

## INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES IN BILINGUAL CLASSROOMS: A CLASSROOM OBSERVATION STUDY AT XIKOU BILINGUAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TAIWAN

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### Abstract

A classroom observation study at Xikou Bilingual Elementary School in Taiwan explored the instructional strategies applied in bilingual classes. The research findings highlight three key aspects of effective teaching in a bilingual classroom: the balanced use of Mandarin and English, the incorporation of media and games, and a persuasive student-centered approach. Observing the instructional strategies in bilingual classrooms offers insights into how teachers use certain approaches and media to support the students' learning process. The primary data collection methods for this study are classroom observations and teacher brief interviews which provide rich, contextualized data about how bilingual education is practiced in the classroom. It was found that the teacher effectively balances both languages, facilitating language acquisition while maintaining clarity in instruction. Multimedia tools such as videos and interactive games are used to engage students, enhance understanding, and promote active participation in lessons. The teacher also adopts a persuasive and supportive teaching style, motivating students and fostering a positive classroom environment. Through the observation, it is recommended to emphasize the importance of end-of-lesson reflection sessions in enhancing student engagement and retention. By allowing students 3-5 minutes at the end of each lesson to reflect on key learnings, challenges, or interesting aspects, the teacher encourages self-awareness and deeper learning. This reflective practice, whether through individual journaling or group discussions, provides valuable insights for both teachers and students, ultimately improving the overall learning experience.

*Key words: Bilingual education, instructional strategies, Mandarin and English, student engagement, reflective practice.*

### Introduction

Bilingual education is an instructional approach that teaches students content in two languages: their native language and a second language. The primary aim of bilingual education is to promote proficiency in both languages while enhancing students' literacy and cognitive skills. Experts emphasize its significance for cognitive development, cultural preservation, and fostering global competence, especially in our interconnected world. Bilingual education has a long history in many countries. Some countries in Asia have established traditions of multilingualism, while others have developed bilingual education programs in response to globalization. This approach not only fosters an understanding of languages and cultural perspectives but also offers students the cognitive, academic, and social advantages associated with being bilingual. Furthermore, bilingual education supports academic performance and enhances language abilities. It provides meaningful opportunities for students to engage with both languages and understand the subject matter delivered by their teachers.

Ofelia García (2009), a prominent scholar in bilingualism and multilingualism, describes bilingual education as a strategy that involves teaching students in two languages. García argues that bilingual education goes beyond merely learning two languages; it also recognizes and values the cultural and linguistic resources that students bring. She highlights the importance of bilingual education in affirming and celebrating students' cultural and linguistic identities while critiquing traditional views of bilingualism and advocating for more inclusive and context-aware approaches.

In Taiwan, bilingual education primarily involves Mandarin as the language of instruction, with English as the second language. This approach is implemented at various educational levels, from elementary schools to universities. Recently, Taiwan has been working towards creating a truly bilingual society where Mandarin and English coexist with local and indigenous languages. This initiative aims to cultivate a more inclusive and globally engaged population, strengthening connections between Taiwanese people and foreigners residing in Taiwan. By promoting both Mandarin and English, Taiwan seeks to improve communication and understanding between local residents and the international community, fostering a more interconnected society where locals and foreigners can connect, interact, and collaborate.

Xikou Bilingual Elementary School is an example of an institution applying bilingual education in Taiwan. The school integrates both Mandarin and English into its curriculum, reflecting Taiwan's broader vision of becoming a bilingual nation by 2030. Within this context, English has increasingly become a central part of the educational framework alongside the indigenous language of Mandarin. This shift brings both challenges and opportunities for teachers, highlighting the need for specific instructional strategies to effectively support bilingual students in mastering both languages while achieving academic success.

Despite the growth of bilingual education in Taiwan, there is still a need for a deeper understanding of the instructional strategies that best support bilingual learners in diverse classroom settings. Identifying effective strategies will enhance the teaching and learning process in bilingual classrooms. However, teachers often face challenges in balancing the demands of teaching both Mandarin and English, particularly when addressing students' varying levels of proficiency and creating an inclusive learning environment in bilingual classes.

