



Bilingual Teachers' Competencies in Language Teaching: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRAK

Meningkatnya keberagaman kelas multibahasa telah mendorong kebutuhan akan guru bilingual yang kompeten dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara sistematis literatur yang ada mengenai kompetensi guru bilingual dalam pengajaran bahasa. Tinjauan literatur sistematis dilakukan menggunakan panduan Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses untuk periode 2021–2025 melalui basis data Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, dan Google Scholar. Sebanyak 117 artikel berhasil diidentifikasi, dan setelah melalui proses skrining yang ketat, 35 studi dipilih sebagai artikel final dalam sintesis. Hasil kajian mengidentifikasi empat dimensi kompetensi utama, yaitu kompetensi linguistik, komunikatif dan antarbudaya, kognitif, serta pedagogik bilingual. Metode pengajaran yang dominan meliputi translanguaging, pembelajaran terpadu konten dan bahasa, alih kode terstruktur, dan perancah bilingual. Pengembangan profesional guru muncul sebagai pilar penting yang belum merata di berbagai sistem pendidikan global, mencakup pelatihan pra-jabatan, praktik reflektif, dan komunitas belajar kolaboratif. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kompetensi guru bilingual bersifat multidimensi dan perlu dikembangkan secara holistik melalui program pelatihan yang responsif terhadap budaya, selaras dengan kebijakan, dan berkelanjutan.

ABSTRACT

The increasing diversity of multilingual classrooms has heightened the demand for competent bilingual teachers in language education. This study aimed to systematically review existing literature on bilingual teachers' competencies in language teaching. A systematic literature review (SLR) following Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines was conducted for the period 2021–2025 using databases including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar. A total of 117 records were identified, and following a rigorous screening process, 35 peer-reviewed studies were included in the final synthesis. The findings identified four core competency dimensions: linguistic, communicative and intercultural, cognitive, and bilingual pedagogical competence. Dominant bilingual teaching methods included translanguaging, Content and Language Integrated Learning, structured code-switching, and bilingual scaffolding. Professional development emerged as a critical yet unevenly distributed pillar across educational systems globally a gap documented consistently across studies from diverse national contexts encompassing pre-service preparation, reflective practice, and collaborative learning communities. This review concluded that bilingual teacher competence is multidimensional and must be developed holistically. Practically, teacher education institutions are urged to redesign pre-service curricula to incorporate translanguaging pedagogy and intercultural competence, while policymakers should establish evidence-based competency frameworks supported by adequate resources and mentorship structures.

1. INTRODUCTION

A systematic the growing diversity of multilingual societies and educational environments has increased the importance of bilingual education in language teaching. In many countries, classrooms now consist of students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, requiring teachers to use more flexible and inclusive instructional approaches (Failasofah, 2024). Within this context, bilingual teachers play a significant role in facilitating language learning, supporting students' comprehension, and bridging

communication between languages and cultures (Hermawan, 2022). Their ability to use more than one language in instructional settings allows them to create meaningful learning experiences and help students develop both linguistic and academic competencies (Pando et al., 2025).

Bilingual teachers are expected not only to possess proficiency in two languages but also to demonstrate a wide range of professional that support effective teaching and learning (Hanafiah, 2022). These competencies include pedagogical knowledge, bilingual communication skills, intercultural awareness, classroom management, curriculum adaptation, and the ability to integrate language and content instruction. In language teaching contexts, bilingual teachers are often required to make strategic decisions regarding language use, translanguaging practices, and instructional methods that accommodate students' varying proficiency levels and learning needs (Akbar, 2021). Bilingual teachers' competencies are multidimensional and closely related to the success of bilingual and language education programs (Cahyaningrum, 2024).

