



## BALANCED BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN EFL SETTINGS: INSIGHTS FROM A BILINGUAL SCHOOL CASE STUDY

Made Raninta Candra Dewi<sup>1</sup>, Ni Nyoman Padmadewi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha  
E-mail: [raninta@student.undiksha.ac.id](mailto:raninta@student.undiksha.ac.id)

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Corresponding Author:

Made Raninta Candra Dewi

Email Corresponding :

[raninta@student.undiksha.ac.id](mailto:raninta@student.undiksha.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of balanced bilingual education in an EFL context. Adopting a basic qualitative research approach, the research focuses on a bilingual elementary school in Singaraja. Data were gathered through classroom observation and interviews, using the researcher, an observation sheet, and an interview guide as instruments. The interview participant was a first-grade classroom teacher. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis. The results indicate that balanced bilingual education is facilitated through the use of bilingual learning media and consistent language use in daily activities. Learning media include both instructional tools used during lessons and materials displayed in the school environment. Language use encompasses communication during instruction, positive reinforcement practices, as well as school policies and routines that support bilingualism.

*Keywords: Balanced-bilingual, Bilingual-education*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In this era, the development of technology and how information is easily obtained have impact on several life aspects. One of the aspects affected is the language used and how language is perceived. English is one of the lingua franca referring to the language that is mostly spoken by people in the world (Margana, 2015; Pennycook, 2012; Rokhayati & Widiyanti, 2022; Sitio et al., 2023). Being able to communicate in English as lingua franca makes this language important and crucial to be in the global working field. The competence of speaking English becomes major consideration of including English as mandatory subject in Indonesia. Not only that, the paradigm of how important English is makes the government regulate the policy of RSBI (The International Standardized School) and makes the existence of bilingual and international school increase (Jayanti & Sujarwo, 2019; Margana, 2015). Due to this

fact, youth generation start to be more comfortable speaking in English and even have tendency to be more dominant in English (Nisa & Pandin, 2021; Thankavel, 2023; Leon et al., 2024; Fitri et al., 2022). It is proved by the slang or terms that are in English and used by youth generation on the daily basis. According to (Jayanti & Sujarwo, 2019; Nisa & Pandin, 2021), the tendency of using English on the daily basis will lead to the problem of identity crisis.

Identity crisis could happen since national language is served as national identity (Jayanti & Sujarwo, 2019; Nisa & Pandin, 2021; Akteruzzaman et al., 2023; Merta et al., 2023). The lack usage of Bahasa Indonesia and the identity crisis is the start of a bigger problem in the future. Considering how this problem could be a threat for this nation and how important English serving as lingua franca in this world, the usage of language between native language and English as foreign language should be

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balanced. One language should not be dominated in the youth generation; thus, they will not encounter identity crisis and be able to competence in the world-working field. Not only serving as the solution the problem, according to (Carranza, 2009; Margana, 2015; Yow & Li, 2015), balanced bilingual is also proved to be have more benefits that unbalanced bilingualism. Balanced bilingual is stated to have more advantages in cognitive development, especially in their executive control (Carranza, 2009; Yow & Li, 2015; Rahma, 2023; Suharyo & Nurhayati, 2021; Tsan et al., 2023). However, even though the balanced bilingualism is the solution for the problem faced by this nation and important for students' cognitive development, bilingual education encouraging balanced bilingual rarely exist in this nation.

In one of the cities in Indonesia, English as Foreign Language country, a bilingual school that encourages balanced bilingual exists. In this school, the education uses more than one language with the encouragement of being able to speak in Bahasa, Balinese, and English with almost the same level of proficiency. Thus, this study aims to find out about 1) the usage of learning media in the learning process and outside the classroom, 2) the usage of languages in the school environment. There are few theories that support the study that is described as follows.

