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**The Effectiveness of Bilingual Teaching Models: Teachers' and Students' Perspectives: A Case Study of Medical Departments at Cihan University-Erbil**

**A B S T R A C T**

In the context of globalization, bilingual education has become an essential instructional strategy for developing learners' linguistic proficiency, cognitive abilities, and intercultural awareness. This study examines the relationship between bilingual education models and language acquisition, focusing on their application within the medical departments at Cihan University-Erbil. Two primary questions guide the research: first, what are the perspectives of teachers and students towards bilingual teaching methods and whether these models exert a positive or negative influence on language learning. The working hypothesis suggests a direct association between bilingual education models and language learning outcomes, as well as a generally positive effect on students' academic and linguistic development. A quantitative descriptive design was employed, utilizing questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to gather data from both students and instructors. The sample included 100 second-stage students from the Medical Biochemical Analysis, Anesthesia, and Radiological Imaging Technologies departments, in addition to 20 English language instructors. The study aims to shed light on the benefits and challenges of bilingual education in a higher education context where English is employed as a medium of instruction. More broadly, the research contributes to ongoing discussions about the role of bilingual programs in enhancing students' academic achievement, professional opportunities, and ability to engage in an increasingly interconnected world.

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فاعلية نماذج التدريس الثنائي اللغة: وجهات نظر الأساتذة والطلبة - دراسة حالة في الأقسام الطبية

في جامعة جيهان - أربيل

زهراء سمكو قرني / جامعة جيهان

اسراء بهرام عزيز / جامعة تكريت، كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية

الخلاصة:

في ظل العولمة، أصبح التعليم الثنائي اللغة استراتيجية تعليمية أساسية لتطوير كفاءة المتعلمين اللغوية، وقدراتهم المعرفية، ووعيهم بين الثقافات. تتناول هذه الدراسة العلاقة بين نماذج التعليم الثنائي واكتساب اللغة، مع التركيز على تطبيقاتها في الأقسام الطبية بجامعة جيهان - أربيل. ويقود البحث سؤالان رئيسيان: الأول، ما هي وجهات نظر الأساتذة والطلبة تجاه أساليب التعليم الثنائي، والثاني، ما إذا كانت هذه النماذج تُحدث تأثيراً إيجابياً أو سلبياً في تعلم اللغة. تفترض الفرضية الأساسية وجود علاقة مباشرة بين نماذج التعليم الثنائي ونتائج تعلم اللغة، إضافة إلى أثر إيجابي عام على التطور الأكاديمي واللغوي للطلبة. وقد اعتمد البحث المنهج الوصفي الكمي، مستخدماً الاستبيانات والمقابلات شبه المهيكلة لجمع البيانات من الطلبة والأساتذة على حد سواء. شملت العينة (١٠٠) طالب من المرحلة الثانية في أقسام التحليلات المرضية الطبية، والتخدير، وتقنيات التصوير الشعاعي، فضلاً عن (٢٠) مدرساً ومدرسة للغة الإنجليزية. وتهدف الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على مزايا وتحديات التعليم الثنائي في سياق التعليم العالي حيث تُستخدم اللغة الإنجليزية كوسيلة للتدريس. وبصورة أوسع، تسهم هذه الدراسة في النقاشات الجارية حول دور البرامج الثنائية اللغة في تعزيز التحصيل الأكاديمي للطلبة، وتوسيع فرصهم المهنية، وتمكينهم من الانخراط الفعّال في عالم يزداد ترابطاً يوماً بعد آخر

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم الثنائي اللغة؛ تعلم اللغة؛ الإنجليزية لغة للتدريس؛ تصورات الطلبة؛ إستراتيجية التدريس

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With globalization breaking down cultural and economic barriers, the ability to communicate proficiently in more than one language has become increasingly valuable over the past few years as an effective approach to education. A bilingual education program seeks to cultivate this proficiency by offering instruction in two languages, typically the native language and a second language (Baker, 2001). Since English is the most commonly used language, it occupies a dominant position and develops as one of the leading global languages. It is therefore crucial for someone to master English as well as their native language or national language in order to communicate with people from other countries (Crystal, 2003). Baker states that bilingualism is the process of learning and implementing two languages in a single individual (Baker, 2001). There has been a growing concern regarding

bilingualism among governments and educational institutions in many countries over the past few years.