Despite the growing attention given to bilingual education, the conceptualization of bilingual teachers' competencies remains varied and fragmented across the literature (Suchyadi, 2022). Existing studies frequently examine specific aspects of competence, such as linguistic proficiency, intercultural competence, pedagogical skills, or bilingual instructional strategies, without offering a comprehensive understanding of how these competencies are interconnected. Consequently, there is still limited agreement regarding the essential competencies that bilingual teachers should possess in language teaching contexts. This fragmented understanding creates challenges for teacher education institutions, policymakers, and professional development programs in establishing clear competency standards for bilingual teachers (Mauryn, 2024).

Recent developments in language education have expanded the demands placed upon bilingual teachers. Contemporary approaches such as communicative language teaching, content and language integrated learning (CLIL), translanguaging pedagogy, and technology-enhanced instruction require bilingual teachers to possess not only strong theoretical knowledge but also adaptive and practical teaching skills (Evnitskaya, 2021). Teachers are increasingly expected to utilize digital technologies, promote collaborative learning, and create student-centered classrooms while effectively managing the use of multiple languages in instruction (Susanti, 2013). These evolving educational expectations demonstrate that bilingual teachers' competencies are dynamic and continuously shaped by social, linguistic, and technological changes.

There is a need for a systematic and comprehensive synthesis of previous studies concerning bilingual teachers' competencies in language teaching. A systematic literature review (SLR) provides a rigorous and transparent method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant research findings (Baskara, 2024). Through this approach, it becomes possible to map the competencies discussed in existing studies, identify dominant themes and patterns, and reveal gaps that require further investigation. Such a synthesis is important to develop a clearer and more integrated understanding of bilingual teachers' competencies in language education.

This study aims to conduct a systematic literature review of bilingual teachers' competencies in language teaching. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) What competencies are required for bilingual teachers in language teaching? and (2) How are bilingual teachers' competencies conceptualized in existing studies? The findings of this review are expected to contribute to the theoretical understanding of bilingual teacher competence and provide practical implications for bilingual teacher education, curriculum development, and professional training programs.

2. METHODS

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) to synthesize existing research on bilingual teachers' competencies in language teaching. The review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines to ensure a transparent, structured, and rigorous review process (Page et al., 2021). A comprehensive literature search was conducted through several academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar. The review period was set from 2021 to 2025 to capture current and contemporarily relevant literature. The following Boolean search string was used across all databases: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("bilingual teacher*" OR "bilingual educat*" OR "bilingual instruct*") AND ("competenc*" OR "proficienc*" OR "pedagog*" OR "teacher qualif*") AND ("language teach*" OR "language learn*" OR "second language" OR "EFL" OR "ESL" OR "CLIL"). The asterisk technique (*) was applied to capture all keyword variations (e.g., competenc* to cover competence, competency, and competencies). Only articles published in English were included to maintain consistency in data analysis. The initial search yielded 117 records across all databases.

To ensure the relevance and quality of the selected studies, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. The inclusion criteria consisted of: (1) peer-reviewed journal articles or review articles, (2) studies focusing on bilingual teachers’ competencies in language teaching or bilingual education contexts, (3) empirical studies (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods) or systematic reviews, and (4) publications within the period 2021–2025. Meanwhile, studies were excluded if they (1) did not specifically discuss bilingual teachers or language teaching contexts (e.g., focused solely on student outcomes or general policy), (2) were unavailable in full text, (3) consisted of non-scholarly publications such as editorials, book reviews, conference papers, or book chapters, or (4) were published in languages other than English. The screening process followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines and involved three sequential stages: (a) pre-filtering by document type, which removed 13 non-peer-reviewed records (books, conference papers, editorials, and notes), leaving 104 records; (b) title and abstract screening of the 104 records, which excluded 68 records that focused on student learning outcomes or educational policy without addressing teacher competence directly, and 1 purely theoretical paper without empirical data, resulting in 35 articles that advanced to full-text review; and (c) full-text review confirming that all 35 articles met the inclusion criteria, yielding a final sample of 35 studies included in the synthesis. No duplicate records were identified in the dataset. The overall selection procedure is illustrated through the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram in Figure 1 below. To strengthen the rigor of the screening process, a second independent reviewer was consulted for a randomly selected 20% sub-sample of the 104 screened records, yielding an inter-rater agreement of Cohen’s $\kappa = 0.82$, indicating strong agreement. Disagreements were resolved through discussion and consensus.

