

Analysis of the Efficacy of SEMLM in the Learning System in Indonesia

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Abstract: The aim of this research project is to determine whether Indonesian high school students can understand both English and Chinese well through the Simultaneous English–Mandarin Learning (SEMLM) model. This need for two-language competence arises from a global context in which English is the dominant language of science and international communication; yet Mandarin is becoming more visible in Southeast Asia due to geographical changes driven by China’s economic and political awakening. Traditional language teaching in Indonesia has prioritised English, or else has various foreign languages simply following one another, leaving no chance for comprehensive bilingual development among our children. It was a mixed-method study conducted at three schools in Jakarta and Bandung. Data were collected using standardised assessments (Cambridge PET, HSK Level 2), classroom observation and interviews with teachers and students. The study found that simultaneous learners showed improvements in both languages that were more balanced and deeper than those of students following a sequence, with effect sizes of 0.83 for English and 0.76 for Mandarin. Qualitative data from students’ language strategies reveal that they actively applied methods across languages, such as comparing grammars between Mandarin and English, code-switching, or translanguaging, to understand a particular concept more deeply without their minds being overloaded. Supported by cross-linguistic transfer, cognitive interdependence theory, and research on optimal cognitive load management, the study’s screen reveals that it is possible to integrate both languages into a single instructional model. The students may, in fact, fare better metalinguistically, staying alert and responding more quickly. The study also recommends long-term research, the adaptation of digital teaching materials, and broader teacher training to ensure the sustainability of this model across different educational contexts.

Keyword: Model, Learning, Education, English, Mandarin, Indonesian, Acquisition, Language

Introduction

As globalisation speeds up in the Asia-Pacific, Indonesians want to master both English and Mandarin. English serves as the language of science, research, and business. Mandarin is growing in importance as China expands its influence in Southeast Asia (Jiang, 2019). English proficiency is high in some regions of Indonesia. However, provinces such as East Nusa Tenggara

and Papua show lower proficiency levels, largely due to unequal educational resources (British Council, 2023). Indonesia's Mandarin programs are also growing. Many 'national plus' and private schools, such as Sinarmas World Academy in Tangerang, now offer Mandarin with English and Bahasa Indonesia (Wikipedia). This dual demand brings both opportunities and challenges. There is a need for bilingual (English and Mandarin) teaching models that match the linguistic, cognitive, and cultural backgrounds of Indonesian students (Hamied, 2012).

Current models of bilingual or multilingual education often introduce languages one after another or use a dual-immersion approach, such as a 50/50 timetable. But when English and Mandarin compete in places where Bahasa Indonesia is also important, problems can occur. Such issues include language interference, overload, or uneven language development (Odlin, 2003). Prior research on bilingual instruction in Indonesia primarily in Indonesian and English has identified issues such as teacher readiness, limited resources, policy inconsistencies, and uneven development of language skills (Sulistiyo, Haryanto, & Widodo, 2020). From a policy viewpoint, reviews of university bilingual programs show these policies help with internationalisation and support local identity. However, schools face difficulty aligning language use and teaching methods. Few studies investigate the simultaneous learning of two foreign languages, like English and Mandarin, in Indonesian schools. There is also little examination of interference, skill transfer, or best practices for switching. Some university research examines learning Chinese in English-medium classes, but these are case studies of language use rather than controlled teaching models (Korompot et al., 2024).

Policy debates on translanguaging in Indonesian classrooms indicate flexible language switching aids understanding and scaffolding (García & Li, 2014), but few actionable models exist for dual-language programs.

This study aims to design, test, and summarise an Indonesian simultaneous English and Mandarin Learning Model (SEMLM) for secondary students. The main research question is: How can we design and implement a teaching model that enables Indonesian students to learn English and Mandarin simultaneously, while maintaining balanced proficiency in both languages and avoiding interference or overload? From this, the research explores: (1) Which schedules (like alternating days, time blocks, or mixed code switching) give the best gains in both languages? (2) How do cross-linguistic transfer effects between English and Mandarin work for Indonesian learners are they positive or negative? (Cummins, 1979) (3) What support systems such as teacher support, materials, and scaffolding strategies are needed for simultaneous teaching? The study does not try to generalise about students in primary grades or those starting school in rural areas, especially if they aim for careers in urban areas.

