

Chapter 4.

Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education program

This chapter investigates the Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education program in Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province. The bilingual education program has been conducted by the Dehong government since the 1980s. In this study, it is considered as a typical case of a transitional bilingual education program in China. This chapter, first, introduces a general background and brief history of the program. Later, it illustrates the eleven subsystems of the program, based on library research, observations, and interviews.

4.1 Background

Dehong Prefecture (short for Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture) is located in the southwest of Yunnan Province (see Figure 13). It is estimated that over 300,000 Dehong Dai people live in the prefecture. That is the second largest population in the prefecture, following that of Han (Chinese majority) nationality.

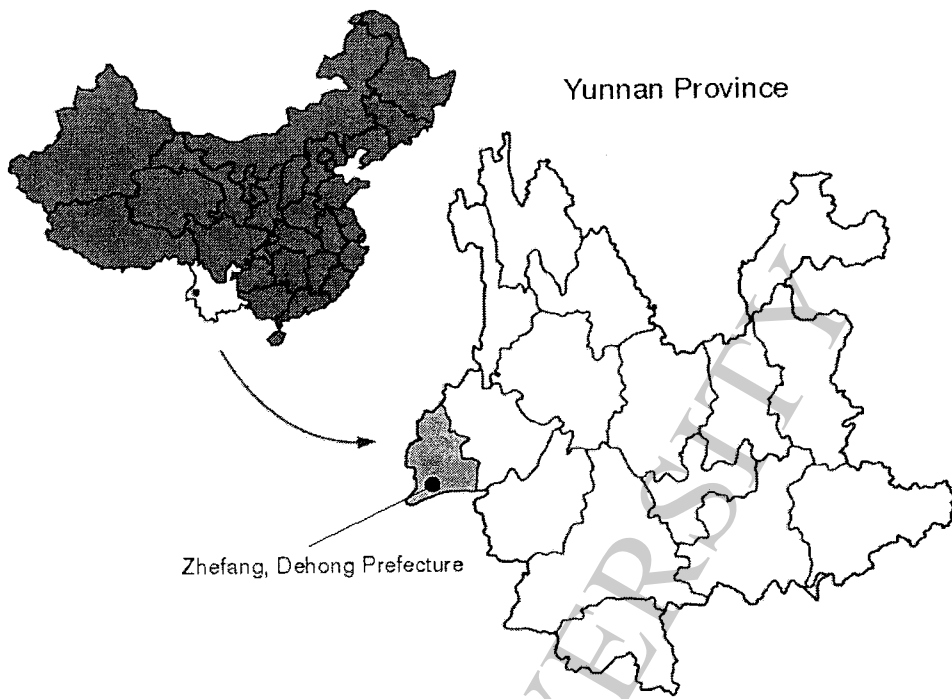


Figure 13: Location of Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province (the map was modified from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dehong_Dai_and_Jingpo_Autonomous_Prefecture on 27 August 2009)

Although the Dehong Dai people are classified as a part of the Dai nationality by the Chinese government, they are still clearly identified apart from other Dai members. They have unique linguistic and cultural characteristics. Especially the unique Dehong Dai orthography, which has a long history (see Figure 14).

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Figure 14: Example of Dehong Dai orthography (*Story of Tools*, typed by the author)

Dehong Dai people traditionally developed a minority language education system in temples to satisfy their needs for reading Buddhist scriptures. This may be the reason that Dehong Dai people are highly literate today (Cai 2003; Tsung 2009). According to a research in 1996, the ratio of illiterate Dehong Dai people, aged from 12 to 40, was only 5.1 % (Yunnan minority Language Commission 2001:6). That means, more than 90% of Dehong Dai people are literate in either Dehong Dai or Chinese. However, very few young Dehong Dai people now study at temples.

Since the 1980s, the Dehong Prefecture government has promoted adult literacy and bilingual education programs in Dehong Dai communities. For example, between 1984 to 1992, the government conducted 1,925 Dehong Dai literacy classes and implemented bilingual education in 261 schools (out of 352 schools) in Dehong Dai communities.¹⁶ By the end of 1998, the prefecture had registered 191 Dehong Dai language teachers for primary schools, ten teachers for middle schools, and three teachers for technical schools (Zhou and Fang 2004:205). Several literacy textbooks for Dehong Dai speakers were also published. However, despite the literacy movements, very few Dehong Dai students progressed beyond middle school.¹⁷ This was mainly caused by the economic difficulties of the Dehong Dai students.¹⁸ Moreover the linguistic difficulties for the students should be considered as well.