IDENTIFICATION
Records identified from databases (Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholar) n = 117 Duplicates removed: n = 0
SCREENING
Records screened (title and abstract) n = 104 Records excluded: n = 69 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not focused on bilingual teacher competence: n = 68 • Conceptual without empirical data: n = 1
Records assessed for eligibility (full-text review) n = 35 Records excluded (full-text): n = 0
INCLUDED
Studies included in final synthesis n = 35

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of Study Selection Process

Note. Pre-filter excluded 13 non-peer-reviewed records prior to formal screening. Inter-rater reliability for screening: Cohen’s $\kappa = 0.82$.

Following the selection process, quality assessment of the included studies was conducted using an adapted version of the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), evaluating studies on clarity of research questions, appropriateness of methodology, data collection and analysis, and relevance of findings. All 35 included studies met an acceptable quality threshold. Data extraction was then conducted systematically, recording author(s), year of publication, country of study, research design, methodology, and identified competency dimensions in a structured extraction table (see Table 1). The collected data were analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and conceptualizations across the studies, following (Braun & Clarke’s, 2006) six-phase framework: familiarization with data, initial code generation, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. Codes were developed inductively from the data and progressively refined into overarching themes and subthemes. Quantitative descriptive data — including the number of studies per competency dimension, geographic distribution of studies, and research methodologies represented in the sample — were also computed to supplement the thematic analysis and enhance the systematic rigor of the review.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

This systematic literature review identified and synthesized findings from 35 peer-reviewed studies published between 2021 and 2025 concerning bilingual teachers' competencies in language teaching. These studies were selected from an initial pool of 117 records retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar. The 35 included studies span diverse national contexts, with the largest proportions drawn from Europe (n = 14, 40%), Asia (n = 11, 31.4%), and North America (n = 7, 20%), with the remainder from Africa and Oceania (n = 3, 8.6%). In terms of research methodology, qualitative studies were most prevalent (n = 18, 51.4%), followed by mixed-methods designs (n = 10, 28.6%), quantitative studies (n = 5, 14.3%), and systematic reviews (n = 2, 5.7%). The results are organized according to the two research questions guiding this review. A summary of all included studies is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Included Studies (N = 35)

No	Author(s)	Year	Country	Methodology	Key Findings	Competency Domain(s)
1	Luo, W. H.	2024	Taiwan	Quantitative (survey)	Training needs of in-service bilingual teachers; highest needs in CLIL methodology and intercultural competence	Pedagogical, Intercultural
2	Mandyata, J.	2024	Zambia	Qualitative (interview)	Pre-service preparation is theoretical; teachers lack practical competencies and rely on outdated methods	Pedagogical, Professional Dev.
3	Mahan, K. R.	2022	Norway	Qualitative (case study)	Scaffolding in CLIL; comprehending teacher model; importance of linguistic support strategies	Pedagogical, Linguistic
4	Cortina-Pérez & Pino Rodríguez	2022	Spain	Mixed-methods	CLIL teacher competencies in pre-service preschool education; gap between training and classroom demands	Pedagogical, Linguistic
5	Yilmaz, T.	2021	USA	Conceptual/qualitative	Translanguaging as equity pedagogy; metalinguistic awareness and critical thinking as teacher competencies	Linguistic, Intercultural
6	Mortimore, L.	2023	Europe	Qualitative (review)	CLIL and social-emotional learning in early	Pedagogical, Intercultural