The instructional strategies employed in bilingual schools can significantly influence students' language development, cognitive skills, and academic performance. In Taiwan, bilingual classrooms typically feature a combination of Mandarin and English, depending on the subject and grade level. While there has been a focus on developing bilingual policies and curriculum, less attention has been given to the specific instructional strategies used in the teaching and learning process within these bilingual classes.

This study will explore how teachers at Xikou Bilingual Elementary School uses particular teaching methods, resources, and classroom management techniques to address the challenges of facilitating bilingual learning. Located in Hualien County, Taiwan, Xikou Bilingual Elementary School serves local children in the community and offers a comprehensive primary education. This school is likely part of the Taiwan educational system, which emphasizes a well-rounded curriculum focused on core subjects and character development.

The primary goal of this study is to observe and analyze the instructional strategies used by teachers in the bilingual classrooms at Xikou Bilingual Elementary School. Specifically, the study aims to identify the strategies teacher applies to effectively teach the students in bilingual class, examine how these methods support students with varying proficiency levels in both languages, assess how teacher adapts her teaching styles to encourage engagement and mastery of content in both languages, explore the role of classroom resources, including materials and technology, in supporting bilingual education, and address the challenges teacher faces in managing a bilingual classroom along with her approaches to overcoming these challenges.

The study will address the following research questions: What instructional strategies are commonly used by teachers in bilingual classrooms at Xikou Bilingual Elementary School? How do these strategies support students' language development in both their first and second languages? What challenges do teachers encounter when implementing bilingual instructional strategies at the elementary level? This study contributes to the growing body of research on bilingual education by providing insights into the practical application of instructional strategies in elementary bilingual classrooms. The study will provide valuable feedback for teachers at Xikou Bilingual Elementary School. By focusing on the unique context of Xikou Bilingual Elementary School, this study offers an opportunity to understand how bilingual education is implemented in a specific cultural and linguistic context, where both Mandarin and English are essential for students' success in language skills.

Bilingual education has become a key feature of educational systems aimed at enhancing students' proficiency in languages while supporting their academic performance. In Taiwan, bilingual education is gaining traction, especially in elementary schools where English is increasingly recognized as an essential skill. This study examines existing research on bilingual education models, effective instructional strategies, and the challenges faced in bilingual classrooms.

Bilingual education can take various forms depending on educational goals, linguistic contexts, and student needs. There are two primary models: Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) and Dual-Language Immersion (DLI).

1. Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)

TBE programs aim to gradually transition students from their native language to the dominant language of instruction, which is often English in many global contexts. Initially, students are taught in their home language, with the second language introduced over time. According to Cummins (2000), this model seeks to develop proficiency in the second language. While TBE helps bridge the gap for students with limited proficiency in the second language, it faces criticism for possibly marginalizing students' native languages. García (2009) emphasizes that, although transitional models may enhance second-language proficiency, they risk undervaluing the students' cultural and linguistic heritage, an essential aspect of bilingual education.

2. Dual-Language Immersion (DLI)

DLI programs provide instruction in both the native language and the second language, aiming to develop bilingualism and biliteracy. This model is often implemented in educational settings where both languages hold significant value. Baker (2011) asserts that DLI programs are more likely to focus on both languages equally, enabling students to achieve high levels of literacy in both, thereby promoting bilingualism as an asset. Research on dual-language programs, such as that conducted by Howard et al. (2007), indicates that DLI can lead to higher academic achievement compared to traditional monolingual programs, especially when both languages are used as mediums of instruction rather than merely subjects to be learned.

Xikou Bilingual Elementary School uses both models to balance language development with cultural and academic content. Understanding these models enables researchers to identify instructional strategies that effectively support bilingual learners. Effective teaching strategies in bilingual classrooms involve a combination of methods that address both language development and content learning. Key strategies include scaffolding, code-switching, visual aids, and collaborative learning.

1. Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a teaching strategy where teachers provide temporary support to help students complete tasks that they cannot achieve independently. This technique is rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and guided learning in cognitive development. In bilingual classrooms, scaffolding may involve the use of visual aids, simplified language, or peer support to assist students in understanding complex concepts. Swain (2000) highlights that scaffolding provides language support, enabling learners to engage with academic content in their second language.

