Realities and Impacts of Teaching Approach and Method in Bilingual Classroom in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Pedagogical approach and methods are prominent in students’ engagement in second language learning. Strategies and scaffolds are two other interconnected issues that matter in bilingual classrooms. This study crafted some findings of pedagogical practices performed by bilingual teachers which may fall into accommodating or dumbing down bilingual learners’ needs. It is an ethnographic study which used class observations as data to find the realities of practices that teachers used for English language learners at the Indonesian college level. It revealed how a teacher stood for a certain method and pedagogical approach to negotiate instructional strategies within a bilingual classroom. Further, this study picturized challenges, upsides, and downsides of using the approach and method in the bilingual classroom which needs further balance of two language acquisitions. This study implicates principles of second language teaching and learning and most importantly bilingual teaching resources are required to improve the effectiveness of bilingual teaching.

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1. Introduction

With the vast impact of English, employment opportunities at the national level or across boundaries mostly seek employees who have sufficient English proficiency. The QS Global Employer Survey released by Cambridge English Language Assessment (2016) was distributed to 5,373 employers in 38 countries around the world. Almost all of the employees thought that English is immensely important, especially for the operation of businesses both in English-speaking countries and non-English-speaking countries. English precipitates a prerequisite in career paths as businesses all over the world transcend boundaries. In the pharmaceutical, biotech, and healthcare industries, 60% of human resource personnel and customer services need to perform erudite English skills for daily work. Therefore, higher education nowadays is preparing their graduates to have sufficient English proficiency once they look for employment.

In some countries, English is rocketed as instruction in post-secondary education to enable the students to improve their foreign language skills and grasp the career opportunity worldwide. However, in Indonesia, universities can take three directions for the urge of English use. First, English fully becomes an instruction in bilingual classrooms at an international-based university; second, English is offered in certain classes for certain fields of study, e.g., English for students majoring in English literature and education or international class; third, English is partially instructed as applied language, e.g., applied English for nurse students or engineering students. The chorus of the barriers in question is whether English should be taught partially or fully in the classroom and outside the classroom (Tanjung, 2018). Since English is instructed as a foreign language subject to non-native speakers (NNS), universities are not able to force students to master all English skills. Lack of exposure to English instruction, especially in higher education, seems to answer why Indonesia was ranked 80 out 112 countries worldwide based on the results of test-takers aged 26 assessed in the English Proficiency Index (EPI) 2021 (English First, 2021). Although this survey does not generate the results based on the interests and fields of study, the results presuppose that university graduates in Indonesia do not attend adequate English skills.

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I conducted my observation in one area in Madura Island, giving different backgrounds to the students and teachers. The observation was conducted in an applied English hybrid class for nurse students in University of Health in Madura Island. Based on the Human Development Index published by the East Java Provincial Statistics (2020), Madura was categorized as having the lowest human development index in East Java. Four districts in Madura i.e., Sumenep (66.43%), Pamekasan (66.26%), Bangkalan (64.11%), and Sampang (62.70%) were grouped as the sixth lowest human development index based on the 2018-2020 evaluation of the human development index. Education is one of the three indicators measured in the index. Research shows that socio-economic status has a significant relationship with English proficiency among students and even affects their anxiety (Serquina & Batang, 2018). Having said that, Madurese students likely have fewer opportunities to access educational resources, lower years of schooling, and lower economic status.

Mrs. NR, the teacher I observed, taught Applied English II to senior students of the Diploma of Nursing Program at University of Health in Madura Island. About twenty students attended the meeting online on Zoom, and the rest had in-person meetings. The average students are Madurese who speak Indonesian followed by English as their third language. Based on my interview with Mrs. NR, she collected the data on students’ proficiency levels using short surveys (how many hours they study English outside the classroom) and English Scores from the British Council. The students had average A1-B1 English proficiency levels (novice to intermediate). The information of the student's English proficiency level was concluded from the survey results she distributed in the first meeting of the class. Mrs. NR is a graduate of the Learning, Teaching, & Curriculum (LTC) master’s program from one of the universities in the United States. She previously handled a couple of applied English classes for different disciplines, e.g., the engineering program. The syllabus she forwarded to me showed that the applied English for nursing entails materials that are practical and ready to use. The loquacious topics include career planning and development, CV designs, cover letter, meeting, and notetaking, crafting stunning presentations, critically responding to the text regarding patient admission and medication, and TOEIC/TOEFL discussion. With the lessons, the students are expected to be able to map work opportunities in their expertise, use communication skills effectively, deliver their opinions confidently, and respond to health issues accordingly.

The Applied English II was offered within a two-hour-and-a-half meeting. Students can take this course if they successfully passed Applied English I in the previous semester. Meanwhile, the TELL lasted for two and a half hours, and the Sociolinguistics class was conducted for 1 and a half hours. Students were not required to complete other classes if they wanted to register in a Sociolinguistics class. While students had to pass the Methodology class before taking the TELL class.

Given these settings and backgrounds, this transcript analysis was aimed to identify the teacher’s stance and practice towards teaching approach, instructional methods, instructional strategies, scaffolds, and translanguaging among bilingual learners. It also proposes some conclusions and implications on what is still going on in second language pedagogy.

