


## The Implementation of Bilingual Education at Singaraja Montessori School

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	Abstract	Article Info
	<p>Bilingual education has become increasingly prominent in Bali, driven by the rapid growth of globalization and tourism. This study explores the implementation of bilingual education at a Montessori school, focusing on its application in the classroom, the benefits perceived by teachers, and the challenges encountered. Employing a qualitative research design, data were gathered through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Three teachers were selected as participants using purposive sampling. The instruments used included observation checklists, interview guides, and note-taking protocols, with data analyzed through qualitative content analysis. The findings indicate that the school integrates both the Montessori and Merdeka curricula, applying Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and translanguaging strategies. A strong bilingual education model is adopted by the teachers. Reported benefits include enhanced language proficiency, improved career prospects, increased intercultural awareness, and the enrichment of pedagogical practices. However, several challenges were also identified, such as restrictive school policies, varying teacher backgrounds, and entrenched academic culture. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on bilingual education in non-Western, multicultural contexts by providing empirical evidence on curriculum integration and bilingual instructional strategies. It offers practical insights for policymakers, school leaders, and educators seeking to implement or refine bilingual programs, particularly in regions influenced by tourism and globalization. Furthermore, it highlights the need for institutional support and professional development to overcome systemic and pedagogical challenges in bilingual teaching environments.</p>	<p><b>Article History</b>  <i>Received :</i>  <i>January 09, 2025</i>  <i>Revised :</i>  <i>March 19, 2025</i>  <i>Accepted :</i>  <i>April 22, 2025</i></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b>  <i>Bilingual Education,</i>  <i>Content and</i>  <i>Language</i>  <i>Integrated Learning,</i></p>
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### INTRODUCTION

Currently, bilingual education has gained prominence in Bali reflecting the development of globalization. Reader et al., (2021) argue that the development of globalization is marked by a high level of migration in society opening an easy access to live with a mixing cultural diversity including languages. This phenomenon emerges dynamic linguistic practices in Bali since there are language resources across different domains in the society (Purnawati et al., 2025; Sinaga & Marbun, 2025). A significant growth of bilingual education demonstrates a linguistic heterogeneity in Balinese society (Budasi et al., 2020; Dewi et al., 2023; Purnami et al., 2023). Additionally, this phenomenon is considered as a contribution to improve the quality of education along with the rapid globalization (Jayanti & Sujarwo., 2019).

The preliminary observation showed that many schools majorly implement bilingual education still face many obstacles in conducting the learning process. One of them is Singaraja Montessori School (SMS) that conducts bilingual education at primary level. The school combined Indonesian national curriculum or known as Merdeka curriculum as an additional instrument to conduct Bilingual education. The teachers mentioned that they still taught compulsory subjects listed in Merdeka curriculum by using English and Indonesian languages. In addition, they also had their own curriculum to support the learning process. The teachers mentioned that they still faced difficulties in teaching. The students with varying levels of language proficiency were one of the problems faced by the teachers in balancing the use of

English and Indonesian during non-English subjects. It gained an extra effort for teaching the students with different language background.

However, bilingual education aims at developing students' language skills for both languages. The current problem can be a serious obstacle for the students' language development (Dewi & Padmadewi, 2025; Utami Putri et al., 2022; Wulandari et al., 2020). Teachers are considered as a pivotal element in handling this case (Juniari et al., 2022). Scherzinger and Brahm (2023) mention that teachers are the center of bilingual education influencing students' behavior, motivation, and language development. In building a proper bilingual educational environment, the teachers' support can be seen from how they see about bilingual education for their future (Oktarina, 2019; Wijaya & Santosa, 2022). Hence, obtaining this problem from the teachers' lens serves as a preliminary step in anticipating or addressing the emerging issues in the bilingual education at SMS.

The identification reveals most of bilingual educations recruiting teachers with B2 level or above to ensure their competences in teaching the students in English (Canillas, 2021). Luo (2024) argue that providing certified teachers is an integral part of bilingual program considering that the instruction uses English as the sole of instructions. Improving bilingual education furtherly depends on the teachers' experiences, personal background, and expectation (Durán-Martínez & Fernández-Costales, 2025; Yani et al., 2023). Therefore, teachers have responsibility to provide their best teaching scenario to train students' prospective bilingual development (Liu & Chong, 2024; Ozfidan & Burlbaw, 2016).