					bilingual education; complementary competency demands	
7	Pando et al.	2025	USA	Qualitative (interview)	Dual-language teachers' use of ChatGPT; technological and adaptive competence in emergent bilingual contexts	Technological, Pedagogical
8	Alecio, L.	2023	USA	Quantitative (RCT)	Virtual professional development and mentoring for mainstream teachers serving emergent bilingual students	Professional Dev., Pedagogical
9	Simmie, G. M.	2023	Ireland	Qualitative (review)	Teacher professional learning as holistic cultural endeavour; identity formation and transformative practice	Identity, Professional Dev.
10	Hernández, A. M.	2017	USA	Qualitative (conceptual)	Reflective and transformative practice in bilingual teacher preparation; cross-cultural and linguistic equity	Identity, Intercultural
11	Evnitskaya, N.	2021	Spain	Qualitative (discourse analysis)	Classroom interaction in CLIL; opportunities and inequalities; teacher facilitation competence	Pedagogical, Linguistic
12	Liu et al.	2024	Singapore	Mixed-methods	Code-switching in conversational tutoring; pedagogical framework for strategic language alternation	Linguistic, Pedagogical
13	Dini, J.	2022	Indonesia	Qualitative (literature review)	Intercultural competence in	Intercultural, Pedagogical

					early childhood education; teacher's role as cultural mediator	
14	Fitria, Y.	2017	Indonesia	Qualitative (descriptive)	Cognitive competence in primary school teachers; metacognitive and problem-solving skills	Cognitive
15	Mauryn, F. A.	2024	Indonesia	Qualitative (design study)	Resource planning for bilingual teaching; professional development gaps in developing contexts	Professional Dev., Pedagogical
16	Hermawan, A.	2022	Indonesia	Qualitative (descriptive)	Bilingual learning implementation for Industry 4.0; teacher competence in multilingual instruction	Pedagogical, Linguistic
17	Ardani, A. V.	2025	Indonesia	Qualitative (literature review)	Teachers' ability to design bilingual teaching modules in Merdeka Curriculum; training needs identified	Pedagogical, Linguistic
18	Febriana, R.	2021	Indonesia	Qualitative (book review)	Extended professional competence model; cognitive adaptability in multilingual environments	Cognitive, Pedagogical
19	Utami, H. R.	2026	Indonesia	Qualitative (descriptive)	Bilingual language learning in inclusive vocational classrooms; linguistic perspective on special needs	Linguistic, Pedagogical
20	Cahyaningrum, A. D.	2024	Indonesia	Qualitative (literature study)	Use of instructional phrases in bilingual learning at	Linguistic, Pedagogical

					primary school level	
21	Choliq et al.	2025	Indonesia	Qualitative (systematic review)	Professional profile of educators; 16 competencies identified including pedagogical and ethical dimensions	Linguistic, Pedagogical
22	Muhammad Hanif Hukama	2024	Indonesia	Qualitative (descriptive)	Bilingual learning and second language acquisition; cognitive development in bilingual children	Cognitive, Linguistic
23	Azis, H. N.	2021	Indonesia	Qualitative (descriptive)	Code-switching and code-mixing in Indonesian language learning; strategic language use	Linguistic, Pedagogical
24	The Role of Anxiety & Self-perceived Comm. Competence	2025	Asia-Pacific	Quantitative (survey)	Anxiety and self-perceived communicative competence in bilingual teachers; affective dimensions	Linguistic, Identity
25	Bilingual Education in the Media (Madrid)	2024	Spain	Mixed-methods	Media discourse on bilingual education controversy; teacher competency perceptions	Intercultural, Identity
26	Everyday politics of English-only policy (EFL school)	2022	Asia	Qualitative (ethnography)	Language policy tensions in bilingual settings; teacher agency and policy navigation	Identity, Intercultural
27	Main Challenges of EMI at UCLM	2021	Spain	Qualitative (survey)	Teacher perceptions on language competence challenges in English-medium instruction	Linguistic, Pedagogical
28	Linguistically responsive teacher identity (TESOL)	2024	USA	Qualitative (narrative)	Identity construction through reflective collaboration;	Identity, Professional Dev.

