Environmental Management in SD Alam Al Fath’s Bilingual Program: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

In the modern era, bilingual competencies not only enhance job opportunities and international collaboration but are also critical for effective environmental management in educational programs. Thus, environmental management of bilingual programs must be thoroughly examined and well-implemented. This article analyzes the policies and implementation of environmental management, along with influencing factors, at SD Alam Al Fath in Jambi City. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method developed from an interpretive paradigm. Through interviews, observations, documentation, and interactive analysis using Miles & Huberman’s approach, it is concluded that the environmental management of the bilingual program at SD Alam Al Fath in Jambi City is implemented through a well-structured series of daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly activities. There are five main supporting factors for these activities and three hindering factors: time constraints in the school environment, the lack of some supporting facilities, and various levels of language proficiency. This study suggests that student categorization can improve the effectiveness of bilingual programs in schools and similar programs elsewhere. However, if there is no possibility, inductive and expository strategies with direct and cooperative learning approaches could be preferred to improve the Arabic and English language proficiency of heterogeneous learners.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Bilingual or even multilingual competencies are critical domains every learner must master to access various global resources. Furthermore, the digital communication phenomenon, one of the indicators of the Society 5.0 era, has encouraged individuals from different cultural backgrounds and countries to communicate easily for multifarious purposes (Alencar, 2020; Nordesjö et al., 2022), such as business and education. In the educational context, several studies show that learners who can

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communicate in various foreign languages have a greater opportunity to enhance intercultural understanding and broaden their educational access (Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Albantani & Madkur, 2019; Lou & Noels, 2019). Learners can acquire new knowledge and communicate with people from diverse cultures through bilingual and multilingual competencies (Dhokare et al., 2023; Frigolé & Tresserras, 2023). Chang & Suparmi’s study on the widespread misunderstandings among parents concerning bilingual education for children reveals that the ability to speak two languages aids children in developing robust language skills and executive functioning simultaneously (Chang & Suparmi, 2022). Likewise, Failasofah et al. (2022) describe that bilingual skills in education can positively influence the improvement of learners’ cognitive functions. Van Laar et al. (2020) also convey a similar idea through their study, proving that mastery of language skills beyond a first language (L1) or mother tongue is one of the dominant aspects that can support people to have more chances to get jobs in the modern era. Therefore, schools as educational institutions have an important responsibility to respond to this issue by enhancing the bilingual skills of every learner. The paragraph above highlights the critical role of bilingual and multilingual competencies in global communication and education. However, despite recognizing the importance of such competencies, a considerable knowledge gap exists in understanding the specific challenges and effective strategies for developing bilingual skills within educational settings, especially in bilingual environmental management and inclusive education. Several studies could be categorized into two domains. First, research that analyses how educational institutions can systematically enhance learners’ bilingual abilities and address potential obstacles (Lyu, 2022; Öztürk et al., 2023; Ramandasis & Xinogalos, 2023). Moreover, there needs to be more comprehensive insights into the most effective pedagogical approaches that can encourage bilingualism and multilingualism in students across diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Second, the study focused on how bilingualism was implemented in formal teaching and learning processes without consent in non-formal activities outside of the classroom (Rowan et al., 2021; Scherzinger & Brahm, 2023; Widiantari et al., 2023). Understanding the knowledge gap in this area is essential for educators, policymakers, and researchers to design targeted interventions and curriculum enhancements that maximize bilingual education’s potential benefits.

This research directly addresses these gaps by exploring the environmental management in bilingual programs from the point of view of non-formal learning activities and the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Consequently, two fundamental questions were addressed. First, how does Sekolah Dasar (Elementary School) SD Alam Al Fath in Jambi implement learning management to realize an ideal bilingual environment? This question provides an in-depth description of how SD Alam Al Fath in Jambi carries out the processes of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling the bilingual environment to achieve foreign language competency for each student. Second, what factors influence the implementation of this bilingual environment management? The second question seeks to identify and analyze various factors that support and inhibit the implementation of bilingual environment management. A comprehensive description of the ideal implementation of a bilingual environment will be obtained through these two formulations. It can serve as a prototype for other institutions to develop similar programs.