The prefecture government is still promoting bilingual education today. Article 56 of the current *Dehong Prefecture Law* (2006) clearly states that the primary schools in minority communities should conduct bilingual education (see Table 23). *Dehong Yearbook 2007* also records that the issues about bilingual education were still discussed at the All Prefecture Education Reform Entry Conference in July 7, 2006.

¹⁶ Another statistic conducted by the Dehong Education Bureau says 318 of 445 minority schools (182 schools unofficially) conducted bilingual education in 1996. (Dai et al. 2006:250) Other statistics says; 106 Dehong Dai schools and 33 Jingpo schools out of 875 schools conducted bilingual education (plus, 185 are unofficial) in 1996 (Dai et al. 2006:238,240); 321 schools of 445 minority schools opened bilingual education classes in 1998 (Cai 2003:80), etc.

¹⁷ The ratio of who those received high school (and college) education was 0.93% in Dai nationality people in Yunnan Province in 2000. It was 2.74% for Han nationality in the same statistics. (Dao and Hu 2005:79)

¹⁸ Dao and Hu (2005) compared the educational level of 25 national minorities in Yunnan Province. They show the ratio of minority students in high education is directly proportional to their economic situations. They summarized that “the poor economic development of national minorities seriously limits the development of their educational standards.” (Dao and Hu 2005:81)

Table 23: Extracted text from the *Dehong Prefecture Law* (translated by the author)

Article 56

Within Dehong Prefecture, the primary schools in minority communities where the majority of the students are minority nationality bilingual/bi-literal education should be conducted and Standard Chinese should be promoted for nation-wide communication. Minority language classes should be opened for the minority classes in secondary schools and occupational schools. In this prefecture, minority languages are included in the unified exam and counted into the total score.

On the other hand, the Dehong government has also considered reducing the size of the bilingual education programs. *Dehong Prefecture Government Document No.(2006)186* suggests that bilingual education for the first three years in primary schools should be promoted in rural minority communities. That means the bilingual education will be reduced from six years (whole primary education) to three years. Likewise, bilingual education will be implemented only in schools in rural areas. The reduction of the program is similar to the case of Chinese-Hani bilingual education program, with regards to the decreasing number of bilingual schools after the 1990s.

4.2 General results

The field research was conducted from October 19 to 22 in 2007 at Zhefang Central School. Zhefang is a small county which is about two hours away by bus from Luxi, the capital of Dehong Prefecture. The school was selected because, first, it is located in a typical Dehong Dai community. Second, it is a model school in Zhefang County. The other schools in smaller villages will follow the education system of the model school in a few years. Therefore, this school is like a mirror of the future of small village schools. Many teachers from the school also have experience teaching in a village school. That makes the teachers possibly more sensitive to the difficulties of teaching in the bilingual settings.

This study interviewed ten teachers from Zhefang Central School. Since the recent Chinese policies encouraged young teachers in towns to teach in rural areas, the ratio of teachers from Han nationality is increasing in primary schools in Dehong Prefecture. In the same way, out of all 48 teachers in Zhefang Central School, 30 teachers are Dehong Dai nationality, while the other 18 teachers are Han nationality. That is why the ten teachers interviewed in this study includes six teachers who speak the Dehong Dai language as their first language and four teachers who speak Chinese as their first language. Of the four teachers who speak Chinese as their first language, two teachers are also able to communicate in Dehong Dai. The teachers

are selected randomly according to their class schedules and the background information of the teachers is summarized in Table 24.

Table 24: Background information of interviewees

| Subjects No. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|----------------|-------|--------------|
| Sex | F | F | F | M | F | F | F | F | F | F |
| Age | 27yrs | 39yrs | 35yrs | 33yrs | 26yrs | 34yrs | 35yrs | 30yrs | 30yrs | 39yrs |
| L1 | DD | DD | Ch | DD | Ch | DD | Ch | Ch | DD | DD |
| L2 | Ch | Ch, Jp | DD | Ch, Jp | - | Ch | - | DD | Ch | Ch |
| Teaching Grades (before) | G1 (G1-6) | G5 (G1-6) | G3 (G1-6) | G4-6 (G1-6) | G4 (G2-6) | G5 (G1-6) | G4 (G1-6) | G5 (G1, G5) | G3-6 | G4 (G1-6) |
| Teaching Subjects | Mt, Ch | Ch | Ch, Ml, SS | PE | Ch | Mt | Mt, Ch, Ml, Sc | Ch, Ml | Sc | Mt |
| Years of teaching | 8yrs | 20yrs | 16yrs | 14yrs | 10yrs | 15yrs | 12yrs | 11yrs | 10yrs | 20yrs |

