

The Different Types of Bilinguals and the Dominant Languages among FSSK UKM Students

Kepelbagaian Jenis Dwibahasa dan Penguasaan Bahasa dalam Kalangan Pelajar FSSK UKM

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ABSTRAK

Rakyat Malaysia hidup dalam negara yang terdiri daripada pelbagai etnik dan telah mencetus fenomena linguistik yang dikenali sebagai kedwibahasaan. Kedwibahasaan ditakrifkan sebagai individu yang berkebolehan untuk berkomunikasi dalam lebih daripada satu bahasa. Beberapa pengkaji terdahulu berpendapat bahawa adalah mustahil bagi individu dwibahasa untuk mahir dalam kedua-dua bahasa; mereka berkemungkinan menguasai satu bahasa lebih daripada bahasa yang satu lagi. Beberapa kajian yang lain pula menyatakan bahawa individu dwibahasa ini seharusnya sama-sama mahir dan cekap dalam kedua-dua bahasa. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kepelbagaian jenis dwibahasa dan penguasaan bahasa individu. Kajian kuantitatif ini dijalankan keatas 200 orang pelajar prasiswazah Fakulti Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan (FSSK) Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) yang mempunyai kebolehan berbahasa dalam sekurang-kurangnya dua bahasa. Responden dikehendaki menjawab satu soal selidik yang terdiri daripada 29 soalan yang merangkumi aspek bahasa pertama, kemahiran Bahasa dan penguasaan bahasa. Dapatan kajian menemukan terdapat beberapa jenis dwibahasa dalam kalangan 200 pelajar FSSK UKM - Simultaneous Early Malay-English bilinguals, Sequential Early Malay-English bilinguals, Late Malay-English bilinguals, Passive Bilinguals, Equilinguals, dan Dominant Bilinguals.

Kata Kunci: *Kedwibahasaan, Dwibahasa, Penguasaan Bahasa, Bahasa Pertama, Biliterasi*

ABSTRACT

Malaysians live in a multiethnic country and this has led to a linguistic phenomenon known as bilingualism. Bilinguals are individuals who can communicate in more than a language. Many past studies argue that it is uncommon for a bilingual to become proficient in both of the languages as he/she may have a dominant language. On the other hand, some researchers suggest that bilinguals should be equally proficient and competent in both languages. Hence, this study aims to investigate the different types of bilinguals and their dominant languages based on language proficiency. A quantitative study was conducted on 200 Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) undergraduate students of Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (FSSK) who possess the ability to speak at least two languages. Respondents

were required to answer a 29-item questionnaire which covers the aspects of first language, language proficiency, and language dominance. The research findings show that there are a few types of bilinguals among 200 FSSK UKM undergraduate students - Simultaneous Early Malay-English bilinguals, Sequential Early Malay-English bilinguals, Late Malay-English bilinguals, Passive Bilinguals, Equilinguals, and Dominant Bilinguals. The respondents are dominant bilinguals based on the proficiencies.

Keywords: Bilingualism, Bilingual, Language Dominance, First Language, Bi-Literacy

1. Introduction

Being a multiethnic nation, Malaysians naturally live in a multilingual society. Despite the high number of languages that are spoken and used in the country, two languages stand out as dominant languages in the country, namely Bahasa Melayu (or known as the Malay Language, or Malay, which is the national language) and the English language, the nation's second language. Due to the heavy influence of British colonization and intrusion into the administration bodies, the English language was used widely. Later, after the independence in 1957, its position as Malaysia's second language was reaffirmed in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025 as one of the aspirations for students to be proficient in both Malay and English languages (Ministry of Education, 2013). Since both Malay and English are formally taught as compulsory subjects in primary schools, the majority of Malaysians are not monolinguals; most of them are able to speak two languages if not more (Mahmud & Salehuddin, 2023).

This linguistic phenomenon is known as bilingualism and the term bilinguals refer to "people who can communicate in two languages" (Cambridge Dictionary Online). According to Köktürk et al. (2016), a bilingual child refers to a child who is brought up learning two languages and who is equally competent and proficient in both languages. However, the truth is, a bilingual person may not have balanced competencies in both languages. Baker (2006 cited in Treffers-Daller, 2019), for example, wrote that it is not possible for bilinguals to become competent in all four skills of a language and in other domains as well as situations.