Multilingualism has been discussed, and efforts are being made to help people become bilingual. Furthermore, as a first step to establishing a bilingual curriculum, it is essential to acknowledge the growing importance of multilingualism in today's globalized environment. The elimination of communication barriers and the acceleration of cultural exchange have made bilingual education an essential strategy for equipping learners with linguistic and cultural competencies to be successful in the modern world (García & Wei, 2014). Moreover, the importance of language in students' social and academic development cannot be overstated. One of the major obstacles encountered by students is their inability to use correct phonology and syntax, followed by their inability to communicate effectively even if they lack knowledge (Qarani, 2023).

Furthermore, Participation in a bilingual education program was likely influenced by students' English language background and exposure; positive perceptions were more prevalent among those with more exposure to English. Moreover, students believed that learning English in the program would have a significant impact on their prospects and opportunities. Additionally, the bilingual program implemented English as a medium of instruction, enhancing students' English proficiency (Chen & Starosta, 2018).

Language proficiency is dependent on numerous factors, one of these critical factors that have emerged as key influencers which is motivation. Motivation refers to the internal and external forces that direct and sustain behavior related to learning (Mohammed&Yahya, 2025:103). A critical challenge for encouraging student achievement was also found to be limited English proficiency. English skills were low, which prevented students from understanding essential English instruction, resulting in a lack of mastery of content subject materials (Hernandez et al., 2020). In addition to enhancing linguistic skills, bilingual programs foster a deeper appreciation and understanding of culture. It is well known that bilingual teaching helps students appreciate diversity and prepare them for navigating an interconnected world. Furthermore, bilingualism has been determined to intensify cognitive skills, such as problem-solving and multitasking, resulting in academic accomplishments superior to language acquisition (Abedini et al., 2020). This

study aims to examine teachers' and students' perspectives on bilingual instructional models in medical departments. It hypothesizes that the implementation of bilingual teaching models exerts a positive influence on language learning.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bilingual teaching models can be designated into two primary types: additive and subtractive bilingualism. Additive models recommend the evolution of both the first and second languages, while subtractive models often prioritize the second language at the assessment of the first (Cummins, 2000). In medical education, additive models are generally preferred, as they allow students to maintain their native language while acquiring medical terminology and concepts in a second language. From the students' perspective, bilingual education in medical departments has been companion with enhanced academic performance and better comprehension of complex medical concepts (Chen & Starosta, 2018). Students often precise acknowledgment for learning in their native language, as it decreases concerns and reinforces their confidence in a challenging curriculum. A study by Abedini et al. (2020) found that students in bilingual programs proclaimed higher satisfaction levels and noticed to be more rehearsed for clinical procedures in comparison to their peers in monolingual settings.

The study gives prominence to the important impact of bilingual tuitions on student engagement in different ways:

1. Increased Comfort: Utilizing both English and Indonesian in the classroom makes students feel more at ease, encouraging them to attempt more fervently in discussions and activities.
2. Enhanced Understanding: Bilingual instruction facilitates students' exceptional grasp of complex concepts by decreasing confusion, as lessons are addressed in both languages, allowing them to engage with the material in their native language.
3. Facilitated Communication: In acquiring any language, students' participation is vital for learning, and the importance of class interaction in EFL setting is undebatable. Moreover, class participation includes many activities such as verbal interaction, non-verbal, group work, pair work, and

oral discussion (Azeez, 2024:127). By following bilingual approach, students can deliberate their ideas and ask questions more easily when they can use both languages, creating a more interactive classroom environment.

4. Support for Vocabulary Acquisition: Learning new English vocabulary parallel to Indonesian equivalents aids retention and encourages greater interaction and participation in class activities.
5. Positive Perceptions: Students generally outline bilingual instruction enthusiastically, which improves their motivation to participate in learning activities due to the accessibility and relatability of the lessons (Subandiyah & et al. 2025).

In summary, bilingual instruction facilitating student engagement by fostering comfort, improving understanding, improving communication, aiding vocabulary acquisition, and developing positive perspectives toward learning. Collectively, these aspects contribute to a more active and engaged classroom experience for students learning English as a foreign language.

Wean (2021) examines the emotional responses of students in bilingual classrooms and offers suggestions for adjusting them, providing insight into the socioemotional aspects of bilingual education. Although bilingual teaching offers many benefits, it also faces challenges such as the allocation of resources, standardized testing, and community support. There may be a shortage of bilingual teachers and appropriate instructional materials in schools. Bilingual students' abilities must be accurately measured with assessment methods that reflect their proficiency in both languages (González, 2018). To ensure adequate resources and advocacy, universities, parents, and policymakers must collaborate to ensure the success of bilingual programs.