Many researchers have investigated the implementation of bilingual education. Mañoso-Pacheco and Sánchez-Cabrero (2022) found out that teachers' English proficiency correlated with students' language acquisition proven by students' positive responses on the instructions given by their teachers. Another study showed how pedagogical practices associated with bilingual instruction derives students' language skills. This finding was considered as a beneficial of conducting bilingual education on students' language skills (Nirmalasari et al., 2023). Creed et al., (2024) found out that bilingual education provided many benefits both for students and teachers, such as; academic, socio-cultural, and linguistic. In addition, an earlier study revealed that teachers' awareness influencing students' creativity in bilingual education (Allehyani, 2023). Dewi and Padmadewi (2025) recently found that language use and learning media were the core of balancing bilingual education. These studies indicate that implementation bilingual education really depends on the teachers. Related to these findings, the current study is conducted to investigate the implementation of bilingual education at SMS by obtaining the implementation, the teachers' benefits, and the teachers' challenge.

## METHOD

The current study applied a descriptive qualitative research approach focusing the phenomenon of bilingual education in Bali. It analyzed the implementation of bilingual education at Singaraja Montessori School (SMS) by understanding how the bilingual education was conducted, what were the teachers' perceptions, and what were the challenges that they faced. There were two teachers selected as research subjects with purposive sampling technique. The data were collected by conducting observation, interview, and document analysis. The research instruments were observation sheet, interview guide, and field note. Qualitative Data Analysis was employed as a data analysis technique in this study. There were four steps of analyzing data; data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion or verifying. The data collection was a step to gather the data from observation, interview, and document analysis. The collected data were selected in which unwanted data were eliminated. The data were classified based on the research objectives of this study on this step; implementation of bilingual education, teachers' perceptions, and the challenges. The data were displayed in table and description. The conclusion was conducted by verifying the data through triangulation.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Implementation of Bilingual Education at SMS

The implementation of bilingual education at SMS were obtained from three dimensions; the curriculum, teaching strategy, and types of bilingual education. The findings were presented in table 1.

Table 1. The Implementation of Bilingual Education at SMS

Dimension	Finding
The curriculum at Singaraja Montessori School	a. <i>Montessori curriculum</i> b. <i>Merdeka curriculum</i> c. <i>Bilingual education approach</i>
Teachers' strategies in teaching	a. CLIL

	b. Translanguaging
Type of bilingual education	A strong type of bilingual (Immersion)

The SMS implements a bilingual education approach by integrating *Montessori and Merdeka curriculum*. In implementing bilingual education approach, the teacher used Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and translanguaging as the teaching strategy in the classroom. They also used a strong type of bilingual during teaching and learning. The explanation of data in table 4.1 above is explained below: The SMS implements the bilingual education approach by integrating the *Montessori and Merdeka curriculum*. The following excerpt (Excerpt 1) is the transcription of Teacher 1's answer during the interview conducted by the researcher. The excerpt 1 are as follows:

**Excerpt 1:**

"In the learning system, we use the Merdeka curriculum, Montessori, and the bilingual approach so that the Merdeka curriculum plays a role in topics or materials and project-based learning while Montessori is more about teaching methods. As well as the bilingual approach in the use of language, because our students have a high understanding and culture of language, so there are local and non-local students, therefore, they can understand the material and discussions in class, we as teachers deliver lessons and design materials using two languages, namely Indonesian and English. **(Teacher 1)**"

Based on Excerpt 1 above, Teacher 1 explained how the curriculum was implemented in SMS. This is important because the curriculum is the core of the education system in the school. The school implements a bilingual education approach with the integration of two curricula: the *Montessori curriculum* and the *Merdeka curriculum*. This approach provides flexibility and convenience for teachers to be more effective and helps them understand their lessons well. The bilingual approach is implemented because of the high level of students' language proficiency in English. The statements from Teacher 1 are also supported by Teacher 2 in the excerpt 2 below:

**Excerpt 2:**

"Although we use both Indonesian and English, English remains our main language in teaching and communicating with students so that students get used to using and understanding English **(teacher 2)**."