2. Code-Switching

Code-switching refers to the practice of alternating between two languages in the classroom. This strategy is significant in bilingual education, as it allows students to tap into their full linguistic repertoire. Gumperz (1982) defines code-switching as a natural phenomenon in bilingual interactions, where switching between languages helps clarify meaning and facilitate communication. Wei (2011) discusses how both teachers and students use code-switching to enhance comprehension, draw connections between languages, and create a welcoming learning environment.

3. Visual Aids

The use of visual aids such as charts, pictures, and diagrams is another common strategy in bilingual classrooms. Visual aids enhance language comprehension by providing context for students, especially when they may not fully understand spoken language. Snow (2010) argues that visual aids improve comprehension and learning in bilingual settings particularly for students who are still developing proficiency in the target language. In bilingual classes, visual aids can introduce new vocabulary and engage students who may struggle with verbal explanations alone.

4. Collaborative Learning

Promoting collaborative learning in bilingual classrooms is an established instructional strategy. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory suggests that students learn most effectively when they participate in cooperative activities, as these provide opportunities for social interaction and language practice. Pica (1994) explains that group work allows students to use language in meaningful contexts, thereby supporting their language development. In bilingual classrooms, collaborative learning enables students to work together, practice their second language, and support one another's learning.

Bilingual education has both strengths and challenges that must be addressed to provide meaningful and positive impacts for students. These challenges include gaps in language proficiency, cultural differences, and limited resources.

1. Language Proficiency Gaps

One of the most significant challenges in bilingual classrooms is the gaps in language proficiency among students. Cummins (2001) argues that students with strong proficiency in their first language (L1) are more likely to succeed in learning a second language (L2). However, in bilingual classrooms, some students may enter with limited proficiency in either language, making academic success more difficult. Addressing this gap often requires several instructional strategies such as differentiated teaching and individualized support.

2. Cultural Differences

Cultural differences can create additional challenges in bilingual classrooms. Students from diverse cultural backgrounds may have varying educational expectations, learning styles, and communication patterns. Nieto (2004) emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive teaching in bilingual classrooms to ensure that students' cultural identities are respected and integrated into the learning process. Teachers need to be sensitive to the differences and incorporate culturally relevant materials and activities into the curriculum.

3. Limited Resources

Many bilingual classrooms, particularly in developing countries, encounter challenges related to limited resources, such as a lack of bilingual materials, trained teachers, and teaching assistants. García and Wei (2014) point out that the availability of appropriate materials and support can significantly affect the quality of bilingual education. In some cases, the resources available, such as textbooks and teaching materials, may not adequately meet the needs of bilingual classrooms.

The sociocultural theory of learning, particularly the work of Vygotsky (1978), provides a solid theoretical framework for understanding how students learn in bilingual classrooms. This theory emphasizes the role of social interaction and language in cognitive development. In bilingual classrooms, social interaction and collaboration are essential for language acquisition. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories, particularly Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982), inform practices in bilingual education. According to Krashen, learners acquire a second language most effectively when they are exposed to language that is just

beyond their current level of proficiency but still comprehensible. García and Wei (2014) also discuss translanguaging as an important framework in bilingual classrooms. This approach encourages students to draw on their linguistic resources to understand content and engage in the learning process, effectively integrating the use of both languages in the classroom.

The pedagogical practice section in *The Bilingual Education Reader* by Ofelia García explains practical insights for teachers, particularly in bilingual class settings. One of the key practices is language interaction. Related to this research, it is important to highlight how teachers motivate students to use both languages in the learning process and how they interact in the classroom.

## **Research Method**

This study applies a qualitative observational design to explore the instructional strategies used in a bilingual classroom at Xikou Bilingual Elementary School in Taiwan. The research primarily focuses on how Mandarin and English are used as media of instruction and how the teacher's methods contribute to both language development and academic achievement in a bilingual setting. Through a combination of classroom observations and teacher interviews, this study seeks to examine how bilingual education strategies are implemented in a grade 3 classroom, with particular attention to the balance between languages, use of media resources, and student engagement. The research design aims to understand how the bilingual classroom operates in practice, providing insights into the teacher's instructional approach and how it fosters an interactive, student-centered environment that supports students' learning in both languages.

The qualitative observational method allows for an in-depth understanding of the teaching and learning process in a bilingual classroom. This approach is appropriate for investigating the complexity of bilingual education because it captures both observable teaching practices and the interactions between the teacher and students in real-time. Qualitative research emphasizes the interpretation of phenomena, making it particularly suitable for this study, which aims to examine how bilingual education is effectively delivered in the classroom.