Additionally, the existence of bilingual education programs today has created controversy. Accordingly, these seven attributes are identified to be characteristics of bilingual education programs: (1) leadership, vision, and goals; (2) creating a positive learning environment; (3) articulating the curriculum; (4) ensuring accountability; (5) ensuring quality people; (6) involving parents and communities; (7) curriculum and instruction.

These challenges impact both educators and students, influencing the effectiveness of bilingual education. Issues include cultural insensitivity, a lack of authenticity, outdated materials, limited linguistic diversity, insufficient language exposure, and uneven development of language skills. These factors impede students' grasp of cultural subtleties and limit their ability to engage genuinely with the language. Bilingual teachers are required to develop their own teaching materials and lesson plans, which significantly increases their workload. Specifically, while the primary objective of bilingual teachers is to educate bilingual learners, as noted by Amanti (2016), there are numerous unseen tasks that negatively impact their effectiveness. The success of bilingual education programs is heavily dependent on the quality and appropriateness of the learning materials, which are crucial for fostering language skills in both the primary and secondary languages. However, there are ongoing concerns about the adequacy of these materials. A review of the literature highlights several common issues with bilingual resources, such as cultural content problems, lack of authenticity, and outdated information, all of which contribute to students' low bilingual proficiency ( Lopez.2025:10)

Research shows that instructors play a crucial role in the progress of bilingual education. According to a study by Téllez and Waxman (2006), Instructors who are academically proficient in both languages and culturally compassionate are more effective in bilingual classrooms. They can create a cooperative learning environment that serves student engagement and comprehension. Furthermore, teachers reported that bilingual methods enriched their teaching strategies, allowing them to cater to various learning styles (García & Wei, 2014). However, many educators feel insufficiently prepared to teach in a bilingual setting, often due to a deficiency of training and resources (González, 2018). This absence can cause inconsistencies in teaching practices and interfere the overall effectiveness of bilingual programs. The authors evaluated students' attitudes, ideas, and beliefs regarding bilingual educational programs, uncovering major concerns associated to curricular content, methodologies and techniques, as well as the challenges and successes of these programs as recognized by the students.

Bilingual education models promote particular challenges, particularly in teaching and medical departments. Students' prospect on these challenges can supply valuable awareness into the effectiveness and application of such programs. Here are some key challenges identified in the literature:

1. **Language Proficiency:** Many students express concerns about their proficiency in both languages. In medical education, for example, the capability to understand complicated medical terminology in a second language can be extremely challenging. It indicates that inadequate language skills can hinder students' academic performance and confidence (Hernandez et al., 2020).
2. **Cultural Barriers:** Students regularly encounter cultural verities that can affect their learning experience (Qarani, 2024). In bilingual medical programs, for example, the lack of culturally relevant examples in the curriculum can make it problematic for students to connect with the material that disconnect can lead to feelings of alienation and reduced engagement (Zhang & Wang, 2019).
3. **Teaching Methods:** The effectiveness of teaching methods in bilingual settings is a major concern. Students report that traditional teaching techniques may not sufficiently address their needs in a bilingual context. For instance, lectures delivered particularly in one language can cause comprehension gaps (Lopez, 2021).
4. **Resource Availability:** Access to bilingual resources, such as textbooks and additional materials, is often limited. Students have noted that the scarcity of high-quality bilingual educational materials can impede their learning process (Nguyen, 2022). This shortage of resources can basically impact medical students who need specific terminology and practical information in both languages.
5. **Peer Interaction:** In bilingual classrooms, students may feel unwilling to engage with peers due to language obstacles. This reluctance can restrict cooperative learning opportunities and affect social interaction within the classroom (Smith & Garcia, 2021).
6. **Assessment Challenges:** Assessments in bilingual programs can be challenging, as students may encounter conflict with language nuances in exams. This issue can lead to inconsistency in performance that does not accurately demonstrate a student's knowledge or abilities (Chen, 2023).

Some students face difficulties, particularly those who struggle with the second language. They may face serious difficulties when producing grammatically correct sentences this is due to their limitation of understanding the morphological structures or even to guess the meanings of the unfamiliar words or the new words (Alani,2025:2) Limited proficiency can impede their ability to engage fully with course materials and participate in discussions (Khan et al., 2019). This highlights the importance of providing adequate language support alongside content instruction.

### **3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**

#### **3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Research questions: This paper aims to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the perspectives of teachers and students towards bilingual teaching methods
2. Do bilingual models have a positive or negative impact on language learning?