On the excerpts 2, the teacher 2 said that the students are able to understand English gradually while at the same time maintaining students' first language by implement the bilingual education approach. That is why bilingual education approach integrates with the Montessori curriculum and Merdeka at SMS. In implementing its education, the teachers' teaching strategy applied translanguaging and CLIL. The researcher found that the teachers implement translanguaging and CLIL in their teaching strategies. It was proven by the following statements;

**Excerpt 3:**

"I teach using two languages orally and in writing. The material that I make in the form of power points also uses two languages above English and below Indonesian to make it easier for students to understand the learning." **(Teacher 1)**

The interviews with the teachers further support the observations on the use of bilingual education. Teacher 1 explained that he uses English and Indonesian consistently, both orally and in writing. This is seen in the learning materials used, which feature two languages, such as PowerPoints and quizzes designed with English at the top, followed by Indonesian at the bottom. It is to help students better understand the learning materials.

**Excerpt 4:**

"My strategy in teaching classes using the bilingual system I teach using English, and if students need to be explained again using Indonesian, I will explain, the material I give to students also uses two languages even though I teach mathematics" **(Teacher 2)**

The statement from teacher 2 also supports the statements of teacher 1. She emphasized that while learning, she uses a bilingual education approach even in teaching math and Indonesian. Although she explains more in English, she also provides explanations in Indonesian whenever students need additional clarification. In the teaching strategy, the teachers at SMS implement two teaching strategies: CLIL and Translanguaging. These strategies align with the theory of bilingual education ensuring that students have access to learning materials in two languages in an attempt developing their English

language skills. In the type of bilingual form, the teachers use the strong type of bilingual. It can be seen in the observations table 4.2 below:

Table 1. Observation of Bilingual Type

Class activities	Finding	Type of Bilingual
Teaching Language	Teacher: Now we are going to learn about the reproductive strategy in animals, Cara berkembang biak pada hewan ya. Like chicken how they reproduct?	Strong bilingual
	Teacher: As you can see here. What dose whale do in reproductive system. Bagaimana cara paus berkembang biak? Soo what did they do?	
	Teacher: What about ovovivipar? Its both of them, mereka bisa bertelur dan melahirkan, they can lay eggs and give birth	
	Teacher: Embriyo is also called janin, and inside the eggs it contains yolk. Kuning telur. What is kuning telur? Do you know? It is embriyo or food source? Jadi eggs yolk adalah tempat penyimpanan makanan, there is a food storage in the egg's yolk	
Giving instruction	Teacher: Take your note books! I'll give you one minute, ambil buku tulisnya!	Strong bilingual
	Teachers: If you don't want to write, just write the detiles. Catat yang pentingnya saja kalau kalian tidak mau menulis banyak. Atau you can just listen to Mr. because letter you have to observe and than do the worksheet.	
	Teacher: Any questions? Ada pertanyaan? For all the people?	
	Teacher: I told you, if you feel that you already understand the material, its alright if you not take a note, asal kalian sudah memahami tidak apa-apa jika kalian tidak mencatat atau kalian bisa catat bagian pentingnya saja	

The observation showed that the SMS used a strong type of bilingual education because the teachers were still using both languages in teaching activities to make the instruction clearly transfer to the students. The observation data was also collected through an interview by the researcher; it is also shown in Excerpts 5 and 6 as follows:

**Question:** How is the language use system you apply while teaching in class?

**Excerpt 5:**

"I use both Indonesian and English in teaching but I make sure that English is my main language and then support it with Indonesian. The goal is for students who are not native English speakers to get used to hearing and understanding English gradually, and the same goes for students who are not native English speakers." **(Teacher 1)**

Based on teacher 1, he said that both Indonesian and English are actively used in the classroom. However, English remains the dominant language uses to achieve fluency through exposure. the teacher 2 on the excerpt 6 also said:

**Excerpt 6:**

“In learning in all subjects, we use two languages (English and Indonesian) because it is adjusted to the conditions of the students who are diverse even in learning English, Balinese, and Indonesian we use two languages to help students understand the learning. On the other hand, language skills are also important for students” (Teacher 2)

The teachers 2 on the interview said, they use dual language in their class. She uses both Indonesian and English in teaching activities. She uses English in teaching and follows the Indonesian language. The SMS implements a bilingual education approach that is integrated with two curricula: the *Montessori Curriculum* and the *Merdeka Curriculum*. This approach ensures that students receive structured learning experiences in both Indonesian and English to meet their diverse language backgrounds and academic needs. The bilingual approach allows teachers to deliver materials to accommodate these differences and ensure all students can follow and engage with the content effectively. Additionally, this approach aims to gradually strengthen students' English skills while maintaining their proficiency in Indonesian.

