as a crucial foundation in shaping future elementary school teachers who possess adaptive, functional, and globally relevant English language competence.

2. Challenges in English Language Development Among PGSD Students (English Version)

Although bilingual learning contributes positively to the English language development of Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD) students, the literature indicates that its implementation still faces a range of structural, pedagogical, and affective challenges. These challenges consistently appear across national and international studies examining bilingual learning practices within teacher education.

One of the most significant challenges is the limited and inconsistent exposure to English throughout university learning activities. Many PGSD programs continue to rely on Indonesian as the primary language of instruction, with English appearing only as supplementary material or partial instruction. As a result, students have very few opportunities to use English in sustained academic contexts. In many cases, English is used only when completing specific assignments rather than as part of their everyday academic routine.

In addition, literature reviews highlight inconsistencies among lecturers in implementing bilingual approaches. Some instructors integrate English extensively through content delivery, reading materials, enrichment activities, or assessments while others do not use English at all in their teaching practices. This lack of instructional alignment across courses prevents students from receiving patterned and continuous bilingual exposure, resulting in fragmented language development.

From an affective perspective, PGSD students frequently experience low self-efficacy and language anxiety when required to use English actively. Many report feeling nervous, afraid of making mistakes, and lacking confidence when speaking English in front of peers. These anxieties are often linked to negative learning experiences in the past, limited exposure during prior schooling, and the perception that English is inherently difficult. Such affective barriers discourage students from practicing English and actively participating in bilingual interactions, slowing the development of their oral proficiency.

Another challenge concerns students' limited academic vocabulary, particularly vocabulary related to pedagogical terminology and professional teaching concepts. Students often struggle to comprehend international journal articles, English-based learning modules, or assignment instructions that require understanding of technical terms. This vocabulary gap negatively affects their critical reading skills and their ability to grasp global pedagogical perspectives.

At the institutional level, many PGSD programs face difficulties in providing access to English-language learning resources. Not all universities offer libraries with international journal collections, English-language textbooks, or digital learning platforms that support academic literacy development. These infrastructural limitations reduce students' opportunities for independent study beyond the classroom.

Furthermore, the diverse linguistic backgrounds of PGSD students contribute to widening proficiency gaps. Students who previously attended schools with English enrichment programs or participated in English courses tend to progress more quickly, while those with minimal prior exposure struggle to keep pace with bilingual instruction at the university level. This variation creates uneven learning outcomes and requires lecturers to adopt more adaptive and differentiated teaching strategies.

Overall, while bilingual learning holds strong potential to enhance English proficiency among PGSD students, these challenges must be addressed by institutions, lecturers, and curriculum planners to ensure that bilingual implementation is effective, equitable, and aligned with students' real needs.

3. Implications for Teacher Education and Bilingual Teaching Practices (English Version)

The comprehensive literature review reveals that bilingual learning carries extensive and strategic implications for shaping the professional competencies of future elementary school teachers. One of the central implications is that experiencing bilingual instruction during university studies establishes a strong foundation for PGSD students to teach in bilingual or English-mediated classrooms in the future. When students become accustomed to receiving instruction in two languages, engaging with international literature, and interacting academically using English, they are better prepared to implement similar approaches in the elementary school context.

Another important implication is that bilingual learning strengthens students' pedagogical and academic competencies. Students who regularly access international academic articles gain a deeper understanding of contemporary developments in education, including innovative teaching strategies, global curriculum approaches, and the latest research on pedagogy. This exposure enables future teachers to be more open to change and better equipped to adapt instructional practices to meet international standards.

The reviewed literature also emphasizes that bilingual learning plays a key role in developing students' intercultural competence. Exposure to English provides access to global cultures, cross-national educational perspectives, and international learning resources. These competencies are highly relevant for modern teachers who are expected to prepare students to become globally aware citizens. PGSD students with strong intercultural competence are more sensitive to linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom and are better able to design inclusive learning experiences.