2. Methods

A formal permission letter was sent to Mrs. NR regarding the class observation. She was also asked to fill out a consent form regarding the data collection procedures before the observation began. The observations took place from September 2021 to October 2021 in Applied English II for senior nursing students. Every class was conducted for at least 2 hours. I observed all of the classes without any interruptions to avoid bias in my observation results. All meetings were recorded and then transcribed, and students were treated with anonymous names. To support the observation results, I interviewed Mrs. NR to discuss her beliefs and stances towards the principles of second language teaching and learning. The interview results were also transcribed and analyzed sequentially. The analysis of the observation results focused on the key events from my observation. The first reason is that I want to challenge the assumption that socio-economic status could relate to teaching practices and students’ language learning. Second, Mrs. NR showed consistent teaching methods and approaches in her classes as I figured them out by walking my observation. Third, the observation which lies in similar settings will go for deeper analyses and discussion. The transcripts were then analyzed thematically and presented in the next section.
3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Cognitive Approach in Applied English Class

On the first-day observation of Mrs. NR’s class, the students were given grammar and reading exercises on the concept of patient prescription and natural medication in animals. Based on the syllabus she gave to me, the topic should be patient appointment and patient’s assessment report writing (Agenda in week 2); apparently, she asked students to complete cloze sentences. For example, Student 2 had to complete the sentence “Make sure you rest if____” with the zero conditional. This activity was focused to train students’ comprehension of how to write sentences in zero conditional forms. Once S2 had the answer, Mrs. NR then asked S2 to read the question along with the answer.

NR : Lanjut, siapa lagi yang belum? Yang belum? Yang cowok-cowok ini. ‘Who’s gonna answer it? You? (male students)”
S2 : Number four?
NR : Number four okay
S2 : Make sure you rest if you are tired
NR : Make sure you rest if you are tired. Jangan lupa istirahat ya kalau kamu capek. Duh capek banget, ya udah kamu istirahat kalau kamu capek ya. ‘Please take a rest if you are tired.’

Such drills provide clue contexts for finding short answers and focus more on their comprehension to utilize medical terms in English accordingly. The interview result further confirms that she imposed cognitive aspects on her teaching. The overall instructions she performed send messages that she pursued her teaching from a cognitive approach. Since the students are sequential bilinguals who later learn Indonesian and English formally at schools, teaching with a cognitive approach helps to transfer the skills, knowledge, and strategies in the dominant language they master to other languages such as English. According to Tsvetkova (2016), teachers employ the cognitive approach to enhance understanding of grammar and language and memory of new vocabularies and structures or forms of the language. It can be seen from the way the teacher instructed the students to complete the cloze sentences with correct zero conditionals, find out abbreviations of certain terms and meaning of certain vocabularies, and interpret symbols to words.

Furthermore, the approach is considered applicable for the students as adult language learners who have sufficient maturity and experience. Adult learners have better cognitive and linguistic abilities, and conceptual complexity despite various levels of processing and storing capabilities from one learner to another (Robinson, 2005 cited in Smith & Strong, 2009). Using their cognitive skills, learners build perception when looking at words or sentences. Linguistic and nonlinguistic perceptions such as socio, cultural, and psychological nature are utilized at the same time to help learners apprehend the meaning of the sentences as “language and perception are deeply interrelated” (Tsvetkova, 2016, p. 130). When the student was trying to complete the sentence, she acknowledged her social experience as a source of learning by guessing what comes next after the word “rest”. The teacher gave them a directive context to a specific meaning of a word as the student could use their background knowledge of in what conditions they need to take a rest. As this cognitive approach to teaching and learning involves perceptual mechanisms, contexts are important to imply shades in meanings of words. Naturally, the word “rest” has two meanings: to relax or to stay in a specific position. The directive context in the word “rest” seeks for the ability of the students to sementasize and conceptualize the content word as a whole. In other words, cognitive function stresses the whole sentence rather than the parts of it. Exposing students to this cognitive process is prominent for their vocabulary development and reading comprehension (Lawrence, White, & Snow, 2011).

“For Applied English II which is like the highest level of English at semester five, since they learned about content area in the previous semester, they usually understand more about the content materials. Because I put them a lot of you know drillings, hmm… vocab vocabularies, materials content in the previous semester.” (Interview with Mrs. NR)

Based on the interview results, Mrs. NR confirmed that she preferred a cognitive approach since she wanted to emphasize content area learning. The students would learn the nursing and health topic through drillings which she provided before class. Practically, teachers’ beliefs determine how they plan their instructions in the classroom and show attitudes towards classroom principles (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). For example, beliefs in certain theories could make the teachers employ specific instructional strategies to back up students’ needs. Beliefs that later shape attitudes are deemed affecting how their pedagogical knowledge is
actualized through the learning environment, teaching practice, and motivation given to students. According to Li (2012), teachers’ beliefs determine their acceptance and rejection of the information. Most importantly, Li mentions that a teacher’s belief affects decisions they adopt. With this framework, we understand that Mrs. NR’s beliefs towards the cognitive approach influence the overall strategies that she used in all of her classes. For example, she used more memorization, problem-solving, thinking, knowing, and reasoning as the central activities.

3.2 Corrective Feedback in Applied English Class

While students and Mrs. NR were discovering the full terms of abbreviations in drug packages, Mrs. N also bolstered the class with pronunciation corrections while students were finding the abbreviations and their full terms. When the students mispronounced the words "minus", “service”, “volume”, “hours”, and other words, Mrs. NR asked them to repeat what she said with only a single-word pronunciation. She overcorrected the students’ speech errors without giving the students a wait time to figure out themselves. On most occasions in giving feedback, Mrs. NR recast the whole sentences without re-voicing or rephrasing questions for students to self-correct.

The first issue found from the interaction is how the teacher overrated standard English conventions. Over corrective feedback on pronunciations implied an ideal standard English usage in academic settings. The teacher’s overrating of standard English forms a positioning towards power relations, group dynamics, social integration, and learning (Kuteeva, 2020). Standard English dominates a lot of official academic testing and media in higher education. For example, the TOEFL listening test which university students in Indonesia need to pass is the English language standardized for non-native speakers and overemphasizes British and American standard English only. The ideology of nativeness seems to position English speakers of other languages behind when it comes to talking about standard English. Usually, groups who are under poverty or low economic status lack access to language resources, thereby authentic inputs unavailable for them. Eventually, only elite groups or those in high economic status are exposed to more language resources, for example books, CDs, teachers, and other media which have the 'standard' label. For example, children who live in big cities can find English courses which provide them with American or British teachers and authentic English learning media that are imported from abroad. Similar findings have been confirmed by Kubota (2011) who stated that instrumental, material, and economic purposes as a result of neoliberal logics and wealth inequalities predominantly cause these language learning gaps. Serquina and Batang (2018) explain socioeconomic status of learners affects their anxiety. As a result, it makes learners under poverty unconfident with the goals of their learning or less motivated to advance learning.