F:female, M:male, L1:first language, L2: second language, DD:Dehong Dai, Ch:Chinese, Jp:Jingpo, G:Grade, yr:year, yrs:years, Mt:Math, Ml:Moral Education, SS:Social Studies, Sc:Science, PE:Physical Education

During the field research, seven classes were also observed. The observed classes ranged from Grade 1 to 3 classes to Grade 5 classes. This was intended to help the study to examine age differences. Since the Dehong Dai class was canceled in this school a few years ago, the subjects observed were only Chinese (including Writing classes), Math and English classes. During the classes, languages used by teachers and students were carefully observed. The classes were 45 minutes each. The observed classes are summarized in Table 25.

Table 25: List of observed classes

| Lesson | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---------|----|-----------------|----|----|----|-----|----|
| Grade | G5 | G5 | G1 | G2 | G3 | G3 | G1 |
| Subject | Ch | Ch (Writing) | Mt | Ch | Ch | Eng | Ch |

G:Grade, Ch:Chinese, Mt:Math, Eng:English

The library research was conducted in Luxi and Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province. The Dehong Prefecture Public Library in Luxi contains a series of *Dehong Yearbook* and some books recording the history and statistics in the prefecture. Some governmental documents are found on the prefecture government website, such as the *Dehong Prefecture Law* and other official documents dealing with the minority education.¹⁹ There are several books published by Yunnan Nationality Publishing House and Central Nationality Publishing House referring to the Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education program. In addition, a few studies, such as Zhou and Fang (2004) and Xiao (1998), are available in English.

The library research also found the records of an official syllabus announced by the Dehong government in 1989 (Dehong Prefecture Education Department 1995; Dai et al. 2006; Zhou and Fang 2004). According to the records, this syllabus takes an important role in the bilingual education program. This syllabus is not offered for public viewing today, because it was meant for local schools only. Through the former research cited above, however, it is still possible to understand what the contents were.

4.2.1 Official syllabus in 1989

The official syllabus in 1989 was the very first (so far, it is the only one) source to state the governmental standards for Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education in Dehong Prefecture. In fact, the 'official syllabus (called *da4gang1*)' is one of the most important documents in the Chinese education system through which the prefecture government provides local schools with its guidelines on various educational issues. The local schools and teachers have to design their school policies, curriculum and lesson plans according to what the syllabus suggests.

The syllabus in 1989 is recorded by Dehong Prefecture Education Department (1995:264):

In 1989, the prefecture education department, considering the local conditions, made an 'official syllabus for minority language education' with teaching plans.... The 'syllabus' provides that all the primary schools in minority communities (where more than 60% of the students are minority nationality) which have their own writing systems are required to open bilingual courses, to carry out the bilingual two-tracks education system, and to teach minority languages and Chinese at the same time.

¹⁹ These documents are available from www.dh.gov.cn (*Portal of Dehong Government*) on 21 January 2010.

The syllabus does not mention the name of 'Dehong Dai language', but 'minority languages' in general. However, 'minority languages' in this context surely includes Dehong Dai language as it is the largest minority language in Dehong Prefecture. Zhou and Fang (2004:206) reports that “in 1989, Dehong’s Department of Education issued an official syllabus for [Dehong] Dai language study for primary schools, a syllabus that requires [Dehong] Dai-Chinese bilingual education in primary schools in [Dehong] Dai communities”. Thus, the syllabus officially announced that the Dehong government launched the Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education program in the prefecture. Dai et al. (2006:237) also refers to the official syllabus, saying, “[Adopting the official syllabus] marks that Dehong Dai-Jingpo Prefecture has started forming a complete standard bilingual education system.”

This chapter compares the official syllabus in 1989 and the actual situation at Zhefang Central School. It shows that the official syllabus, to a large extent, is an ideal bilingual education policy for the students' CALP development. However, the local teachers in the program do not apply what is written in the syllabus.