The objectives of this study are: 1) to identify the types of bilinguals of UKM students; and 2) to compare and contrast bilinguals' dominant language based on their proficiency.

2. Literature Review

This section provides review of literature concerning the types of bilingualism and language dominance. In addition, Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is discussed as the theoretical framework in regards to this study.

2.1 Bilingualism

Generally, a bilingual individual is defined as a person who speaks two languages. According to Haugen (1952, cited in Lynch, 2017) and Bakić and Škifić (2017, cited in Loginova and Gvozdeva, 2019), anyone can be considered bilingual if one can utter and comprehend

meaningful words in more than a language on a regular basis. Nevertheless, to define bilingualism is complex and not easy because each circumstance and situation of one's bilingualism is not the same as another (Köktürk et al., 2016; Landsberry, 2019). Due to these challenges, there are various definitions of bilingualism, and they are written as follows: -

Köktürk et al., (2016), presents three definitions of bilingualism (or biliteracy): -

- a. A person who is brought up and speaks two languages equally proficient and competent;
- b. A person is able to switch the language appropriately according to the situations; and
- c. A person who has the lingual-cognitive competence to understand the meaning and context of words.

On the other hand, Landsberry (2019) divides bilingualism into a few types: -

- a. Simultaneous Bilinguals - individuals who grow up learning two languages simultaneously;
- b. Early Bilinguals - individuals who learn two or more languages during their childhood;
- c. Later Bilinguals- individuals who learn another language later in their childhood;
- d. Passive Bilinguals - individuals who can understand the written and spoken forms of a language, but cannot write or speak it; and
- e. Balanced Bilinguals - individuals who have the ability to use the language equally.

In another research by Mahmud & Salehuddin (2023), bilingualism is defined according to the categories and previous studies from another researchers: -

TABLE 1.0 The types of bilingualism and their definitions
 Source: Mahmud & Salehuddin (2023, p. 147-149)

Type	Descriptions	Additional notes	Example of studies mentioned and defined the types
Simultaneous Early Bilinguals (SIM)	Simultaneous early bilinguals are individuals who learn and acquire two languages from birth. They also include those who are exposed to two languages from birth or shortly after. These individuals appear to have a high level of bilingualism.	A child who has early exposure to a second language before the age of 3 can be described as a SIM. A child whose parents practice 1 Person/1 Language (1P/1L) at home from birth (e.g., the father speaks Language A, the mother speaks Language B) is also regarded as SIM.	De Houwer (2011), Hoff & Core (2013), Moradi (2014), Summer (2016), Thordardottir (2019), de Bruin (2019), Mohamed Salleh et al. (2020), Gil et al. (2021), Bylund et al. (2021)