The researcher focuses on the classroom dynamics involving these students as they engage with the teacher's strategies for learning both languages and academic content. The primary participant is the subject teacher, whose teaching methods and interactions with students are at the center of this study. The teacher is responsible for implementing the bilingual education curriculum and for creating an engaging classroom environment that balances the use of both Mandarin and English. The teacher's approach to managing student engagement, balancing languages, and incorporating media into lessons provides key insights into the effectiveness of bilingual instructional practices.

The primary data collection methods for this study are classroom observations and teacher brief interviews. These methods provide rich, contextualized data about how bilingual education is practiced in the classroom. The combination of these two methods enables the researcher to gather real-time information about the teaching process, as well as reflective

insights from the teacher about their instructional choices. The researcher observes the classroom in real time to document the teacher's instructional strategies and classroom interactions. Observations will focus on three key aspects:

1. Instructional Objectives

Observations will aim to identify the goals the teacher sets for each lesson, particularly regarding language development (both Mandarin and English) and academic content. The study will examine how the teacher structures lessons to achieve these objectives and how students interact with the content in both languages.

2. Teaching Practices

This area of focus will examine how the teacher employs various instructional strategies to facilitate student learning. Of particular interest is how the teacher balances the use of Mandarin and English in the classroom. The researcher will observe the teacher's ability to switch between the two languages to scaffold students' language acquisition and provide clarity in instruction. Additionally, the study will explore the use of multimedia resources (such as videos and interactive games) to support content delivery and engage students.

3. Classroom Interactions

Observing the interactions between the teacher and students, as well as among students themselves, is essential to understanding how language is used for communication and learning in a bilingual setting. The researcher will document how students engage with the content, how they participate in discussions, and how they use both Mandarin and English in their interactions.

A specific focus will be given to the teacher's use of media and interactive games, such as educational videos and classroom games like "Safe and Dangerous," to make lessons more dynamic and engaging. These tools are designed to not only reinforce the lesson content but also to motivate students and create an enjoyable learning experience.

In addition to classroom observations, brief interviews are conducted with the teacher before and after the observed lessons. These interviews will provide context for the observed teaching practices and offer the teacher an opportunity to reflect on their instructional choices and challenges. The combination of classroom observations and teacher brief interviews enables data triangulation, which enhances the depth of the findings. By comparing the direct observations of teaching practices with the teacher's reflective insights, the researcher can ensure a comprehensive understanding of how bilingual instruction is implemented in the classroom. The data collection process for this study emphasizes classroom observations and brief teacher interviews, with a strong focus on the observational component as its core element. The researcher's role as an observer provides an authentic view of how bilingual education strategies are enacted in real-time, ensuring that the data collected is rooted in the bilingual classroom environment.

Through direct observation, the researcher can document classroom interaction, including students' responses to instructional techniques and the effectiveness of the teacher in navigating between Mandarin and English to facilitate both language achievement and

content learning. Systematic observation allows the researcher to focus on how the teacher uses both languages and how students engage with the material. Particular attention will be given to code-switching, the practice of alternating between Mandarin and English as a strategy for making academic content more accessible. This technique is integral to bilingual education, and observing its application closely enables the researcher to evaluate its effectiveness in helping students to understand complex concepts while simultaneously developing proficiency in both languages.

Classroom observations also help identify patterns of student participation, collaboration, and interaction in both Mandarin and English. The researcher documents how students use both languages during lessons. The use of multimedia resources and interactive games, such as educational videos and “Safe and Dangerous” classroom games, are observed to assess how these tools contribute to student engagement and language development.

The combination of detailed observational data and teacher brief interviews create a strong dataset, enabling the researcher to provide an interpretation of how bilingual education unfolds in a real classroom setting. This methodological approach ensures that the study captures both the structural elements of bilingual instruction, such as language use and media resources, as well as the dynamic interactive elements, like teacher-student and student-student communication.

By integrating these data collection methods, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the challenges and successes of bilingual class, offering a deeper understanding of how bilingual instruction operates in practice. This method not only captures the teacher’s strategies and their impact on student learning but also enables the researcher to identify patterns, challenges, and effective practices within the bilingual education framework.