In relation to teachers' strategies at SMS, the teachers implement a bilingual education approach by using CLIL and Translanguaging. The English language is taught in English and all subjects. Based on the observations, the teachers teach science using both languages. This represents a type of CLIL based on the theory mentioned by Toth (2018), as the school applies bilingual education in all subjects is to reinforce language use and facilitate students' comprehension of the content. Teachers explained that the objective of using two languages is to maintain language use and help students understand the teaching materials presented in the classroom.

In addition, translanguaging teaching strategy is also applied during classroom activities. In the discussion, most students use English when answering and asking questions. However, in some instances, some students ask questions in *Bahasa Indonesia*. In this case, the teachers' responses using both English and *Bahasa Indonesia*, ensuring that all students who are not native *Bahasa Indonesia* are able to understand the concept being discussed. This bilingual approach fosters inclusivity and enhances overall comprehension in the classroom. Moreover, during the explanations, the teacher mainly used English but switched to Indonesian when encountering complex terms or when students showed difficulty in understanding the teaching materials. Additionally, the teachers mentioned that the instructions are initially given in English and then repeated in Indonesian to maintain clarity.

The bilingual education approach was also seen in teachers' teaching interactions. When students were asked questions, the teacher responded in English. Occasionally the teachers provided further clarification in Indonesian. When checking for understanding, the teacher asked students to summarize key points, allowing them to use both languages flexibly. Group discussions and students' presentations followed a similar pattern. Students attempted to explain concepts in English but were given the flexibility to use Indonesian when needed.

**Teachers' Benefits of the Implementation of Bilingual Education at Singaraja Montessori School**

The second finding revealed the benefit of bilingual education was obtained from the teachers' language development, career opportunity, cultural understanding, and pedagogy. The data were presented in table 3.

Table 3. The Finding of Teachers' Benefits in Implementing Bilingual Education

Dimension	Finding
Teacher Language development	Teachers reported that using a bilingual approach in the classroom <i>significantly improved their language skills</i> . Their fluency and confidence increased over time since they consistently practiced English while teaching and engaging in discussions with students. One key factor contributing to this improvement was the interaction with native English-speaking students and parents. These interactions required teachers to communicate effectively in English, helping them refine their vocabulary, pronunciation, and overall communication skills.
Career opportunity	Teachers believe that teaching in a bilingual environment provides them with <i>new opportunities for career advancement</i> . They feel that their communication skills have improved significantly, allowing them to interact more confidently in English. By consistently practicing English in the classroom and interacting with native

	English-speaking students and parents, they have developed skills that enhance their professional growth and open doors to new teaching prospects.
Culture understanding	The teachers expressed a positive perspective on cultural understanding. Since the school has a highly diverse cultural environment, <i>they naturally became more familiar with different cultures through daily interactions with students and parents.</i>
Pedagogy (Teacher teaching strategy)	<i>Teachers acknowledged that their teaching strategies have improved due to working in a bilingual and multicultural environment. They recognized the need to design more engaging materials and develop teaching strategies accommodating students with diverse cultural backgrounds and varying language proficiency levels.</i>

The teacher 1 mentioned that his English communication skill improved as a result of teaching through the bilingual method. He also expressed an increase in confidence in using English because he is still able to use Indonesian when needed for explanations. Additionally, he felt that his language skills developed due to exposure to a supportive environment that encourages continuous growth. Teacher 2 shared that her English language skills improved significantly due to her daily teaching activities. One contributing factor is the frequent interaction with native English speaker students, which requires the teacher to use English consistently. This daily practice shows an authentic way to strengthen her language proficiency. Both of the teachers stated that implementing bilingual education approach in the classroom has positively impacted their professionalism and career growth. Their experience in a bilingual teaching environment helped them grow, adapt, and refine their teaching skills in diverse situations. This continuous improvement enhances their teaching abilities and serves as an added advantage when seeking career advancements and new opportunities in the future. They feel more confident in seeking new job prospects due to their experience teaching in English. They believe that they will be better equipped to pursue career opportunities related to their experience and other positions requiring English proficiency. It was added that the school had a multicultural environment, they learn from their students' habits and get to know each student's cultural background. This helps them better understand their students and respond to their needs more effectively. Moreover, the cultural exchange between teachers and parents further enhances the teachers' knowledge of different cultures and encourages them to become more open-minded.