This research is critically important as it focuses on developing bilingual and multilingual competencies in the educational context. These competencies are necessary in the era of global communication and an increasingly digitally connected society (Society 5.0). With an understanding and mastery of multiple languages, learners gain broader access to global resources for business and educational purposes. Successfully addressing the knowledge gap related to the specific challenges and effective strategies in developing bilingual skills within educational settings holds significant implications. Education that enhances learners’ bilingual abilities not only strengthens cross-cultural and interpersonal understanding but also opens up more comprehensive opportunities for educational access. Furthermore, the research can provide deeper insights into the best environmental management to foster bilingualism and multilingualism, especially among students with diverse cultural and
linguistic backgrounds. The findings can be a foundation for developing more effective curricula and targeted interventions to enhance bilingual abilities in educational environments. This research can also help educators, policymakers, and researchers design better, more targeted solutions to maximize the potential benefits of bilingual education in the current global educational landscape.

2. METHODS

This research adopts the interpretivism paradigm with a qualitative approach and a case study method. A qualitative approach is ideal for exploring environmental management in bilingual programs due to its ability to captivate the contextual understandings and diverse perspectives of the stakeholders involved. This approach allows researchers to investigate in depth the complexity of language dynamics, cultural influences, and perceptions that shape environmental practices in the context of bilingual education. The qualitative approach was employed to understand the environmental management system within the bilingual program at SD Alam Al Fath Jambi. By a case study method and descriptive research model, the writers describe the environmental management system within the bilingual program and aim to explore its implementation and the supporting and inhibiting factors.

The study was conducted at SD Alam Al Fath Jambi from May to November 2023. The research subjects include the school principal, teachers, and students in grades V and VI. The research subjects were selected using a purposive sampling technique by considering several criteria. These subjects were selected based on their direct involvement and influence in shaping and implementing environmental initiatives within the educational setting. These stakeholders were chosen to provide diverse perspectives and insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating environmental education into a bilingual curriculum, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

Data collection techniques involve interviews with the school principal, teachers, and students to gain profound insights into implementing the bilingual program and the environmental management system. Direct observations within the school environment are conducted to observe practices related to the bilingual program and environmental management. Documentation encompasses collecting data from relevant documents such as school policies, bilingual program documents, and environmental management records. For more details, the types and techniques of data collection used in this study are shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection techniques</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>School Principal, Arabic and English teachers (4 teachers), Students in grades V and VI (10 students)</td>
<td>Descriptive data of the implementation of bilingual environmental management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Environmental management and the bilingual learning process</td>
<td>Direct observation data of environmental management and the bilingual learning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>School data, curriculum, student assessments</td>
<td>Supporting data for the implementation of bilingual environmental management</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Data analysis uses the Miles & Huberman interactive analysis technique. This approach allows the researcher to detail, categorize, and organize relevant findings regarding implementing the bilingual program and the factors influencing environmental management. The validity test in qualitative
research needs to be carried out, as explained by Moleong (2018, p. 56), through four criteria, which are: 1) credibility; 2) dependability; 3) transferability; and 4) confirmability. However, this research only utilized credibility and confirmability criteria to test the validity of the research data based on the triangulation technique. This technique serves to verify the validity of the data or information obtained by considering multiple points of view. This process aims to reduce the possibility of bias that may arise during data collection and analysis. In this study, the triangulation technique was applied through three different approaches: theory, method and expert triangulation. Theoretical triangulation involves comparing the research results with relevant theoretical perspectives to avoid the researcher’s individual bias in the findings or conclusions.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Concept of Bilingual Environmental Management at SD Alam Al Fath

This research was conducted at SD Alam Al Fath, located at Jl. Abdul Chatab No.65, Pasir Putih Village, South Jambi Subdistrict, Jambi City. Since 2004, SD Alam Al Fath has consistently used nature as a “teacher”. Using nature as a learning instrument should develop every child’s needs, including character education, adolescence, and a return to being an honest human. This school was one of the academic institutions that implemented bilingual teaching and learning, namely Arabic and English. The school also has bilingual programs to enhance the language skills of its students, supported by professional teachers in both Arabic and English.

Nature schools, in general, are formal institutions, some of which cover from playgroups to secondary schools. The education background at SD Alam Al Fath in Jambi refers to the national curriculum. However, it is further developed to create an enjoyable and inclusive educational environment for developing each child’s interests, talents, and potential. As the institution’s leader, Fenti knows that what they do with the school’s team goes against the current education approaches widely practiced in Indonesia. While in other schools, students follow the teaching methods of their teachers, nature schools do the opposite. The curriculum still refers to the national curriculum, but the learning methods differ.