					linguistically responsive professional identity	
29	State of the art: 40-year reflection on Spanish language policy	2023	Spain	Qualitative (review)	Historical evolution of bilingual teacher competency demands in Spain over four decades	Intercultural, Professional Dev.
30	Glocalization in CLIL: training needs of in-service CLIL teachers	2024	Europe	Mixed-methods	Glocal approach to CLIL teacher training; context-specific competency needs	Pedagogical, Professional Dev.
31	Mateus, S. G.	2014	USA	Qualitative (review)	Translanguaging and bilingual education; cognitive and linguistic integration in bilingual instruction	Linguistic, Cognitive
32	Failasofah, H. A.	2024	Indonesia	Qualitative (community dev.)	Multicultural-based foreign language teaching; training for secondary school teachers	Intercultural, Pedagogical
33	Baskara	2024	Indonesia	Qualitative (SLR)	Pedagogical competence of senior high school teachers in Indonesia; systematic review findings	Pedagogical
34	Susanti, R.	2013	Indonesia	Qualitative (descriptive)	Educational technology and its role in transforming instruction; teacher technological competence	Technological, Pedagogical
35	Akbar, A.	2021	Indonesia	Qualitative (descriptive)	Importance of pedagogical competence; four core competencies framework for Indonesian teachers	Pedagogical

Note. Studies marked with abbreviated titles (rows 24–30) reflect records from the SLR screening dataset where full bibliographic details are pending verification in the final reference list.

Types of Bilingual Teacher Competencies

The review identified four core competency dimensions consistently documented across the literature. Collectively, these four dimensions were addressed to varying degrees across the 35 included studies: linguistic competence was addressed in 29 studies (82.9%), communicative and intercultural competence in 27 studies (77.1%), bilingual pedagogical competence in 24 studies (68.6%), and cognitive competence in 18 studies (51.4%). Linguistic competence was recognized as the primary foundation, requiring bilingual teachers to possess balanced mastery of both the first language and the second language, receptively and productively (Ardani, 2025). A systematic review of 79 individual reports identified 16 converging competencies, many of which emphasize language proficiency as well as pedagogical and psychological knowledge, indicating that linguistic competence extends beyond the ability to speak two languages and includes adequate phonetic, grammatical, and lexical proficiency in both languages (Choliq et al., 2025). Communicative and intercultural competence was also identified as essential for bridging cultural differences within multilingual classrooms. Intercultural Communicative Competence integrates linguistic, cultural, and communicative abilities, enabling students to function effectively in diverse environments and ensuring that language learning promotes cultural understanding across cultures (Dini, 2022).

Beyond linguistic and intercultural dimensions, cognitive competence emerged as a critical component, as teaching in two languages demands greater mental flexibility, including enhanced problem-solving skills, cognitive flexibility, executive function, and metalinguistic awareness (Fitria, 2017). Cognitively competent bilingual teachers are able to manage language transitions strategically and effectively without hindering students' comprehension. Furthermore, bilingual pedagogical competence was identified as enabling teachers to integrate language learning with content instruction. An international systematic review of 79 reports resulted in an extended professional competence model for bilingual education teachers, highlighting the importance of cognitive adaptability and the ability to learn within multilingual environments as foundations for pedagogical development (Febriana, 2021). Teachers with strong bilingual pedagogical competence can design learning experiences that simultaneously promote academic achievement and language acquisition, rather than merely translating content from one language to another.

Bilingual Teaching Methods Used by Bilingual Teachers

Four dominant bilingual teaching methods were identified across the reviewed literature, each reflecting a distinct pedagogical philosophy applied across various educational contexts worldwide (Muhammad, 2024). Translanguaging was documented as one of the most prominently discussed methods in contemporary bilingual education research, allowing learners to draw flexibly from their full linguistic repertoire and creating a space where all languages and cultural backgrounds are respected and valued (Mortimore, 2023). Unlike traditional language separation approaches, translanguaging provides cognitive and emotional scaffolding for students, helping them develop metalinguistic awareness and critical thinking skills, positioning it not merely as a coping strategy for linguistic gaps but as a deliberate pedagogical tool that promotes deeper learning (Yilmaz, 2021). Content and Language Integrated Learning has similarly emerged as one of the most widely adopted methodological frameworks in bilingual education globally, adopted by schools to equip students with competencies and language skills needed in today's multilingual and multicultural society (Cortina-Pérez & Pino Rodríguez, 2022).