Type	Descriptions	Additional notes	Example of studies mentioned and defined the types
Sequential Early Bilinguals (eSEQ)	Sequential early bilinguals are individuals who learn and acquire a second language (L2) after partially acquiring the first language (L1) in childhood. Because the child requires time to learn the L2, the language production in L2 is usually not as strong as SIM.	Exposure and influence on L2 usually begin when the bilinguals enter school (e.g., after the age of six (Schlenter, 2023)). eSEQ may also occur in the context of childhood immigrants (e.g., an L1 Spanish-speaking Latin American child who emigrated to Sweden between the ages of 3 to 8 years old and acquired Swedish as his L2) (Bylund et al. 2021).	De Houwer (2011), Hoff & Core (2013), Moradi (2014), Nagel et al. (2015), Thordardottir (2019), Smolander et al. (2020), Mohamed Salleh et al. (2020), Gil et al. (2021), Bylund et al. (2021)
Late Bilinguals	Late bilinguals are bilinguals who learn a second language after a critical period, which typically occurs during adulthood or adolescence. They can further be classified into two different acquisition contexts, namely, a) immersion learning (e.g., a Spanish native speaker learns English as L2 during childhood/teenagehood after migration – see Soares-Silva et al., 2021) and b) classroom learning.	Late bilinguals become bilinguals as a result of migration, living in a monolingual society, or learning a foreign language in a classroom setting.	Geneese et al. (1978), Moradi (2014), Novitskiy et al. (2019), Baigorri et al. (2019), de Bruin (2019), Soares-Silva et al. (2021), Bylund et al. (2021)
Dominant (unbalanced) Bilinguals	Dominant bilinguals are bilinguals who are more proficient and fluent in one of the languages they acquire. They can be considered as native-like speakers in one of the languages. They are also known as unbalanced bilinguals (e.g., Peal & Lambert, 1962) or functional bilinguals (Nagel et al. 2015).	This is related to the common distinction between a dual competence acquired naturally through contextual demand, where one language is primary, and the other is secondary.	Moradi (2014), Nagel et al. (2015), Dosi (2019), Ovu & Anyanwu (2019), Moreno (2022)
Balanced Bilinguals	Balanced bilinguals are bilinguals with comparable levels of proficiency and competency in both languages. They are considered to be equally skilled and well versed in both languages.	Balanced bilinguals may have higher level of fluency and proficiency in both languages as compared to dominant bilinguals (Moradi, 2014). Furthermore, Summer (2016) adds that balanced bilinguals are considered “true bilinguals” because their fluency in both languages is incomparable to native speakers of the respective languages.	Peal & Lambert (1962), Edwards (2012), Moradi (2014), Summer (2016), Dossi (2019), Soares-Silva et al. (2021)
Passive Bilinguals (receptive bilinguals, incipient bilinguals)	Passive bilinguals are speakers who can understand much of a L2 without being able to translate this ability into production” (p. 303, as cited in Wald, 1974), or in other words, they cannot speak the L2. They are also known as <i>incipient bilinguals</i> (Diebold, 1961) and <i>receptive bilinguals</i> (Hockett, 1958, as cited in Pousada, 2000; Moradi, 2014; Nakamura, 2019).	Individuals who are regarded as passive bilinguals have restricted capability in language activities. They can only understand the L2 spoken or written but will have difficulty to produce it (Pousada, 2000; Edwards, 2012).	Pousada (2000), Edwards (2012), Moradi (2014), Nagel et al. (2015), Nakamura (2019)

Type	Descriptions	Additional notes	Example of studies mentioned and defined the types
Active bilinguals (productive bilinguals)	Active bilinguals can utilize both languages actively since their acquisition without having to rely solely on one language. This may occur when a person actively practices both acquired languages rigorously (Hartanto & Yang, 2019).	Active bilinguals may be better at controlling and monitoring their language production as they may have experienced “high demands on coordinating two activated languages and inhibiting the irrelevant language” (Hartanto & Yang, 2019, p. 5)	Edwards (2012), Hartanto & Yang (2019), Wagner et al. (2022)
Equilingual (or Ambilingual)	Equilinguals are bilinguals who are “able to use their two languages with equal ease, if they are heard consistently using both languages in apparently the same context, e.g., the home or at work, whether or not to different individuals” (Dodson, 1985, p. 327). They can grasp and master both languages equally. Despite this, equilingual speakers may have a preferred language in some or most situations or areas.	This may occur when a bilingual can master two languages equivalently smooth and is also considered communicatively competent bilingual.	Dodson (1985), Pousada (2000), Soares-Silva et al. (2021),

Source: Mahmud & Salehuddin (2023, p. 147 – 149)

Another topic on debate is the age onset of bilingualism. McLaughlin (1984, cited in Mohamed Salleh, 2017) mentioned that the acquisition of two languages of a child is divided into two phases: 1) simultaneous acquisition is acquired before three (3) years old; and 2) successive (sequential) acquisition is acquired after three (3) years old. On the other hand, Dittman and Jürgen (2002, in Köktürk et al., 2016) claimed that children are considered bilingual first language acquirers if a child is exposed to two languages simultaneously within the first two years. Meanwhile, De Houwer, (1990 & 2009, cited in Mohamed Salleh, 2017) argued a simultaneous bilingualism means a child should be taught two languages to a child from birth and a stringent cut-off at a week old compared to other researchers. In addition, some studies state that second language acquisition starts between the age of one (1) and three (3) and others mentioned a crucial cut-off point at 4 years old (Unsworth, 2013a, Schwartz, 2004; Rothweiler, 2007; Meisel, 2009; Schulz and Tracy, 2011; Unsworth, 2016, in Schulz & Grimm, 2019). Meanwhile, Altarriba & Heredia (2011, cited in Treffers-Daller, 2019) have argued that early bilinguals are individuals who acquire two languages before the age of six (6) and late bilinguals use the second language after 12 years old.