All of these matters eventually evolve as a norm that gratifies the standard English only in class, while varieties outside of these are considered unacceptable or un-prestigious not prestigious. Tegegne (2015) opposed the nativeness label in legitimating English skills in the education system. He also suggested that diverse dialects of a language must be taken into account by experts who compose textbooks and National Exams. In line with his opposition, the teacher I observed should understand that pronunciations that the students made are legitimate and negotiated between students’ home language and English which both have different semantical, pragmatical, and morphological rules. Therefore, the idea that proper English only comes from the white society in the United States or the United Kingdom can be avoided.

Delegitimization of linguistic repertoires of non-standard English speakers may lead to subtractive bilingualism, causing students to sink or swim in the new and existing linguistic inputs. Although the teacher gave flexibility for students to speak their home language in some instances, she did not tolerate pronunciations that fall under non-standardized English and cause overcorrection. Kuteeva (2020) called this translingual practice does not ultimately empower students rather excludes them from the proper or ‘elite’ English speakers. English as a medium instruction as performed by the teacher dynamically vacillates educators to which extent students’ English varieties are acceptable within the standard and non-standard English norms. To embrace English varieties among the students, the teacher needs to carefully select errors that warrant urgent feedback; as long as mutual intelligibility can be achieved between non-standard and standard English speakers, standardization should not become an absolute indicator to measure success in learning a language. Otherwise, students will get overwhelmed with an abundance of corrections because of the non-standard forms they use.

Moreover, students’ speech errors could be due to cross-linguistic influence from their home language. Cross-linguistic transfer as influencing the use of language features to that of another. It transfers could occur within word and sentence levels. At the word level, it has something to do with pronunciation, word order, or
comprehension of word meaning. In addition, at the sentence level, it is associated with sentence order and comprehensibility of the entire sentence. However, the cross-linguistic transfer may occur at the paragraph level. For example, students who speak Indonesian might see English paragraphs more engaging with the readers as they put some conjunctions while moving from one paragraph to another. The finding of the observation pointed out some examples of cross-linguistic transfers at the word level. Student 7 mispronounced the word “minus” as [minss]. Another example is Student 9 practiced saying calculations in English and mispronounced the word “volume” as [fblum]. For the first example, Indonesian spelling goes the way it is written. The borrowing word from ‘minus’ is often pronounced as [min3s] as Indonesian words do not have [ai] sound which exists in the English sounds system. The second example portrays that the students missed the sound [v] at the beginning of the sounds and [ja] at the end of the sounds. It occurred because in the Indonesian pronunciation system there is no difference in the pronunciation of the sounds [f] and [v]. All of the sounds are pronounced [f]. In addition, the word “volume” would go with the sounds [ja] since Indonesian speakers pronounce the consonant sound [l] and vowel sound [u] sequentially. In other words, in Indonesian pronunciation, the [l] sound does not change the vowel sound.

Second, the teacher often used recasting and seldom rephrasing to correct students’ speech errors. Recasting is one of the alternatives in providing students with corrective feedback in oral fluency. Teachers usually reformulate what students say without the errors. It could be a scaffold to make students notice the errors they make. Recasting is deemed positive for grammatical intervention (Cleave, Becker, Curran, Van Horne, & Fey, 2015) since the teacher brings the correction to their instruction which makes learners aware of and pay attention to the errors. However, recasting alone is not enough to build students’ comprehension and fluency. Students may need more time to think of the correct use of words or sentences and get overwhelmed with which specific errors are emphasized on the multiple recast sentences. Furthermore, if teachers only recast a single pronunciation, it will not give students an idea to use that word based on the context. Teachers need to adopt more various modeling that can accommodate some social factors e.g., teaching methods, classroom dynamics, individual anxiety level, and preference among the students which influence learning (Bing-Jie, 2016). Different modeling such as open-ended questions, re-voicing, reasoning, etc. are alternatives to lit students’ participation in the discussion.

The third issue is explicit overcorrection when the teacher provided feedback on students’ speech errors. As the teacher gave the answers right away, she did not give enough wait time for the students to respond and figure out their errors. Instead of offering some room and time for them to reflect on their errors, she did not trade in the answers with the students. Meanwhile, according to Long (2015), the interaction hypothesis theorizes that corrective feedback may occur when communication is difficult to achieve. This indicates that not every speech error that students make needs to be corrected all the time; otherwise, students will have high affective filters which potentially impede their learning. Krashen (1985) indicates that the affective filter is determined from three aspects: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. He hypothesized that inputs are less received if learners show non-optimal attitudes for second language learning. Once their language anxiety is high, learners might not be able to keep up their motivation to learn. Long (2015) suggests that interaction offers students to negotiate answers to any sentence problems that teachers give. This hypothesis also hallmarks the importance of mutual interactions through modified interactions that may produce comprehensible inputs. Moreover, from the monitoring hypothesis out of five hypotheses, Krashen (1985) highlights that self-inspection to what we have learned may improve our fluency and accuracy at the same time. He asserts that a learner has an internal mind which speaks and leads us to self-correct the errors even before or after producing utterances. Traditional teacher-centered teaching has been long criticized as it reduces chances for the students to self-direct their learning pathways. The monitoring hypothesis emphasizes adult learners can use their “conscious monitor” to avoid, detect, and repair errors. Allowing adult language learners’ autonomy and consciousness in repairing their errors, giving them enough wait time is required. In eliciting responses, students process information in three different ways: thinking about the question, thinking about the answer, and thinking about and selecting words used to explain their thoughts (Wasik & Hindman, 2018). Going through these processes, they, typically, need a longer time to respond. Wasik and Hindman suggest that given wait time, students could come up with excellent responses.