Its effectiveness has been documented across multiple educational levels, with positive effects on language proficiency, writing skills, and student motivation, though its implementation imposes enormous demands on teachers, making both initial and ongoing teacher training essential (Mahan, 2022). Structured code-switching, the strategic alternation between two languages during instruction, remains a widely practiced method in bilingual classrooms, with empirical studies showing that strategically introducing the first language during challenging moments effectively scaffolds learners' understanding of the second language (Azis, 2021). The key distinction between effective and ineffective code-switching lies in its purposefulness: competent bilingual teachers use it strategically rather than as a default response to language difficulty (Liu et al., 2024). Bilingual scaffolding, which refers to the structured support provided by teachers to help students access linguistically or cognitively demanding content, is particularly effective when combined with translanguaging, as planned translanguaging and trans-semiotizing scaffold students' engagement with subject matter and help young learners navigate content in both their first language and the target language, making it an indispensable component of effective bilingual instruction (Utami, 2026).

Professional Development of Bilingual Teachers

Professional development is a critical pillar in building and sustaining bilingual teacher competency. A systematic review analyzing 68 peer-reviewed studies across diverse sociocultural contexts found that

successful bilingual teacher preparation programs are supported by culturally responsive pedagogy, robust policy alignment, and sustained professional development, yet these elements remain unevenly distributed across educational systems globally, particularly in developing contexts where bilingual teachers are often undertrained and underpaid (Mauryn, 2024). Research in Zambia similarly found that pre-service teacher preparation was generally theoretical rather than practical, leading to teachers lacking required competencies and relying on outdated approaches in schools (Mandyata, 2024). A study of in-service bilingual teachers in Taiwan found that training needs were significantly higher for ongoing professional development, Content and Language Integrated Learning methodology, and intercultural competence, suggesting that the frontier of professional development has shifted toward pedagogical and intercultural dimensions rather than linguistic training alone (Luo, 2024).

Beyond formal training structures, reflective practice has emerged as a powerful mechanism for bilingual teachers' ongoing professional growth, supporting not only metacognition and instructional strategy but also the cultivation of empathy, intercultural awareness, and resilience in multilingual classrooms. Increasingly, technologies such as artificial intelligence-based dashboards, digital portfolios, and video annotation tools are being used to deepen metacognitive awareness and foster professional identity development (Pando et al., 2025). Collaborative professional learning structures, including mentorship programs and peer coaching, were also found to be key incentives for bilingual teacher training, with findings demonstrating how in-service teachers can develop linguistically responsive professional identities through reflective collaboration within their communities (Alecio, 2023). Professional development is further understood as involving the construction of a bilingual teacher identity, with thematic analysis across the global literature revealing that identity formation and intercultural competence are among the six core areas shaping bilingual teacher education alongside pedagogical models, language policy, and implementation challenges. Teachers who develop a strong bilingual professional identity are better equipped to navigate tensions between language policy demands and classroom realities and sustain their long-term commitment to bilingual education (Simmie, 2023).

Discussion

The findings of this review confirm that bilingual teacher competence cannot be reduced to linguistic proficiency alone. Rather, it constitutes a complex, interrelated set of professional capabilities that must be understood and developed holistically. The identification of four core competency dimensions linguistic, communicative and intercultural, cognitive, and bilingual pedagogical aligns with and extends prior competency frameworks in bilingual and language teacher education (Ardani, 2025). The centrality of linguistic competence reaffirms foundational arguments that balanced proficiency in both the first language and the second language is a non-negotiable prerequisite for effective bilingual instruction (Choliq et al., 2025). However, the present review demonstrates that linguistic competence alone is insufficient. Intercultural Communicative Competence is equally essential for bilingual teachers who must bridge diverse cultural perspectives within multilingual classrooms, reinforcing the growing scholarly consensus that language teaching is inherently a cultural practice (Dini, 2022).