4.3 The literacy system of the Dehong Dai program

The collected data is summarized in the eleven subsystems below. The discussions on each subsystem follow the checklist introduced in the previous chapter and Appendix 4. The table of each section shows the results of the interviews.

4.3.1 Ideological subsystem

The purpose of the Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education program is stated in the 1989 official syllabus. Dai et al. (2006:237) says, “the syllabus [in 1989] sets the purposes of teaching minority languages in primary schools as: 1) to effectively develop intellectual resources of minority students at the stage of basic education; 2) to effectively improve the quality of primary education for minority nationalities and the standard of minority students' Chinese learning; 3) to meet the needs of the cultural movements in minority people's lives.” The 'intellectual resources' covers the same basic concepts as CALP. In this way, the support of the students' CALP development is evident in the government document. So far as statements of underlying purpose of the program are concerned, the program is ideologically supportive to the students' CALP development.

On the other hand, the local teachers who were interviewed in the field research have different ideologies from those of the official syllabus (see Table 26). The

teachers answered that “only Chinese should be used in class” or, at most, “both languages can be used only when the students do not understand in Chinese”. According to some teachers, most students went to a Chinese kindergarten for two years, and they think that the students have no problem with learning only in Chinese. However, according to the CALP theory, even though the students have acquired communication skills (BICS), it does not mean the students' academic language skills (CALP) are fully developed. The development of CALP takes longer than that of BICS. If only L2 is used for instruction when the students' CALP is not developed, some students are not able to build a good foundation of language proficiency in either L1 or L2. It is dangerous for the teachers to decide not to use minority languages only because the students seem to communicate in Chinese fluently. Therefore, the answers to the first question are scaled as tolerative and prohibitive. To the 'how long' question, two teachers answered “one to two years”, and the others answered “less than one year”. Even one teacher answered, “Any support is not necessary”. Since these answers are all shorter than the five years that are suggested by Cummins, they are scaled negatively (between non-discriminative to prohibitive) in the aspect of the CALP development. One teacher who answered “it depends on the students” is not counted in this chart because it only indicates that the teacher tolerates the use of two languages of instruction occasionally, but does not answer how long he or she thinks those languages should be used.

Table 26: Results of the interviews (ideological subsystem)

| | Promotive | Permissive | Non-discriminative | Tolerative | Prohibitive |
|--|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| What languages do teachers think should be used in class? | | | | 3 | 7 |
| How long do the teachers think the students should have any special support by using both languages of L1 and Chinese? | | | 2 | 6 | 1 |

4.3.2 Policy and planning subsystem

According to Dai et al. (2006:237-238), “To avoid the teachers using only minority languages or using only Chinese in class,... the syllabus made a regulation of

teachers' teaching languages [which means language of instruction]: mainly minority languages for Grade 1; both of minority languages and Chinese for Grade 2 and 3; and mainly Chinese for Grade 5 and 6.” The fact that the government made such a regulation of language of instruction is also recorded by Dehong Prefecture Education Department (1995:264). It is evidence that the government wants the teachers to use both minority languages and Chinese for instruction, at least, until Grade 3. In addition, the phrase 'mainly Chinese for Grade 5 and 6' also implies that the government supports the teachers using some minority languages in Grade 5 and 6, even though it should be less than Chinese. With regards to the government policies, the policy and planning subsystem of the program is strongly supportive of the students' CALP development.

Table 27 below shows the results of interviews with the teachers about school policies. Three teachers answered, “The school policies allow the use of both languages.” However, other teachers answered either “they do not mention about language of instruction” or “they suggest to use only Chinese”. One of them even answered, “They strongly command using only Chinese.” Though the teachers do not understand in the same way, the results still indicate that the school policies show different attitudes toward using two languages for instruction from those of the government policies. Similarly, with the 'how long' question, most of the teachers answered 'one to two years' and 'less than one year'. This is much shorter than the government's desire of using both languages until Grade 6.