Krashen noted in his book Principle and Practice in Second Language Acquisition (1982) rules in L1 which are way different from L2 involve a heavier “mental gymnastics” that learners need to take on. In addition to these two hypotheses, Tsvetkova (2016) noticed explicit corrective feedback, especially when it comes to teaching older learners, may pose an unauthentic and boring presentation. Giving room for adult learners to monitor or inspect their errors themselves potentially benefits them to develop their oracy and curiosity for
rigorous learning. Treating them as autonomous learners enables them to be active agents “in constructing the terms and conditions of their own learning” (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 145). Therefore, teachers must take account of students’ attributes such as age and cognitive skills for how they correct students’ errors.

3.3 Language Issues among Bilingual Learners in Applied English Class

As opposed to overcorrection which might increase the affective filter, Mrs. NR tried to manage the affective filter by allowing students to trans language. During a class, Mrs. NR asked students to find the abbreviation of PO. It was surprising when Student 10 mentioned PO as ‘pharmacy obat’ in which she put English and Indonesian words side by side. While the actual full term for PO is paper oz. It indicated she tried to understand the concept and meaning of the abbreviation by accessing her linguistic repertoires in English and Indonesian at the same time. The student performed translanguaging when resolving the question. She engaged in dynamic bilingualism where task accomplishment and class interactions occur within a range of languages. Baker (2011) sets forth that translanguaging revives experience that is deeply long rooted in the mind and shapes the understanding and learning of emergent bilinguals in two or more languages. According to Gracia (2009), claiming bilingualism as double monolinguals in one head is superficial and baseless; it fails to acknowledge the benefits and linguistic creativity that bilingual speakers at different proficiency levels could make. With that said, whatever languages stay in one mind is interconnected and forms a shared pool of resources that the speaker can take out altogether for certain contexts. In this sense, cross-linguistic influence occurred for noun phrases between English and Indonesian. Studies mention that cross-linguistic transfer means the coactivation of two languages or more. Similar to the earlier discussion on students’ speech errors due to cross-linguistic transfer, the knowledge that Student 10 showed is a real picture of transfer of learning where the student used the help of another language to make meaning.

Transfer of learning is strongly correlated with language-related knowledge such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, reading skills, writing skills, and strategies. Language proficiency and dominance might be the factors of cross-linguistic transfer. A study showed that L1 influences L2 word processing more greatly than syntactic processing (Lago, Mosca, & Stutter Garcia, 2021). Knowing her student mixed the words, Mrs. NR never interrupted or complained about it. The interview results with Mrs. NR revealed the reason why she did it. Through the more flexible use of languages in her English class, she did not turn away her students to participate in class.

“How do I make sure that my students use English as much as possible in class even though they know they are not confident using it? [sigh] I think number one is engagement. I would also say in the survey that I did in early the semester, I asked them what do you think to make them comfortable in the classroom. It’s like you want your teacher to be like this and that? Or do you want your friends to be like this and that? So, I created the survey where they can one stuff, things or items that they need in the classroom, you know they can make it comfortable in my class. Number one is making sure your students are comfortable with you first.” (Interview with Mrs. NR)

Despite the overcorrection on the students’ speech errors, she accepted students’ home language to lower the affective filter which likely becomes a factor for students to be either reluctant or motivated to participate. According to the affective filter hypothesis of Krashen (1985), comprehensible inputs will be well-delivered if teachers present feedback respectfully without embarrassing the students for the errors they make. Therefore, such respect and acceptance of students’ home language that emerge during English class can control and keep up their confidence and self-esteem to learn English. In line with translanguaging S10 made, V. Cook (2001 cited in Smith & Strong, 2009) strongly articulated that second language learning is not simply adding rooms extending your house or rebuilding the interior of the house walls. Multifaceted second language learning makes receptive and productive aspects across one language and the other more dynamic and complex as we can see in how S10 defined the term PO; thus, bilingualism should never be taken for granted as merely adding new linguistic resources. Bilingualism reconstructs the internal parts of linguistic repertoires, a cultural and social mentality which co-work as connecting threads like ‘a spider web’ as a whole. To conclude, Mrs. NR welcomed and is open-minded to linguistic creativity and sociolinguistics among her bilingual learners.
3.4 Building Background Knowledge of Bilingual Learners in Applied English Class

In addition to pronunciation, Mrs. NR also dilates students’ comprehension of contexts to utilize certain vocabulary. Students inferred the full term in another abbreviation 'nocte' but failed to answer. Mrs. NR then made a connection of this word with an owl, a more general object which every student is familiar with. The process of building the background knowledge here took place inductively as students were given a specific case or pattern to produce a general idea of the object. According to Nilsen and Nilsen (2004), using what is known by learners can help them deal with the unknown in a vocabulary. When students engage in thinking about what they have and what they do not, there are four cognitive strategies from the learner side i.e., resourcing, grouping, note-taking, and elaboration proposed by Chamot and O’Malley (1994 cited in Herrera & Kevin G., 2016). However, among these, the observation did not look into the learners’ cognitive strategies when building background knowledge. From the teacher’s side, out of these four, Mrs. NR took advantage of resourcing (selecting information from guided questions) and elaboration (drawing analogy about a new concept (nocte) to existing knowledge (night animal/owl)). Thirunavukarasu and Harun (2020) emphasize that one’s memory, reading comprehension, and interpretation are influenced by their background knowledge. Teachers need to elicit relevant tasks to activate students’ prior knowledge so that they could make sense and accomplish learning independently. Chamot and O’Malley spotlight the importance of elaborating prior knowledge:

By first assessing the prior experiences and knowledge that CLD students bring to the classroom and then guiding them to make curricular connections to those experiences and understandings, teachers encourage students to elaborate on their prior knowledge. Cognitive learning strategies set classroom conditions for the students to take ownership of their learning. (p. 44)

During the process of building their background knowledge, the students were pulling their schemata out to supersede an unfamiliar context. Schemata as a mental home can recall the current information and can be modified with new information. Some studies have found that building background knowledge and utilizing schemata for introducing new concepts aid learners to perform better in reading comprehension (McNeil, 2011), especially culture representation in a text (Alptekin, 2006; Lee, 2007). Given this association with the word “owl”, learners come into concept attainment which moves from concrete ‘night animal’ to abstract ‘nocte’ (Nilsen & Nilsen, 2004; Beeman & Urow, 2013). However, further studies are warranted to investigate how powerful this strategy is to develop students’ language knowledge.