## **Results and Analysis**

The research study, titled “Instructional Strategies in Bilingual Classrooms: A Classroom Observation Study at Xikou Bilingual Elementary School, Taiwan,” examines the teaching practices of a third-grade teacher in a bilingual health education class. This study focuses on how the teacher balances instruction in both Mandarin and English to create a positive and engaging learning environment, helping students understand the material effectively. During the observation, several key themes emerged, highlighting the teacher’s effective use of bilingual strategies, interactive activities, adaptability to students’ emotional and physical states, and student-centered pedagogies. These practices significantly contribute to both the academic and linguistic development of the students, cultivating a rich and dynamic learning environment.

A fundamental aspect of effective bilingual education is the teacher’s ability to communicate clearly and support student understanding in both languages. In a bilingual classroom, especially one with students who have varying levels of proficiency in Mandarin and English, this balance is crucial. The teacher’s bilingual strategy, which involves alternating between Mandarin and English, allows students to access content while being immersed in both languages.

The "Safe and Dangerous" game required students to categorize various scenarios as either "safe" or "dangerous," prompting them to think critically and discuss safety in real-life situations. The interactive game like "Safe and Dangerous" is especially effective for younger learners, such as third-grade students, who are typically more energetic and may struggle to focus during traditional lectures. These games accommodate both kinesthetic and visual learners by incorporating movement and discussion. Additionally, the competitive aspect of the game helped capture students' attention and increase their motivation, as they were encouraged to participate and apply their knowledge in a fun and informal setting.

Games also promote social learning by encouraging students to collaborate, communicate, and learn from one another. This sense of community was essential in a bilingual classroom, where some students might feel insecure or anxious about their language skills. Engaging in activities like games can help reduce this anxiety, providing students with a safe environment to practice both their academic content and language skills in a relaxed context. This game-based approach ensured that students were not just passive recipients of information but were actively processing and applying their learning. Moreover, the competitive aspect of the game helped maintain students' attention and increased motivation, as students were encouraged to participate and apply their knowledge in a fun and informal setting. The teacher also provides room for discussion and interaction with the students after the game.

Another key aspect that emerged from the classroom observation was the teacher's ability to adapt her teaching methods to meet the emotional and physical needs of her students. She demonstrated a high level of awareness and responsiveness to students' behaviors, which is crucial for maintaining a positive learning environment. At one point during the lesson, the teacher noticed that the students seemed shy, tired, and lacked energy. Recognizing their physical and emotional states, she asked about their bedtime, which was a thoughtful question that addressed potential factors affecting their energy levels. By acknowledging and addressing these external factors, the teacher showed genuine concern for her students' well-being, fostering a sense of trust and safety within the classroom. Although the students initially appeared nervous, the teacher successfully attended to their emotional needs. This level of empathy is vital in bilingual classrooms, where students may experience additional stress or anxiety related to language barriers.

By creating a supportive environment and safe space, the teacher was able to reduce any potential tension or discomfort students might have felt about using English in front of their classmates. This approach helped maintain an atmosphere of emotional safety, essential for students to feel confident and willing to take risks in language use and participation. Moreover, the teacher adjusted her teaching pace to accommodate her students' needs. When she observed that they were tired or lacking focus, she slowed down the lesson, reducing the intensity. This flexibility in teaching style ensured that all students could follow along and remain engaged, regardless of their energy levels or emotional states.

The teacher successfully adjusted her teaching pace to meet her students' needs, integrating multimedia resources, such as videos, to enhance their learning experiences. In

bilingual classrooms, the use of videos can significantly improve students' language skills and comprehension by providing visual and auditory reinforcement of the lesson content. When the teacher noticed that the students appeared tired or lacking focus, she reduced the intensity of the lesson. Allowing them time to watch videos related to the topic is also helpful. Her teaching style and approach ensured that all students could follow along and remain engaged, regardless of their energy levels or emotional states. Additionally, the teacher provided extra support to those struggling with the content, ensuring that every student received the necessary scaffolding for success. This adaptability and responsiveness reflect a teacher-centered approach that prioritizes students' well-being.

