

MULTILINGUALISM IN SCHOOLS: LITERATURE ANALYSIS OF TEACHING APPROACHES AND METHODS

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Abstract

Multilingualism in education is increasingly becoming a global concern because of its role in improving students' cognitive, academic and social skills. This research is a systematic literature review which aims to analyze various teaching approaches and methods in a multilingual school environment. Various scientific sources, including journal articles, academic books, and research reports, were reviewed to identify the effectiveness and challenges of immersion, translanguaging, bilingual, and plurilingual approaches to learning. The analysis results show that the immersion approach is effective in improving target language skills, while translanguaging is more inclusive in supporting students' academic understanding. Bilingual and plurilingual approaches also offer flexibility in learning, especially in environments with high linguistic diversity. Additionally, technology plays an important role in supporting multilingual learning through interactive tools and digital platforms. However, challenges such as gaps in access to education, stigma against minority languages, and the readiness of teaching staff are still obstacles in implementing multilingualism in schools. This research contributes to providing insight into strategies that can be adopted to optimize multilingual learning, as well as highlighting the need for more inclusive and adaptive education policies. It is hoped that the implications of this study can help educators and policy makers in designing more effective and sustainable multilingual teaching programs.

Keywords: Multilingualism, Teaching Approaches, Teaching Methods

INTRODUCTION

Multilingualism in education has become a global phenomenon that is gaining increasing attention, especially in the era of globalization and high international mobility. The ability to master more than one language not only provides advantages in communication, but also contributes to students' cognitive, social and academic development (Gkougkoura et al., 2022). In an educational context, multilingualism allows students to access more learning resources, understand various cultural perspectives, and improve critical and creative thinking skills. Therefore, schools have an important role in creating an environment that supports multilingual learning so that students can develop optimally.

The implementation of multilingual learning in schools faces various complex challenges. One of the main challenges is how schools can design an effective curriculum to accommodate the diversity of languages in the classroom (Li et al., 2024). In addition, teachers are often faced with difficulties in balancing the use of various languages in the learning process, especially if they themselves do not have sufficient competence in these languages. Differences in students' language backgrounds can also be an obstacle, especially in contexts where the language of instruction used at school is different from their mother tongue.

In addition to pedagogical challenges, social and psychological factors also play an important role in multilingual learning. Students growing up in multilingual environments often face pressure to adapt to different linguistic norms, both inside and outside school (Pike et al., 2023). In some cases, the use of the mother tongue at school is actually stigmatized, so students prefer to use the dominant language which is considered more prestigious. This can impact their cultural identity and confidence in using the various languages they speak.

However, multilingualism also presents many opportunities for the world of education. Various studies show that students who are accustomed to using more than one language tend to have better metacognitive skills than those who only master one language. This ability can improve memory, flexibility of thinking, and more complex problem solving skills. In addition, multilingual learning can strengthen tolerance and intercultural understanding, which is an important aspect in building an inclusive and harmonious society (Megens & Allgäuer-Hackl, 2022).

From an educational policy perspective, many countries have begun to adopt various strategies to support multilingual learning in schools. Some

countries implement a bilingual or plurilingual approach in their education system, while others prioritize translanguaging as a method for integrating various languages in the learning process. Implementation of this policy certainly requires support from various parties, including teachers, parents and the school community as a whole (Moore, 2024).

Various approaches and methods have been developed to overcome the challenges of multilingual teaching. Approaches such as immersion, translanguaging, and content and language integrated learning (CLIL) have been proven to provide positive results in supporting language learning effectively (Zaman & Belinkov, 2022). Apart from that, technological developments also provide new opportunities in multilingual teaching, such as the use of language learning applications, online platforms, and artificial intelligence-based methods to support interaction in various languages.

