

Students' Perception of the One-Month Intensive Bilingual English Program at HEC-1

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Abstract

This study explores students' perceptions of bilingual instruction in a one-month English course at HEC-1, a non-formal English learning program in Pare, Kediri. There are speaking groups, grammar and vocabulary lessons, and a study club as part of the course. Teachers often switch between Indonesian and English to help students understand, even though the school encourages them to use English. The study is mostly about how students feel about this bilingual method, especially when it comes to understanding, confidence, and motivation. This study is based on two theories: Robbins and Judge's theory of perception, which says that people react to experiences based on how they see them, and García and Wei's theory of translanguaging, which says that students use two languages in different ways to help them understand and communicate in school. Five students were interviewed to get the data, which was then analyzed using theme analysis. The results showed that teaching students in two languages greatly improved their understanding, especially in grammar and vocabulary, and gave them more courage to speak up and take part in class. Students liked how clear the lessons were and how helpful the environment was. They also offered ways to make things better, like setting up structured study sessions in the evening and making sure that the camp only spoke English. These ideas back up the strategic use of bilingual teaching in short-term English classes that aren't formal. These insights support the strategic use of bilingual instruction in short-term non-formal English programs.

Keywords: bilingual instruction, student perception, short-term program, HEC-1, English learning.

Introduction

Speaking and writing English well is seen by many as increasingly vital for succeeding in your career, doing well in the classroom, and communicating with people from different nations. Still, the primary language used in business, education, and leisure remains English. This is why many nations, including Indonesia, know they must raise the quality of English instruction both inside and outside of institutions. This need has opened several non-formal learning venues. The intensive English courses they provide are aimed at assisting pupils to improve quickly in the language. One among these locations is HEC-1 in Pare, Kediri. For one month, you can live and study English there. Apart from the study club, there are courses covering grammar, vocabulary, and speech. HEC-1 aims to increase English usage, although its methods of instruction vary between English and Indonesian. Students are supposed to benefit from this two-language approach in terms of improved understanding, better classroom behaviour, and handling of emotional problems, including low confidence or anxiety. The frequent use of two languages raises questions about the effectiveness of bilingual education and how students perceive it.

In practice, the instructors at HEC-1 do not use English exclusively. They often combine English and Indonesian during classroom instruction, especially when students seem confused or are learning difficult material. This bilingual approach is believed to help students understand better, lower their anxiety, and make the classroom feel more inclusive. A study by Pratiwi and Sugirin (2024) found that translanguaging helped students feel more confident and better understand the material, especially when they could use their first language in class. Similarly, research by Larasati, Prihatin, and Sumartono (2022) showed that students appreciated bilingual instruction, particularly when learning new content, because it helped them follow the lessons more easily.

Zainal, Nisa, and Thaha (2022) found that most students agreed bilingual instruction played an important role in improving their academic writing, based on responses collected through questionnaires. Liu, Hu, and Peng (2023) also said that students in a short-term training program got better at English, felt more confident, and wanted to learn English more as the program went on. Even with these results, there is still a big need for more study on how students in informal, short-term bilingual

programs in Indonesia feel and what they think about them. There is a lot of research that supports bilingual strategies, but not many studies have looked directly at how students feel about the balance of languages and the choices teachers make during lessons, and how these things affect their motivation, understanding, and confidence, especially in short-term non-formal programs like the one at HEC-1.

This study uses two different theoretical frameworks to look at how students understand these kinds of bilingual learning situations. The first is Robbins and Judge's (2013) Theory of Perception, which explains how people organize and make sense of sensory information to create experiences that are important to them. This theory shows how subjective perspective is, especially in school settings where students past experiences and expectations can affect how they react to teaching methods. The second theory is García and Lin's (2016) Translanguaging Theory, which emphasizes the flexible and strategic use of multiple languages by bilingual learners to support understanding and expression. In environments like HEC-1, translanguaging allows students to draw from both Indonesian and English as part of a single communicative repertoire. This dynamic use of languages helps students not only comprehend classroom material more deeply but also engage more confidently in speaking and learning activities.

So, the point of this study is to find out how students felt about using two languages while they were in the one-month bilingual English program at HEC-1. It will focus on their understanding, drive, and confidence as they learnt.

Method

Research Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach to probe students' impressions about bilingual education in a short-term English program. This approach lets participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences be thoroughly investigated free from numerical data's restrictions.

Participants

Participants for the study are 5 students who completed the one-month bilingual English course at HEC-1. Their aptitude for introspection on their school experience and their eagerness to contribute drove their selection via purposeful sampling.

Participants will be decided upon till data saturation is attained.