2.2 *Types of Bilingualism*

This section discusses and focuses on Simultaneous and Sequential Bilingualism.

2.2.1 *Simultaneous Bilingual*

Early Bilingualism, Simultaneous Bilingual or Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA) refers to a situation when a child learns two languages at the same time within the first week from birth. Later, when the child is able to speak, words from each language are used (De

Houwer, 2009 cited in Mohamed Salleh, 2017). De Houwer (2013) stated that BFLA are children who have two first languages which are typically spoken at the same time from home. In addition, according to Hamers & Blanc (2005, cited in Suek, 2017), simultaneous bilinguals are those who learn two languages in their early childhood as their mother tongues. In another term, a simultaneous bilingual may learn two languages at the same time due to parents' languages spoken to the child and the most effective method is one-parent-one-language input to raise a bilingual child (Ronjat, 1913 & Leopold, 1939 cited in Mohamed Salleh, 2017).

2.2.2 Sequential Bilingual

De Houwer (1990, 2009 cited in De Houwer, 2013) reported that an Early Second Language Acquisition (ESLA) is a child who learns a first language, then is introduced to another language at a later age. As mentioned earlier by McLaughlin (1984, cited in Mohamed Salleh, 2017), sequential or successive bilinguals are children who acquire two languages after the age of three years old. According to Stobart (1992), sequential bilingualism may occur into three stages of age such as a) in pre-school children (which children by the age of three (3) will start to focus on meaning of utterances rather than linguistic forms), b) older-school aged children (they will realize languages have structures, awareness on the differences and environment), and c) adults (they show cognitive maturity, better skills, and attitudes towards second language acquisition).

In the Malaysian context, instead of speaking native language, some parents speak English to their children as English holds prestigious status in this era of globalization (Hashim, 2014, cited in Mohamed Salleh, 2017). In such a situation could be where the parents first introduce the English language to the child before their native language; their children would usually develop as sequential bilinguals.

2.3 Bilingual and Language Dominance

Language dominance is as challenging as bilingualism to define due to its broad features and the various aspects of an individual acquiring it such as the frequency of using the languages, proficiency in the dominant language, experiences and habits (Schmid & Yilmaz, 2018; Treffers-Daller, 2019). Montrul (2016, cited in Schmid & Yilmaz, 2018) claimed that language dominance takes two languages of bilingual individuals into account and their biographical variables and all language-external conditions which the languages are learned or used by them.

“Societal language dominance is linked to but not identical to, individual language dominance; that exposure to and use of languages are key to the development of language dominance; and that dominance can change over time (Argyri & Sorace 2007, Hohenstein et al. 2006). (Treffers-Daller, 2019)” The author mentioned that language dominance is complex in terms of its linguistic, sociolinguistic, and psycholinguistic dimensions (Lanza, 2004, cited in Treffers-Daller, 2019). In Malaysia, the predominantly used language is Malay language, hence it may be considered as the dominant language due to it being highly used and activated (Mohamed Salleh, 2021).

In addition, Köktürk et al., (2016) claimed it is hard for one to achieve both equally successful competency and proficiency in the two languages they acquire as they may have a weaker or stronger language. The differences between strong and weak languages always show that their proficiency in the two languages have different proficiency and this imbalance of language proficiency can be shifted and turned around. Numerous studies have shown that a bilingual has the tendency to embrace the elements of dominant language to the less one (Gawlitzeck-Maiwald & Tracy, 1996; Aafke Hulk & van der Linden, 1996; Yip & Matthews, 2007, cited in Mohamed Salleh, 2017). According to Meisel (1989, cited in Mohamed Salleh, 2017), “the nature of dominant and weaker language pertains to the presence and frequency of use (i.e., performance rather than competence).”

Figure 1 illustrates the bilinguals’ proficiency measures, adopted from Schmid and Yilmaz (2018). X and Y are indicators of languages (L_x and L_y). A speaker whose proficiency is ‘balanced’ in the two languages is mapped at the space which is at similar level on both axes. Meanwhile, a speaker who is dominant in the stronger language is placed closer to one axis which has scored highly. Schmid and Yilmaz (2018) argued that time plays a crucial role in the development of linguistics, e.g., the increase in exposure to L_x, the higher the proficiency in the language and has the potential to affect L_y.