In an effort to optimize multilingual learning, a deeper understanding is needed regarding the effectiveness of the various teaching approaches and methods that have been implemented. Therefore, literature reviews are an important step to identify best practices, evaluate the results of research that has been conducted, and formulate recommendations for educators and policy makers (Hou, 2022). By understanding how teaching approaches and methods are applied in various contexts, schools can more effectively design strategies that suit the needs of their students.

With this background, this research aims to analyze various teaching approaches and methods in multilingual learning in schools through a literature review. Through this analysis, it is hoped that new insights can be found that can help overcome challenges in multilingual teaching, as well as provide recommendations that can be implemented to increase the effectiveness of multilingual learning in educational environments.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to analyze various teaching approaches and methods in multilingual learning in schools. Systematic literature review was chosen because this method allows researchers to identify, select, and synthesize findings from various relevant scientific sources systematically and objectively. With this method, research can provide a comprehensive picture of best practices, challenges, and the effectiveness of teaching approaches and methods that have been applied in various multilingual education contexts.

Data sources in this research include scientific journal articles, academic books, and research reports discussing multilingualism in education. Data was collected from various academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and ResearchGate using relevant keywords, such as "multilingual education," "bilingual teaching methods," and "language immersion in schools." The analysis technique used in this research is a synthesis of findings, where various research results are compared and studied to find patterns, similarities and differences in the application of multilingual teaching approaches and methods. With this analysis, the research aims to provide deeper insight into the effectiveness of multilingual teaching strategies in various educational contexts (Earley, M.A. 2014; Snyder, H. 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Empirical Study of Approaches in Multilingual Teaching

Approaches to multilingual teaching are very diverse, and their effectiveness depends on various factors such as social context, educational policies, and student characteristics. Two approaches that are often compared in research are the immersion approach and the translanguaging approach (Heidt, 2022). The immersion approach emphasizes the full use of the target language in learning without much interference from the student's mother tongue, while translanguaging allows students to use various languages flexibly in the learning process. Empirical studies show that these two approaches have their respective advantages and challenges in supporting multilingual learning in schools.

Several studies show that the immersion approach is very effective in improving communication skills in the target language, especially in the context of bilingual education. A Canadian study examining French immersion programs found that students learning through this approach had better speaking and writing skills than those studying in traditional programs. The main advantage of immersion is intensive exposure to the target language, which allows students to develop linguistic competence naturally (Howard et al., 2022). However, the challenge of this approach is the difficulty experienced by students in understanding academic concepts if they do not yet have a strong foundation in the target language.

On the other hand, the translanguaging approach is increasingly being used in the context of multilingual education because it is considered more inclusive and supports students' cognitive development. This approach allows students to use their mother tongue as an aid in understanding the subject

matter, which can increase deeper understanding of concepts. A study conducted in Spain on bilingual students using Spanish and Basque showed that translanguaging helped them understand complex concepts without losing proficiency in the target language (Mustapha et al., 2024). Apart from that, this approach also provides space for students' linguistic identity, so that they do not feel forced to leave their mother tongue in the learning process.

Apart from immersion and translanguaging, there are bilingual and plurilingual approaches which are also widely applied in multilingual education systems. The bilingual approach usually refers to an educational system in which two languages are used interchangeably in the learning process. Empirical studies show that this approach is effective in developing students' academic and language skills, especially if the language used is of equal social status (Angelovska, 2022). For example, research in Finland shows that students studying in a Finnish-Swedish bilingual system have comparable academic competence to those studying in a monolingual system, with the added advantage of communication skills in two languages.

Meanwhile, the plurilingual approach emphasizes flexibility in the use of various languages in learning. In contrast to the bilingual approach which tends to limit the use of only two languages, the plurilingual approach allows students to integrate the various languages they master in the learning process. Studies in Belgium show that students who learn with a plurilingual approach tend to have better communication skills in multiple languages than those who are only exposed to a bilingual system (Tang et al., 2023). This approach is also considered more suitable for educational environments that have high linguistic diversity, such as international schools or migrant communities.