Instruments

The main instrument of study is a semi-structured interview guide developed by the investigator. Using theories of perception (Robbins & Judge) and translanguaging (García & Lin), the questions were designed to explore students' learning experiences, perceived advantages or challenges, and emotional reactions to bilingual instruction. The translanguaging framework helped shape questions related to how students navigated between Indonesian and English during the learning process.

Data Collection Technique

Data were acquired via in-person or online interviews conducted in Indonesian to ensure that participants felt comfortable and honest in sharing their impressions. Every interview was audio recorded and then turned into a transcript for review.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis helped one to understand the interview data. After transcription, the data were categorized and processed to identify recurring trends and themes regarding the way students perceived the bilingual teaching approach. The data were then analyzed considering the theoretical framework and literature.

Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the results of interviews with five students who participated in the one-month bilingual English program at HEC-1. Using thematic analysis, the data revealed several recurring themes regarding students' perceptions of bilingual instruction.

Bilingual Instruction Supports Comprehension

In this study, students shared that the use of both Indonesian and English in the classroom helped them understand the lessons more clearly. Since most participants were still at the basic level, they found it difficult to follow when English was used all the time. The teacher explained important points in Indonesian, which made the material easier to follow and reduced confusion.

One of the students (R1) mentioned:

“Selama saya mengikuti kelas sejauh ini saya lebih senang guru tuh menggunakan 2 bahasa, karena menurut saya, karena di sini kita ngambil program 1 bulan dan kayanya rata-rata dari dasar semua, kayanya nggak mungkin kalau kita langsung ke bahasa Inggris... jadi fokusnya ke bahasa Inggris dan Indonesia di selang-seling.”

This reflects the idea that bilingual instruction gives students a better chance to keep up with the class. They felt more confident when teachers gave explanations in both languages, especially when introducing new grammar topics or vocabulary. Another student (R2) said:

“Menurut saya cara guru menggunakan dua bahasa cukup efektif karena membantu kaimi memahami materi dengan lebih cepat, apalagi untuk yang baru belajar banget.”

These responses show that bilingual instruction was not just helpful, it was necessary, especially in a short-term program. Students valued how the teachers used Indonesian to make sure everyone could follow, while still practicing English through regular class activities. This finding supports García and Lin's (2016) theory of translanguaging, which explains how learners flexibly draw on their full linguistic repertoire to support comprehension and meaning-making. Rather than seeing languages as separate, translanguaging allows both Indonesian and English to be used purposefully during instruction. In a short and intensive course like this, such an approach helped students learn more effectively while still maintaining active exposure to English.

This is also in line with Pratiwi and Sugirin's (2024) research, which found that students felt more relaxed and confident when both languages were used in the class. In addition, Robbins and Judge's (2013) theory of perception helps explain why the students responded positively: when they understood what was being taught, they felt more comfortable and motivated to learn. According to this theory, perception is shaped by how individuals interpret experiences based on their background and situation. In this context, the students' understanding was enhanced because the teaching matched their language needs and prior knowledge.

Overall, bilingual instruction helped students not only understand the material better but also feel more supported during the learning process.

Bilingual Instruction Builds Confidence and Classroom Engagement

Besides helping them understand lessons better, many students also said that bilingual instruction made them feel more confident and active in class. They felt more relaxed and not afraid to ask questions or take part in activities. This was because the teachers did not rely on English alone but also used Indonesian when students looked confused or unsure. This kind of flexible approach made students feel seen and supported.

One student (R3) said:

“Saya jadi lebih berani maju ke depan, sebelumnya saya sering gugup atau nervous.”

This statement shows how bilingual instruction had an emotional effect, not just an academic one. The student used to feel nervous in front of the class, but with help from the teacher’s explanations in two languages, they started to feel more confident.

Another student (R4) explained:

“Alhamdulillah juga dengan guru-guru yang baik dan ramah, saya jadi percaya diri dan lebih aktif di kelas.”

This shows how teacher attitude and language choice both mattered. When the teacher was patient, friendly, and willing to use both languages, students felt freer to speak and join in discussions. Even students who were usually shy became more active because they were no longer afraid of not understanding.

These findings support Robbins and Judge’s (2013) theory of perception, which explains that how people respond to experiences depends on how they interpret them. In this case, students interpreted the bilingual classroom as safe and supportive. When they felt like the teacher understood their struggles and gave them space to learn, they became more involved in class activities and communication.

