



The Analysis of Bilingualism Use in Teaching English at the Eighth Graders of SMP Negeri 2 Manderehe Barat

Mega Rohani Zebua^{1*}, Riswan Zega², Kristof Martin Efori Telaumbanua³, Afore Tahir Harefa⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Universitas Nias, Indonesia

Corresponding Author : ✉ megarohaniz@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Bilingualism is commonly used in English language teaching to facilitate students' understanding of instructional materials and classroom communication. In English learning, the use of English and Indonesian may help teachers accommodate students with different levels of English proficiency. This study aimed to analyze the types of bilingualism used in teaching English to eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Manderehe Barat. This research employed a qualitative descriptive design. The participants were one English teacher and 18 eighth-grade students. Data were collected through non-participant classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings showed that three types of bilingualism were found in English teaching: coordinate bilingualism, subordinate bilingualism, and compound bilingualism. Coordinate bilingualism occurred most frequently at 34.9%, followed by subordinate bilingualism at 33.3% and compound bilingualism at 31.7%. The teacher used bilingualism to help students understand learning materials, classroom instructions, vocabulary, grammar, and speaking activities. Students also responded positively because bilingual use helped them understand explanations, participate in classroom activities, and feel more confident. The study concludes that bilingualism was consistently used as part of English classroom instruction at the research site. The study contributes a description of bilingual practices in an Indonesian junior high school context and provides a basis for further research involving broader participants and other aspects of language learning.

Bilingualism, English Teaching, EFL Classroom, Junior High School, Teaching Strategy.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received

20 August 2026

Revised

17 September 2026

Accepted

05 October 2026

Key Word

How to cite

<https://pusdikra-publishing.com/index.php/jetl>



This work is licensed under a
[Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the important subjects taught in Indonesian schools. In the process of learning English, students are expected to understand English vocabulary, grammar, classroom expressions, and communication. However, students have different levels of English ability. This condition may create

difficulties when English is used continuously as the language of classroom instruction. Therefore, teachers may use more than one language to facilitate classroom communication and students' understanding.

Bilingualism refers to the ability or practice of using two languages. In educational contexts, bilingualism involves the use of two languages in teaching and learning activities. (Baker & Wright, 2017) explain bilingualism as a broad phenomenon that may involve different levels and uses of languages. (Landsberry, 2019) also explains that bilingualism has various definitions because bilingual individuals may have different levels of ability and different ways of using two languages. Thus, bilingualism does not necessarily mean that an individual has exactly the same level of proficiency in two languages.

In English language teaching, bilingualism can appear through the use of English and Indonesian during classroom activities. Teachers may use English when giving greetings, instructions, examples, or opportunities for students to practice speaking. Indonesian may be used when students experience difficulties in understanding explanations or when the learning material requires more detailed clarification. The use of two languages can therefore become part of classroom interaction.

Bilingualism can be categorized into several types. Weinreich's typology, as discussed in bilingualism studies, includes compound, coordinate, and subordinate bilingualism. Compound bilingualism refers to a condition in which two languages are associated with the same conceptual system. Coordinate bilingualism refers to the use of two languages through separate conceptual systems, while subordinate bilingualism involves understanding one language through another language (Akbar et al., 2025). These types provide a framework for identifying bilingual practices in language learning.

The use of bilingualism in English teaching is related to teachers' strategies and classroom practices. Teaching strategies are used to facilitate students' learning and support the achievement of learning objectives (Abulhul, 2021). In English classrooms, teachers may combine different approaches and techniques according to students' needs and classroom situations. (Anggraeni & Dewi, 2025) explain that teachers use different teaching methods based on classroom needs and learning objectives. In this context, bilingualism can function as part of the teacher's way of delivering English learning.

Previous studies have discussed bilingualism and bilingual education in different contexts. (Hoerudin, 2024) discusses bilingual teaching as a way of developing students' English language skills. (Pauziyah & Lailatuzzifapiyyah, 2024) examine bilingualism as a communication tool in English learning. (Handayani et al., 2025) analyze bilingualism in English teaching and learning at

a junior high school level. (Krisma & Nida, 2025) discuss teachers' perceptions of bilingualism and bilingual education. These studies show that bilingualism is relevant to English teaching, particularly in contexts where learners are still developing their English proficiency.