We believe a carefully planned alternation model, such as switching language blocks with bridging tasks, will help students develop balanced skills. This includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing in both languages. This approach should outperform the basic 50-50 model or teaching languages one after the other. We also expect that using intentional transfer tasks, such as mapping and using cognates, will prevent language interference and foster positive effects across languages (Jessner, 2008).

The innovative part of this work is shifting from a linear method to truly parallel language teaching in Indonesia. The syllabi are based on cross-linguistic transfer theory, using insights from contrastive linguistics and psycholinguistics (Siregar, 2024). The research also suggests principles for designing bilingual schools, which have been tested in real classroom experiments. These

include schedules, scaffolding, and teacher training guidelines. These are shared here for others in multilingual settings who want to plan their own schools. Finally, while this research aims to create a workable SEMLM for Indonesian students, it also seeks to contribute to global knowledge of bilingual education using a foreign-language simultaneous system.

Methods

This research used a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. Using quantitative and qualitative data-gathering techniques, it investigated the feasibility and effectiveness of a simultaneous English and Mandarin instructional mode for Indonesian secondary school students. The methodological rationale is based on the mixed methods framework of Creswell and Plano Clark (2017), which allows statistical results to be triangulated with rich contextual information. The main research sites were three urban secondary schools in Jakarta and Bandung that run dual foreign language programmes. There were 120 Grade 9 students (aged 14-15) involved in the project, randomly allocated to experimental and control groups with equal gender distribution.

There are four main ways in which data were collected. The first was language proficiency testing. Utilising internationally recognised criteria: preliminary English (PET) and level 2 Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) for both Indonesian, as a constantly recurring requirement to manage their content, was built in at the beginning, upon realisation that it wasn't enough. Longitudinally, classroom observations were conducted in one full academic year. We used a straightforward checklist for each visit, with information deemed necessary by [Spada and Frohlich's 1995 COLT Framework]. Thirdly, 18 teachers and 40 students were interviewed. The interviews aimed to gather data not only on cognitive load in both languages but also about the motivations by which language learning might be judged as worthwhile. Finally, a documentary analysis of policies and their relevant context was undertaken; it focused on the kinds of instruction that have been mandated and the patterns that textbooks and other materials provide for classroom work. Coordinates for this paper are in standard scholarly notation.

There are eight basic coordinates in the entire system of mathematical logic. The job isn't finished until you've put all the p's back in their proper places (i.e., completed the synthesis of a particular position). If we have E and another letter, such as it, it makes it very difficult to figure out the order of those last two. To Lowercase a. We used four principal methods to collect data. One of them was the Direct Testing Component of the Assessment Program for Strategic International Cognition Education (USICAR). The second way to express it is as follows: a Yes party occupies seat p, while p is one of the E's and a no party has himself or herself.

The NVivo 12 software was used to code the material thematically, resulting in two deductively constructed frameworks (e.g., based on theoretical constructs such as cross linguistic transfer and translanguaging) and two inductively derived frameworks (from student and teacher responses). In conducting the analyses, both descriptive and inferential methods were used. For pre-post test proficiency scores within groups, paired t-tests were used, and ANCOVA was used to control for baseline differences between the experimental and control groups. Cohen's d was used to estimate effect sizes and quantify learning gains. The observational data were coded to determine how often different languages were used, whether people were speaking (or writing) in multiple languages, and the balance between English and Mandarin input. Thematic analysis of interview data uncovered recurring categories such as "positive transfer," "interference," motivation and "cognitive load". This process was validated by cross checking qualitative and

observational perceptions with quantitative results. The best results were then looked for. The final phase of this research was to amalgamate our datasets and to reflect on their conclusions. Results from the two rounds of testing (proficiency evaluation) determined whether the simultaneous or consecutive model produced more balanced gains in both languages. Observational and interview data add to our data by uncovering how these results translate into pedagogical practices and the implementation issues that also arise. Conclusions were drawn through the iterative process outlined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The process of drawing conclusions was repeated several times with the data. And then the interpretations were cross-checked against empirical detail. Reflexivity was also practised with researchers taking into consideration their role as participant observers in multilingual classrooms.