Creating an emotionally supportive classroom environment increases students' likelihood of being engaged and focused, ultimately enhancing their learning outcomes. In the observed lesson, the teacher used videos to illustrate health concepts relevant to Taiwan, reinforcing the information taught through spoken language and offering students an additional mode of input. One video focused on safety in everyday school scenarios particularly in Taiwan, providing concrete examples of the concepts being discussed. Such videos not only engage students but also bridge the gap between theoretical learning and real-world applications. By observing safety in action, students could better understand the relevance of the lesson material to their own lives and share these learning experiences with their parents.

The multimedia approach also aimed at different learning styles. Some students might better understand and gain information visually, while others could respond more effectively to auditory input. By incorporating videos, the teacher addressed these diverse learning preferences, making lessons more accessible to a broader range of students. The engaging nature of videos helped sustain students' attention, motivating them to participate in discussions and activities. In addition to their visual appeal, videos exposed students to language use.

Through this observation, it is also important for the teacher to maintain a student-centered approach by allowing students to reflect on their learning. At the end of the lesson, time for students to share their thoughts on key takeaways, challenges faced, and aspects they found particularly interesting could be provided. This reflective practice is crucial for helping students consolidate their learning. Reflection activities enable students to consider what they have learned, how they have learned it, and which areas they may need to revisit. This process encourages self-awareness and promotes a growth mindset, where students see challenges and mistakes as opportunities for improvement. The teacher's emphasis on reflection will further reinforce the student-centered nature of the classroom, giving students a voice in the learning process and fostering ownership of their education. Moreover, these reflection sessions will serve as formative assessments, providing the teacher with valuable feedback on the student's understanding of the lesson. This information can be used to adapt future lessons better to meet students' needs, ensuring that instruction remains dynamic and responsive. The use of student reflection also encourage a collaborative learning environment, enabling students to share their thoughts and ideas, which facilitated peer learning and supported each other's understanding. This collaborative approach is particularly beneficial in a bilingual

classroom, where students may have varying levels of proficiency in the target language. Peer interactions will also provide additional language practice opportunities and help students build confidence in their language skills.

The overall classroom atmosphere observed during the lesson was warm and characterized by mutual respect and positive reinforcement. The teacher consistently provided encouragement and praise, helping to build the students' self-confidence and motivation. This environment is especially important in a bilingual classroom, where students may feel apprehensive about making mistakes in a second language. The teacher's approach to classroom management was characterized by empathy, patience, and flexibility. She recognized that bilingual learners often face unique challenges, such as language anxiety, cultural differences, and varying proficiency levels. By creating an emotionally supportive environment, the teacher allowed students to feel safe and secure, knowing that their contributions were valued regardless of their language ability. A major finding from the classroom observation was the effectiveness of interactive activities in engaging students and enhancing their learning outcomes. The use of games, such as the "Safe and Dangerous" activity, demonstrated how hands-on, experiential learning could make the class fun and engage the students with learning process. This kind of active learning and fun activity also contribute to increase student motivation, as it allows students to participate directly in the learning process rather than passively receiving information.

In bilingual classrooms, where students may occasionally face language barriers, engaging activities can effectively bridge the gap between content and comprehension. For instance, during the "Safe and Dangerous" game, the teacher presented a practical scenario in which students were tasked with categorizing various behaviors as safe or dangerous. This activity not only reinforced the lesson content but also provided a tangible context for students to apply their knowledge, making the learning experience more meaningful.

The teacher's use of such games demonstrates the effectiveness of interactive and participatory methods in creating an engaging and supportive bilingual classroom. These activities encouraged students to collaborate, ask questions, and share ideas, which not only enhanced their understanding of the content but also improved their social and language skills. The cooperative nature of these activities fostered a sense of community in the classroom, which is particularly important in bilingual education settings, where students may feel isolated or self-conscious about using a second language.

Interactive activities like games also meet the needs of different learning styles. Incorporating games and movement into lessons helped address these diverse needs, ensuring that all students had the opportunity to engage with the content in the most effective way for them. In this manner, the teacher's use of interactive learning activities fostered an inclusive learning environment where all students could thrive.