Vocabulary and speaking ability are also important aspects of English learning. Students need sufficient vocabulary to understand and produce English. Bangun and Simanjuntak (2022) found a relationship between vocabulary mastery and English-speaking ability. Teaching speaking also requires techniques that encourage students to participate and communicate (Farizi & Herwiana, 2022; Fitriani et al., 2025). In this situation, bilingual use may help students understand vocabulary, instructions, and activities before they are expected to use English.

Based on the phenomenon observed at SMP Negeri 2 Mandrehe Barat, English and Indonesian were used by the teacher during English instruction. The teacher did not use only English throughout the learning process but combined English and Indonesian according to classroom situations and students' understanding. The use of both languages occurred in greetings, classroom instructions, explanations, examples, vocabulary, grammar, and speaking activities.

The argument of this study is that the use of bilingualism in English teaching can be identified through the types of bilingualism appearing in classroom interaction and through the reasons for the teacher's use of two languages. The study therefore focuses on describing the bilingualism used by the English teacher and the students' responses to its use rather than measuring the effectiveness of bilingualism through students' achievement scores.

Based on this background, the objective of this study was to analyze the use of bilingualism in teaching English to the eighth graders of SMP Negeri 2 Mandrehe Barat. Specifically, the study identified the types of bilingualism used during English teaching, described the teacher's reasons for using bilingualism, and described students' responses to bilingual use in the classroom.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Object, Case, Place, and Event

The object of this research was the use of bilingualism in teaching English. The case examined was the use of English and Indonesian during English classroom instruction. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Mandrehe Barat, located in Lasarafaga Village, Mandrehe Barat Subdistrict, Nias Barat Regency, North Sumatra Province. The research was conducted during the 2025/2026 academic year.

The events observed were English teaching and learning activities involving the teacher and eighth-grade students. The classroom observations focused on the language used by the teacher and students during the learning process, including greetings, instructions, explanations, examples, vocabulary, grammar, speaking activities, and classroom interaction.

Research Type and Data

This research used a qualitative descriptive research design. Qualitative research was selected because the study focused on describing bilingual practices that occurred naturally during English classroom instruction. The research did not aim to calculate the effectiveness of bilingualism through experimental procedures but to describe the forms of bilingualism found in classroom interaction.

The data consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from classroom observations and interviews with the English teacher and eighth-grade students. Secondary data were obtained through documentation related to the research. The research focused on the use of English and Indonesian during English teaching. The data were then categorized based on the types of bilingualism identified in the research: coordinate bilingualism, subordinate bilingualism, and compound bilingualism.

Participants, Informants, and Respondents

The participants in this study were one English teacher and 18 eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Mandrehe Barat. The English teacher became the main informant regarding the implementation and reasons for bilingual use in the classroom. The eighth-grade students became participants whose classroom activities were observed and whose responses to bilingualism were explored through interviews.

The participants were selected because the study specifically focused on the use of bilingualism in English teaching at the eighth-grade level.

Research Process and Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The classroom observations were conducted on April 7, April 14, April 21, and April 28, 2026. During the observations, the researcher observed the English teaching process without participating directly in the learning activities. The researcher focused on identifying the languages used by the teacher and students and recording bilingual expressions occurring during classroom interaction.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the English teacher on April 28 and May 4, 2026. The interviews focused on the teacher's reasons for

using English and Indonesian, the situations in which each language was used, and the teacher's views regarding students' understanding and participation.

Interviews with students were used to obtain information about their experiences and responses to the use of bilingualism in English learning. The students described how the use of English and Indonesian helped them understand lessons, follow instructions, participate in activities, and feel comfortable during English learning. Documentation was also used to support the research data. The documentation related to the teaching and learning process and other information relevant to the research.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through three main processes: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction was conducted by selecting and focusing on information relevant to the research objectives. Data concerning bilingual expressions and classroom interactions were categorized according to the types of bilingualism.