Although bilingual and plurilingual approaches have many benefits, challenges in their implementation remain. One of the main challenges is teacher readiness in managing multilingual classes. Many teachers do not have special training in multilingual teaching, so they have difficulty integrating more than one language in learning (Sherman & Teemant, 2022). Apart from that, policy factors also have an influence, where some countries have regulations that limit the use of certain languages in schools, so that the implementation of this approach does not always run optimally.

Overall, empirical studies show that no approach is truly superior to another, as its effectiveness depends on the context in which it is applied. The immersion approach is more effective in building target language competency, while translanguaging is more inclusive and supports

understanding of academic concepts. Likewise, bilingual and plurilingual approaches each have advantages depending on student needs and applicable educational policies. Therefore, further research is needed to explore how a combination of these approaches can be optimally implemented in multilingual education systems.

Evaluation of Multilingual Teaching Methods

Teaching methods in multilingual education play an important role in ensuring that students can master more than one language effectively. One method that is widely used is the communication method (communicative language teaching), which emphasizes the use of language in real situations and active interaction in the classroom. The advantage of this method is that it provides opportunities for students to use language naturally, so that their speaking and listening skills develop well (Oliveira, 2023). Apart from that, this method also increases students' confidence in using various languages because they are used to communicating in a supportive environment.

However, communication methods also have their own challenges in multilingual teaching. One of the main challenges is the different levels of language acquisition between students, especially in linguistically heterogeneous classes. Some students may already have a strong foundation in the target language, while others are still in the early stages of learning (Wittman, 2023). This can hinder balanced interactions in the classroom, where more advanced students tend to dominate the conversation. Apart from that, the limited number of teachers who have competence in several languages is also an obstacle in implementing this method in multilingual schools.

In recent years, technology has become an increasingly important tool in supporting multilingual teaching. The use of language learning applications, online platforms and artificial intelligence allows students to learn languages more flexibly and independently. Several studies show that the use of technology in multilingual learning can increase student motivation and provide access to a wider range of language resources (Hagler & Morris, 2024). For example, apps like Duolingo and Babbel help students to practice their language skills interactively, while platforms like Google Translate and Grammarly can help with translation and writing in multiple languages.

Apart from applications, technology also allows the use of content-based methods (content-based instruction), where students learn languages through other subjects such as science, mathematics or history. This method is

often used in bilingual or plurilingual systems to improve contextual understanding of language. In several studies, this method has been proven to be effective in improving students' language competence as well as academic understanding (Hurskaya, 2024). However, the challenge is how to ensure that students not only understand the subject matter but can also develop their linguistic skills well.

Another factor that influences the success of multilingual teaching methods is the social and cultural context in which the method is implemented. In some cases, methods that are successful in one country may not necessarily be applied effectively in another country due to differences in educational policies, social status of language, and support from the school community (Lee et al., 2023). For example, translanguaging methods are more accepted in countries such as Spain and Wales, where there are policies supporting the use of more than one language in schools. Meanwhile, in some other countries, stricter educational policies against the use of the mother tongue may limit the effectiveness of this method.

Apart from policy, the role of teachers and the readiness of educational institutions are also factors determining the success of multilingual teaching methods. Teachers who have skills in managing multilingual environments tend to be better able to adapt their teaching strategies to students' needs. Training teachers in multilingual approaches is very important so that they can use methods that suit students' language backgrounds (Liu & Ives, 2023). In addition, support from schools in providing diverse learning resources, such as textbooks in different languages or language exchange programs, can also increase the effectiveness of multilingual teaching methods.

Overall, evaluations of multilingual teaching methods show that teaching success depends not only on the method used, but also on the context in which it is applied. Communication methods offer a more interactive learning experience, but require appropriate strategies to handle differences in student skill levels. Technology can be a tool that greatly supports multilingual learning, but its use must be adapted to student needs and the curriculum. Therefore, a flexible and student needs-based approach will be more effective in creating an inclusive and powerful multilingual learning environment.

