

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter discusses the background of the study, problem identification, study limitations, research questions, research objective, research significance, and the definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of Study

Bilingual education has gained prominence in Bali, reflecting the globalization's development. Reader et al., (2021) argue that a high level of migration in society marks the development of globalisation. It causes easy access to live with a mix of cultural diversity, including languages. This phenomenon emerges in dynamic linguistic practices in Bali since language resources are across different social domains (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 contributes to improving the quality of education along with the rapid globalisation (Jayanti & Sujarwo., 2019).

The preliminary observation shows that many schools implementing bilingual education still face many obstacles in conducting the learning process. One of them is Singaraja Montessori School (SMS), which performs bilingual education at the elementary level. The school combines the Indonesian national curriculum, or the Merdeka curriculum. Merdeka

Curriculum is an additional instrument for conducting bilingual education. The teachers mentioned that they still taught compulsory subjects listed in the Merdeka curriculum using English and Indonesian. In addition, they also had their 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 made an extra effort to teach students from different language backgrounds.

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

The identification reveals that most bilingual education programs recruit teachers with a B2 level or above to ensure their competencies in teaching the students in English (Canillas, 2021). Luo (2024) argues that providing certified teachers is an integral part of a bilingual program, considering that

the instruction uses English as the sole language. Improving bilingual education furtherly depends on the teachers' experiences, personal background, and expectations (Durán-Martínez & Fernández-Costales, 2025; Yani et al., 2023). Therefore, teachers are responsible for providing the best teaching scenario to train students' prospective bilingual development (Liu & Chong, 2024; Ozfidan & Burlbaw, 2016).

Many researchers investigated the implementation of bilingual education. Mañoso-Pacheco and Sánchez-Cabrero (2022) found that teachers' English proficiency correlated with students' language acquisition, as proven by students' positive responses to the instructions given by their teachers. Another study showed how pedagogical practices associated with bilingual instruction improve students' language skills. This finding was considered a benefit of conducting bilingual education on students' language skills (Nirmalasari et al., 2023). Creed et al., (2024) found that bilingual education provided many benefits for students and teachers, including academic, socio-cultural, and linguistic. In addition, an earlier study revealed that teachers' awareness influences 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 indicated that the implementation of bilingual education depended on the teachers. Related to these findings, the current research was conducted to investigate the implementation of bilingual education at SMS by examining the implementation, the teachers' benefits, and the teachers' challenges.

1.2 Problem Identification

Globalisation has a significant impact on education, increasing the existence of Bilingual education in Bali. Bilingual education is predominantly conducted at the elementary and primary levels. Singaraja Montessori School (SMS) is a bilingual school for elementary students that emphasises using English and Indonesian during learning. However, the preliminary observation indicated that there was unbalanced usage of languages. It was found that the students and teachers still use Indonesian more in many subjects. In addition, the teachers mentioned that they still faced difficulty in teaching bilingual students since they have different levels of English proficiency. Related to this problem, the implementation of bilingual education at SMS needs to be explored, particularly by identifying teachers' challenges and the benefits of teaching bilingual education. It is essential, considering that the teachers have a significant role in the learning process.

1.3 Limitations of the Study

Based on the identified problems, the current study is limited to implementing bilingual education at Singaraja Montessori School (SMS) by focusing on how teachers conduct bilingual education, the teachers' benefits, and the teachers' challenges.

1.4 Research Question

- a. How do the teachers at Singaraja Montessori School implement Bilingual Education?

- b. What are the benefits of implementing bilingual education for teachers at the Singaraja Montessori School?
- c. What are the teachers' challenges in implementing bilingual education at the Singaraja Montessori School?

1.5 Research Objective

Based on the research questions of this study, the researcher's objective is generated as follows:

- a. To analyse the teachers' implementation of bilingual education at Singaraja Montessori School.
- b. To identify the benefits of implementing bilingual education for teachers at the Singaraja Montessori School.
- c. To explore the teachers' challenges in implementing bilingual education at the Singaraja Montessori School.

1.6 Research Significance

This stage the researcher explains both the theoretical and practical significance.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The information on how Singaraja Montessori school implemented bilingual education. This study provided valuable insight into the benefits and challenges teachers face. As we know, teachers are essential school factors, and we need to focus on them and find out what they need to implement bilingual education. Ultimately, this research aimed to enrich the theoretical

framework surrounding bilingual education and provide insight from the teacher at Singaraja Montessori School for the evaluation and references in the future.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

This study was holds practical significance for various educational sectors, providing insights and recommendations to governments, school stakeholders, teachers, students, and other researchers.

a. Government

This research provides valuable insights for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) policymakers in designing the education system that effectively integrates bilingualism into the national education system. Furthermore, this study offers up-to-date information on implementing bilingual systems in schools, highlighting the benefits and challenges that must be addressed. By considering these factors, the government can formulate strategies to develop high-quality human resources capable of competing in the era of globalisation.

b. School stakeholders

The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into the development of the bilingual education system and offer an evaluation of the aspects that need improvement or should be maintained to enhance the school's overall quality. Furthermore, the findings helped the school that implements bilingual education understand the teachers' perspectives on the

current system and identify the necessary resources and support to ensure the success of bilingual education.

c. Teacher

The findings of this study provides valuable guidance for teachers in the same situation and condition on how to effectively implement a bilingual system in bilingual classrooms, particularly in schools that adopt such an approach. Furthermore, this research aims to serve as a reference for understanding the benefits of bilingual education and the challenges faced by educators working in bilingual school settings. The study seeks to contribute to developing more effective bilingual teaching strategies and enhancing the overall quality of teachers in implementing bilingual education.

d. Student

The findings of this study serve as a valuable reference and contribute to enhancing students' awareness of the quality of education and learning systems, which ultimately influence their prospects. Furthermore, this research aims to encourage students to gain a deeper understanding of school environments that implement bilingual education, fostering greater interest in engaging in such learning settings.

e. Future Researcher

The researcher hopes that the findings of this study provide future researchers with in-depth and relevant insights into the implementation of

bilingual education, as well as the benefits and challenges that need to be considered in their execution.

1.7 Definitions of Key Terms

The key terms in this study are defined in two forms, such as; theoretical definition and operational definition.

1.7.1 Theoretical Definition

a. Bilingual Education

In education, the curriculum is the first factor in the school system (Fauziah, 2021). Bilingual education is defined as a system or approach of using two languages in the teaching and learning process to ensure that students are able to develop students' proficiency in both languages (Baker, 2011). The teaching strategy is essential to effectively deliver the materials and language (Toth, 2018).

b. Benefits of Bilingual Education

Bilingual education provides positive outcomes for the teachers, such as; cultural understanding, linguistic proficiency, career opportunities, and pedagogy (Dairse, 2009; Hurajová, 2015; Janet, 2020; Okal, 2014; Xiao, 2024). This perspective highlights that bilingual education is crucial to personal and professional development.

c. Challenges of Bilingual Education

Graham & Yeh, (2023) mention that the challenges in teaching bilingual education include: academic culture, teachers' backgrounds, and policy ambiguity.

1.7.2. Operational Definition

a. Bilingual Education

Bilingual education operationally deals with the approach or system in using two languages for teaching and learning, including developing students' proficiency in both languages at Singaraja Montessori School (SMS).

b. Benefits of Bilingual Education

The benefits of bilingual education deal with teachers' cultural understanding, linguistic proficiency, career opportunities, and pedagogy while teaching at Singaraja Montessori School (SMS).

c. Challenges of Bilingual Education

The challenges in bilingual education cover the teachers' academic culture, backgrounds, and policy ambiguity at Singaraja Montessori School (SMS).