

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature in the areas of:

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2.1 BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

2.1.1 Types of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

Bilingual is defined as "A person who uses or is able to use two languages, especially with equal fluency". (Bilingual, American Heritage Dictionary) Bilingualism means ability to speak two languages or it can also refer to the use of two languages in teaching, especially to foster learning in students trying to learn a new language. (Bilingual, Britannica Concise Encyclopedia)

There are many types of childhood bilingualisms. We refer to children who are exposed to more than one language from birth as *simultaneous bilinguals*. Those who begin to learn a second language later in their lives are claimed to be *Sequential bilinguals*. There are also *subtractive bilinguals* which refers to children who were cut off from their family language for long periods and started to lose family language. (Lightbown & Spada, 2003) The term *balanced bilingualism* is also found in those who possess the same fluency in both languages.

Bilingual Education

As per "Encyclopedia of American History", bilingual education is defined as an educational program in which both first language and second language are taught as subject matter and used as a media of instruction for academic subjects. The US Department of Education defines bilingual education as the use of 2 languages for instruction. Cazdon and Snow mentioned that Bilingual education is "a simple label for a complex phenomenon" (as cited in Bilingual Education), that is, it depends on

many variables such as the native language of students, the language used for instructions, and the goal of the program.

There are 2 ways that bilingual education helps develop English and contributes to academic success. The background knowledge from first language helps make the second language more comprehensible and also developing literacy in first language is a short cut to developing literacy in the second language. In his *Natural Approach*, the theory of Krashen on second language acquisition has also had a huge impact on education systems. At the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) Conference in February 2004, Krashen pointed toward the two independent goals for bilingual Education. One is English which Jim Cummins has referred to as academic English. Another goal for the bilingual program is the heritage language purpose.

It is estimated that between 60-75% of the world is bilingual and bilingual education is a common educational approach used throughout the world.

2.1.2 Bilingual situation in USA vs. situation of bilingual program in Thailand

A country like the USA has been quite familiar with the term “bilingual program” since the First World War. For Thailand, English programs, or bilingual programs, have just been accepted in this past decade. Hence, the popularity of Bilingual program and its natures differ if we compare the situation in USA to Thailand.

Bilingual Situation in USA

Bilingual programs have had a mixed success. More than ever, bilingual education is prevalent in classrooms (Kohlhepp, 1999). If we look at the number of minorities, according to the 2000 U.S. census, the language minority children were the fastest growing segment of school age population. And between 1999-2000, the number of this group increased by 55% compared to monolingual English children which grew only by 11%.

The students who study in bilingual program mainly are the minority, especially immigrants from low social-economic status, who struggle to survive in the mainstream target language. In recent years the popularity of the bilingual program has been dropped by opponents’ criticism. The website of ProEnglish

(<http://www.proenglish.org/>, 2007), the non-profit organization supporting state initiatives to end bilingual education stated that:

"After 30 years of experimentation and billions of dollars spent on bilingual education these programs have failed to do an acceptable job of teaching English...Students in bilingual education programs consistently score lower on standard achievement tests. Many of the students remain socially isolated and frequently drop out. Millions more graduate without learning fundamental English skills"

Also we note the anti-bilingual critics such as Ron Unz, who claims that bilingual education has been a “*Complete Failure*” and “*a waste of tax payment*”. (Cited in Kohlhepp, 1999) Bilingual education has sparked as much controversy as any other education issue.

However, there is also a group who support the bilingual programs such as Prof. Jay Greene of University of Texas at Austin who has tried to explain to the public about the benefits of the bilingual education. A study was conducted using precise statistical tools and the results concluded “the use of native language has moderate beneficial effect and that efforts to eliminate the use of the native language in instruction... harm children by denying them access to beneficial approaches.” (Krashen, n.d.). There was also the research study done by Christine Rossell and Keith Baker in 1996 (as cited in Cummins, n.d..) which addressed the effectiveness of bilingual education.

There is still no conclusion yet whether a bilingual program is really inefficacious or opponents are xenophobic. The debate still remains.