Furthermore, the teachers said that their teaching pedagogy had enhanced due to working in a bilingual and multicultural environment. They recognized the need to design more engaging and adaptive materials to accommodate students with diverse cultural backgrounds and varying levels of language proficiency. Based on the teachers, their pedagogy has also developed significantly. They felt that the differences in the school environment and student needs have encouraged them to tailor their teaching materials more effectively. Additionally, they gained new teaching strategies through training programs provided by the school, which aim to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in delivering bilingual education. These findings indicated that bilingual education was not only beneficial for students but it also brings an essential effect for the teachers.

### Teachers' Challenges of the Implementation of Bilingual Education at Singaraja Montessori School

In implementing bilingual education, the teachers mentioned that they also faced difficulty in conducting the learning process. The challenges were related to the school policy, teacher background, and academy culture as presented in table 4.

Table 4. The Teachers' Challenges in Implementing Bilingual Education

Dimension	Challenges
School Policy	a. Curriculum b. Clear teacher guidelines on language use c. Parents' expectation
Teacher background	a. The varying levels of English proficiency among teachers b. Teacher workload and their academic background
Academy culture	a. Teacher training b. Teacher resources and facilities

Both of the teachers said that the significant challenge is the extra effort required to develop teaching materials that align with the *Merdeka Curriculum*. Teachers must create or adapt bilingual materials since

the curriculum and most workbooks are primarily designed in Indonesian. This involves translating content and ensuring that the materials are suitable for students with varying levels of English proficiency. Moreover, the teachers must maintain a balance between the *Montessori and Merdeka curriculum*. This was also related to the clear teacher guidelines on language use in the classroom. Since they must use two languages, teachers must stay focused and manage their time effectively, as they have to deliver explanations in both languages. Another finding revealed that parents' expectations were also the challenges. It created pressure on teachers, as they are responsible for teaching many students with diverse backgrounds and learning abilities. Each parents have different expectations and goals for their child's education, which can sometimes be challenging to balance within a bilingual learning environment. Teachers must find ways to meet these expectations while ensuring students receive appropriate and effective instruction adapted to their needs.

Teachers also mentioned that they faced challenges related to the teachers' backgrounds, including the varying levels of English and teachers' educational backgrounds. The teachers said, it's challenging to be a teacher when their educational background is not suit with their workload, he needs to explore the materials more before they present it to the students and it takes a lot of time. It was mentioned that Teachers without a strong English background may find it challenging to keep up with the demands of bilingual education, especially when teaching students whose native English speaker. As a result, these teachers must put in extra effort to improve their language skills and adapt their teaching methods. They must practice English more frequently and work harder than in a regular school setting to ensure effective communication and learning in the classroom. This situation often leads to additional pressure, especially when teachers must balance language improvement with lesson planning, classroom management, and curriculum alignment.

## DISCUSSION

This study succeeded in finding and analyzing the school implementation of bilingual education and the benefits and challenges that the teachers face. Implementing bilingual education at Singaraja Montessori School (SMS) integrates the bilingual education approach with two curricula, which are the *Montessori curriculum* and *Merdeka curriculum* in line with school conditions. In teaching strategies, the teachers implement a strong bilingual education approach, particularly through the use of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and translanguaging learning strategies. These strategies facilitate language use and explain content in a strong bilingual context and provide various benefits for teachers, including personal language development, broader career opportunities, increased cultural understanding, and enrichment of their pedagogy. However, the findings of this study also show that teachers face some significant challenges, such as restrictive school policies, diverse backgrounds, and academic culture.