**LITERATURE REVIEW****Bilingual Education**

Bilingual Education is the term referring to the education that uses more than one language as the media of the learning instruction (Hurajova, 2015; Katsos et al., 2021; Tsan et al., 2023; Suharyo & Nurhayati, 2021). It is also defined as the term referring to education that uses more than one language in its curriculum to teach non-language subject in the program (Hurajova, 2015; Katsos et al., 2021; Askhatova A, 2020; (Suprayogi et al., 2024). It also includes the definition of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which has started to gain society's attention. According to (Hurajova, 2015), since language cannot be separated with the culture lies on it,

bilingual education also indirectly promotes the culture of the language; thus, bicultural education becomes one of the most important factors of bilingual education (Hurajova, 2015).

The aim of the bilingual education varies across the countries. Some bilingual educations aim to make minor language students able to speak the majority language (Hurajova, 2015; Katsos et al., 2021; (Amin, 2021; Hien & Phuong, 2023; Hien & Phuong, 2023). This type of bilingual is usually conducted in a country that is full of immigrants, such as USA, UK, or China (Hurajova, 2015). According to Malarz Education Education as cited in (Hurajova, 2015), the aims of bilingual education can be divided into four aims, which as cognitive development, affective development, linguistics growth, and cultural enrichment.

The languages used in the bilingual education could also vary based on the purpose of the bilingual programs or the type of the BE itself, which is presented as follows.

**Table 1.** Language Combinations in Bilingual Education Program proposed by Pokrivcakova as cited in (Hurajova, 2015)

<b>Combinator</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
L1 + L2	The first language and the second language of the country is used. The second language refers to the language used as the daily basis of the country (informal context).
L1 + FL	The first language and the foreign language, the language that is not used in the country, is used in the bilingual education program.
L2 + FL	The second language, language that is not the students mother tongue but used officially in the country, and the foreign language, language that is not official and used in the country, is used for the bilingual education program.
FL 1 + FL	Two different foreign languages are used in the bilingual education

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program without involving students' first language or the official language in the country.

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Since the goals of the bilingual education are varied, the type of the bilingual is also varied (Hurajova, 2015). The basic models of bilingual education can be divided into several types. The transitional bilingual education refers to the program that aims to make the shifting the students' language used from the minority language to the majority language (Artini & Nitiasih, 2014; Hurajova, 2015). The maintenance bilingual refers to foster and strengthen students' minority language (Artini & Nitiasih, 2014; Hurajova, 2015). The enrichment type of Bilingual Education has the similar purpose of maintenance bilingual program, but in this type, the purpose is also to extend and develop the minority language (Artini & Nitiasih, 2014; Hurajova, 2015). Some bilingual education promotes additive bilingualism, which aims to add language without cutting students' first language (Artini & Nitiasih, 2014; Margana, 2015). Another program promotes subtractive bilingualism that weaken students' first language by adding a second language to students (Artini & Nitiasih, 2014; Margana, 2015; Kirk et al., 2022; Suharyo & Nurhayati, 2021).

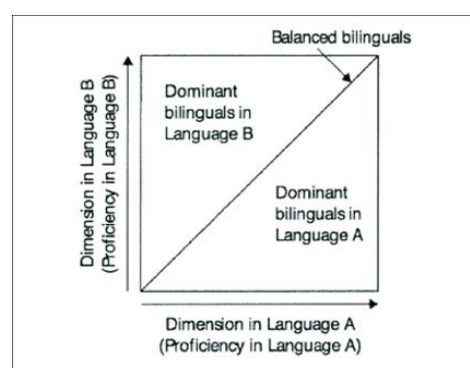
Immersion and submersion are also two models of bilingual education (Hurajova, 2015). Immersion Bilingual Education has three characteristics, which are 1) the second language is the medium of language instruction, 2) this model promotes additive bilingualism, 3) the culture in the classroom is still sticks to the first language of the students. On the other side, submersion Bilingual Education refers to bilingual education that enroll minority students to ordinary school that use the majority language (Hurajova, 2015). Students are not given special treatment and required to learn the major language by themselves. According to Baker as cited in (Hurajova, 2015), this type of bilingual education uses the concept of "Swim or drown".