Table 27: Results of the interviews (policy and planning subsystem)

| | Promotive | Permissive | Non-discriminative | Tolerative | Prohibitive |
|--|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| Do the school policies state the use of two languages for instruction? | | 3 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| How long do the school policies support the use of two languages in education? | | | 3 | 5 | |

4.3.3 Institution building and organizational subsystem

As discussed in the two subsystems above, the local teachers who were interviewed in this study have different understandings of the policies and ideologies from those of the official syllabus in 1989. Further questions in the interviews found that the teachers misunderstand or sometimes just do not know the government policies. When the teachers were asked about the government policies, out of all ten teachers, only three teachers answered, “the government policies allow/suggest teachers to use both languages as language of instruction,” which is in line with the 1989 syllabus. On the other hand, one other teacher understands that “the government policies suggest that teachers are to use only Chinese in school”. Another one answered, “There is a policy that allows teachers to use both languages in the future, but not now”. These two teachers misunderstand what is suggested in the 1989 syllabus. The other five teachers answered either “The policies do not mention about which languages should be used” or “I do not know any government policies talking about teaching languages.” Those teachers did not know the fact that government policies recommend them to use two languages for instruction. Moreover, they show almost opposite understandings about language of instruction and how long both languages should be used. The institution building and organization subsystem of this program has a serious problem in communication and consistency.

The problem in the institution building and organizational subsystem is related to the fact that some subsystems are missing in the program. Many teachers, in the interview, answered that they never had training or professional support in bilingual education. Since they have no training for the teachers, the teachers do not have any opportunity to know the government policies. Since there is nobody to guide them on the importance of using two languages for instruction, the teachers do not think the students should have support in both languages for the long term. This study suggests that the institution building and organizational subsystem is the crucial problem in the slowing down of bilingual education programs in the 1990s.

4.3.4 Mobilizational subsystem

According to the interview results (see Table 28), the teachers do not allow the students to use both languages in class. Only one teacher answered that it is allowed but the students are not supposed to use minority languages in class. The teachers believe that the students are not motivated to learn in two languages at all. Most of the teachers also do not encourage the students to read books in both languages,

although four teachers explained that is because there are no books written in minority languages in the school. These first two questions show that the teachers are negative influences towards the students' CALP development in the mobilizational subsystem. Most of the teachers also could not think of the benefits of learning in both languages. Only three teachers understand that the minority language may help the students' Chinese learning. The last question shows the students' interests in learning both languages. According to the teachers, the students are interested in learning Chinese only. In conclusion, the mobilizational subsystem of this program is negatively supportive to the students' CALP development.

Table 28: Results of the interviews (mobilizational subsystem)

| | Promotive | Permissive | Non-discriminative | Tolerative | Prohibitive |
|---|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| Are the students allowed to use both languages in class? | | | | 1 | 9 |
| Do the teachers encourage the students to read books in both languages? | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | |
| Do the teachers find any benefits for the students' CALP development from learning in both languages? | | | 3 | 7 | |
| In which languages are the students interested in learning and how does it change in the long term? | | | | 5 | 4 |

4.3.5 Professional support subsystem

Seven teachers answered either “There is not any professional support” or “I am not clear about who provides professional support.” These answers are not counted in this subsystem, but they are considered in the discussions under the institution building and organizational subsystem. That is because absent of professional support is part of the institution building and organizational subsystem.

There were three remaining teachers who answered the questions about professional support (see Table 29). According to two of the teachers, the government provides professional support. The third teacher could not mention who provides it specifically but referred to an official meeting conducted by the government. One of the three teachers answered that during the government training, they allowed the usage of both languages and suggested that students should learn in both languages for two to three years. On the other hand, the other two answered that the government suggested the teachers use only Chinese in class and suggested the students learn in both languages only in the first year. One teacher added that she is actually not sure what they suggest because she could not attend their meetings. Therefore, her answers are scaled 'tolerative' to the CALP development, because it affected her decisions negatively. The others are scaled according to the rubric suggested in the previous chapter.

Table 29: Results of the interviews (professional support subsystem)

| | Promotive | Permissive | Non-discriminative | Tolerative | Prohibitive |
|--|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| What languages do the professionals tell the teachers to use for instruction? | | 1 | | 1 | 1 |
| How long do the professionals tell the teachers to use both languages of L1 and Chinese? | | 1 | | 2 | |

4.3.6 Curriculum development and programming development subsystem

The curriculum should be designed corresponding to the policy subsystem. The 1989 official syllabus suggests that the bilingual schools have both languages as subjects until Grade 6. An example of the suggested time schedule is presented in Table 30 below.