This methodological design aligns with the principles of reliability, validity, and replicability. By combining standardised testing, classroom observation, interview data, and document analysis, the study offers a rich description of Indonesian students' uptake of English and Mandarin together. The methodological rigour also contributes to multilingual folk education research, especially when two foreign languages are examined together. Triangulated, mixed-method procedures employed increase the credibility of conclusions, which is best practice in applied linguistics research.

Result And Discussion

Result

The Simultaneous English and Mandarin Learning Model (SEMLM) was proposed to Indonesian high school students as a pedagogical innovation in light of the growing need for proficiency in two foreign languages amid globalisation and regional cooperation. Although English has been and continues to serve as the world's lingua franca in science, technology, and higher education, Mandarin has recently taken on even greater importance given China's ascent to prominence in Southeast Asia. By allowing students to study both English and Mandarin independently rather than sequentially, SEMLM was designed to explore whether simultaneous learning would achieve similar effects without burdening users' cognitive resources. The outcomes presented here are quantitative proficiency results, qualitative attitudes, classroom processes, and theoretical implications, exemplified through technical analysis and case study illustration, before being compared with earlier studies in multilingual education.

Quantitative ability testing provided the basis for the empirical data used in the research. The Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET) and the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK Level 2) were used to provide baseline scores that placed the students at a relatively low level in both languages to begin with. The mean PET score for the experimental group was 47.2/100, while the mean HSK score was 41.5/100. These results reflect national Indonesian patterns: English proficiency is rated "low" by the EF English Proficiency Index (2023), and Mandarin is an emerging foreign language with limited nationwide penetration. After a single school year of simultaneous instruction, the treatment group had a mean PET score of 68.9 and an HSK score of 64.3, which showed statistically significant improvement ($p < 0.01$). On the other hand, the control group, which learned Mandarin followed by English, achieved smaller gains: PET increased from 46.8 to 57.2, and HSK increased from 42.1 to 51.4. The effect sizes calculated (Cohen's $d = 0.83$ for English and 0.76 for Mandarin) indicate that the simultaneous model yielded large and significant gains in both languages.

Table 1. *Quantitative and Case Study Extended*

Parameter	Experimental Group	Control Group	Rina (Case Study)
Group	Experimental	Control	Rina (Case Study)
Instruction Model	Simultaneous English & Mandarin	Sequential Mandarin then English	Simultaneous English & Mandarin
Pre-Test PET	47.2	46.8	<2 sentences (speaking)
Pre-Test HSK	41.5	42.1	<20% (listening)
Post-Test PET	68.9	57.2	72
Post-Test HSK	64.3	51.4	65
PET Improvement	21.7	10.4	Significant
HSK Improvement	22.8	9.3	Significant
Effect Size PET	0.83		
Effect Size HSK	0.76		
Significance Level	$p < 0.01$	$p < 0.05$	Qualitative
Notes	Large gain in both languages; confirms simultaneous model effectiveness	Smaller gains; sequential instruction less effective	Improved to intermediate English and showed cross-linguistic transfer (Cummins, 1979)

A case study documents this quantitative trend. One of the students, referred to as "Rina" here, began the year with low confidence in both English and Chinese. She was unable to sustain speech beyond two sentences on the PET speaking exam and scored less than 20% on the HSK listening exam. With SEMLM intervention, not only did she achieve an intermediate proficiency level in English (72/100), but she also scored 65/100 on Mandarin. Ultimately, she showed the ability to recode (basic) Mandarin directions into English on class tasks a skill never directly assessed indicating a phenomenon in cross-linguistic transfer. This task suggests that the simultaneous instruction prompted both language-specific competence and metalinguistic awareness, which aligns with Cummins' (1979) linguistic interdependence hypothesis.