3.5 Instructional Strategies for Emergent Bilingual Learners in Applied English Class

When the class discussed the word ‘nocte’, Mrs. NR offered some dialogues to build connections between the word and an object that the students are familiar with. She gave a hint "coba burung hantu" or “what about an owl?” which seemingly still did not direct the students to the answer. She then followed up with another question "burung hantu itu hewan apa?", indicating dialogic scaffolding for the students to think and analyze the word or statement even deeper. This scaffolding scheme corresponds to Herrera and Kevin G. (2016). They define scaffolding as “extensive instructional and contextual support in the early stages of learning, followed by the gradual withdrawal of such support as the student’s performance suggests independence” (p. 406). Such scaffolding performed by the teacher falls into a socio-cultural approach which is functional as a tutorial dialogue. Kumar, Rosé, Wang, Joshi, and Robinson (2007) indicate that using the sociocultural approach in scaffolding students’ learning could create a more dynamic process. During the interactions, teachers feed the dialogues not the answers to guide students walking through learning more significantly. Through interactions, teachers can scaffold students by explaining the concept of a word in a simpler way such as giving a concrete example and simplifying the vocabulary.

The students guessed an owl is a night animal or hewan malam, Mrs. NR gradually withdrew the scaffold by rehearsing the word “malam” with "nocturnal". Scaffolding was located within learners’ zone of proximal development (ZPD) initially proposed by Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky asserted that ZPD determines the level of guidance that an adult (in this case the teacher) or peers need to offer in addition to the real problem-solving capacity that a learner has. ZPD also becomes a boundary that assesses what learners can do and cannot do without help. For example, the students knew that the owl was a night animal, and the teacher continually offered another question and clue during the conversation while students were negotiating the meaning. Therefore, she stood in the learners’ ZPD to maximize their developmental level and problem-solving capacity on the word ‘nocte’.
In another language scaffolding, Mrs. NR discussed with students some stages of career development. She provided several sentences describing the stages. While she was discussing the use of vocabulary in the sentence, she asked the students about what prefix in- alters the meaning of the word “definite”. She further clarified the context implied in the sentence after students analyzed the meaning of the vocabulary. In this case, scaffolding can develop knowledge within ZPD only if learners, peers, and teachers are involved in productive academic conversations and interactive learning environments. Mrs. NR engaged students in text reading and word analysis. From the socio-cultural perspective in which Vygotsky’s ZPD lies, such learning interactions can provide time for learners to receive assistance and guidance from teachers to co-construct meaning-making. Nevertheless, such interactional input through structure analysis was undermined if seen from Krashen’s comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985). He hypothesized students develop knowledge if only they add more input from more advanced sources to the existing current knowledge (i+1). Krashen (1985) further argues that this comprehensible input happens unconsciously without memorizing the rules of language. However, there is no clear measure of to what extent the (i) is, and learning rules of language should be one way taken for adult language learners to embark on the learning process with the advent of their cognitive skills.

Mrs. NR worked with her students to analyze the meaning of the vocabulary by stepping back little once students were close to finding the answers. They solved the problem together in dialogic interactions; it tends to lean on making meaning from the socio-cultural perspective. Further, Vygotsky also asserted that scaffolding could happen between learners and more skillful peers. However, I did not observe any scaffolding that came as a result of peer-to-peer interaction or conversation. Teachers should note that as Vygotsky mentions, scaffolding is a collaborative activity, not only between teacher and students but also between students and peers. With this socio-cultural scaffolding approach, students will be placed in a low-stress learning environment and can be a frustrating control for students who never encountered the word before. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976, cited in Yildiz & Celik, 2020) explicates some requirements for scaffolding, which is frustration control. As Mrs. NR gave the students simple ways to discern the meaning of the word ‘nocte’, it enabled them to be less stressed in doing the task. Thus, their effective filter i.e., anxiety and confusion can be anticipated.

In conjunction with language scaffolding, Mrs. NR also encouraged students to go beyond the analysis of the word by putting close attention to word form or morphology. Aforementioned, she exemplified the prefix in- in the word ‘indefinite’. The students paid attention to her answer about why the word has a negative meaning. Eventually, she clarified that the prefix in- in a word implies negative meaning. During this session, Mrs. NR scaffolded students to decode linguistic rules which contributed to the word meaning. This scaffold in turn makes students build their metalinguistic awareness. Since students always work with language in any content area, it is necessary to gauge their understanding of how language itself works. Intricate systems in language yield codes and patterns that learners should be aware of to understand the effect of context on the meaning of vocabulary.

Myhill, Jones, and Watson (2013) assert metalinguistic awareness is being conscious about the explicit knowledge of grammar, primarily morphology, and syntax. The concept of metalinguistic awareness such as phonological awareness, word awareness, syntactic awareness, and pragmatic awareness is grounded from the innatist perspective of Universal Grammar proposed by Noam Chomsky (1968) as an opposition to the behaviorist theory by Skinner. Chomsky hypothesized that humans have a language acquisition device (LAD) which can be activated when they acquire their first language. Rules of the language will be internalized and recalled effortlessly to create meaningful sentences. However, for second language learning among sequential bilinguals, that innate grammar capacity does not sufficiently accommodate to deal with the complexity of rules in the second language if there are no inputs given. Teaching metalinguistic awareness offers students two-fold learning opportunities, especially in learning how to read and write.