SD Alam Al Fath also accommodates students with special needs, such as autism. According to Fenti, the school has several autistic students blended with other normal children. The goal is not to lose their normal spectrum; their progress is now visible. This school only allows 20 students in one class with two teachers to enhance the learning intensity. Through its vision, this school strives to shape individuals with leadership qualities for the progress of the nation and state. The school’s mission concerns serving role models and guides in shaping the children’s character, providing opportunities and encouragement for children to discover and develop their talents from an early age, and creating avenues for children to evolve into leaders. The school’s concern is strengthening students’ noble character, intelligence, and leadership qualities, aligning with utilizing nature as a teacher and an inclusive education atmosphere.

Based on an interview with Fajar, the Head of SD Alam Al Fath, the concept of bilingual environmental management in this school consists of several stages, starting from planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. In the planning stage, the school holds a schedule called the academic calendar. This academic calendar discusses upcoming activities such as Earth Day in April, Culture Day in August, the Al Fath Festival featuring and discussing students’ achievements, including language presentations at the end of the semester, and literacy week activities held from October 16-20.

During the implementation of Literacy Week activities, the focus is on showcasing students’ creations by presenting them in Arabic, English, and Indonesian. Typically, students create works such as books or clippings using recycled materials like newspapers, magazines, and more. This assignment allows students to choose themes that align with their talents and interests. The activity takes place...
throughout a full day in each class. All these activities naturally adhere to the established curriculum of the nature school.

Figure 1. Environmental bilingual program management at SD Alam Al Fath

Icha, an English teacher at SD Alam Al Fath, adds that during the Al-Fath Festival, students are typically asked to present their works using three languages: Arabic, English, and Indonesian. These works usually take the form of individually created books based on a predetermined theme that can be developed according to each student’s talent and interest. In this activity, students can apply and showcase their language skills in both Arabic and English.

In line with Icha, Januardi states that the bilingual program at SD Alam Al Fath is a systematic application for consistent communication between students and teachers and among students themselves. The implementation involves teachers routinely greeting students in both English and Arabic, including commencing and closing lessons using these languages. Students should use English and Arabic during bilingual lessons, even during breaks, except when inquiring about a specific lesson topic, where Indonesian may be used. The bilingual program at SD Alam Al Fath runs smoothly and actively, as evidenced by frequent communication in English and Arabic. During classroom sessions, if students can answer a teacher’s question, they receive a reward of additional points, motivating them to continue sharpening their language skills and applying them in daily life.

3.2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of the Bilingual Environmental Management Concept at SD Alam Al Fath

Based on interviews and observations, several supporting and inhibiting factors exist in implementing the bilingual environmental management concept at SD Alam Al Fath. Supporting factors include high motivation among students to learn English and Arabic, the presence of competent Arabic and English teachers (particularly one who is a graduate of an Islamic boarding school with valuable Arabic language teaching experience), full support from the school and the Al Fath foundation, demonstrated through language months and other language-related activities. Additionally, Arabic and English vocabulary is strategically placed in various locations to aid students in learning new words. Engaging teaching methods, such as incorporating music and projectors, further support the learning process.
It can be understood that at least five (5) main factors determine the success of implementing a bilingual environmental management program at *SD Alam Al Fath*. These factors include students’ motivation, teacher competence, school and foundation support, program effectiveness, and teaching methods. This issue was in line with various relevant studies that prove these five instruments positively impact successful learning processes (Fitriati & Farida, 2019; Hidayat et al., 2023; Sugianto, 2014). For example, Cheng’s research on the urgency of motivation for students. Through his investigation, he found that internal and external motivation significantly influence learning success and vice versa (Cheng, 2019). Meanwhile, regarding teacher competence and infrastructure, Sutrisno et al. (2023) stated that their roles are very strategic in improving the quality of education. Educational institutions that can facilitate the learning process well and enhance the competence of their educators will have many opportunities for success (Sutrisno et al., 2023). Similarly, with program effectiveness and teaching methods, some studies revealed that appropriate and varied teaching methods show a high energy level in the discourse of education and learning (Hung, 2012; Muñoz et al., 2022). Thus, any educational institution striving to create a bilingual or multilingual environment must consider these five components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting and Inhibiting Factors</th>
<th>Domain</th>
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<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching competence</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and foundation support</td>
<td>School principal and stakeholder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program effectiveness</td>
<td>School principal, teacher, and student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching method</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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Neglecting any aspect of these supporting factors can lead to failure to achieve the set goals. Bilingual and multilingual environments can only be easily created with serious efforts from various parties. In this regard, school and foundation support lay the foundation for success. Therefore, environmental management is a crucial aspect to consider when creating an effective bilingual and multilingual environment. Krisskoy & Rašković (2023) explained that a good bilingual environment is not only oriented toward teaching foreign languages to students, but also positively contributes to enhancing students’ cognitive abilities (Failasofah et al., 2022). Through this, it is hoped that every student can have active skills that can be used to participate in the development of the global world or what is currently often referred to as the era of Society 5.0.