Classroom observations also provided insight into simultaneous acquisition processes. Using the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme, teachers were filmed switching between Mandarin and English in 20–30-minute segments, with integrative tasks that promoted translanguaging. A technical analysis of classroom discussion yielded three pedagogical practices that were dominant: (1) teachers used Bahasa Indonesia as a scaffold to bridge ideas between, (2) learners engaged in contrastive analysis activities (e.g., comparing English subject verb agreement with Mandarin word order), and (3) information technology provided multimodal support for lexis. An example provided was a class exercise in which students were required to double-label objects in both English and Mandarin, e.g., "book" (English) and "book" (Mandarin). Double-labelling not only aided memory but also allowed students to become attuned to variation within language, thereby establishing semantic networks for both languages simultaneously.

Student and teacher interviews outlined initial difficulties of cross-linguistic phonological

fusion among vocabularies as well as greater mental fatigue in the first few weeks of implementation. Nevertheless, at the end of the semester, students reported greater ease in balancing the two languages due to the use of explicit classroom strategies, such as comparative drills and class discussions based on translanguaging. For instance, one student said she had been confused by Mandarin tones at first. However, that practice alongside English stress patterns helped clarify the distinction and made her, in general, more sensitive to pronunciation. This phenomenon was reinforced by instructors, who found that students in parallel programs were more sensitive to phonological nuance than students learning in sequential programs. This concurs with Kuo and Anderson's (2010) results, which indicate that bilingual exposure enhances executive control and auditory discrimination.

NVivo analysis was used to code the qualitative data, yielding superordinate themes such as 'positive transfer', 'cognitive strategies', 'motivation', and 'interference'. Positive transfer was most prevalent in syntax, particularly the order of the subject in the sentence, and students commented on the similarities between their English and Mandarin placements. Cognitive strategies involved using mnemonics that drew on features of both languages, such as applying the tonal contours of Mandarin to the intonational contours of English. Motivation was cultivated through the belief that proficiency in both languages would confer a competitive advantage in future education and career opportunities. The students experienced interference, but it diminished as they deliberated on the two systems through group processing and feedback.

Discussion

The integration of qualitative and quantitative findings ultimately yields stronger conclusions. Just as the proficiency gains accounted for a measurable degree of gain, while interview and practice data provided knowledge of how such gains were achieved - equitable translanguaging, comparative processes, and a level of Bahasa Indonesia scaffolding, by triangulating the findings, the validity of the research is increased as it demonstrates that the SEMLM not only impacts prospective students, it can also be used in different cognitive and sociolinguistic environments of Indonesian learners.

Comparison with other studies is a key aspect of both continuity and innovation. In Indonesia, previous research on bilingual education, such as by Hamied (2012) and Sulistiyo (2016), revealed that English-medium instruction increased proficiency in English but marginalised local languages and created inequalities. The SEMLM, however, named Bahasa Indonesia as an explicit scaffold and prevented marginalisation, ensuring linguistic equity. Sulistiyo et al. (2020) also recognised teacher readiness as an issue; this study demonstrated that without specific training in translanguaging and cognitive load management, teachers would be unable to accomplish simultaneous teaching. With explicit teacher training, the SEMLM closed this gap.

In Singapore, a bilingual education policy demands proficiency in English and Mandarin. Curdt Christiansen (2016) found that English is most likely to prevail due to its global pragmatism. The SEMLM had a differential outcome: because both languages were introduced as foreign languages rather than societal languages, both English and Mandarin benefited equally. The outcome shows that simultaneous acquisition in a foreign language context has more symmetrical outcomes than in a bilingual national policy context, where social dominance tends to favour one language over the other.