Data presentation was conducted by organizing the findings into descriptions of classroom bilingual practices. The data were presented according to the types of bilingualism and the teacher's and students' responses to bilingual use. The final process was conclusion drawing and verification. Conclusions were drawn based on the data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. The researcher verified the findings by comparing information obtained from different data collection techniques.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Types of Bilingualism Used in English Teaching

The research found three types of bilingualism in English teaching at SMP Negeri 2 Mandrehe Barat: coordinate bilingualism, subordinate bilingualism, and compound bilingualism. Based on the classroom observations and analysis of the bilingual expressions, coordinate bilingualism occurred most frequently. The percentage of coordinate bilingualism was 34.9%. Subordinate bilingualism occurred at 33.3%, while compound bilingualism occurred at 31.7%.

Table 1.

Distribution of Types of Bilingualism in Teaching English

Type of Bilingualism	Percentage	Rank
Coordinate Bilingualism	34.9%	1
Subordinate Bilingualism	33.3%	2

Compound Bilingualism	31.7%	3
-----------------------	-------	---

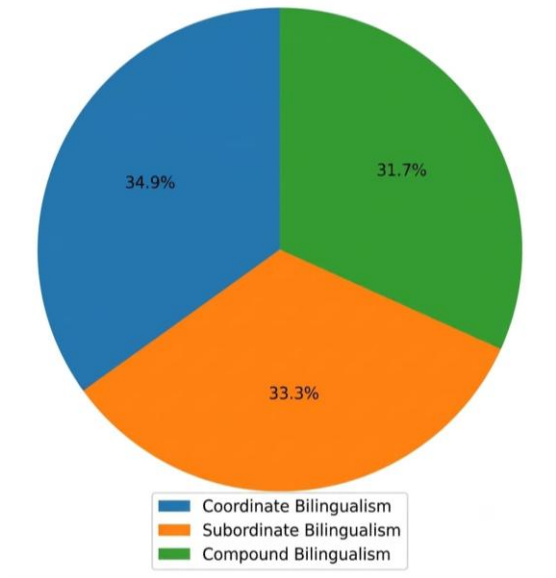


Figure 1.
Overall Percentage of Bilingualism Use Across Four Meetings

Coordinate Bilingualism

Coordinate bilingualism was the most frequently identified type. It occurred when the teacher used English and Indonesian in classroom interaction in ways that showed separate expressions or meanings in the two languages. One example was:

“Today we will learn about things in the classroom, yaitu nama-nama benda yang ada di dalam kelas.”

In this expression, the teacher first stated the learning topic in English and then explained it in Indonesian. The Indonesian expression clarified the meaning of the English expression for the students. The occurrence of coordinate bilingualism was identified in explanations, classroom instructions, and other teaching interactions where the teacher used English followed by Indonesian clarification.

Subordinate Bilingualism

Subordinate bilingualism occurred at 33.3%. This type was identified when the use or understanding of English was supported through Indonesian. Examples included:

“Good morning everybody, how are you this morning?”

and: "Please prepare your English book and notebook."

The use of English in classroom routines exposed students to English expressions. The teacher also provided clarification when students experienced difficulty understanding the meaning of English expressions.

Subordinate bilingualism was therefore found in classroom greetings, instructions, and expressions that were introduced in English while students' understanding was supported by their existing knowledge of Indonesian.

Compound Bilingualism

Compound bilingualism occurred at 31.7%. It was found when English and Indonesian were used together in the same learning context to communicate the intended meaning. One example was:

"Ketika kita bertemu seseorang pada pagi hari, kita bisa mengatakan Good morning."

In this expression, the teacher explained the situation in Indonesian while introducing the English expression "Good morning." The two languages were used within the same teaching context to help students understand the expression and its appropriate use.