The study results showed that implementing bilingual education at Singaraja Montessori School (SMS) is integrated with the *Montessori and Merdeka curriculum*. The teachers said they implement the three approaches (Montessori, Merdeka, and bilingual) to make the system suitable for the school's condition and students' needs. Therefore, it would impact the students' outcome. As the researcher found, the school was implementing Bilingual Education as the theory from Brisk (2006), Harmes and Blame (2002), Baker (2011) said that bilingual education is the use of two languages in the teaching system. It is strengthened with the study from Fauziah (2021), where implementing bilingual education in the school system bridges the other curriculum to give access to two languages based on school conditions. Implementing Bilingual education in combination with other curricula is to improve and balance the quality of education in Indonesia, which is in line with the study by (Andayani et al., 2024). Therefore, implementing bilingual education by combining the Montessori and Merdeka curricula in SMS enriches learning by using two languages and allows the teachers to explore more and address the school system's imperfections. Moreover, help the teachers facilitate the students with the diversity of students' languages, cognitive abilities, and cultures.

Moreover, the strategies used in implementing the bilingual education approach in this school were Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and translanguaging. As Toth (2018) mentioned, CLIL aims to improve students' language skills. It was also strengthened with the study from Yani, et al (2023) that using CLIL as the teaching strategy can enrich language mastery and provide language exposure to the students. Another study also strengthened the use of the CLIL strategy in the implementation of bilingual education Khoiriyah, (2021) showed that the CLIL framework is suitable to combine with other approaches, especially in the bilingual education approach, to gain the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Therefore, the school is implementing the best strategy for teaching bilingual education.

Translanguaging is also a strategy implemented by teachers. The teachers said those strategies suit the students' condition and the school system's instruction. The study's results strengthened in Canagarajah (2013) as cited in Sclafani (2017) by encouraging the translanguaging strategy teachers can use to maintain students' diverse linguistic backgrounds while using English and Indonesian. Observations and interviews at SMS support the finding that teachers use both English and Indonesian; in giving instructions, the teacher explains the content in English and flexibly uses Indonesian. This also supports the study by Baker (2001) as cited in Fauziah et al. (2021), which showed that the strategy in implementing bilingual education in all subjects is essential for encouraging students to learn and making it more effective based on students' needs and situations. The study by Widianita (2023) strengthened the idea that teachers' strategies and teachers' support in implementing bilingual education in teaching play the most significant role in learning because they convey material into two languages. Therefore, integrating a bilingual education approach is crucial in teaching and learning activities in the SMS situation. A clear and structured approach can help students understand the material and encourage them to talk deeply about the topic.

In line with teachers' teaching strategies, the school implements the CLIL strategy and translanguaging because it suits its conditions and purposes. This also supports the study results from Jalaludin (2023). He mentioned that the CLIL strategy can be used with students of any age to learn the concepts of materials while integrating the language. The study by Baker (2011) and Canagarajah (2013) also showed that translanguaging strategies can engage students' comprehension in understanding the materials using two languages flexibly and allow them to know every situation of the class environment. This also supports the study by Fauziah et al. (2021), which suggests that bilingual strategies can impact students' writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills because they are continuously learning using two languages and will gradually achieve proficiency in the second language.

Furthermore, the language used in SMS aligns with the theory by Baker & Wright (2017). The theory states that three types of language are used in bilingual education. Based on the data, implementing bilingual education at SMS utilises a strong form of bilingual education, specifically Two-way immersion bilingual education. This means that in the class, there are diverse languages; some students used L1 and others used L2. Therefore, the teacher uses English more frequently and smoothly follows up with Indonesian in a balanced manner, allowing both languages to be used flexibly during the learning and teaching process, with a greater emphasis on using English. This is also strengthened by the theory from Mey (2008) as cited in, Artini & Nitiasih (2014) two-way immersion is a bilingual approach that focuses on using two languages in balance. Therefore, the students can understand the content in both languages. This is also supported by a study by Herits (2010) the flexible use of English and Indonesian in all learning subjects can improve students' skills in communicating in two languages because they become familiar with the second language.

The researcher also found significant benefits for teachers implementing bilingual education at SMS, especially in language skills, career opportunities, cultural understanding, and pedagogy. First, regarding teachers' language development, the teachers at SMS felt that their language competence is continuously improving because they have to speak two languages during interactions. The teacher is also a model for the students, so they must prepare well, think about what they will discuss, and think about the topic in English. This is also similar to the study by Dairse (2009) and Nuryana (2018), which states that the more exposure teachers have to using two languages, the more their linguistic skills and cultural knowledge increase. Fauziah (2021) reported that teachers have improved their language competence and become more confident when bilingual education is implemented. Baker (2011) also said bilingual education improves cognitive and language skills. Therefore, being a teacher in a bilingual environment allows them to learn and enables them to strengthen their language skill while learning with students who are native English speakers.