**Balanced Bilingual**

Bilingual refers to an umbrella term for people who are able to speak more than one language. The existence of bilingual could be categorized based on several things, such as the age of people being bilingual, the language belonging, the dominance of the language, and from cognitive concept (Artini & Nitiasih, 2014). Bilingualism seen from the dominance of the language could be categorized into three types, which are balanced bilingual, dominant bilingual, semi-lingual bilingual. Balanced bilingual refers to the term for bilingual who has the same level of proficiency of the languages that they master (Artini & Nitiasih, 2014; Yow & Li, 2015). It is also defined as term referring to the bilingual, who is able to have equal usage of two languages (Yow & Li, 2015).

**Figure 1.** Balanced Bilingualism

(Birdsong, 2018)



According to (Birdsong, 2018), the figure shows that balanced bilingual is at the point on the rising line to the higher proficiency. It is stated that being balanced bilingual means being not dominant in both language (Birdsong, 2018). Being dominant doesn't necessarily mean having high proficiency (Birdsong, 2014, 2018). Having equally low proficiency and having equally high proficiency in both languages are called balanced bilingual. However, it is indeed still related.

According to (Treffers-Daller, 2019), the dimension of language dominance can be seen from two dimensions, which are language proficiency and language use. The language proficiency is called as direct measures of language dominance. It consists of vocabulary and grammar (Treffers-Daller, 2019). On the other side, the language use is referred as the indirect measure. It is related

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to the exposure of the language to the bilinguals; the frequency of students uses the language and how they use in school, work or houses (Treffers-Daller, 2019). The vocabulary and also the language used is measured from the input received by the bilingual.

## 2. METHODS

This method is collected in a bilingual school in Singaraja that encourage the establishment of balanced bilingual for all its students. The participant involved in the interview session is one classroom teacher of grade 1.

The data is collected through two means, which are observation and interview. The instruments used in research are the researcher, observation sheet, and the interview guide. After the data is collected, the data is analyzed through content data analysis. In this analysis, the data is analyzed particularly using conventional content data analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In this method, the data is mainly from text data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The procedure is mainly collecting the data, taking notes about first impression, thought and initial analysis, initial coding scheme, correlate one theme to another theme, and draw conclusion about the holy analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

In this research, the aims of the study are, 1) the usage of learning media in the learning process and outside the classroom, 2) the usage of languages in the school environment. In accordance to the finding of the research questions stated, the researcher conducted observations three times and the finding is strengthened by the interview session conducted.

### The Usage of Learning Media in the Learning Process and Outside the Classroom

In the first finding of the first research question (RQ1), it can be categorized into two themes, which are the learning media used in the learning process and the media around the school environment.

#### Theme 1: Learning Media

Based on the observation conducted by the researcher, the learning media used to encourage balanced bilingual are varied and in the form of visual aids. The learning media is usually attached on the wall as the classroom decoration. The learning media used are as follows.

#### a) The Name of the Days

In the classroom, the media used to enhance balanced bilingual is the decoration of the name of the days. The name of the days learning media is written in three languages, which are the national language, the local language, and the foreign language. In this context, it is written in Bahasa, Balinese, and English respectively. There are three posters presented, which are today, tomorrow, and yesterday. Below each day is put the name of the day itself. It can be changed regularly based on which day it is that day.

The finding of the observation is also supported by the classroom teachers who had interview with the researcher. The support can be seen in excerpt 1

#### Excerpt 1

*“School encourages the usage of two or three language using some learning media. One of them can be seen from the of poster of days as class decoration, using three languages, which are Bahasa, Balinese, and English...”*

As it can be seen in excerpt 1, participant who is the classroom teacher state that the decoration of classroom also serving as learning media, the media that encourages students to acknowledge vocabularies in

