

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section provides a general description of the content of the current research, which is divided into several parts.

A. Background

The current study aims to explore how teachers' beliefs shape the implementation of bilingual education for young learners, as these beliefs are able to influence teaching practices. Regardless of the hurdles like misalignment between school instruction and home use that can impact the consistency of bilingual education implementation (Setyaningsih & Haryati, 2025), it still can not change the fact that in this globalization era, bilingual education in young learners' schools is becoming more relevant (Fajeri & Samsuri, 2025). Those reasons are the urgency for which this research was conducted.

The increasing prominence of bilingual education in early childhood stems from its potential to bolster linguistic proficiency. Early bilingual learners grow significantly in the receptive and productive lexicon, showing advanced vocabulary acquisition and language processing skills (Leotta, 2023). The other potential is that bilingualism can develop cognitive skills, as retrieved from studies demonstrating improved attention control and problem-solving abilities in bilingual children. These cognitive benefits emerge as children navigate the dual linguistic systems (Moreno & Paz-Albo, 2020). Additionally, bilingual children in dual-language environments demonstrate enhanced proficiency in their second language while maintaining their native language fluency (Niklas et al., 2018). Bilingual education can help young bilinguals excel in acquiring additional languages and perform better on language and grammar tasks, provided their bilingual development is adequately supported by educators (Hopp et al., 2019). Those potentials certainly could take part in assist students to cope their next academic level in the future later.

Likewise, bilingual education could be a huge benefit for young learners learning. Structured bilingual education programs can cultivate fluency in both their native language and English, facilitating academic success and cultural awareness. Bilingual education likewise enables young learners to connect more deeply with diverse cultures and communities. Learners gain greater cultural awareness and social

integration skills through bilingual instruction, which helps bridge gaps between home and school environments (Kulenović, 2021). Bilingualism also enriches children's perspectives by exposing them to diverse ways of thinking and communicating, reinforcing their adaptability and empathy in multicultural settings (Jawad, 2021). Students with bilingual ability have a chance to engage properly with people from different backgrounds, utilizing their ability in language and cultural awareness.

Despite its advantages, bilingual education is not without challenges. The success of bilingual programs depends on teacher proficiency, classroom quality, and parental support (Djahimo & Indahri, 2018). Moreover, addressing socioeconomic disparities and ensuring access to high-quality bilingual instruction are essential for achieving equitable outcomes (Ruan, 2022). Without recognizing inequality in society and the background that supports the sustainability of bilingual education directly or indirectly, it could result in defects in learning.

In Indonesia, bilingual education has undergone several changes over the years. After the discontinuation of the International Standards School program in 2015 (Mahmud, 2020), efforts were made to re-implement bilingual programs, particularly with an emphasis on content-based instruction in subjects such as physical education and the arts (Masduqi & Subiyanto, 2020). Despite its cognitive and academic benefits, bilingual education still faces challenges, including the selection of appropriate teaching methods and maintaining consistency in second language instruction (Insani et al., 2024). Although not universally adopted, bilingual education continues to be implemented across various educational levels in Indonesia (Ling Ling et al., 2024). Supporting multilingual learners requires strategies such as active practice and sustained dedication to both languages (Insani et al., 2024). These ongoing adjustments demonstrate that bilingual education is preserved for its advantages, despite the challenges it encounters, with solutions continually being developed.

Subsequently, the beliefs that teachers hold are not less important factors that influence their teaching practices and students' learning processes. The beliefs that are formed as a result of these experiences are influenced by both personal and social factors (Luo & Restall, 2020), in addition to having a significant impact on the implementation of educational reforms (Lazdina & Daga-Krumina, 2023). Through teachers' beliefs, effective and good learning depends on how the teacher views it.

In that case, the current study researches one of the primary schools in Bekasi, West Java, Indonesia that implements bilingualism in its education. Several registered students were found to have no background at all in English. To overcome that situation, the elementary school where the students studied performs the material in two different languages: the mother tongue, Indonesian, and English. Therefore, the school is applying the bilingual system in its education. The bilingual program encompasses some points, which are on every Tuesday and Thursday the students have to speak English, then the teachers have to begin and close the learning in English, also every student have to ask for permission to the teacher in English, in addition, there is English supplementary for *Matematika* (maths) and *IPA* (science) lessons, namely maths champion, and science.