Bilingual Education in Thailand

On the contrary, the adoption of English bilingual education in Thailand is unlike the cases in USA. It is not a result from perceived need for ethnic minorities to fit into a majority culture, but rather the indirect effects from the threat of western colonization and improvement of communication media. The number of schools that offer bilingual/English programs has been rapidly increased especially in private schools. The students who decide to choose English programs are the majority of citizens who foresee the significance of the language. A combination of using English as a medium of instruction plus the use of Thai curriculum (students learn

English through content base), stimulate parents to choose this program for their children. As a matter of fact, the cost to run a bilingual program is higher than for a monolingual one, most of the students who participate therefore come from a medium to high social economic household.

According to the Ministry of Education, schools that offer bilingual/English program must follow Thai curriculum. All subjects shall be taught in English except Thai and Social Science (Thai law and culture). Foreign teachers are required to have training in cultures awareness and language at least 15 hours.

2.2 FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNING

There are several factors effect language learning such as age, motivation, aptitude, attitude, intelligence, or learner preference. The most controversial factors are the motivation and attitude of learners.

Motivation and attitudes

There are many researches on the role of attitudes and motivation in second language learning. Many researchers consider motivation as one of the main elements that determine success in developing a second or foreign language; it determines the extent of active and personal involvement in L2 learning. (Oxford & Shearin, 1994 as cited in Abisamra) Gardner and Lambert (1972) claimed that a highly motivated person enjoy learning the language, want to learn and strive to learn and that would results in achievement. However, motivation is too complex to be explained by this assumption. People can be sensitive to power relationships and we should keep in mind the social dynamics between the languages that can affect motivation. For example, we cannot expect the same attitude and motivation from a member of a minority group learning the language of a majority, in comparison with the majority learning the minority language. McDonough's study (as cited in Abisamra) noted that there are two types of integrative motivation; one is “*assimilative motivation*”, which refers to strong motivation to “belong” to the target group, and “*affiliative motivation*” or weak motivation- a desire for wider social contact with target language speakers.

Gardner and Lambert's (1972) integrative attitude emphasizes the learning of the target language from wishes to associate with the speaker of that particular language. This can be perceived as intrinsic motivation and learners who are integratively motivated seem to have a strong intrinsic motivation in language learning.

According to Oxford and Shearin (1994, as cited in Abisamra), there are six factors that impact on motivation in learning the language. They are attitude toward the learning community and target language, beliefs about self, goals or reasons for learning, involvement of learners (in what extent to the language learnt), environmental support (peer, teachers, cultural and outside-of-class support), and personal attributes such as age, sex and previous language learning experience. Undoubtedly, both attitude and motivation are influenced by various factors which the instructors should keep in consideration for planning a course.

2.3 PROBLEMS FOUND IN BILNGUAL PROGRAM IN THAILAND

The dramatic shift of the number of English program or bilingual schools in our country over the past years are now leading to severe problems. As a matter of fact, Ministry of Education does not provide support, evaluation, or any principle for the program. Problems such as inadequate resources and incompetent teachers are found almost everywhere, not only the newly-run schools. The research conducted by Panjit Rattanapon (cited in Manageronline dated Feb 06, 2007) reported that the existing schools were facing a variety of problems. The common drawbacks discovered were in terms of lack of good command of English in Thai teachers, high turn over rate of foreign teachers, scarcity of qualified staff, and classrooms that are not suitable for learning. The research also related more problems in running English programs in terms of students' learning problems: students' language incompetency, especially grade 10 students in the subjects like Math and Science due to a lot of technical terms; social effects like the ability to adapt to new environments; the discrimination in terms of privileges between students in the regular program and EP (the different uniform and foods in the canteen, activities and fieldtrips).

Even though English program has operated since 1995 and the Ministry of Education (MOE) has set a standard policy for schools to follow, it has failed to provide any guiding principles for the curriculum, teaching materials and textbook. Therefore, the program evaluation of each school is based upon each individual situation. There are no standard assessments from the center bureau.

However, according to the website Manageronline (dated February 05, 2004), it reported that the MOE realized the situation and they were working to solve the problems. Books have been translated into English so that students from different schools are heading in the same direction. The principle manual guides have been published. To solve the problem of inadequately qualified teachers, the MOE has set up a recruitment center, and also working in cooperation with the embassy and abroad educational institution for an exchange program.