#### **3.2 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

The present study hypothesizes that:

1. There is a direct correlation between bilingual models and language learning.
2. Bilingual models have a positive impact on language learning.

**3.3 Research design:** This research will adopt a quantitative descriptive approach using questionnaires to collect data on teachers' and students' perspectives on the effectiveness of bilingual teaching methods in medical departments at Cihan University-Erbil.

#### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION**

The data will be gathered using questionnaires that include a variety of questions, including open-ended and multiple-choice questions aimed at assessing the attitude

and perspectives of teachers and students toward bilingual teaching methods. Google Forms was used to distribute the questionnaires. In addition to the questionnaire, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews to interview the teachers.

### **3.5 PARTICIPANTS**

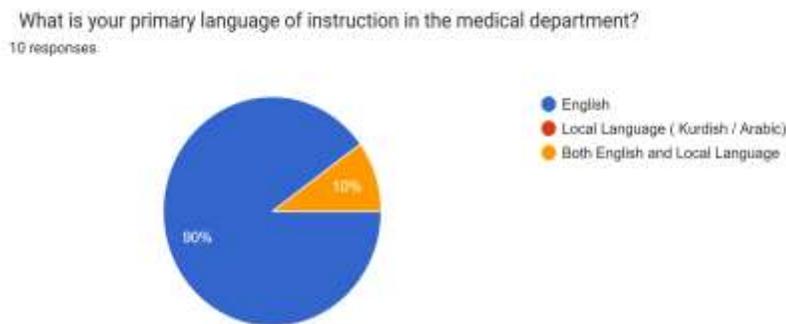
The participants targeted teachers and students of the medical departments at Cihan University-Erbil. A sample of 20 teachers and 100 students was selected to ensure that students from all courses and stages were included. This study is limited to 2nd-stage students of Medical Biochemical Analysis, Anastasia, and the Radiological Imaging technologies department. The second group of participants is the instructors who teach English in the Medical departments in Cihan University-Erbil.

### **3.6. DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **1. Teachers' perspectives of bilingual teaching**

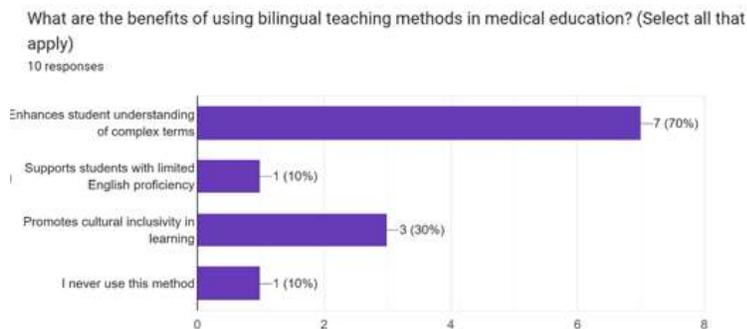
The teachers who participated in this research were from medical departments at Cihan University-Erbil. The analysis of the results showed that 90% of the responders use only English as their medium of teaching and only 10% of them communicate using English and a local language(Kurdish/Arabic) even though the majority identified Kurdish as their mother tongue. Regarding teachers' comfort with the use of the bilingual teaching method, the results demonstrate diverse levels of preference since the answers were evenly distributed on a scale of 1-5. As shown in the figure bellow.

Figure 1. The primary language of instruction



As for the impact of bilingual teaching on students' performance, 50% of the teachers agreed that using two languages can improve learners' comprehension of medical terms. 30% disagreed and the rest of the answers were neutral.

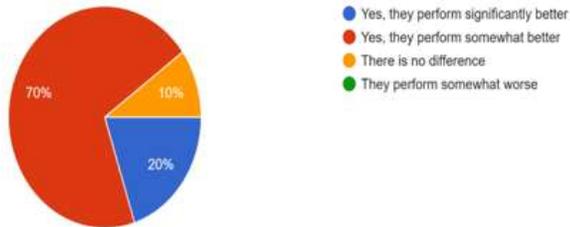
Figure 2. The benefits of bilingual teaching



Regarding the effect of using two mediums of instruction on students' communication skills, 60% of the teachers believed that bilingual teaching can positively influence learners' communication skills. They also agree that using the local language reduces anxiety and increases interaction in the class.