Hence, the urgency for choosing the school studied is that this school has established a bilingual program, although the age of the students is still relatively young, and how the teachers registered at the school view and respond to the program, since recognizing the positiveness of bilingual education in the field of young learners makes it important to intensify and maximize the quality of learning wherever possible to achieve, specifically with young learners.

Previous studies have demonstrated the advantages of bilingual education for young students. A study from Creed et al. (2024) states that bilingual education improves academic, sociocultural, and linguistic outcomes, promoting inclusivity and equity in classrooms in South England. Meanwhile, the current study focuses on bilingual education specifically in a private primary school in Indonesia. The second study from Agostini (2021) states that early bilingual education fosters creativity, fluency, and flexible thinking in young learners. Meanwhile, the current study, in addition to the advantages of bilingual education, also discusses the disadvantages and their solutions in implementing the program. Also, there is research that discusses concerns about potential challenges for young learners through the previous research studies (Anjarini et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the current study explores how bilingual education is executed through the teachers' lenses.

B. Research Question

This research includes the following questions:

What are the teachers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral beliefs of teaching bilingual classes in primary school?

C. Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is customized with the research question above, which is:

To explore teachers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral beliefs of teaching bilingual classes in primary school.

D. Research Significances

This research holds significant theoretical and practical importance. By investigating the positive impacts of bilingual education on early English language acquisition, the following points highlight the research's significance:

1. Theoretical Significance

This research is expected to contribute by providing valuable insight for the readers in bilingual education for young learners' through a case study research design. Additionally, the findings of this research could provide valuable insight for educators in developing effective education programs to support learners' overall academic performance and personal growth.

2. Practical Significance

For this context, the findings of this research are expected to evaluate how bilingualism could influence learners' linguistic proficiency and enhance their cognitive skills. Also, to convey the awareness for educators to optimize their learning strategies in support of young learners. Moreover, learners could not only become proficient in English without compromising their native language, but also be able to understand general subjects in school with a good and thorough grasp.

E. Research Scope

This research specifically focuses on exploring the implementation of bilingual education for young learners through the lens of teachers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral beliefs, which encompass their knowledge, attitudes, and actual instructional practices in the classroom. The participants of this study are limited to four 4th-grade homeroom teachers at a private Integrated Islamic Elementary School (SDIT) in Bekasi City, West Java, Indonesia, who were purposefully selected due to their direct involvement in the school's bilingual program across various subjects. As a qualitative case study, this research is strictly bounded by the experiences and perceptions of the selected teachers within this specific institutional setting, aiming to provide a focused and in-depth understanding of the "teacher's lens" in a bilingual primary education context.

F. Conceptual Framework

This section provides an overview of the research to be conducted by outlining the connections among the concepts studied. The conceptual framework comprises the logical conceptualization of the complete research endeavor. A conceptual framework is a metacognitive, reflective, and operational component of the entire research process; hence, it is said to be a logical conceptualization (Kivunja, 2018). It serves as the foundation that guides the study's design and interpretation, ensuring coherence between research questions, methodology, and theoretical perspectives.

In academic settings, young learners are children whose capacity to regulate their feelings and behavior is still evolving (Moon, 2005). When learning is centered around their interests and feelings, young learners are more likely to feel included and are very active in social situations (Almalti, 2018). This means teachers should create lessons that connect with their emotions and curiosity, making learning feel natural and exciting for them.

Meanwhile, a bilingual education is the practice of teaching academic content in two languages to promote competency in both while attending to students' cognitive and social needs (Do Nascimento & Rauen, 2025). Aside from combining language learning with academic content, bilingual education also necessitates cultural understanding and continuous teacher training (Badwan, 2022). Furthermore, schools that implement bilingual education typically employ an approach called CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), which serves as a powerful pedagogical approach in bilingual education, simultaneously fostering both content mastery and second language acquisition (Pérez-Cañado, 2021). Ultimately, bilingual education plays a crucial role that not only builds students' linguistic and academic abilities but also nurtures cultural awareness, making it a holistic approach to learning in this era.