Nevertheless, implementing bilingual environmental management in educational institutions, especially at the elementary level, such as *SD Alam Al Fath*, does not mean it is free from various inhibiting factors. During the implementation, several conditions that could weaken the program were identified in the research. One of them is the limitations of applying the bilingual program, which is confined to the school environment. Consequently, students tend to revert to Indonesian or local languages at home. The need for more facilities and resources to support the bilingual program,
including language laboratories and supplementary materials, poses another challenge. Additionally, more support from teachers of other subjects, due to varying proficiency levels in Arabic and English, is needed to implement the bilingual program.

Based on the description, it is evident that there are three hindering factors in the implementation of bilingual environmental management at SD Alam Al Fath. These factors include limitations in the school environment, additional facilities, and variations in proficiency levels in the focused program languages. Students primarily use Arabic and English within the school environment and switch to the local language upon returning home. In line with this, Rossell & Baker (1996) also expressed a similar concern, stating that time constraints at school are a major hindering factor for bilingual programs compared to schools with a boarding system. Educational institutions implementing a boarding system have the opportunity to enforce and control the implementation of bilingual programs more effectively (Asari et al., 2023). The lack of resources, such as limited language laboratories and variations in language proficiency levels among teachers and students, further compounds these limitations.

In light of these challenges, categorizing educators and students is necessary to enhance the effectiveness of bilingual environmental management. Grouping and forming teams for each student, often known as homogeneous, are essential to ensure the continuity of efficient learning. If not feasible, selecting methods and strategies for implementing bilingual management with the heterogeneous principle must be carefully studied and maximally applied (Mulyani & Sholeh, 2023). Empirically, some of the strategies and management of bilingual learning that can be applied are inductive and expository strategies. Through inductive strategies, materials can be started from specific topics directly related to learners’ lives and then continued to more general topics. This is intended as an effort to generalize the material to make it more suitable for the context of heterogeneous learners. Meanwhile, the expository strategy is intended so that learners do not find it too difficult to learn material that has not been understood. Both strategies need to be implemented through direct and cooperative learning approaches.

4. CONCLUSION

The bilingual program at SD Alam Al Fath Jambi was implemented in several stages, including curriculum planning, bilingual program planning, bilingual media facilities, Language Month activities, and the presentation of innovative works. Bilingual learning in English and Arabic is supported by competent teachers, including an Arabic language teacher who graduated from an Islamic boarding school with extensive experience in Arabic language education. Full support from the school, particularly the Al Fatah Foundation, is reflected in the organization of Language Month and other language-related activities. Placing Arabic and English vocabulary in various locations facilitates students’ understanding of new vocabulary. Engaging teaching methods, such as listening to music or using infographics, also contribute to learning.

On the other hand, inhibiting factors in bilingual learning at this school include the limitation of program implementation time only within the school environment. This results in students using Indonesian or local languages when they return home. Limitations in facilities and infrastructure, such as the need for more language laboratories and supporting books, also pose constraints. Limited support from other subject teachers in implementing the bilingual program is attributed to the varying proficiency levels in Arabic and English among some teachers.

Further research is expected to focus on efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the bilingual program by considering the implementation of new strategies that can overcome identified constraints, such as implementing methods and strategies based on student heterogeneity. Additional studies can explore the potential integration of technology in bilingual learning, strengthen teacher training in Arabic and English language proficiency, and examine the impact of using innovative teaching methods to enhance students’ language skills. Furthermore, the research could concentrate on analyzing the effects of Language Month and other language-related activities, as well as exploring
models of heterogeneous learning that can maximize the potential of each student to achieve optimal bilingual skills.

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