Table 30: Curriculum suggested by the 1989 syllabus (Dai et al. 2006:234)

| | G1 | | G2 | G3 | G4 | G5 | G6 | |
|--|------------|---------------|--------------|----|----|----|----|---------------|
| | Semester 1 | Semester 2 | | | | | | |
| | | 1st 9weeks | | | | | | 2nd 9weeks |
| Dai Language | 16 (hrs) | 16 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| Chinese and Dai Oral Language | 4 | 4 | 4 | | | | | |
| Chinese Language | | | Pinyin 10 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 11 |

However, Zhefang Central School canceled Dehong Dai language classes a few years ago. Table 31 is an example of the updated class schedule in the school. It does not have any Dehong Dai language class.

Table 31: Class schedule of Grade 1 at Zhefang Central School (sketched by the author)

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------|------------------------|
| 1 | Chinese | Math | Chinese | Math | Chinese |
| 2 | Moral | Chinese | Local Geography | Chinese | Local Geography |
| Exercise | | | | | |
| 3 | Physical Education | Music | Physical Education | Art | Math |
| 4 | Math | Chinese | Math | Chinese | Music |
| Lunch Time | | | | | |
| 5 | Chinese | Math | Health | Chinese | Math |
| Meditation | | | | | |
| 6 | Math | Chinese | Home Room | Moral | Art |
| 7 | | Social Studies | | | After Class Activities |

Even though the curriculum does not have any minority language class as a subject, it is still possible to use both minority languages and Chinese for instruction in the other subjects. In fact, some teachers answered that the curriculum positively supports the students learning in both languages (see Table 32). What is more critical is when the school does not have Dehong Dai classes any more and many teachers think that the bilingual education program is canceled as well. Five teachers in the interviews answered that the curriculum does not help the students to learn in both languages at all. The teachers understood that no Dehong Dai class is equal to no bilingual education. The fact implies that the bilingual education in China often means just opening the class of minority languages as a subject under the national curriculum. Until they pay enough attention to the language of instruction, they can not be supportive to the students' CALP development.

Table 32: Results of the interviews (curriculum development and programming development subsystem)

| | Promotive | Permissive | Non-discriminative | Tolerative | Prohibitive |
|--|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| How much do the teachers think the curriculum helps the students to learn in both languages? | | 2 | 2 | 5 | |

4.3.7 Media and materials subsystem

The prefecture government published *Minority Languages-Chinese Vocabularies Translation Handbook* for the bilingual education programs in the prefecture. However it did not work as well as the government expected.

Dai et al. (2006) describe the *Minority Languages-Chinese Vocabularies Translation Handbook*. The handbook puts four-line notes on every character or vocabulary item from the national textbooks: the first line is Chinese pinyin (pronunciation guide for Chinese characters); the second line is Chinese characters; the third line is in a minority language (translation of the Chinese characters above); and the fourth line is Chinese pinyin (pronunciation guide for the minority language). Such handbooks were prepared in three languages, Dehong Dai, Jingpo, and Zaiwa. They were published corresponding to the number of volumes of national textbooks for Grades 1 to 5 (Dai et al. 2006:238).

This handbook is a supplementary book for the national textbooks written in only Chinese. It was used as a dictionary or a phrase book when the students learn from the national textbooks. However, according to their explanation, it contains the vocabulary used in the national textbooks for Grades 1 to 5. This means the national textbooks, which the handbook is based on, were edited when the primary education was for five years. However, today's national curriculum is for six years. Therefore, the curriculum was totally changed when the years of primary education were changed, and the handbook no longer corresponds with the current curriculum.

Dehong Prefecture Education Department (1995:265) also has a record of the handbook and adds some explanations of how to use it;

Teachers who understand minority languages can use the first three lines [of the handbook] in class. On the other hand, teachers who do not understand minority languages can use the first,

second and fourth lines. If the teachers pronounce the fourth line in Chinese pinyin, the students would understand.

One benefit of this handbook is that it gives pronunciation guides for teachers who do not understand minority languages. It suits the situation in the prefecture today since there are more teachers of Han nationality teaching in rural areas and even several teachers of minority nationalities cannot read their own languages. Still the problem is that it is out of date.

All the ten teachers answered that they do not use the handbook anymore. Textbooks that the teachers use in class are all written in Chinese, so that all teachers evaluated “the textbooks do not help students to learn in both languages at all” (see Table 33).