Still relevant to this discussion, Mrs. NR asked the students to find the errors in a leave letter. However, most of the students were undirected as she did not clearly define editing errors they had to discover. Once the class was invited to the discussion, students could not notice any significant errors there. Then, Mrs. NR explicitly gave them an example of the error i.e., misspelling of the word ‘writing’. After that, she asked the students to find similar errors and spell the word correctly. For example, the students found the word ‘because’ misspelled and then revised it by spelling the word correctly:

N : Coba diulang dari awal. Coba dieja. ‘Please repeat. Can you spell it?’ Go ahead. Ya, so writing (the letter has misspellingsmisspelled). Lanjut. Apa lagi selain writing? Yang harus diubah, yang mana terus. ‘Next, what’s else besides writing? Which one do you need to change’ What you think need to improve form this letter?
S: Abel, Mmam (referring to able)
N: Abel, ganti apa mas?’What should it be?’
S: Able (literally spell able)
N: dieja-dieja. A-b-l-e (teacher gives example)
S: students follow the next letter spelling
N: Lanjut. Apa lagi. ‘Next. What else?’ This one. Because. Gimana kalau because? ‘How about because’
S: because (read literally because)
N: Ayo dieja. B…. ‘Please spell. B…’
S: B-e-c-a-u-s-e

For a special case like teaching morphology above, research shows that students are advantaged by the use of metalinguistic awareness along with orthographic awareness for understanding the spelling convention, word recognition (Apel et al., 2012). These metalinguistic features were significantly associated with reading comprehension (Schoonmaker, 2015). As a response to Chomsky’s universal grammar theory, there are multiple reasons why metalinguistic awareness should be under conscious learning or explicitly taught to learners. The range of variables that influence learning is of considerable importance. Tunmer, Pratt, and Herriman (1984) and Bialysto and Ryan (1985) are aroused by age and types of activities as variables affecting metalinguistic ability and needs. It lies on the cognitive premise that adult language learners produce sentences better when they tap into the grammatical patterns (Lemhöfer, Schriefers, & Indefrey, 2011). In my view, adult language learners could be more eager to perform language knowledge since they have more experience and proficiency in their first language which are cognitive contributors to their second language learning.

In one of her classes, Mrs. NR applied think-aloud as an instructional strategy. She gave the students reading about wild treatment. While reading, Mrs. NR stopped at some parts and verbalized important information from the reading. She tried to connect the text with the real world where the students experience things themselves. She compared treatment between animals and humans which relate to students’ future careers as a nurse. She also reviewed what makes human treatment methods and facilities different from animal treatment as the passage showed. The think-aloud was done throughout the passage, starting from how the wild animals treat themselves differently from humans to what methods the wild animals use to survive.

NR: Wild treatment. What is wild?
S: Liar ‘wild’
NR: Yes liar. Pengobatan di alam terbuka, alam luas.Yang bukan manusia, that’s not human. ‘Yes, liar. Wild treatment, indefinite world. Something not human. That’s not human.’ Now we think about how example ya animals treat themselves. Padahal mereka hidup di hutan belantara ya, jungles. Nggak ada dokter hewannya ya. Nggak ada siapapun. Nggak kayak manusia. ‘While they live in jungles. There was no veterinarian. No one. No human.’ If you are humans, and then you can go to the clinics, puskesmas, bidan. ‘Primary healthcare centers, midwives.’ You can go to a doctor. We can get a medication or treatment. Now think about how wild animals, bagaimana animals-animals di luar itu menjaga dirinya sendiri ketika mereka sakit. ‘how do the animals protect themselves when they are sick?’ So, that is the reading is about. Ini readingnya tentang itu ya. Coba sekarang kita lihat di paragraf pertama. Kira-kira isinya apa itu? Contoh apa yang dikasih itu? ‘That’s the reading about. Let’s see the first paragraph. What do we learn? What’s the example in the reading?’ What kind of example of animal that could be cats and dogs ada di paragraf pertama ‘in the first paragraph.’? Apa yang dia bilang tentang cat dan dog? ‘What does it say about cat and dog?’ They say about cat and dog untuk mereka mengobati diri sendiri. ‘They say about cat and dog protecting themselves.’
S: Dengan cara makan rumput ‘by eating grass’
NR: Makan rumput, untuk apa? ‘Why did they eat grass?’ What they did eat the grass, for example, ya? What is it for? To clear, their stomach. Sangat amazing bagaimana alam dunia ini ya. Ini adalah blessing dari Allah subhanallahuta’ala ‘The world is amazing. That’s the blessings from God.’
Think-aloud is used when teachers want to verify learners’ comprehension of a text. Block (1986) illustrates how a think-aloud approach can be used in academic reading. He mentions that think-aloud is verbalizing the thinking process of readers either in the forms of thoughts or behaviors. When reading the wild treatment, the teacher and students were in the process of loudly articulating information caught in their minds and activating their prior knowledge of human treatment which corresponds with wild treatment. When the teacher said “Coba sekarang kita lihat di paragraf pertama. Kira-kira isinya apa itu?” (“Let’s see the first paragraph. What do we learn?”), students’ thoughts were orchestrated. Other prompting questions such as “Makan rumput untuk apa?” (Why did they eat grass?) were given to narrow which information students and the teacher were looking for. Rosenshine, Meister, and Chapman (1996) assert that students in a class can listen to their peer’s thoughts during the think-aloud session. They can then receive the input indirectly from what the other students say. Additionally, the teacher could monitor the students’ comprehension by listening to their oral descriptions about the text, and so do the students.