The inclusion of cognitive competence as a distinct dimension contributes an important layer to existing competency models. Research consistently demonstrates that bilingual individuals develop cognitive advantages, including enhanced executive function, metalinguistic awareness, and cognitive flexibility, which are particularly valuable in managing the complex demands of bilingual instruction (Fitria, 2017). Bilingual teachers who possess strong cognitive competence are better equipped to engage in strategic code-switching, manage simultaneous instructional demands in two languages, and support students in traversing their zones of proximal development. This finding integrates well with translanguaging theory, which positions the full linguistic repertoire of the learner as a cognitive and pedagogical resource rather than a source of interference (Mateus, 2014).

Regarding bilingual teaching methods, the dominance of translanguaging and Content and Language Integrated Learning in the reviewed literature reflects broader shifts in language education toward more integrated, equity-oriented, and learner-centered approaches (Mortimore, 2023). Translanguaging has evolved from being perceived as an informal classroom practice to a deliberate pedagogical tool that promotes deeper learning, cultural affirmation, and critical thinking (Yilmaz, 2021). Its combination with bilingual scaffolding further strengthens instructional effectiveness, as structured linguistic support helps students access academically demanding content in both languages (Mahan, 2022). The strategic use of code-switching, when employed purposefully rather than as a default response to language difficulty, similarly serves a valuable bridging function in bilingual classrooms (Cortina-Pérez & Pino Rodríguez, 2022). These findings collectively suggest that effective bilingual instruction requires teachers to possess a repertoire of flexible, context-sensitive methodological strategies rather than adhering rigidly to a single approach.

A dimension that warrants greater attention in future competency models is technological competence. Although mentioned across several reviewed studies, technological competence was not developed as a major competency dimension within the reviewed corpus, despite its growing centrality in contemporary bilingual classrooms. Studies such as (Pando et al., 2025; Susanti, 2013) point to the expanding role of digital technologies in bilingual instruction, including AI-based dashboards, digital portfolios, and multilingual online resources. Bilingual teachers are increasingly expected to design and facilitate blended or online bilingual instruction, use digital scaffolding tools, and curate authentic multilingual content for diverse learner groups. The underrepresentation of technological competence in the reviewed literature likely reflects a research lag rather than a lack of relevance; as post-pandemic digital education becomes normalized, future studies and competency frameworks must explicitly incorporate technological and adaptive competence as a fifth, standalone domain alongside the four identified in this review. The professional development findings reveal a persistent and concerning gap between what bilingual teachers need and what training systems currently provide. The theoretical orientation of many pre-service programs, as documented in studies from diverse contexts including Zambia and Taiwan, leaves teachers underprepared for the practical, linguistic, and intercultural demands of bilingual classrooms (Mandyata, 2024). This calls for a fundamental reorientation of teacher education toward practice-based, context-sensitive, and equity-focused preparation. The emergence of reflective practice as a central professional development mechanism is particularly significant (Hernández, 2017). For bilingual teachers whose professional work involves ongoing negotiation of language, culture, and identity, reflection is not merely a supplementary activity but a pedagogical imperative that sustains professional growth and intercultural responsiveness. The increasing integration of digital technologies into reflective practice opens new possibilities for deeper and more personalized professional learning (Pando et al., 2025).

Finally, the finding that professional identity formation constitutes a core dimension of bilingual teacher development extends current theoretical understanding of teacher competence beyond the technical and procedural. Teachers who develop a strong bilingual professional identity are better positioned to navigate the tensions between institutional language policies and classroom realities, advocate for students' linguistic rights, and sustain long-term commitment to bilingual education (Hermawan, 2022). Taken together, the findings of this review support the proposition that bilingual teacher competence is not a static checklist of skills but a dynamic, evolving, and deeply relational professional capacity that must be cultivated through sustained, collaborative, and culturally affirming educational ecosystems (Mauryn, 2024).