Table 33: Results of the interviews (media and materials subsystem)

| | Promotive | Permissive | Non-discriminative | Tolerative | Prohibitive |
|--|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| How beneficial are the textbooks in helping the students to learn in both languages according to the teachers? | | | | 10 | |

It is assumed that the handbook was cut off when the curriculum changed to the new six years curriculum because it was a supplementary book for the older curriculum. The school may not have canceled the bilingual education program intentionally. However, no textbooks written in minority languages are available. Local teachers may misunderstand that the government policies and ideologies suggest them to use only Chinese for language of instruction.²⁰ To build a CALP development supportive bilingual education program, it is necessary to provide textbooks available in both Dehong Dai and Chinese languages, or at least, update the 'handbook' for the current curriculum.

4.3.8 Orientation and training subsystem

According to the teachers, the school and the government provide teacher training. Some teachers said that they trained themselves through self-learning textbooks that were provided by the government.

²⁰ Cai (2003:82-83) also points out the gap between the handbook for five years and national curriculum for six years.

The interview results about training are presented in Table 34 below. It shows quite divergent understandings of the teachers. Some teachers answered that the training allows them to use both languages and suggested they use the languages until Grade 6. However, others said the trainers strongly suggested using only Chinese in class.

Table 34: Results of the interviews (orientation and training subsystem)

| | Promotive | Permissive | Non-discriminative | Tolerative | Prohibitive |
|--|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| What languages does the training tell the teachers to use for instruction? | | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| According to the training, how much time should teachers use both languages of L1 and Chinese? | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | |

4.3.9 Teaching-learning subsystem

The interview results show that most of the teachers and students use only Chinese in class. The teachers also barely give the students any support by using both languages (see Table 35).

Table 35: Results of the interviews (teaching-learning subsystem)

| | Promotive | Permissive | Non-discriminative | Tolerative | Prohibitive |
|---|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| What languages do the teachers use for instruction? | | | | 4 | 6 |
| What languages do the students use in class? | | | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| How long do the teachers give the students any special support by using both languages? | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 |

Observations in classroom prove the interview results. They found that one teacher used Dehong Dai language in class only once when the students could not

understand a Chinese word. However, it is not just because the teachers think the teaching methods of using only Chinese is the best for the students. The study assumes that the negative results in this subsystem are closely related to the other factors of the program, such as Chinese only textbooks, Chinese dominating curriculum, and so on.

4.3.10 Post-literacy subsystem

The researcher visited the school library in Zhefang Center School and Dehong Prefecture Library in Luxi. The school library contains about 5000 books. Some are written in Chinese and a few are written in English. There is no book in Dehong Dai language in the library. The public library in Luxi contains about 100 titles written in Dehong Dai language. They seem to be too difficult for the students to read because they are about medicine, philosophy and traditional literature.

The teachers also find it difficult for the students to get help from the books to learn in both languages. Most of the teachers answered that the books in the library do not help students learn in both languages at all (see Table 36).

Table 36: Results of the interviews (post-literacy subsystem)

| | Promotive | Permissive | Non-discriminative | Tolerative | Prohibitive |
|--|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| How much do the teachers think the books help the students learning in both languages? | | | 1 | 6 | |

4.3.11 Evaluation subsystem

According to the teachers, the evaluation concerning two language instruction was never done in the school. The classes are occasionally observed by other teachers and the government officers, but they pay attention to whether the teachers use Standard Chinese accurately or not.

All exams in Zhefang Center School are written in Chinese. One teacher said there used to be exams in Dehong Dai language for the Dehong Dai language class before but there is none today. Dai et al. (2006:240) mentions that the government stipulated that the minority language component was worth 30% of the entrance