This is also in agreement with Larasati, Prihatin, and Sumartono (2022), whose study revealed that bilingual classrooms helped increase students’ motivation and learning willingness. According to their participants, the use of both English and the local language made the class more enjoyable and encouraged more active learning behavior. In short, bilingual instruction didn’t just help students understand the lesson; it made them feel more confident to try, to ask, and to speak in English, even if they were still learning.

Skills Most Supported by Bilingual Instruction

Students shared that almost all parts of their learning felt easier because teachers used both Indonesian and English. The three main areas mentioned were grammar, vocabulary, and speaking. Among these, grammar was mentioned the most. Many students said they understood grammar better when the teacher explained it in both languages.

One student (R5) said:

“Grammar adalah bagian yang paling terbantu karena penjelasan dalam dua bahasa membuat saya lebih mudah mengerti strukturnya.”

Another student (R6) also shared their experience:

“Tutor di HEC-1 jelasinnya rinci banget, terus slow... gampang banget buat dipahami.”

These quotes show that using two languages helped students follow grammar lessons more clearly, especially because they felt the explanation was slower, easier to follow, and more detailed than what they had experienced before. The combination of languages made it easier for them to connect the rules with the meaning. Some students also felt that vocabulary learning was better when teachers gave translations in Indonesian. Speaking activities became less scary because students felt more confident when they could ask for clarification in their first language.

These findings align with García and Lin’s (2016) translanguaging theory, which suggests that allowing learners to use their full linguistic repertoire helps them build meaning and participate more actively in learning. In a short-term bilingual program like this, translanguaging supported student comprehension, reduced anxiety, and helped create a more inclusive and effective classroom environment. By switching between languages, teachers can make sure that students really understand the material. This aligns with Pratiwi and Sugirin’s (2024) findings, which show that translanguaging strategies helped students follow lessons more easily in speaking classes. Their study in a similar short-term English program in Kampung Inggris revealed that the use of both English and Indonesian allowed students to better engage with the material and boosted their confidence. As one of their participants noted, bilingual instruction “created a secure environment for student engagement” and “enhanced comprehension of the subject being taught.”

It also reflects the perception theory by Robbins and Judge (2013), which suggests that when students interpret their learning environment as supportive and accessible, they are more likely to engage and succeed.

In conclusion, grammar was seen as the most improved skill, followed by vocabulary and speaking. The use of two languages gave students clarity and support, which made it easier for them to learn new material and take part in classroom activities.

Suggestions for Program Improvement

Aside from sharing their learning experiences, students also gave some suggestions to improve the program. Many of them felt that the one-month program could be more effective if there were more structured activities outside class hours.

One student (R7) suggested:

“Kalau bisa waktu luang dipakai buat study club, kayak speaking atau hafalan vocab... biar makin terbiasa.”

Students thought that having study clubs or practice sessions in the evening would help them keep learning even when they were not in class. This would give them more chances to use English regularly.

Another student (R8) recommended having rules about speaking English in the camp environment:

“Menurut saya pribadi, kalau ada peraturan di camp kaya program CTC itu lebih terbantu... ada punishmen jadi kita lebih semangat, dan ada setoran vocab tiap malam.”

The student believed that clear rules and consistent routines would help them stay motivated and practice more seriously. The idea of having vocabulary memorization or speaking tasks each night was seen as a way to build habit and discipline.

These suggestions show that students wanted more than just classroom learning. They wanted opportunities to practice, to be challenged, and to have routines that keep them on track. This aligns with Liu, Hu, and Peng's (2017) findings, which emphasize the importance of offering more structured learning opportunities, extended practice sessions, and engaging projects to support students' progress during short-term immersion programs. Their study concluded that immersion programs become

more effective when students are provided with consistent support both inside and outside the classroom.

In short, students felt that structured support outside the classroom like study clubs, speaking practice, and vocabulary tasks, could make the program stronger and more meaningful.

Overall Learning Experience

At the end of the interview, students were asked to share how they felt about their overall learning experience in the one-month bilingual program. Most of them gave positive responses. They felt happy to have joined the program and were grateful for the chance to study English in a way that felt clear and supportive.

One student (R9) shared:

“Saya bisa improve bahasa Inggris saya dan saya bisa tahu apa itu grammar, tentang apa itu vocab dan apa itu speaking, dan saya merasa senang bisa diberi kesempatan belajar di sini.”

This student appreciated learning the basic components of English and felt that their skills had improved, even in a short time. They were also thankful for the opportunity to study at HEC-1.

Another student (R10) said:

“Saya senang sih... guru-gurunya seru semua... tapi kurang temen belajar malam.”

This response shows that while the student enjoyed the teachers and the learning atmosphere, they also wished for more study time or interaction with peers during the evenings.