Then, the term "belief" frequently refers to subjective knowledge that might have an affective component and is impacted by social circumstances and individual experiences (Furringhetti & Pehkonen, 2002). Teachers' approaches to critical pedagogy and language practices are influenced by these concepts (Nirmal & Ihsan, 2024). Individual experiences, situational settings, and support systems comprise such factors that influence belief (Lou & Restall, 2020). Additionally, in the classroom context, teachers' reflectiveness and perceptions of contextual circumstances influence

how they apply their opinions and embrace curriculum innovations (Lou & Restall, 2020). According to his Theory of Planned Behavior, Ajzen (1991) distinguishes three aspects of beliefs: behavior beliefs, norm beliefs, and control beliefs. These aspects demonstrate how beliefs serve as cognitive conditions that impact intention and, ultimately, conduct (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, understanding teachers' beliefs is essential for predicting their instructional choices and shaping effective educational practices.

So, it is essential to recognize teacher competency, high classroom quality, and strong parental engagement as challenges to create a firm foundation that supports the linguistic and academic growth of students in the bilingual program (Djahimo & Indahri, 2018). Bilingual program and education can not be implemented well without any preparation; factor like excellent teachers with competency, good classroom quality, and parental involvement is needed to accomplish the program.

G. Previous Studies

The importance of bilingual education, particularly for young learners, has been a focal point of numerous research efforts. For instance, Trebits et al. (2021) conducted quantitative research investigating the relationship between early bilingual immersion, socioeconomic status (SES), and cognitive development among primary school students. Using repeated measures ANOVA and regression analysis as research instruments, they found that immersion school students significantly outperformed their peers in English proficiency and cognitive measures. The study also indicated that bilingual immersion may reduce SES-related disparities in language learning and cognitive outcomes.

The other study is by Creed et al. (2024), which employed semi-structured interviews followed by thematic analysis to explore teachers' perspectives on bilingual education in England's free schools. The study identified four superordinate themes: Academic and Socio-Cultural Effects, Privilege in Bilingual Education, Bilingual Education Takes Time, and Special Educational Needs. Their findings underscored the academic, socio-cultural, and linguistic benefits of 50:50 immersion programmes, while also emphasizing the need for equity in bilingual education.

Another study by Mak et al. (2023) investigated parental perceptions of bilingualism among low-income immigrant families (Mexican American and Chinese

American) using parental interviews, shared reading frequency logs, and oral proficiency assessments of 132 dual language learners (DLLs). The study revealed that positive parental beliefs toward bilingualism were positively correlated with children's home language oral proficiency, highlighting the importance of family involvement in maintaining bilingual development.

Even though many research studies have discussed bilingual education, it is still possible to have shortcomings. Such a review study of prior research studies by Anjarini et al. (2020) that conducted a systematic literature review to examine the advantages and challenges of bilingual education in Indonesia, particularly in the early childhood context. Their review included research employing models such as transitional bilingual education (TBE) and two-way immersion (TWI), concluding that despite concerns over cognitive burden, bilingualism generally provides cognitive and linguistic benefits for young learners.

The last research is from Hadiyanti & Yolanda (2020) that explored prospective teachers' beliefs in Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) through a questionnaire, lesson plan analysis, and teaching performance video review. Their findings indicated inconsistencies between teachers' stated beliefs and their actual classroom practices, suggesting the need for greater awareness and alignment of beliefs in teacher education programs.

While these studies provide important insights into bilingual education and the role of beliefs, most of them either focus on cognitive and academic outcomes (Trebitts et al., 2021; Creed et al., 2024) or on parental and prospective teacher beliefs (Mak et al., 2023; Hadiyanti & Yolanda, 2021). However, few studies have examined in-service teachers' beliefs in the specific context of young learners' bilingual education within integrated Islamic elementary schools, particularly in Indonesia. Furthermore, the interplay between teachers' beliefs, socio-cultural contexts, and bilingual instructional practices remains underexplored. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by exploring teachers' beliefs on young learners' bilingual education through a case study approach. Furthermore, the interplay between teachers' beliefs, socio-cultural contexts, and bilingual instructional practices remains underexplored. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by exploring teachers' beliefs on young learners' bilingual education through a case study approach.