The second benefit is the career opportunities. The teachers mentioned that they feel more confident because of their experience teaching in a bilingual environment. Today, English is needed in every sector of work. They can find new opportunities or search for another school with the same conditions. This also supports the study from Okal (2014) that teaching in a bilingual environment will help educators engage their professionalism in teaching. Fauziah (2021) also found that implementing bilingual education with dual curriculum will benefit them to be better teacher from a global perspective, improving their teaching abilities. This is because they can improve their language skills, which will be helpful for future career opportunities. This theory is in line with the statement from the teacher, as teachers in a bilingual environment provide more significant opportunities. It can offer valuable experience, enabling them to pursue higher career paths because they have more global experience and can adapt to any situation.

Third is cultural understanding. In this study, the researcher found that teachers perceived they gained new insight into the diversity of culture in the school. Therefore, it can open their knowledge about others. The results are strengthened by studies by Baker (2011) and Janet (2020), who found that being a bilingual teacher serves as a bridge between cultures. This also supports the study by Budasi & Suryasa, (2021) that culture and language are interconnected and support one another. Therefore, this will give the teachers new insight to enhance their confidence when communicating with people from different cultures and countries, as they already understand cultural differences, fostering respect and empathy. This is also in line with the teachers' statements. They believe that teaching in a highly culturally diverse environment may help them adapt to differences and become more aware of the cultural backgrounds of their students and parents.

Lastly, there are the benefits of teachers' pedagogy. It is also being trained in implementing bilingual education. As the teachers said, they feel that their pedagogy in teaching is being improved because they have to design the teaching plan based on the situation and conditions to make students feel engaged in learning. They have to think more and be well-prepared before the class starts. This is also in line with the theory from Okal (2014), which states that a bilingual teacher is the key to students' understanding of the content materials because students need clarification from the teacher, who has to be active in instructing and learning. From Bialystok, (2010) also agree that Bilingual had been discussed that it can positively impact cognitive development. Therefore, the conclusion is that bilingualism can improve teachers' and students' cognitive skills, which are essential for academic success.

The implementation of bilingual education also comes with challenges faced by teachers. The researcher found that this study's results showed several challenges the teachers face at SMS, such as the school policy, teachers' background, and academic culture. The ambiguity of the school policy is the major challenge. Teachers expressed that they were confused about using two languages, which affected the time spent teaching because of the "freedom" in choosing the languages. This is consistent with the study from Graham and Yeh (2023). Due to a lack of clear rules for implementing bilingual education, teachers face challenges with consistency. Some teachers primarily use the first language, others the second, and some mix both in various ways. This inconsistency demands extra effort and training for teachers to effectively deliver materials and fully comprehend the essentials of bilingual education. The varying English language levels of the teachers' backgrounds are also significant challenges in implementing bilingual education at SMS. Several teachers at SMS have low levels of English proficiency because their background is not in English teaching. As noted by Jayanti & Sujarwo (2019), one significant challenge to bilingual education in Indonesia is the shortage of proficient teachers in Indonesian and English. This is strengthened by the study from Ma (2023), who stressed that effective bilingual education depends heavily on teachers' strong linguistic competence. The challenges of teachers in this study are also in line with the study by Andayani et al., (2024), which said the lecture at *Politeknik Penerbangan* got confused of the English language in the field of "*Penerbangan*"; therefore, it is pretty challenging for the teacher to teach. The academic culture also presents challenges. Teachers reported that aligning bilingual instruction with dual curricula (Montessori and Merdeka) was difficult, particularly when teaching complex subjects like science and mathematics in a second language. This strengthened the findings of Fauziah et al. (2021), who indicated that implementing a dual curriculum in bilingual education often increases the complexity and workload for teachers, demanding advanced planning, adaptation, and specialised instructional strategies. Therefore, to improve the implementation of bilingual education, the government and schools must provide support such as linguistic training or bilingual teaching strategies to enhance effectiveness. Additionally, learning resources that utilize both languages are equally important.