**Figure 2.** The Name of Days  
'Yesterday'



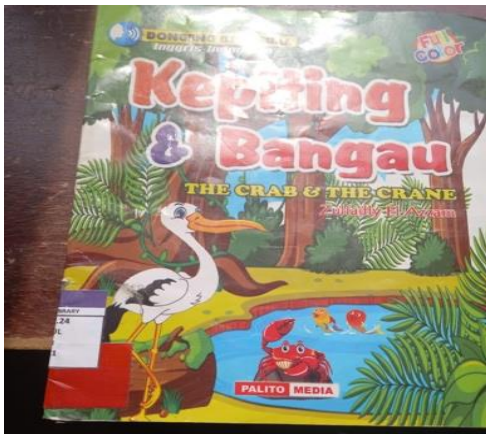
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three languages.

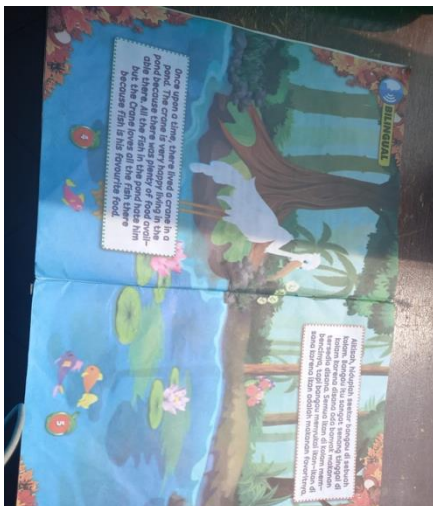
**b) Bilingual Books**

Books are crucial learning media that can be used in the learning process. In this school, students are facilitated with a lot of books. The books provided is varied seeing from the language used in the book. The books in this school use full in Bahasa, dual language that are in Bahasa and English, and full in English. Books are used during the learning process in the form of storytelling activity or in the form of library visitation.

**Figure 3.** The Cover of Bilingual Books



**Figure 4.** The Content of Bilingual Books



The participant also supports this finding about the use of bilingual books to enhance the usage of more than one language and familiarize the students with many vocabularies, not only in one language, but

also in their national and local language. It can be seen in excerpt 2.

**Excerpt 2**

*“Beside the poster in classroom, the encouragement could be seen from the policy of borrowing books every day. One of the books borrowed should be in English/Bilingual and the other one is in Bahasa...”*

*“Media used to make students able to understand more than one language is books that they borrow from the library...”*

**c) Dates on Whiteboard**

Not only the classroom decoration, the date on the whiteboard is also written in three languages, which are in Bahasa, Balinese, and English. The dates are written with the words of days and month. The dates are written everyday by the classroom teacher. The dates are written in the form of, “Senin, 11 November 2023”, “Monday, November 11 2023”, “Soma, 11 Nopember 2023”. It also implies the way date is written in each language since there is difference between the local languages and the foreign language

**d) Worksheet**

The media used in the learning process is also worksheet given to the students. The students are given worksheet in English and also in Indonesia. However, for the identities of themselves, it should be in the form of English, such as “Name” and “Dates”. Specifically on Thursday, according to the government policy regarding the usage of the language, all of the students should write down their identities in Balinese. This finding is collected from the interview session conducted for the participants. It can be seen from the excerpt 3.

**Excerpt 3.**

*“..One of the media used to make students able to understand more than one language is the obligation that require the students to write down their identities on their worksheet in English except on Thursday, which requires them to write down their identities in Balinese.*

**Theme 2: The Media Around School Environment**

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Based on the observation conducted by the researcher, the media around the school environment also support the establishment of the balanced bilingual. One of the media around the school is students' rules and school's vision and mission found in the school environment. The pledge that students have follow is in form of the two languages, which are Bahasa and English. This media is attached on the wall along the hallway, which many students walk by on this hallway. Beside the students' rules in general, the school's vision and mission are also attached on the wall in the hallway. Besides that, so many small school policies is dual language, such as "Walk slowly", "Take off the shoes", and etc.