The Impact of Multilingualism on Student Achievement and Development

Multilingualism in education has a significant impact on students' cognitive and academic development. Various studies show that students who

master more than one language tend to have better cognitive skills, such as stronger memory, critical thinking abilities, and flexibility in solving problems (Alawdat, 2022). This is caused by more complex brain activity in managing several languages at once, which ultimately improves the brain's executive function. For example, research conducted by Bialystok (2011) shows that bilingual children have an advantage in tasks that require attention and self-control compared to monolingual children.

From an academic perspective, multilingualism also contributes to increasing learning achievement, especially in subjects that require understanding of more complex concepts. Multilingual students are more accustomed to switching between languages and thinking from multiple perspectives, which can improve their analytical skills. A study conducted in Canada on bilingual students studying in a French immersion program showed that they had better academic results than monolingual students in mathematics and science (Rahman, 2023). This shows that the ability to use more than one language not only improves linguistic skills but also provides advantages in other academic areas.

However, even though multilingualism has many benefits, its implementation in schools still faces various social and cultural challenges. One of the main challenges is the stigma against certain languages which are considered less prestigious than others. In some countries, students' mother tongue often does not have a sufficient place in the education system, so students feel forced to abandon their native language and culture in order to adapt to the dominant language used in school. This can impact students' identity and self-confidence, especially if they feel that their language is undervalued in academic settings (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2024).

Apart from that, the gap in access to multilingual education is also a challenge in implementing multilingualism. In some countries, only certain schools such as international or bilingual schools have sufficient facilities and teaching staff to support learning in multiple languages. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds often do not have equal opportunities to learn in multilingual environments, which can ultimately create gaps in academic achievement (Solodka et al., 2023). Therefore, more inclusive education policies are needed to ensure that all students, regardless of their social background, can benefit from multilingual learning.

Another social impact is the challenge in social integration between students who have different language backgrounds. In some cases, language differences can become a barrier in social interactions, especially if there are

not enough efforts to encourage cross-language communication in schools (Chen et al., 2024). For example, students who speak the majority language may tend to form their own groups, while students who speak the minority language feel isolated. Therefore, schools need to create an environment that encourages inclusivity by providing programs that facilitate social interaction between students from different language backgrounds.

On the other hand, multilingualism can also be an effective tool in building intercultural understanding and increasing tolerance among students. By becoming accustomed to using more than one language, students are more likely to understand different cultural perspectives and develop cross-cultural communication skills. Studies conducted in Europe show that students who study in a multilingual education system tend to have a more open attitude towards cultural diversity and adapt more easily in a multicultural environment (Melo-Pfeifer, 2023). Therefore, multilingualism not only has an impact on academic aspects, but also plays a role in building a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Overall, multilingualism in education has a broad positive impact on student development, both in cognitive, academic and social aspects. Although there are challenges in implementation, the long-term benefits of multilingual learning are invaluable in preparing students to face an increasingly global and multicultural world. Therefore, further efforts are needed from schools, governments and the education community to develop policies and strategies that support multilingual learning effectively and inclusively.

CONCLUSION

This literature review shows that multilingualism in education provides many benefits, especially in cognitive, academic and social aspects. Teaching approaches such as immersion, translanguaging, bilingual, and plurilingual have their respective advantages and challenges, depending on the context in which they are applied. Technology also plays an important role in supporting multilingual learning by providing interactive tools that enrich students' learning experiences. However, challenges in implementing multilingualism still exist, such as stigma against minority languages, gaps in access to education, and barriers to social integration, which need to be overcome through more inclusive education policies.

This research contributes to the understanding of how teaching methods and approaches can be optimized to support multilingual learning in

schools. By integrating findings from various studies, this research provides insight into effective strategies in creating learning environments that are inclusive, adaptive, and based on student needs. The results of this study also emphasize the need for support from the government, teaching staff, and society in developing policies that enable all students to get maximum benefits from multilingual education.

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