Teacher's Reasons for Using Bilingualism

The teacher used bilingualism to help students understand the English lessons more easily. English was used to gradually increase students' exposure to the target language, while Indonesian was used when students had difficulty understanding the material. The teacher used English for greetings, classroom instructions, examples, and speaking practice. Indonesian was used when students needed additional explanations, especially when the material involved grammar or more complex explanations. The teacher also used bilingualism because the students had different levels of English proficiency. Using only English could make some students experience difficulties in following the learning process. Therefore, the teacher combined English and Indonesian according to students' understanding and the learning situation.

Students' Responses to Bilingualism

The students responded positively to the use of bilingualism in English learning. The students stated that the use of Indonesian together with English helped them understand the lesson more easily. Bilingualism also helped students understand vocabulary and classroom instructions. When the teacher gave an explanation in English followed by an Indonesian explanation, students could understand the intended meaning more clearly. The students also felt more comfortable participating in classroom activities. The use of Indonesian reduced difficulties when students did not understand English expressions. At the same time, the continued use of English provided opportunities for students to become

familiar with English vocabulary and expressions. The students also reported that bilingualism helped increase their confidence during learning. The combination of English and Indonesian allowed them to participate even when they were not yet able to communicate entirely in English.

DISCUSSION

The findings show that bilingualism was consistently used in English teaching at SMP Negeri 2 Mandrehe Barat. The teacher used English and Indonesian as part of classroom interaction rather than using one language exclusively. This finding is consistent with the understanding that bilingualism can involve different levels of language ability and different patterns of language use (Baker & Wright, 2017; Landsberry, 2019).

The study identified three types of bilingualism: coordinate, subordinate, and compound bilingualism. Coordinate bilingualism appeared most frequently at 34.9%, followed by subordinate bilingualism at 33.3% and compound bilingualism at 31.7%. These findings are in line with the typology used in bilingualism studies, particularly the classification of bilingualism into coordinate, subordinate, and compound forms (Akbar et al., 2025).

The occurrence of coordinate bilingualism was reflected in the teacher's practice of presenting an English expression and providing an Indonesian explanation. The example "Today we will learn about things in the classroom, yaitu nama-nama benda yang ada di dalam kelas" shows that the teacher used English to introduce the learning topic and Indonesian to clarify its meaning. This practice indicates that the two languages were used as resources for classroom communication.

The finding is related to the role of teaching strategies in supporting students' learning. (Abulhul, 2021) explains that teaching strategies are used to facilitate learning and improve students' understanding. In the present study, bilingualism was used as part of the teacher's classroom practice to help students understand English materials.

The use of bilingualism was also related to the students' English proficiency. The teacher did not use English alone because some students experienced difficulties in understanding English expressions. Indonesian was therefore used when clarification was needed. This practice is consistent with the concept that bilingual education and bilingual teaching may involve the use of more than one language to support learning.

(Hoerudin, 2024) discusses bilingual teaching in relation to the development of students' English language skills. The present study similarly found that English was used to provide exposure to the target language while

Indonesian was used to support comprehension. However, the present study specifically describes the bilingual practices found among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Mandrehe Barat and identifies the three types of bilingualism found in the classroom.

The teacher's use of English for greetings, instructions, examples, and speaking practice is also related to the development of students' English communication. English speaking requires opportunities for students to listen to and use English expressions. (Farizi & Herwiana, 2022) discuss teaching techniques used to develop speaking, while (Fitriani et al., 2025) discuss teachers' innovative approaches to teaching speaking skills. In the present study, English was used in classroom interaction and speaking activities, while Indonesian was used when students needed clarification.

Vocabulary was another area in which bilingualism supported classroom learning. Students needed to understand the meaning of English words and expressions before they could use them. (Bangun & Simanjuntak, 2022) emphasize the importance of vocabulary mastery for English-speaking ability. In the present study, bilingual explanations enabled the teacher to introduce English vocabulary while providing Indonesian clarification when necessary.

The students' positive responses also indicate that bilingualism influenced their classroom experience. The students reported that bilingual use helped them understand lessons, vocabulary, and instructions. They also felt more comfortable and confident participating in learning activities. This finding is related to studies discussing the use of bilingualism as a communication tool in English learning (Pauziyah & Lailatuzzifapiyyah, 2024).