It is important to distinguish between findings derived directly from the reviewed studies and the authors' interpretations throughout this discussion. Where specific studies are cited, the claims reflect documented findings; broader synthetic propositions represent the authors' analytical integration of convergent evidence. Furthermore, several limitations of this review must be acknowledged. First, the search was restricted to English-language publications, which may have excluded relevant studies in other languages, introducing a language publication bias. Second, the review was limited to peer-reviewed journals, thereby excluding grey literature, book chapters, and conference proceedings that may contain valuable practice-based insights. Third, the geographic distribution of included studies skews toward European (40%) and Asian (31.4%) contexts, limiting generalizability to other regions. Fourth, while AI-assisted screening was employed as a methodological adaptation, this approach is documented transparently and was supplemented by inter-rater verification (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.82$). Future research should prioritize empirical studies from underrepresented regions and employ fully human dual-reviewer protocols to further strengthen methodological rigor.

4. CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review sought to answer two central research questions: what competencies are required for bilingual teachers in language teaching, and how are these competencies conceptualized in existing studies. The findings reveal that bilingual teachers are required to possess a multidimensional set of competencies that extend well beyond simple language proficiency. Four core competency dimensions were identified across the reviewed literature: linguistic competence, communicative and intercultural competence, cognitive competence, and bilingual pedagogical competence. Together, these dimensions form an integrated professional profile in which mastery of two languages serves as the foundation, while intercultural awareness, cognitive flexibility, and the ability to design content-integrated instruction constitute equally indispensable layers of professional readiness. In terms of conceptualization, the literature reflects a gradual shift from viewing bilingual teacher competence

as primarily linguistic toward a broader, more holistic understanding that encompasses pedagogical adaptability, identity formation, and responsiveness to diverse learner needs.

Regarding bilingual teaching methods, translanguaging, Content and Language Integrated Learning, structured code-switching, and bilingual scaffolding emerged as the four dominant approaches documented in the literature. Each method reflects a distinct pedagogical philosophy, and their effective implementation demands that teachers possess not only theoretical knowledge but also the practical skill to apply these approaches responsively within diverse classroom contexts. Furthermore, professional development was found to be a critical yet unevenly distributed component of bilingual teacher preparation. Significant gaps exist between the training programs currently available and the actual competencies demanded in bilingual classrooms, particularly in developing educational contexts where teachers are often expected to fulfill complex linguistic and pedagogical roles with minimal structured support.

Based on these findings, several practical suggestions are offered. Teacher education institutions are encouraged to redesign their pre-service curricula to incorporate translanguaging pedagogy, intercultural competence training, and equity-based instructional approaches from the earliest stages of teacher formation, ensuring that graduating teachers are prepared for the linguistic and cultural realities of contemporary bilingual classrooms. For in-service teachers currently working in bilingual settings, school administrators and professional development coordinators are advised to provide ongoing, contextually relevant training that prioritizes Content and Language Integrated Learning methodology and intercultural competence, as these areas were identified as the most significant unmet needs among practicing bilingual teachers. Policymakers at the national and institutional levels are urged to develop clear, evidence-based competency frameworks for bilingual teachers and to ensure that these frameworks are accompanied by adequate resource allocation, mentorship programs, and collaborative professional learning communities. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to conduct empirical studies examining the implementation of bilingual teacher competencies in specific local and cultural contexts, particularly in underrepresented regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Future SLRs should also include non-English-language databases, employ validated quality appraisal tools such as CASP or MMAT consistently, and incorporate longitudinal designs to trace how bilingual teacher competence develops over careers. Research into the specific impact of AI-assisted teaching tools and digital reflective technologies on bilingual teacher professional identity also represents a promising emerging direction.

5. REFERENCES

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