Figure 3. Students performance in exams

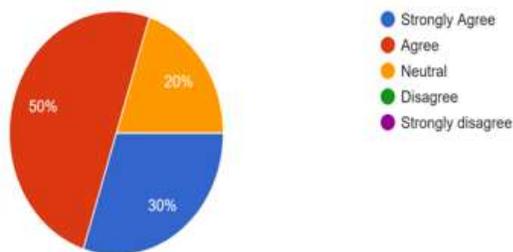
Do you believe that students who are taught bilingually perform better in exams compared to students taught only in English?  
10 responses



In addition to better performance in class, the students achieve better results in exams. As shown in figure 3. above, 70% think that the impact of bilingual teaching on assessment is positive. Although the results revealed that instructors agreed with the positive influence of using bilingual teaching on performance and interaction, they have some concerns regarding the long-term use of bilingual teaching on the learners' English language fluency. The majority agree that this method will lead to over-reliance on the mother tongue.

Figure 4. The effect of bilingual teaching on language fluency.

In your experience, do bilingual methods make it difficult to achieve fluency in English?  
10 responses

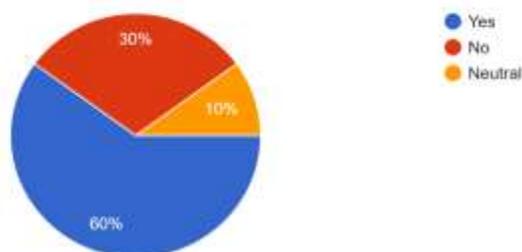


Mixed views were expressed by the teachers regarding the effect of bilingual teaching on students' clinical communication. Some of them believe that bilingual education might have a negative influence and might hinder students' fluency in English. Other teachers disagreed and remained neutral, which suggests that the effect relies on keeping a balance between the languages of instruction. Regardless of their concerns, the teachers reported that learners commonly require instruction

in their native language. The demand for dual means of instruction by the students themselves indicates the real relevance of bilingual teaching in classroom settings.

Figure 5. the effect of bilingual teaching on students' clinical communication

Do you think bilingual teaching methods affect students' clinical communication skills?  
10 responses



The teachers addressed the main challenges of teaching in English in the medical departments, among which were the difficulty in translating the medical terms accurately and varying levels of English proficiency. These challenges create a barrier to communication. Furthermore, the teachers expressed a positive attitude about the role of bilingual teaching in reducing students' anxiety and increasing collaboration among the learners, which suggests that bilingual education, can positively impact the classroom environment and motivate learners to perform better in their learning process.

## 2. Students' perspectives of bilingual teaching

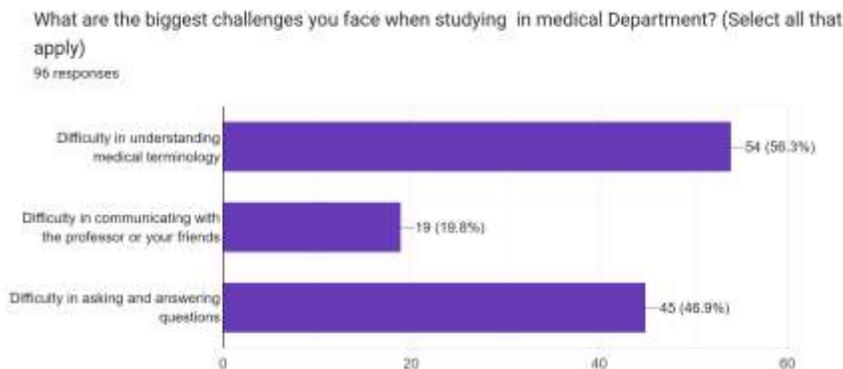
The second part of the study was designed to obtain students' perspectives on bilingual teaching. The results reflect a strong preference among learners to incorporate both their mother tongue and the target language in classes, with 84% favoring bilingual teaching due to their belief that using two languages facilitates understanding of complex terminology.

Figure 6. Support of bilingual teaching



Moreover, based on the data from the students' survey in the medical departments, several challenges were identified. The most frequently reported issue, selected by 56.3% of respondents, was difficulty in understanding medical terminology, highlighting the complexity of English-based medical vocabulary. In addition, 46.9% of students noted challenges in asking and answering questions during classes, which may reflect a lack of language confidence. Communication barriers with peers and professors were also reported by 19.8% of students. These answers emphasize the need for bilingual teaching strategies, which can improve understanding of medical terminology.

Figure7. challenges of studying in medical departments



Regarding bilingual teaching and comprehension of medical terms, 86% of the learners, as shown in the Figure 8. below, showed an optimistic view of bilingual

teaching in enhancing comprehension of medical terms. These results align with the existing studies that demonstrate the relationship between adapting bilingual teaching and improving cognitive connection. Using both the target language and the mother tongue can help in retaining information.