The students' responses are also connected with the broader discussion of teachers' perceptions of bilingualism. (Krisma & Nida, 2025) discuss bilingualism and bilingual education from teachers' perspectives. In the present study, the teacher used bilingualism according to the students' needs and the complexity of the learning material. The teacher's practice shows that the use of two languages was not applied in exactly the same way in every classroom situation.

The findings also demonstrate that bilingualism was not limited to translating individual words. The teacher used the two languages in greetings, instructions, explanations, examples, vocabulary, grammar, and speaking activities. Therefore, bilingualism was part of classroom interaction throughout the learning process.

The use of bilingualism can also be understood in relation to different teaching methods and techniques. (Anggraeni & Dewi, 2025) explain that teachers use different teaching methods according to classroom conditions and learning objectives. Other studies also show that teachers may use various

techniques to facilitate English learning, including project-based learning and small-group activities (Alfatihah et al., 2022; Mukhofifah & Ekaningsih, 2023). The present study does not examine these teaching methods as its main object; instead, it focuses on how English and Indonesian were used within English classroom instruction.

The teacher's decision to use Indonesian for grammar and complex material was also important. Grammar explanations may require students to understand concepts clearly before applying them in English. The use of Indonesian allowed the teacher to provide explanations that students could understand, while English continued to be used for examples and classroom practice.

The finding that English was still used even when Indonesian was needed indicates that bilingualism functioned as a balance between exposure and comprehension. English provided students with opportunities to encounter and practice the target language, while Indonesian supported their understanding when English alone was difficult.

The present study differs from studies that measure the effectiveness of teaching techniques through students' achievement or speaking scores. For example, studies on teaching techniques may examine students' achievement, motivation, speaking ability, or reading comprehension. The present research does not measure achievement or proficiency quantitatively. Instead, it describes the types and use of bilingualism based on classroom observations and interviews.

The research also supports the idea that bilingualism may be useful in an English learning environment where students have different levels of proficiency. (Lumbanraja & Damanik, 2024) discuss bilingualism and its influence on children's English learning. The present study specifically provides classroom-based findings from eighth-grade students in a junior high school setting.

Another important finding is that bilingualism did not prevent students from being exposed to English. The teacher continued using English for greetings, instructions, examples, and speaking practice. Indonesian was used mainly when students needed support. Therefore, the bilingual practice observed in this study involved the complementary use of English and Indonesian.

The findings should nevertheless be understood within the scope of this research. The study was conducted in one school and involved one English teacher and 18 eighth-grade students. The research therefore describes the bilingual practices found at SMP Negeri 2 Mandrehe Barat rather than representing all junior high school English classrooms.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that bilingualism was consistently used in teaching English to the eighth graders of SMP Negeri 2 Mandrehe Barat. English and Indonesian were used throughout classroom instruction, including greetings, classroom instructions, vocabulary, grammar, examples, speaking practice, and other learning activities. The teacher combined the two languages according to students' level of understanding and the demands of the learning material.

Three types of bilingualism were identified: coordinate bilingualism, subordinate bilingualism, and compound bilingualism. Coordinate bilingualism occurred most frequently at 34.9%, followed by subordinate bilingualism at 33.3% and compound bilingualism at 31.7%. The teacher used bilingualism mainly to make learning easier to understand, provide English exposure, clarify difficult material, and accommodate students' different levels of English proficiency.

The students responded positively to bilingualism. They reported that the use of English and Indonesian helped them understand lessons, vocabulary, and classroom instructions. Bilingualism also supported their participation and confidence during English learning.

The importance of this study lies in its description of how bilingualism is actually practiced in an English classroom at a junior high school. Its contribution is primarily descriptive and conceptual because it identifies the forms of bilingualism appearing in classroom interaction and connects them with the teacher's instructional practice. The study also contributes a classroom-based qualitative perspective rather than measuring bilingualism through achievement scores.