**Figure 5.** The School's Vision and Mission



### The Languages Used in the School Environment

This finding refers to the description for the second research question (RQ2), which the data is collected with observation and strengthen by the interview session. This finding is in accordance to the second dimension proposed by (Daller & Jeanine). In this finding, the themes of the finding consist of three major themes, which is presented as follows.

#### Theme 1: The Language Used in the Learning Process

The languages used by student during the learning process are Balinese, Bahasa and English. However, the frequency of how the languages is differed based on the school policy.

#### a) English Language for English, P.E., Art, and Music

English language is exclusively used and spoken in English, P.E., art and music subject in this school. Teachers assigned are required to speak full in English, without any translation at all to Bahasa or Balinese. Despite the understanding of the students, this policy is strictly regulated in this school. The understanding of students is helped with the visual aids, and gesture of the teachers. The vocabularies exposed to the students are immersing with the habit created from this policy. Students should also make an attempt to speak in English in these subjects. This policy of language is supported by the statement by the participants, which is described in excerpt 4.

#### Excerpt 4.

*There are some policies that encourage students to talk with more than one language, which can be seen from the subject taught in the school. In Art, English, and P.E., they are required to understand, and try to talk in English. We as teachers should be able to delivery it verbally or through our gesture; so then, the students will understand it better and try to talk in Foreign Language.*

From the excerpt presented above, it can be seen that this policy becomes one of the major differences between this school and other school. This policy should be followed even for those students who are not able to speak English at all. It can be help by gesture and conducted with teacher's delivery skill.

#### b) Bahasa for Thematic

The usage of Bahasa is used for the thematic subject. Other than the subject of English, art, music, and P.E., the only subject left is thematic subject that consist of thematic one until five. Due to the new regulation of K13, students in the level of elementary school learn the subjects of mathematics, science, and the social studies in the form of thematic. In this subject, the language of Bahasa is used as the language instruction. The worksheet given is also in Bahasa.

#### c) Balinese on Thursday

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As it has been stated above, due to the government's policy regarding to the usage of Balinese on every Thursday, this school also follows the policy by changing the greeting in the morning from "Good morning" to "Om Swastiyastu". On this day, some of the conversation is also encouraged to use the language, such as in the morning habit of students. Before going to the classroom, students are usually asked questions about general knowledge. In this activity, the language used to ask questions are Balinese.

**Theme 2: Reinforcement**

In this school, giving positive reinforcement to the students is also one of the ways to encourage the existence of balanced bilingual. Reinforcement is given through verbal to the students. The encouragement is in the form of speaking in Bahasa when students have tendency to speak in English; speaking in English when students tend to speak in Bahasa or Balinese. In this school, all of the teachers are encouraged to talk in the opposite language that the students are dominant in. The encouragement is usually given outside the classroom, since the language in subject is already regulated in the school policy. The positive reinforcement through verbal is usually given during the interaction between teacher and students in the recess.

For example, one of the students in the school is born and raised in the United Kingdom. Her first language is English and she does not know a single phrase in Bahasa. Teachers are encouraged to speak in Bahasa when talking to her. As time goes by, students gradually speak Bahasa. Another example is a student who always talks in English and in the recess; teachers are advised to speak in Bahasa. The positive encouragement is also stated by the participant in the interview session, which is described as follows.

**Excerpt 5.**

*The language used outside the classroom is usually their mother tongue, which is because they are used to speak or more comfortable in that language. It is different with children who were born in mix family, or those whose their first*

*languages are English. They tend to speak in English outside the classroom, it will affect other students to adapt and start to interact in in English too. Not only that, we also as teachers are suggested to talk in other language if the students often speak the particular language, for example, there is one student who is transferred from UK and cannot speak Bahasa at all. Teachers always try to talk to that kid in Bahasa and her friends also encourage her to talk in Bahasa. Now, she is able to talk in Bahasa and love talking in Bahasa.*

Based on the excerpt 5, it can be seen the finding of observation is in line with the finding of interview session, which are the encouragement is in the form of verbal during the recess.