The researcher found that the new teacher challenge relates to the school policy. The teachers explained that they have challenges with parents' needs. They are often pressured by parents' differing desires for their children. Parents want teachers to meet their expectations while they teach, not only one child who needs the teacher's attention. This is strengthened with the study from Ratminingsih et al., (2020) that language learning has to be facilitated with positive emotions from the teachers and less stress management. Therefore, it is a significant challenge for schools and teachers to balance the needs and wants of students and parents.

In line with the academy culture, the researcher found that the teachers need training to improve their teaching strategy and knowledge in teaching students with a high diversity of language and culture in one class. The teachers also have a challenge with the resources of materials because at this time, they make their books in two languages, which consumes a lot of time in their work. The theory from Alawiyah at al., (2024) supports this finding that the teachers in bilingual schools in Hungary face similar issues, such as a

lack of teaching facilities, materials, and teacher training. Therefore, without teacher training and material support with bilingual design, it will overwhelm the teachers and become unsustainable. Graham & Yeh (2023) said that teacher training is needed to provide a deeper understanding of language and strategies in teaching their subject.

Based on the discussion in this study, several important implications emerge that need attention. Integrating bilingual education with other curricula, such as Montessori and Merdeka, has become increasingly common in today's educational system. This approach aims to enhance the quality of the learning process and achieve meaningful educational objectives. Bilingual education not only presents new opportunities for teachers but also to develop pedagogical and linguistic competencies, particularly in delivering content in two languages and immersing themselves in the English class. This process hones their cultural sensitivity, enhances their adaptability to diverse student backgrounds and, ultimately, enriches their professional identity as innovative and globally relevant educators. It is a long-term investment in teacher capacity that directly affects the quality of students' learning experience.

However, the implementation is not without challenges. Issues such as the lack of professional training and the burden of high workloads highlight the need for strategic policy interventions. Therefore, schools and educational policymakers must provide continuous professional development programs and establish equitable workload distribution for teachers in bilingual settings. These implications are crucial in supporting the creation of an inclusive and responsive education system that meets the diverse needs of teachers and students in multilingual environments. After understanding how SMS implements bilingual education and examining the benefits and challenges for teachers, it is hoped that this research will provide insights and address the challenges teachers face in schools. Additionally, this research aims to serve as a reference for schools implementing bilingual education, illustrating how SMS carries out bilingual education, the teachers' benefits, and the teachers' challenges. By providing full support for teachers, it is hoped that we will cultivate quality educators who can positively impact student development and maximise the knowledge transfer from teachers to students.

## CONCLUSIONS

Singaraja Montessori School (SMS) implements bilingual education by integrating the Merdeka curriculum with the Montessori curriculum. This integration aims to create a better learning system that meets the needs of students and the school. Teachers at SMS use Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Translanguaging learning strategies to help students understand the learning materials. In the type of bilingual, the teachers is seen using a strong type of bilingual, both English and Indonesian are used balanced and flexibly. It showed in the design of learning resources, worksheets, and assessments using both languages equally. Teachers' benefit from implementing bilingualism in improving their language skills and teaching strategies and increasing their understanding of cultural diversity. This understanding enhances their awareness and empathy towards other cultures. Most importantly, it provides wider career opportunities due to their experience, which is valuable to this day. Implementing bilingualism positively impacts teachers who want to develop their values and make a new career opportunity or be good educators. Teachers at SMS experience several challenges, including the lack of learning resources, forcing them to redesign learning materials in English and Indonesian. This is because the school implements the Merdeka curriculum, which means that many topics or materials are designed using Indonesian, and the school needs to adjust to bilingual education. Therefore, teachers feel overwhelmed when preparing to teach and distributing materials to students with relatively little time. In addition, variations in the language skills of teachers and students pose challenges, as teachers must put in extra effort to enhance their language proficiency. Their language skills are also influenced by their educational background, which can be a problem when teachers are unfamiliar with English, leading to a lack of proficiency in using it in the classroom. Explaining concepts in two languages takes more time and effort to convey the material effectively. Furthermore, parents' expectations add another challenge, as teachers and schools must strive to meet these expectations while addressing students' needs

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