The integration of multimedia, including videos, was another key aspect of the teacher's instructional strategy. In bilingual classrooms, especially with younger students, visual and auditory resources significantly enhance comprehension and retention. The use of videos provided a multi-sensory learning experience that catered to both visual and auditory

learners. Videos also illustrated real-world examples that contextualized abstract concepts, making them more accessible and relevant to students' lives. For instance, the teacher can use videos to introduce health concepts, showcasing scenarios that students could relate to. This could involve illustrating safe and unsafe practices or presenting an animation which can attract the students. Videos will also reinforce content in both languages. By using videos in both Mandarin and English, the teacher will not only strengthen content knowledge but also offered additional exposure to language, allowing students to practice their listening and comprehension skills in the target language. This exposure is particularly crucial in bilingual classrooms, where students might not have the same level of English exposure outside of school.

Additionally, videos supported the learning process to maintain the attention and interest of students. Videos are dynamic, and engaging, and often include interactive components like quizzes or discussions, which increase student involvement. For example, after watching a video on safety practices, students could participate in the "Safe and Dangerous" game, applying the knowledge they had just acquired through the multimedia resource. This integration of technology into the lesson ensured that students remained actively engaged while reinforcing key learning objectives.

Furthermore, the use of multimedia supports the development of multiple literacy skills, which are crucial in a bilingual context. The teacher's strategic use of both spoken language and visual elements provided students with a richer linguistic and cultural experience. As students watched videos, they will be exposed to native speakers of both Mandarin and English, enabling them to experience the languages in various contexts.

This exposure is essential for fostering bilingual competence, as it helps students develop a more nuanced understanding of both languages, particularly regarding pronunciation, tone, and usage. Furthermore, the teacher's ability to create a positive and supportive classroom environment was a fundamental aspect of the observed teaching practice. Research has shown that students in bilingual settings benefit greatly from such an environment.

Additionally, the teacher's capacity to adjust her teaching approach based on her students' emotional states further contributed to the classroom's positive atmosphere. For instance, when she noticed that the students appeared tired or disengaged, she adapted her teaching methods to reinvigorate the class. This could include incorporating a short physical activity to break up the lesson or adjusting the pace of instruction to match the students' energy levels. This responsiveness to student needs demonstrated the teacher's commitment to fostering a learning environment where students felt valued, understood, and cared for.

In bilingual education, where students may feel self-conscious about speaking in their second language, such emotional support is especially important. The teacher's attentiveness to her students' emotional and physical needs helped create a classroom where students felt safe to speak, make mistakes, and learn at their own pace. By establishing this supportive environment, the teacher encouraged students to take ownership of their learning and develop the confidence needed to succeed in both languages.

Based on the observation, it is important to incorporate reflection sessions at the end of the lesson. These sessions can be a key component of the teaching strategy in the learning process. Reflection activities are crucial for helping students consolidate their learning and develop metacognitive skills. By providing students with 3-5 minutes to reflect on what they had learned, the teacher encouraged them to think about key concepts, the challenges they faced, and the areas they found interesting. This reflection process allowed students to internalize the lesson and gain a deeper understanding of the material.

Reflection is also vital for developing students' cognitive skills such as self-awareness, which are essential for becoming independent learners. Through reflection, students become more self-aware of their learning processes, helping them identify their strengths and areas for improvement. In bilingual education, where students may feel overwhelmed by the demands of learning two languages, reflection offers an opportunity for them to assess their own progress and set goals for their language development.

Moreover, incorporating reflection activities creates a dialogue between the teacher and the students, enabling her to gather feedback about the lesson. This feedback provides valuable insights into how students engaged with the material and which aspects of the lesson were most effective. The teacher can use this information to adjust her instructional strategies and tailor future lessons to better meet the needs of her students. This continuous process of reflection and feedback fosters a dynamic learning environment, where both students and the teacher are actively involved in the learning process.

This study demonstrates that effective bilingual education goes beyond merely teaching two languages. It requires a holistic approach that integrates diverse teaching strategies, fosters emotional and cognitive growth, and creates a positive and supportive classroom culture. By incorporating these strategies, the teacher at Xikou Bilingual Elementary School created a learning environment where students were able to thrive academically, socially, and linguistically. Based on the observation, it was found that:

1. Instructional Objectives

It is important for teachers to set clear learning objectives based on the key points of the curriculum guidelines which also helps to clarify expectations for both teachers and students.