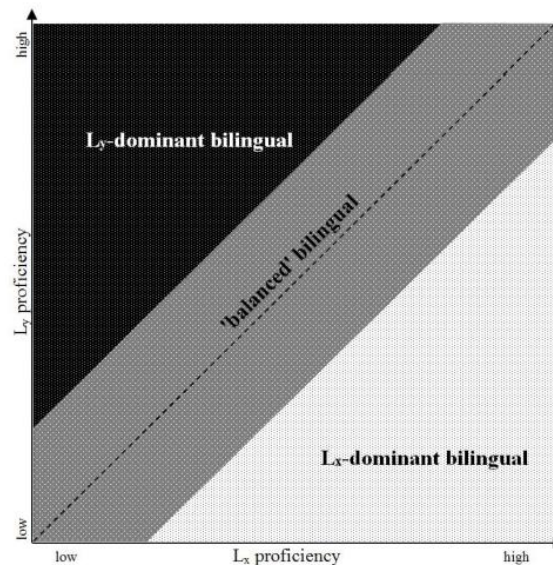


FIGURE 1
Source: Schmid & Yilmaz (2018)

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Critical Period Hypothesis and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory are presented and discussed as the theoretical framework of this study. The theories are crucial to the development of this study and for better understanding on bilingualism acquisition.

2.4.1 Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) in Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) was popularized and refined by Eric Lenneberg who is a pioneer in the study of the biological foundation of acquisition and cognitive psychology in 1961 (Köktürk et al., 2016). Critical period of time of language acquisition begins at the onset of two (2) years old until one reaches puberty (Lenneberg, in Köktürk et al., 2016). In addition, earlier in this chapter of study, the onset age of bilingualism was presented and it was found that there are many interpretations of the issue. There has been no mutual consensus on the age or critical period of language acquisition (Siahaan, 2022). While Lenneberg argued the cut-off point of a better language acquisition to achieve a better proficiency is at the age of 14, some researchers claimed that the cut-off age varies from age 12 to 18. Apart from that, the linguist, Lennberg suggested that after the age of 14 or puberty, language acquisition is effortful and difficult (Campos, 2023). This is supported by many researchers although many opinions are presented on the cut-off point. For instance, Patkowski et al. (1989, cited in Köktürk et al., 2016) mentioned that cut-off point at teenage years, whereas Seliger (cited in Köktürk et al., 2016) stated that, “multiple closure periods for different components of a language due to the fact that the end of neural plasticity changes for different skills”. In other words, the level of proficiency and speed of acquisition from one child to another varies, but they end once the neural plasticity ends.

According to Kanwal et. al (2022), a person may learn or acquire a second language from his/her surrounding or through formal instructions. They claimed that language acquisition (LA) happens naturally, in unconscious thought in which the unfamiliar structures of a language are absorbed. Krashen, a researcher and a linguist known for his SLA theory mentioned that a second language may be acquired or learned. He claimed that language learning is a conscious knowledge, rules of a language, and ability to talk about it. On the other hand, language acquisition is portrayed as a subconscious process of a child learning a language as a child is not aware of language rules and structures, but has the ‘feel’ to sound correct (Köktürk et al., 2016).

In this section, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is presented as an idea to bilingualism in the context of CPH. Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) is crucial in this study as it discusses the critical period of a person to achieve competency during a language acquisition; meanwhile, researchers of bilingualism also argued on the age onset of a child. This is closely related to the context of this study which focuses and discusses the reflection of a dominant language and its proficiency. An individual’s age onset or the age of the language acquired is questioned as the research methodology to find the relation to their proficiency and language dominance. Apart from that, according to CPH, an individual can achieve native-like speaker in the phonological skills however this declines at the age of six (6) although one is offered with many opportunities or motivations (Al-Gamdi, 2019).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive quantitative method for data collection based on Mahmud and Salehuddin (2023). A set of questions was distributed to the students for data collection. This approach complements the objectives of this study; to find out the types of bilinguals among FSSK undergraduate students, and their dominant language.