This study has several limitations. Second, the study focused on English and Indonesian and did not examine local-language or broader multilingual practices. Third, the data were obtained through classroom observations, interviews, and documentation and did not include questionnaires or audio-video recordings. Fourth, the study focused on types and uses of bilingualism rather than measuring its effectiveness on students' academic achievement or English proficiency. The observations were also limited to four classroom meetings.

Future research may involve more schools, more teachers, and students from different grade levels. Further studies may also examine multilingual practices involving local languages, use quantitative instruments to examine students' achievement or proficiency, and investigate the relationship between bilingual teaching and students' English development.

REFERENCES

- Abulhul, Z. (2021). Teaching Strategies for Enhancing Student ' s Learning. *JPSE: Journal of Practical Studies in Education*, 2(3), 1-4.
- Akbar, A. S., Dardjito, H., Rahman, N. S., & Redoble, M. A. C. B. (2025). Unpacking bilingualism in English language teaching : an empirical study of W einreich ' s typology in the Indonesian EFL context. *Journal of English Language and Pedagogy*, 8(1), 18-30.
- Alfatihah, Ismayanti, D., Syam, A. T., & Santiara, R. (2022). Teaching Speaking Skills through Project-Based Learning for the Eighth Graders of Junior High School. *Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 10(1), 152-165. <https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v10i1.2555>
- Anggraeni, D., & Dewi, H. C. (2025). Teaching Method in EFL Classroom : Types and Why Techers Use it ? *BRIGHT: A Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics and Literature Vol.8*, 8(1), 45-51.
- Baker, C., & Wright, W. E. (2017). *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism. Sixth Edition*. <https://share.google/rUCMOFHQNgrqPkLcb>
- Bangun, H. K. B., & Simanjuntak, D. C. (2022). THE EFFECTS OF VOCABULARY MASTERY ON ENGLISH- SPEAKING ABILITY : A META-ANALYSIS STUDY. *JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 10(2), 211-221. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v%vi%i.4995>
- Farizi, F., & Herwiana, S. (2022). A STUDY OF TEACHING SPEAKING TECHNIQUES USED AT PEACE ENGLISH COURSE PARE, KEDIRI. *Pioneer: Journal of Language and Literature*, 14(1), 43-57. <https://doi.org/DOI:https://doi.org/10.36841/pioneer.v14i1.1382>
- Received
- Fitriani, N., Rofiq, A., & Ariani, M. (2025). English Teachers ' Innovative Approach to Teaching Speaking Skills. *ENGLISH EDUCATION Journal Of English Teaching and Research*, 10(01), 92-100.
- Handayani, A. R., Hermansyah, S., & Faradillah, N. (2025). An Analysis Of Bilinguliasm In Teaching And Learning English In Upt SMP Negeri 1 Pancarijang. *MACCA: JOURNAL OF LINGUISTIC APPLIED RESEARCH*, 2(1), 391-402.
- Hoerudin, C. W. (2024). Optimizing Bilingual Teaching in Developing Students ' English Language Skills. *International Journal of Science and Society*, 6(3), 336-347.
- Krisma, N., & Nida, H. (2025). Teachers ' Perception on Bilingualism and Bilingual Education. *Journal on Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 4778, 6739-6753. <https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas>.
- Landsberry, L. (2019). Defining Bilingualism. *名古屋短期大学研究紀要*, 57, 145-

154.

- Lumbanraja, T. E. B., & Damanik, B. A. R. (2024). Bilingualism Concept and The Influence Towards Children English Learning: A Library Research. *INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 4, 2817–2828.
- Mukhofifah, M., & Ekaningsih, N. (2023). THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE STUDENTS ' ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION OF NARRATIVE TEXT. *Prominent: Journal of English Studies*, 6(1), 46–58.
- Pauziyah, R., & Lailatuzzifapiyyah. (2024). The Use of Bilingualism Strategy as a Communication Tool in English Learning. *Journal of Education, Language Innovation, and Applied Linguistics Volume*, 3(1), 64–73. <https://doi.org/10.37058/jelita.v3i1.5247>