Malaysia is another relevant point of comparison. Gill (2014) documented the impact of socioeconomic status on achievement in English Mandarin bilingual programs. Standardisation of

materials constrained the range of imbalances in the present Indonesian study; however, students from different socioeconomic statuses achieved equivalent gains. This suggests that structural equity in resources can immunise against socioeconomic impacts, offering a model for policy development elsewhere in developing countries.

At a basic level, the findings have implications for our understanding of current models of multilingual acquisition. They also provide support for Cummins' (1979) hypothesis of linguistic interdependence whereby gains in one language stimulate gains in the additional language. Similarly, they support Odlin's (2003) model of cross-linguistic transfer, as we have direct evidence for both facilitation and interference.

Significantly, we extend the framework of García and Li Wei (2014), which describes translanguaging in contexts where the lexicons and grammatical systems of two languages are used in the same setting, with neither language dominant in society. Finally, we contribute to cognitive load theory (Sweller, 2011) by illustrating how careful pacing and multimodal support may help surpass cognitive load in simultaneous instruction.

Case examples also illuminate these theoretical contributions. In one of the composition exercises observed, students were required to compose short stories first in English and subsequently recreate them in Mandarin, using simplified vocabulary and with teacher guidance. The task demonstrated that the students were able to transfer narrative modes between languages as they learned to be flexible in response to the specific syntactic demands. Another example was a debating task in which students took turns speaking in English and Mandarin, using Bahasa Indonesia as necessary. The task demonstrated how translanguaging facilitated communicative fluency, even in multi-structured discourse tasks.

The manipulation technology also played its part in this disastrous transformation. On their combined mobile devices, students used both language-learning apps, exemplifying Chinese (HelloChinese) and English (Duolingo), simultaneously. In a departure from earlier classroom visits, such multimodal aids enabled students to ensure they wouldn't forget what they'd learned and gave support for autonomous study outside normal teaching hours. Xu and Warschauer (2020) have already shown the impact of mobile-assisted learning on learning Chinese; this article builds on their work to provide an account of learners' technology-equipped engagement in simultaneous bilingual processing and balanced development.

In each case, however, limitations remain. In our previous research, low-ability students were discovered to be proliferating under the simultaneous influx. Such indicators were also observed by pre-service teachers who reported, for example, that these students would need extra support, including fewer students per class, tutorial classes and active parental cooperation. Also, if Indonesian is too good a bridge, it can get in the way of one's immersion in English and Mandarin. As competencies increase, future evaluations are likely to require increasingly elaborate methods to remove the Indonesian scaffold.

Overall, SEMLM had a significant impact on Indonesian secondary school students in linguistics, cognitive understanding, and pedagogy. Quantitative results confirmed significant gains in both English and Mandarin skills; qualitative results reported increased metalinguistic awareness and aridity, paired with increased excitement and added flexibility. Case studies examined how students coped with the demands of Ascende. By contrast with previous studies of bilingual education, the thesis argues that concurrent dual-foreign-language teaching is not only viable but also much more balanced and fairer than sequential methods or national bilingual education policy.

Its findings also contribute to theory by supporting the concept of language dependence, elaborating on trans-lingualism and extending dual-language contexts as an outgrowth of the theory of cognitive load. As a model for Indonesia, it provides a pedagogically based roadmap for students to learn two of the most important languages in the world today in a comfortable and effective way

Conclusion

The SEMLM has proven to be a practical pedagogical innovation for Indonesian secondary students amid the increasingly pressing demand to learn two valuable international languages. The study demonstrated that grouping students to learn English and Mandarin simultaneously produced observable advantages across language, cognitive, and motivational dimensions, rather than keeping them separate. Quantitative measures of skill such as PET and HSK—indicated significant improvements: the experimental group's PET pre-test average scores increased from 47.2 to 68.9, and HSK scores increased from 41.5 to 64.3 over one school year. The increases were significantly greater than those in the sequential control group, with large effect sizes (Cohen's $d = 0.83$ for English and 0.76 for Mandarin), indicating significant effects. Qualitative results were corroborated by qualitative data, which showed that both teachers and students reported higher metalinguistic awareness, greater transfer benefits, and enhanced motivation for language learning. Case studies and observations of classes, such as students' bilingual discussion abilities or double-label word exercises, also showed that concurrent exposure made involvement deeper and more responsive.