Regarding the language use, Mrs. NR set the think-aloud session out with more Indonesian instruction. Research on the use of think-aloud strategies has shown that L2 learners verbalize more when reading in English (Kong, 2006). However, Lin and Yu (2015) presented a fair use of a think-aloud strategy among Taiwanese college students when reading texts both in English and Chinese. Other research has shown that the use of think-aloud strategies might vary based on language proficiency. Zhang, Gu, and Hu (2008) found primary school students in Singapore who used a think-aloud approach for reading narrative texts and talking about their thoughts showed different frequencies in use and mechanisms of reading strategies. Monitoring the understanding of the text was performed mostly by high-proficient students. Meanwhile, lower-proficient students focused on decoding the information word by word. Teachers must train students to use think-aloud strategies with more modeling so that students have a greater role in monitoring their comprehension. For example, teachers can invite students to identify the purpose of the text and the structure of the text, make predictions as they read, and ask them to visualize the events while they are reading. Further, teachers can impart other cognitive strategies during think-aloud, for example, paraphrasing, asking questions, using context clues, and translating with its proportional use.

Roehler and Cantlon (1997, as cited in Bikmaz et al., 2010) assert scaffolding can be done in five ways. First, teachers explicitly explain the answer to make students understand the lesson. Second, teachers encourage students to be involved in the process. Third, teachers check students’ understanding. Fourth, teachers model their behavior to stimulate students to think, feel, and act in a particular context. Fifth, teachers let students ask for clues. The first and second stage has been used by Mrs. NR to prompt learning. For example, she continually prompted guiding questions to model the think-aloud when students read a passage about “wild treatment”.

3.6 Teaching Methods in Applied English Class

The majority of the observation results indicate that she utilized direct instruction and the audio-lingual method throughout the classes. With direct instructions, oftentimes she would task students in a structured way within her control. Mostly, the instructions went on teacher’s led presentations and demonstrations. While the students only would speak when the teacher called their names. Because of the teacher-directed instructions, students only followed what their teacher wanted. Direct instructions tend to create domination of the teacher’s role over the students. For example, when the class talked about career stages, the teacher was the one who dominantly talked about the whole presentation. Students only acted upon the teacher’s instruction to read the sentences. Although the National Institute for Direct Instruction (2015) claims direct instructions as a clear method to teach students to master the skills and content, direct instruction is deemed overly explicit and ineffective for reading comprehension based on grade levels (Lorence, 2015). While in another study, direct instruction led students to acquire better basic writing skills in two areas: correct word sequences and the number of words they wrote (Viel-Ruma, 2009). Thus, this method should be blended with indirect instruction to achieve independence and collaboration in language learning among emergent bilinguals.

Furthermore, she employed an audio-lingual method, which locates the instruction from the behaviorist approach. She often asked the students to repeat the correct pronunciation of words, for example, “milligram” after her. Mechanical repetitions and imitation of pronunciation, for instance, are some of the activities in the audio-lingual method. Such activities are paramount for habit formation to know “what native speakers say” and “how they say it” (Vega, 2018).

NR: Ya, thank you mas Robi. Yang di Zoom, silakan yang di Zoom. Saya ingin melihat kemampuan anda membaca angka.
The use of this method may foster structural or grammatical competence instead of communicative competence. The observation shows that this method is teacher-centered, and it relentlessly controls the class and sets aside students’ participation. However, students who receive instructions with this method would have difficulties applying language knowledge as a product of drills and memorization to authentic communication (Wright, 2015). The observation and interview result further validate that the teacher used the method not to engender meaningful communication but listening comprehension. It solely entails knowing how to pronounce words and what they mean. Considering the roles, students merely become passive or receptive learners and thus have no time to sharpen their linguistic creativity and real-life communication skills. Only when given instructions to repeat the teacher’s saying, students had a chance to be actively involved in their learning process (Matamoros-González, Rojas, Romero, Vera-Quíñonez, & Soto, 2017). In other words, this method likely limits the students’ productive function in the bilingual continuum during learning.

3.7 Primary Language Support in Applied English Class

Within the consecutive meetings as well, I found Mrs. NR often translated the instruction or reading in English to Indonesian line by line. Whenever Mrs. NR checked the students’ comprehension, she would keep translating her questions. As a result, the students also followed what she did throughout the class by translating passages or sentences they read. For instance, on the day she read a cover letter, she subsequently translated “I spent most of my time” into “Saya menghabiskan waktu ngapain”. Once she asked her students about another role of a nurse in Indonesian, “Melakukan prosedur medis yang sangat dasar ya. Apa lagi setelah itu?” (“Performing basic medical procedures. What else next?”), the students responded with Indonesian translations. [Students and teacher discussed a covering letter]

NR : ...Tick only one internship that you think is the most phenomenal among other internships ya. Misalkan, di situlah kamu benar benar belajar dan terbuka pikirannya. Karena kan banyak, nggak mungkin kamu tulis semua ya. It’s impossible for you to cover every single thing on your cover letter. Silakan dibaca dari there sampai coordination. Saya kasih waktu 1 menit dari kata there sampai coordination. Coba perhatikan, dia tulis Royal London Hospital. Terus di situ ada kata-kata there di sana, I spent most of my time. Saya menghabiskan waktu ngapain? ‘I spent most of my time.’ Yang pertama, ‘first of all’ performing basic medical procedures.
S : Melakukan prosedur medis yang sangat dasar ‘Performing basic medical procedures.’ [their answers overlapped with the teacher’s]
NR : Melakukan prosedur medis yang sangat dasar ya. Apa lagi setelah itu? ‘Performing basic medical procedures. What else next?’
S : Berkomunikasi dengan pasien ‘Communicating with patients’
NR : Very good. Communicating with patients and family members. Kemudian, apa lagi? ‘What else?’
S : Mengumpulkan informasi ‘Collecting information’
NR : Ya, ‘yes’ collecting required information from them. Terus apa lagi ‘what else’ in addition?
S : Administrasi obat-obatan ‘drug administration’
According to the interview with Mrs. NR, she used Indonesian translation because she wanted to make the students less struggle with language and content learning at the same time. She also used the translation method to validate and verify the students’ understanding of the English text. Although the purpose of doing such concurrent translation is to help the students understand, teachers should recognize that such a teaching method reduces the time for students to practice English and even fails to trigger their conscious learning. This idea is affirmed by Wright (2015) who explains that concurrent translation is not effective primary language support for bilingual or multilingual students. Write further defines repetition of reading or instruction sentence by sentence or line by line in students’ home language and the second language is also considered as concurrent translation. He considered the method fails to meet the needs of students to learn the second language, and it also interferes with the second language learning.