2. Teaching Practices

Based on the lesson plan, the key points of teaching practice include the design of instructional activities, a variety of teaching strategies, and learning tasks that provide students with opportunities for hands-on experience, practice, reflection, presentation, discussion, or integration. However, based on the observation, the students did not get a chance for reflection. Through this study, at the end of the class, it is suggested that the teacher have a 3-5 minute reflection session with the students to review the class. The students can be encouraged to write and share their reflections in both languages and to share with the teacher and classmates the key takeaways from today's class. This could provide space for both the teacher and students to reflect together and listen to the learning outcomes.

### 3. Classroom Interactions

It is observed that the teacher uses cross-linguistic communication strategies to help students understand the learning content. The teacher also interacts with the students and gives space to the students to interact with their classmates.

## Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the instructional strategies used in the bilingual classroom at Xikou Bilingual Elementary School in Hualien County, Taiwan. Through classroom observations, the study identified several key strategies that contribute to effective teaching and learning in a bilingual environment where both Mandarin and English are used as languages of instruction, enhancing students' linguistic and cognitive development in an immersive educational setting. The findings suggest that the teacher applies a balanced use of Mandarin and English, incorporates media and interactive games, and adopts a student-centered, persuasive instructional style to create a dynamic and supportive learning environment. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of fostering student engagement through reflection and collaborative activities in the teaching and learning process, ensuring that both linguistic and cognitive skills are developed effectively in a bilingual context.

A central finding of this study is the teacher's effective balance between Mandarin and English in the classroom in order to make students understand the content. This dual-language approach ensures that students are regularly exposed to both languages in a manner that facilitates their language acquisition. The teacher continuously alternates between the two languages, using Mandarin for clarity and instructional purposes while introducing English to enhance language proficiency and provide students with real-life language exposure. This balance not only helps students understand lesson content but also offers them plenty of opportunities to practice both languages in meaningful contexts. By providing clear instructions in Mandarin and additional language exposure through English, the teacher fosters students' confidence in their bilingual abilities while ensuring that both language skills are developed.

The teacher's use of multimedia resources, including videos and interactive games, plays a significant role in enhancing the learning experience. These media tools serve multiple purposes, support the understanding of lesson content, make learning more engaging, and create a more interactive classroom atmosphere. For instance, videos introduce concepts reinforcing the bilingual environment of the classroom. Interactive games, such as the "Safe and Dangerous" activity, allow students to actively participate in the lesson, making the learning process more enjoyable and hands-on. These multimedia tools also address different learning styles, providing a varied and rich learning experience for all students and ensuring that lessons are both accessible and motivating.

Another important observation is the teacher's student-centered and persuasive approach to instruction. The teacher employs strategies that encourage active participation and student engagement, creating a positive and supportive classroom environment where

students feel comfortable taking risks and expressing themselves. The use of positive reinforcement and encouragement helps motivate students to engage with the content and stay focused on the task at hand. This supportive atmosphere fosters a sense of safety and self-confidence, which is essential for language learners, particularly in a bilingual setting where students may feel apprehensive about using a second language. The persuasive approach helps build rapport with students and promotes a learning environment where they feel valued and encouraged.

The observations also highlight the teacher's attentiveness to students' individual needs and adaptability in their instructional methods. The teacher can modify strategies based on students' responses and ensure that varying levels of language proficiency are addressed. This flexibility guarantees that all students receive the support they need, regardless of whether they are more proficient in Mandarin or require additional help with English.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of reflection sessions at the end of lessons. The teacher can allocate 3 to 5 minutes at the conclusion of each lesson for students to reflect on key takeaways, challenges, and interesting aspects of the lesson. This reflection time will serve as an effective way for students to consolidate their learning, deepen their understanding, and reinforce what they have learned. Additionally, it will provide valuable feedback for the teacher, who gains insights into students' learning experiences, enabling adjustments to future lessons. This process will also encourage self-awareness in students, promoting metacognitive skills that help them become more independent learners.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that effective bilingual education in the classroom involves more than just balancing two languages. The teacher's ability to integrate multimedia resources, foster an engaging classroom environment, and use student-centered instructional strategies is essential to the success of bilingual education. This research contributes to the understanding of how bilingual instructional practices can be implemented in ways that not only help students develop their language skills but also enhance their overall academic achievement and engagement. The teacher's reflective practices and adaptability in addressing student needs further highlight the importance of creating a flexible and supportive learning environment that prioritizes both language development and overall growth.

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