Figure 8. The effect of bilingual teaching on comprehension



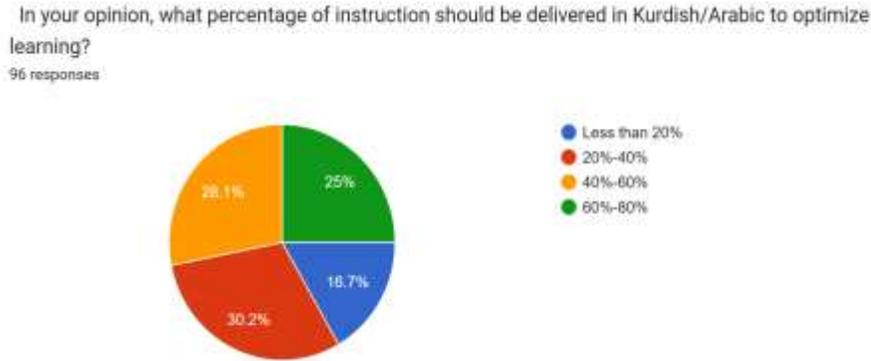
However, the students had different points of view about the impact of dual teaching on learning medical terms. 63% agree that bilingual teaching has a productive influence on their learning. On the contrary, 25% disagreed and expressed their concerns about the negative impact of bilingual teaching methods. The varying attitudes reflect the diversity of learners and their different learning styles and preferences.

Similar to the teachers' viewpoint, 75% of the students agree that bilingual teaching reduces anxiety since the mother tongue provides a comfortable environment and strengthens students' confidence, which allows them to communicate and interact more effectively. Moreover, 88% of the students expressed that it increases their interest in learning.

Despite all the benefits of bilingual teaching, 28% of the learners had concerns regarding the long-term usage of the mother tongue and over-reliance on the native language, which might affect English language fluency. When asked about the best proportion of instruction to be delivered in Kurdish or Arabic, the responses varied among the students. A significant portion of students (30.2%) believed that 20%–40% of instruction should be in the native language, while 28.1% preferred 40%–60%, suggesting a moderate level of bilingual integration is favored by most respondents. Additionally, 25% of students supported a higher native language use

of 60%–80%, highlighting a strong preference among some learners for greater reliance on their mother tongue to understand complex medical concepts.

Figure 9. The percentage of instruction in the mother tongue



#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to examine the perspectives of teachers and learners about the effectiveness of bilingual teaching methods in the medical departments at Cihan University-Erbil. The results demonstrate that a significant percentage of the students experienced challenges in understanding and using medical terminology, in addition to difficulties in asking and answering questions in English, these findings suggest that relying on English as the single medium of instruction may not support the learning needs of the learners sufficiently, especially in the departments that involve medical and technical terminology. Moreover, interaction difficulties among teachers and students were also reported, which reinforces that language has a vital role in establishing academic interaction and knowledge acquisition. A significant result of this research was the strong preference among learners for a balanced implementation of bilingual teaching methods within classes; the majority of the students demonstrated that 20 to 60% of teaching should be conducted using both the source language and the mother tongue.

These results highlight the need for educational strategies that integrate both the native and the foreign language in a balanced structural manner to use the local language as a bridge to help the students to comprehend the material and

understand the complex terminology in a better way, and at the same time, promoting the development of English language fluency.

The findings of the study reveal that both students and teachers perceive bilingual teaching methods as more effective than English-only instruction within medical departments. Students reported considerable challenges in understanding and using medical terminology, as well as difficulties engaging in classroom interaction when English served as the sole medium of instruction. These limitations suggest that monolingual English instruction does not sufficiently accommodate learners' linguistic needs in technical fields. The clear preference among students for a balanced bilingual approach—particularly one in which 20–60% of instruction incorporates both the mother tongue and English—indicates that bilingual modes of delivery enhance comprehension, reduce anxiety, and improve the overall learning experience.

Furthermore, the analysis of the teachers' responses supports these findings; teachers generally express a positive attitude towards implementing bilingual teaching methods to reduce students' anxiety, promote understanding, and contribute to their academic performance without relying upon English as a sole medium of instruction. It is recommended that instructors consider incorporating bilingual teaching strategies to meet the educational and linguistic needs of the students. Moreover, further research can expand on these results to examine the long-term influence of bilingual teaching methods on students' academic performance.

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