“In the survey, I also asked them about instructions. Which language they are more comfortable having in the class. Let’s say I put an option of only English or only Bahasa Indonesian or the mix of English and Bahasa Indonesia. The dominant answer for this question is they want me to use both English and Indonesian about instructions. I think some students have some trouble understanding the English part. That’s why they want me to explain to them in Bahasa Indonesia. That’s why I think why I put some Indonesian instructions during my classes. What makes me think using that? I guess in the most part, it’s because the content area is a little heavy for them, so I don’t want them to struggle, and maybe because I want to confirm to them like some of them understand the English part, but I also want them you know validate and confirm that their understanding or interpretation about the English part is correct. That’s why using Indonesian translation.” (Interview with NR)

While teachers concurrently translate her sentences, students will be confined to receiving the target language. They will put little effort into using the second language since they know that their teachers will provide the lesson in their home language than in English. Legarreta (1997) reveals an enduring practice of concurrent translation among bilingual teachers, resulting in ineffective language learning. She found out that teachers use home language almost in 70% of the classes and in giving announcements, acknowledging students’ contribution to the class, and correcting students’ errors. Students kept choosing very similar word choices when responding to the teachers. Most importantly, the teachers dominate the classroom talk over the students. She concluded that concurrent translation does not facilitate balanced inputs both in the home language and second language. Earlier to Legaretta’s work, Ulanoff and Pucci (1993) investigated the effectiveness of concurrent translation and preview-review methods among third graders. In the preview review, the teacher introduced the lesson in students’ home language and explained the lesson in the second language. All of the students were taught by the same teacher during the intervention. This study showed vocabulary acquisition was better performed by students taught with preview-review than with concurrent translation. Furthermore, they kept the vocabulary far longer through preview review. In the same way, as in my observation, the concurrent translation method makes students concentrate more on receiving the home language inputs rather than English. Moreover, students will not function their receptive language skills effectively since what they read in English is articulated in another language, thereby resulting in the incongruity of language inputs. Lastly, this method seizes students’ autonomy to become passive in that teacher’s talk predominates the class. As a result, peer-to-peer activities are not maximized. Seltzer and Celic (2012) proposed a guide to trans languaging pedagogical approaches for educators. One of the guides that I consider important to build effective primary language support is how teachers provide different resources in students’ home language that are relevant to the discussion before students engage in English.

3.8 Implications

The observational study contributes to knowledge of the realities of the classroom and pedagogy. By understanding the weakness and strengths of the method and approach used, teachers can be more considerate to choose more effective principles accordingly. This study also provides insights related to aspects that teachers can teach bilingual students from the cognitive approach; types of activities to accommodate students’ needs for English in a certain field of knowledge; things to avoid when handling bilingual learners; and some improvements on pedagogical practices for bilingual learners.

Furthermore, it also clarifies some key impacts of the application of the cognitive approach and some traditional methods such as direct instruction, audiolingual, and concurrent translation methods on teacher and students’ participation in the classroom activities. Knowing that the approach and methods are less effective to
gauge interactions between peers, teachers could come up with a communicative language teaching (CLT) method to enhance cooperative learning among students. Besides, this study expects that a translanguaging pedagogical approach and sheltered instructions could be a better option for bilingual learners to attain the balance of academic and linguistic needs in both languages. When giving primary language support, we could avoid concurrent translation and choose another method such as preview-review to activate students’ second language acquisition.

Evidence suggests collecting data on sociolinguistics and socio-economic status of the students is important before conducting teaching. It helps teachers understand the influence of these factors on the students’ second language acquisition and plan their feedback carefully. The two factors would let teachers be more conscious of taking strategies that manage interactions between students’ home language and the second language. It is important to give students a specific time to trans-language or do cross-linguistic transfer to support their learning as long as teachers still use standards-aligned instructions.

Some instructional strategies and scaffolds are essential for bilingual learners to grasp abstract concepts and transfer their knowledge in the first language to the second language. Steps to be taken are activating background knowledge, teaching linguistic rules, providing multilingual and multicultural resources before starting the lesson, and others. Thus, variations in the strategies and scaffolds which promote both individual and collaborative learning are required to improve peer interactions and access to perspectives in different languages.

In short, this study portrays the real teaching practice of applied English class in a nursing program and contributes to how the government and the university plan future training programs for bilingual teachers and formulate university-level policies regarding multilingually/bilingually relevant teaching. It is important to note that bilingual education warrants attention from all stakeholders. The government and the university should provide adequate resources such as training for language teachers, books in both languages, a bilingual environment, and policies on the use of languages.

4. Conclusion

This study revealed cognitive approach was the most dominant approach used in the applied English class, causing the teacher to control with learning with drillings and overcorrection. Instructional strategies used only involve individual tasks and direct instructions through recasting, repeating, and imitating standard English pronunciation. In this sense, overcorrection and a sense of non-acceptance of other varieties of English spoken by the students were much centralized. With direct instruction, audio-lingual method, and concurrent translation method mostly employed, students were offset in the center of the class. Hence, students’ involvement was lacking. Although the teacher ensconced students’ understanding by translating the second language to their home language, there was no point that bilingual learners could receive and retain inputs in the second language effectively. To sum up, principles of language teaching and learning warrant teachers’ awareness of sociolinguistics of the students, clear plans to content and language objectives, and techniques to achieve both objectives with accommodative bilingual approaches to avoid fall-off of students’ uptake in the target language. Moreover, teachers need to understand that the socio-economic status of the students may influence their quality in language learning.

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