A comparison with previous research evidence reveals both continuity and innovation. Previous studies in Indonesia (Hamied, 2012; Sulistiyo, 2016) have found that bilingual education policies have often sidelined national languages in favour of English, resulting in related inequities. The SEMLM addressed these concerns by embracing Bahasa Indonesia as an explicit scaffold, avoiding stigmatisation and facilitating understanding. Sulistiyo et al. (2020) also indicated that teacher preparedness was a constraint to bilingual education. This current study demonstrated that, with specific training in translanguaging and cognitive load management, teachers were able to engage in simultaneous teaching.

International comparison adds more perspective. In Singapore, Curdt-Christiansen (2016) observed that English is dominant, even in policy, where English and Mandarin are placed on equal footing. In Malaysia, Gill (2014) observed that socioeconomic status is a strong determinant of bilingual ability. The SEMLM diverges from such trends by having more parallel development across both languages and by evening out the socioeconomic disparities through standardised materials and well-balanced classroom rhythms. Unlike policy-driven bilingual models in which societal hierarchies prefer one language over the other, the Indonesian SEMLM situation, in which both English and Mandarin are foreign languages, is apt to equalise the playing field.

Theoretically, the SEMLM pushes the boundaries of existing frameworks. Cummins' (1979) concept of linguistic interdependence and Odlin's (2003) examination of cross-linguistic transfer are supported by evidence indicating that knowledge of one language facilitates knowledge of the other. The importance of García and Li Wei's (2014) translanguaging framework is advanced through the discussion of its relevance to learning with two foreign languages. Sweller's (2011) cognitive load theory is also more precise here: while simultaneous instruction initially overloaded students' working memory, strategic pacing, scaffolding in Bahasa Indonesia, and multimodal

supports operated to reverse the overload and enabled long-term gains.

Although it has served its purpose, its impact has been limited. Weaker students had needed assistance at the start, i.e., smaller class sizes, remedial tutorials, and parental guidance. Moreover, while Bahasa Indonesia played its essential scaffolding role, overuse would detract from actual English and Mandarin immersion. These concerns suggest that the model needs to be refined especially in gradually weaning students off scaffolding and providing differentiated support so that it can be more widely applied.

From these findings, several recommendations for future research and model development can be made. First, longitudinal studies must be conducted to assess long-term retention, proficiency growth, and the transferability of skills to tertiary or professional settings beyond the secondary level. Secondly, future research should investigate the inclusion of adaptive digital interfaces that provide support for language learning in English and Mandarin, using artificial intelligence and mobile devices to tailor exposure and practice. Thirdly, comparative studies between rural and urban areas would provide valuable data on differences in infrastructure that will affect SEMLM's scalability. Finally, but not least, more teacher training programs should be designed to develop expertise in managing translanguaging practices, cross-linguistic interference, and cognitive load balancing.

In summary, the SEMLM provides both empirical and theoretical evidence that learning English and Mandarin simultaneously is feasible and beneficial for Indonesian learners. This model moves us away from sequential approaches and contributes to both local pedagogical practice and international theory on multilingual acquisition. By grounding linguistic interdependence in evidence and refining translanguaging applications, this study positions SEMLM as a model of Southeast Asian multilingual education. Future refinements and expanded applications can provide Indonesian students, and perhaps students of other multilingual countries, with the dual linguistic capital to navigate the demands of globalisation, regional cooperation, and twenty-first-century knowledge economies.

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