**Theme 3: Policy and Habit**

The last theme of the second finding is the policy and habit. The encouragement of balanced bilingualism can be seen from the school policy and habit created by the school. There are two things that is fallen into this theme, which are the policy of borrowing books and the fossilized phrase in the school.

**a) The Policy of Borrowing Books**

As it has been stated above, the books provided in the school are in Bahasa and English. However, to make it effective, the school regulates the policy of borrowing books that should be done by every student every day. They have to go to the library to borrow books, at least two books. One book should be in Bahasa; one book should be either in English or in bilingual. This policy encourages the students to acknowledge more vocabularies in dual languages through extensive reading activity. Not only to borrow books, library visit is sometimes conducted to make students stay in the library to read the books. This finding is also in line with the interview session conducted by the researcher, which is described as follows.

**Excerpt 6**

*"Beside the poster in classroom, the encouragement could be seen from the policy of borrowing books every day. One of the books borrowed should be in English/Bilingual and the other one is in*

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*Bahasa. All the children have to go the library every day.”*

**b) Fossilized Phrase**

Based on the observation, there are fossilized phrase that constantly stated in a particular language. There are some of the phrases that in stated in English, even when the subject should be delivered in Bahasa. Some of the fossilized phrases in English are wash hand, line up, assembly, gardening and etc. The fossilized phrase is usually referring to the general habit of students in school. The frequency of fossilized phrase is high due to the activity referred is often done by the students

**Discussion**

Based on the finding above, the encouragement of the establishment of balanced bilingual can be divided into two ways, which are the learning media and also the language usage on the daily basis. Each way has its own theme that has been categorized by the researcher.

The first way to establish the balanced bilingual is conducted through the media used for the learning process and outside the classroom. Learning media is divided into two themes. The first theme, learning media, refers to the media used by the teacher during the learning process such as the class decoration of names of the days, bilingual books provided by the school, the dates on the whiteboard, and also the worksheet of the students. The second theme, media outside the classroom, refers to the media decorated around the school environment. The aims are not deliberately related to the learning process. The example of the second theme is students' pledge, school's vision and mission, students' policy around the school.

The second way to establish the balanced bilingual is conducted through the language use on the daily basis. According to the finding of the observation and the interview, the finding of the second research question could be divided into three themes. The first theme is the language policy during the learning process. English is required to be used during P.E., English, Art, and Music subjects. Bahasa is required to be used during Thematic Subject. Balinese should be used on the students' morning routines on

Thursday. The second theme is positive reinforcement through verbal. Teachers are advised to use the opposite language that the students are dominant in. The last theme is the policy and habit which refers to the policy of borrowing bilingual books every day and the fossilized phrase using particular language around school.

The learning media using more than language is able to richen students' vocabulary and enhance the learning of grammar. The answer of the first research question is in line with the first dimension of language dominance proposed by (Treffers-Daller, 2019). It enhances students' language proficiency in both languages. In is also supported by (Yuliansih et al., 2021) stating to make the acquirement of language is more effective, learning media plays important role in determining students' learning outcome. On the other hand, the language use as the finding of the second research question goes hand in hand with the second dimension (Treffers-Daller, 2019). This dimension is the language use referring the exposure of the language on the daily basis. It is indicated based on the interaction between the bilingual. The interaction between students formally and informally is one of the factors of Second Language Acquire (SLA) (Apriana & Sutrisno, 2022; Kimberg & Serdyukov, 2004). It is also supported by (Rhode Island, 2023) that states one of the factors supporting the success of multilingual learning is the instruction and also the material.

**4. CONCLUSION**

From the finding and analysis, it can be concluded that balanced bilingual education in EFL country can be conducted based on two things, which are the learning media and the language use of both languages. The learning media and the language should use more than one language to enhance the non-dominance in both languages. This study only describes one bilingual school in EFL country. Further research is suggested to conduct descriptive analysis on more than one school so the finding can be used in general term of balanced bilingual education.

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