3.2 *Research Sample*

The respondents of the questionnaire fulfilled the criteria of this research: 1) Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 FSSK UKM undergraduate students; and 2) speak at least two (2) or more languages. Based on the data collected from 200 respondents of FSSK UKM undergraduate students, the researcher found that they are coming from different language backgrounds, including the different dialects they speak at home. Apart from that, these respondents are from 12 different academic programmes in FSSK UKM that use either Malay language (11 programmes) or English (1 programme) as their medium of instruction.

3.3 *Procedures*

A set of 29-item questionnaire in the Google Form format was distributed to all 88 1st Year, 41 2nd Year, and 71 3rd Year FSSK UKM undergraduate students via online. The questionnaire consists of 20 multiple questions, three (3) open-ended questions, and six (6) Likert Scale questions. The topics of the questions are: the students' first language, their language proficiency, and their dominant language.

4. *Findings & Discussion*

The results from the 200 FSSK UKM respondents collected via the 29-item online questionnaire are presented in this section. The data were collected to achieve two (2) main objectives of this study; 1) to identify the types of bilinguals UKM students are; and 2) to compare and contrast the bilinguals' dominant language based on their proficiency in the two languages.

From the demographic question, 65.0% of the respondents are taught in Malay language, 32% respondents used English, and 3.0% used both languages as the medium of instruction in their programmes. However, 32.0% of the 200 participants read the questionnaire in English version more than Malay language version.

4.1 *Language Identity*

TABLE 2.0 The Age of Acquisition of The Language(s).

Grade(s)	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
Malay Language before the age of 3, then English	125	62.5
English before the age of 3, then Malay Language	14	7.0
Malay Language & English at the same time before the age of 3	61	30.5

62.5% respondents were exposed to the Malay language before the age of three (3), 30.5% of the respondents were exposed to both Malay language and English before the age of three (3) simultaneously, and only 7.0% were introduced to English before three (3) years old, then Malay language. Hence, based on the categorization mentioned in Mahmud and Salehuddin (2023), 69.5% respondents were early sequential Malay-English bilinguals, whereas 30.5% were early simultaneous Malay-English bilinguals.

TABLE 3. The Percentage of Respondents' Language Used.

Frequency Language Used	Malay Language	English
All the time	37.5%	6.5%
Almost all the time	40.0%	20.0%
Equally with the other language(s)	17.0%	28.0%
Rarely, only when required	5.5%	45.0%
Not at all	0.0%	0.0%

Respondents use Malay language all the time or almost all the time with the percentage of 37.5% and 40% respectively. However, 45% of the respondents reported that English is not used the most. In addition, 28.0% of respondents responded that they use English as much as other language they know compared to Malay language which only records 17.0%.

The Malay language appears to be dominant language among those who had an early exposure to the language and those who use the language in their daily conversation.

4.2 *Bilingualism*

Table 4. The Exposure of the Language(s).

Language Exposure	Malay Language	English
Since birth	83.5%	21%
Before going to school, but after another language(s)	9.0%	42.5%
At school, but after another language(s)	7.5%	36.5%

Table 4 shows that 83.5% of the respondents had been exposed to the Malay language compare to 21.0% of English since they were born. On the other hand, 42.5% of the respondents were exposed to English before going to school, but they had learned the Malay language prior to that. Only 9% of the respondents were exposed to Malay language after other languages, but before going to school. 36.5% of the respondents reported that they learned English in schools, i.e., after learning Malay language or other language. 7.5% of the 200 respondents learned the Malay language at school after they had learned other languages.

TABLE 5. Correct statement(s).

Following statement(s) are found correct to respondents	Percentage (%)
There is another language that I can speak and I was exposed to the language before I was exposed to the Malay and/or English language.	22.0
There is another dialect of Malay that I can speak and I was exposed to this dialect before I was exposed to the Malay and/or English language.	62.5
I used to speak this other language/dialect at home.	30.5
I used to speak this other language/dialect with my friends.	26.5
I don't have much opportunity to communicate in this other language/dialect nowadays.	20.0
I am more comfortable at expressing myself in this language/dialect than in the Standard Malay or English.	22.0
There is at least one other language that I can speak and I was exposed to this other language after I was exposed to the Malay and/or English language.	43.0
I don't have much opportunity to speak this new language/dialect nowadays.	15.0

Table 5 shows that 62.5% respondents reported that they were exposed to a dialect before they were exposed to the Malay language and English. 43.0% participants were exposed to and can speak at least one other language after they acquired the Malay language or English. Meanwhile, only 15.0% of the respondents show that they currently do not have the opportunity to speak newly learned language or dialect. In addition, Table 5 shows that only 22.0% of the respondents reported that there is another language they can speak and exposed to before they were exposed to Malay language or English and they are more comfortable to express themselves in this language than in Standard Malay language or English. Furthermore, 30.5% and 26.5% respondents reported they used to speak this other language or dialect at home and they do not have the chance to speak the language or dialect with friends, respectively.