Another implication identified is the enhancement of students' critical thinking skills. Engagement with international scholarly literature encourages students to compare, analyze, and

evaluate educational concepts from multiple sources. Such higher-order thinking skills constitute an essential component of professional competence for teachers in the 21st century.

However, the literature also highlights that the development of PGSD students' competencies through bilingual learning will not reach its optimal potential without sufficient institutional support. Academic English literacy must be strengthened through the provision of English-language textbooks, international journals, bilingual learning modules, and specialized training for lecturers on bilingual teaching strategies. Building lecturer capacity is a crucial factor in ensuring that bilingual learning is implemented systematically, consistently, and in alignment with student needs.

Understanding these implications allows higher education institutions to design curriculum development strategies that are more relevant and responsive to global demands. Bilingual learning is not merely a tool for improving English proficiency; it is a long-term investment in developing professional, competent, and globally-oriented future teachers who are prepared to meet the challenges of modern education.

Based on the literature reviewed and analyzed, it can be concluded that bilingual learning plays a crucial role in enhancing the English language development of PGSD students while simultaneously strengthening their professional competencies. The findings show that the benefits gained from bilingual learning far outweigh the challenges encountered during its implementation.

From a linguistic perspective, bilingual learning significantly improves students' comprehensive language abilities, including academic vocabulary, reading comprehension, speaking skills, and academic communication. These linguistic gains not only support students' performance during their studies but also serve as essential foundations for their future roles as elementary school teachers.

However, several challenges such as limited exposure to English, low student confidence, restricted academic vocabulary, and inconsistent bilingual implementation among lecturers indicate that bilingual learning still requires institutional reinforcement. These obstacles are not merely barriers, but valuable indicators for institutions to design more effective strategies for bilingual program development.

The overall discussion also highlights that bilingual learning has strategic implications for teacher education. Bilingual academic experiences help strengthen students' pedagogical competence, international academic literacy, intercultural understanding, and global awareness. All these components are highly relevant for preparing PGSD students to become adaptive, professional, and competitive teachers in the era of globalization.

In summary, this study emphasizes that strengthening bilingual learning within PGSD programs is a vital step toward improving the quality of teacher education in Indonesia. With adequate policy support, resources, and training, bilingual learning has the potential to become one of the key pillars in shaping future elementary school teachers who are competent, globally minded, and capable of addressing the challenges of 21st-century education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings synthesized from national and international literature, this study concludes that bilingual learning plays a central and transformative role in enhancing the English language development of Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD) students. Bilingual exposure significantly strengthens students' linguistic competence, including academic vocabulary mastery, reading comprehension, speaking confidence, and academic communication skills competencies that are essential for their future responsibilities as elementary school teachers. These linguistic benefits highlight the importance of bilingual environments as effective platforms for developing professional readiness in teacher education.

However, the review also reveals several challenges that hinder optimal bilingual development among PGSD students. Limited classroom exposure to English, inconsistent implementation of bilingual practices across lecturers, low self-confidence, academic vocabulary gaps, and restricted access to English-language learning resources are recurring issues that require attention. These challenges emphasize the need for more systematic, structured, and institutionally supported bilingual programs within PGSD departments.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that bilingual learning carries strategic implications for teacher professionalism. Engaging with English academic materials enriches students' pedagogical insight, enhances critical thinking skills, and broadens their intercultural awareness

qualities that align with the competencies required of 21st-century educators. Through bilingual experiences, PGSD students become more capable of adapting to global trends, integrating international perspectives into classroom practices, and fostering globally minded learners in elementary schools.

In conclusion, strengthening bilingual learning within PGSD programs is essential for advancing the quality of teacher education in Indonesia. With adequate institutional policies, resource provision, and lecturer training, bilingual learning can serve as a long-term investment in preparing competent, confident, and globally oriented future elementary school teachers. Thus, bilingual education should be considered not merely as a language enhancement strategy, but as a foundational component of modern teacher preparation.

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