Overall, students saw the program as helpful and enjoyable. They gained not only language knowledge, but also motivation and confidence. Although the program was short, the use of bilingual instruction and the support from tutors left a strong impression on their learning journey.

These reflections are also consistent with Robbins and Judge's (2013) theory of perception, which explains that individuals interpret their experiences based on how they perceive their environment. In this case, students viewed the bilingual classroom as positive, inclusive, and responsive to their learning needs. As a result, they felt

encouraged and emotionally supported, which in turn boosted their engagement and satisfaction with the program.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that students perceived bilingual instruction at HEC-1 positively, especially in supporting their comprehension, confidence, and participation in class. These results align with García and Lin's (2016) theory of translanguaging, which emphasizes the importance of using students' full linguistic repertoires to enhance understanding and engagement. Rather than viewing Indonesian and English as separate, students used both languages together to clarify concepts, reduce confusion, and gain confidence, particularly in grammar and speaking tasks.

Robbins and Judge's (2013) theory of perception also helps explain these results. According to this theory, individuals interpret experiences based on their background, needs, and prior experiences. In this study, students interpreted the use of bilingual instruction as supportive and accessible, leading to increased motivation and willingness to engage. Their positive perceptions reflect how clear explanations, flexible language use, and supportive tutor behavior shaped their learning experience. The results of this study are consistent with several previous findings. For example, Pratiwi and Sugirin (2024) found that translanguaging helped students in speaking classes feel less anxious and more involved. Similarly, Larasati, Prihatin, and Sumartono (2022) reported that bilingual language use improved student focus and engagement in EFL classrooms. Liu, Hu, and Peng (2023) also showed that students in short-term English programs experienced growth in motivation and confidence when instruction was inclusive and adaptive. These studies reinforce the current study's conclusion that bilingual strategies are particularly effective in short-term non-formal learning contexts.

In addition, students in this study expressed a desire for structured support beyond class hours, such as study clubs or vocabulary practice, which aligns with Liu et al.'s (2023) observation that informal practice opportunities enhance the overall effectiveness of short-term language programs.

In summary, the bilingual strategies used at HEC-1 not only helped students understand material more easily but also made them feel confident, supported, and

motivated to continue improving their English. These insights suggest that incorporating translanguaging intentionally into intensive programs can lead to better learning outcomes.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how students perceive the use of bilingual instruction in a one-month intensive English program at HEC 1. The findings show that combining Indonesian and English in the classroom helped students feel more comfortable, understand the material better, and become more confident when speaking or participating in the class. Students especially appreciated how grammar and vocabulary were explained using both languages, making it easier for them to follow. They also mentioned that the friendly and supportive teaching style created a positive learning environment. Rather than seeing instruction as a shortcut, they view it as a helpful bridge, especially for those still developing their English skills.

These results align with the theories used in this study. Robbins and Judge's theory of perception supports the idea that students respond positively when the learning environment feels clear and supportive. Meanwhile, García and Lin's translanguaging theory highlights the value of allowing students to use both languages flexibly and strategically to support their understanding and participation especially in short-term, non-formal programs like HEC-1. In short, bilingual instruction not only helped students academically but also gave them the confidence and motivation to keep learning. This suggests that using two languages dynamically in the classroom can be a powerful tool to support student engagement and comprehension in intensive English programs.

Suggestions

Based on the student's feedback, several suggestions can be offered to improve the program. First, instructors could provide more structured practice opportunities outside of class, such as vocabulary memorization tasks, evening study groups, or speaking sessions. These activities would help students reinforce what they have learned and become more confident in using English. Second, applying consistent English use rules within the camp environment, along with supportive consequences,

may encourage students to practice more regularly and immerse themselves in the language; some students even mentioned feeling more motivated when there were clear expectations and routines.

Third, bilingual instruction could be further integrated into interactive classroom activities that promote teamwork and participation. This approach might make lessons more engaging and help students feel more comfortable using both languages in real situations. For future research, it would be useful to involve more participants from different batches or programs to gain a broader perspective. Combining interviews with other methods, such as classroom observations or focus group discussions, may also help uncover deeper insight into how bilingual instruction influences students' learning behavior in short-term non-formal settings.

Author Biography

Lilik Hartati is an English tutor at HEC-1, Pare, Kediri. She teaches in a one-month bilingual English program and guides students in grammar, vocabulary, and speaking. This research is based on her teaching experience in that program. Lilik is currently studying at Universitas Islam Kadiri. Her interest is in English education, especially in how students learn in bilingual classes. This is her first time joining an academic conference, and she hopes to keep learning and sharing about language teaching.

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