4.3 *Language Dominance*

To answer this question, data on the respondents' proficiency based on their perception towards both languages (Malay language and English), and their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) Malay Language grades and MUET scores were collected. Respondents reported that their proficiency in both Malay language and English were low when they were in primary schools, but the performances improved later when they were in their secondary schools and university. 54.0% of the respondents scored Band 4 for their MUET, whereas, 2.5% of the respondents got the highest score of MUET which is Band 6. Therefore, 56.5% of the respondents can be categorized as proficient in English language. Meanwhile, 53.0% of the respondents received Grade A in their Malay Language subject for their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia, SPM, which is the compulsory national examination for secondary school students.

4.4 *Discussion*

The results collected were to answer and achieve the objectives of this research. The first objective is to identify the types of bilingualism of the FSSK UKM undergraduate students which are the 200 respondents. Secondly, the purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the dominant language based on the language proficiency.

4.4.1 Types of Bilingualism

Analysis of results show that based on the bilingual categorization by Mahmud and Salehuddin (2023, p. 147-149), 69.5% of the respondents were early sequential Malay-English bilinguals and 30.5% early simultaneous bilinguals. 83.5% had Malay as their first language, and 21% of the respondents had English as their first language. The total percentage is 104.5%, which could suggest that 4.5% of the respondents had Malay and English as their first language. These 4.5% can be considered as Simultaneous Early bilinguals. However, the 42.5% of the respondents were exposed to English before going to school but after they have learned Malay language. Although this suggests the respondents are Sequential Early Bilinguals, it cannot be concluded 42.5% were Early Sequential Malay-English Bilinguals. Furthermore, 9% respondents were exposed to the Malay language after other languages, but before going to school. This demonstrates the Early Sequential Malay Bilinguals among the respondents. Nevertheless, 36.5% reported that they learned English in schools, i.e., after learning the Malay language or other language and 7.5% of the 200 respondents learned Malay language at school after they had learned other languages. The respondents are regarded as Late Bilinguals as they learned the second language (i.e., the Malay language and English) later in school.

Therefore, using the categories presented by Mahmud and Salehuddin (2023, p. 147-149), FSSK undergraduate bilinguals can fall under the following categories: Simultaneous Early Malay-English bilinguals, Sequential Early Malay-English bilinguals, Late Malay-English bilinguals, Passive Bilinguals, Equilinguals, and Dominant Bilinguals.

4.4.2 Language Dominance Proficiency

62.5% of the 200 respondents record the highest numbers of Malay language exposure since small, however, 32% respondents demonstrate the highest preference of reading the questionnaire in English version. The 32% participants may have been influenced by the sequence of the language; English version first, then Malay version. Based on the data and results in Section 4.4 Language Dominance, we can assume that initially, the respondents may be considered as unbalanced bilinguals due to one language is more dominant than the other. However, as they grow older, they have the tendency to become balanced bilinguals. Both Malay language and English seem to be dominant based on their proficiencies.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the objective of identifying the types of bilinguals through this research has been met. This research has found that there are Simultaneous Early Malay-English bilinguals, Sequential Early Malay-English bilinguals, Late Malay-English bilinguals, Passive Bilinguals, Equilinguals, and Dominant Bilinguals among 200 FSSK UKM undergraduate students. The second objective, which is to investigate respondents' language dominance based on their language proficiency has also been met. The respondents demonstrate to be balanced bilinguals as they grow older in both Malay language and English based on their perceptions, Sijil Pelajaran

Malaysia (SPM) Malay Language grades and MUET scores. Further research should be conducted on specific categories of bilingualism to understand the linguistic phenomenon.

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