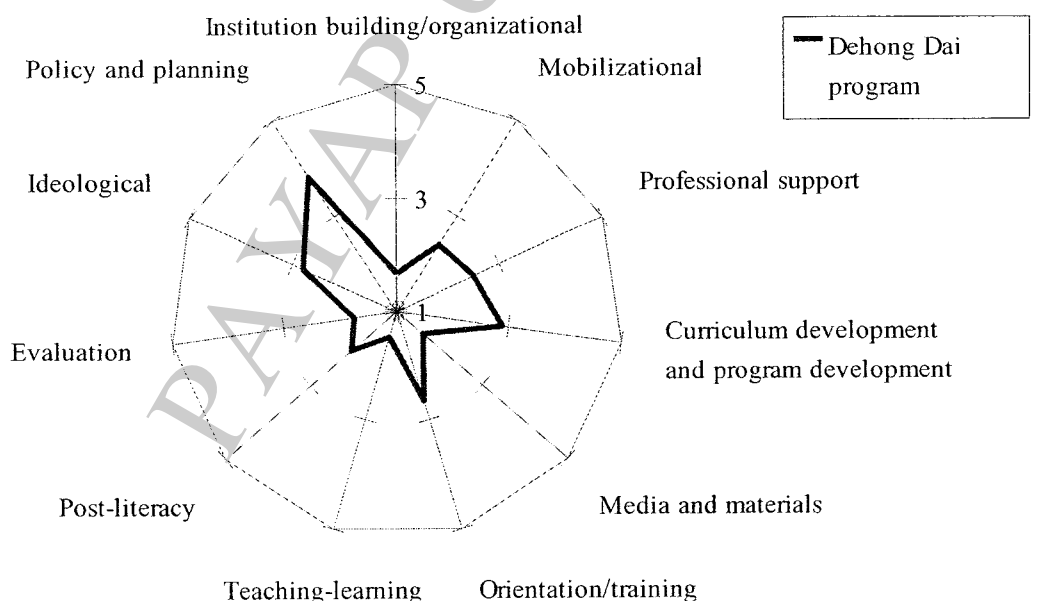
examinations to the middle school. However, interviews and library research could not find any evidence that the regulation still exists today.

4.4 Summary

As discussed in this chapter, the official syllabus in 1989 provides the regulations of Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education program. The syllabus is an ideal policy that supports the students' CALP development. The syllabus clearly states the support of using two languages as mediums of instruction for the whole primary education. Thus, the syllabus satisfies both principles of CALP development: 1) Instruction in both languages; and 2) Long term transfer process.

However, one serious problem of the program lies in institution building and organizational subsystem. In the program, the teachers often misunderstand or just do not know the government policies. The program plan is ideologically and politically ideal to support CALP development. However, when the ideologies and policies do not come down to the local level, the program cannot effectively develop the students' CALP.

The graph below is calculated according to the checklist introduced in the previous chapter with the information from library research and observation and averages of the interview results. (This graph is further explained in Section 5.4.)



Total average: 2.33

Figure 15: The literacy system of Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education program

Since the total average is lower than 3, it can be concluded that Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education program is not a CALP supportive program. More importantly, the graph shows the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The policy and planning subsystem is clearly higher than the other subsystems. That is because the official syllabus in 1989 is ideally supportive to the students' CALP development. On the other hand, the inconsistency between subsystems cause the institutional and organizational subsystem to fare poorly. In the same way, the lack of bilingual textbooks makes the media and materials subsystem score lowly. Another low score is the teaching-learning subsystem. Many teachers have formed the wrong impression that the bilingual education program was canceled already. This is due to the other unsupportive subsystems which imply that the government wants only Chinese as a medium of instruction.

The problems found in the Dehong Dai program are also summarized in Table 37.

Table 37: Summary of problems in Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education program

| Subsystems | The Dehong Dai program |
|---|--|
| (1) Ideological subsystem | The government set its purpose as development of the students' CALP. However, many teachers do not think two languages should be used in class. |
| (2) Policy and planning subsystem | The government strongly recommends the local schools implement the use of two languages for instruction. However, the school policy does not positively support the use of two languages for a long term. |
| (3) Institution building and organizational subsystem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gap of ideologies and policies between the government and the school/teachers. - Lack of professional support and training specialized in bilingual education for ethnic minority students. |
| (4) Mobilizational subsystem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The students are not encouraged to use two languages in their learning activities. - Most of the teachers could not think of how learning two languages benefits the students' CALP development. - According to the teachers, the students are interested in learning in only one language through the whole curriculum. |

| | |
|--|---|
| (5) Professional support subsystem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The professionals do not mention or support the use of two languages for instruction. - Many teachers answered that there is no professional support in the program. |
| (6) Curriculum development and programming development subsystem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The government recommends a curriculum which uses two languages until Grade 6. However, the school canceled the Dehong Dai classes a few years ago. - Bilingual education often means adding extra minority languages class to the national curriculum. CALP development requires the use of two languages for instruction through the whole curriculum. |
| (7) Media and materials subsystem | <p>There is no bilingual textbook available today. A supplementary book, <i>Translation Handbook</i>, is out of date and does not meet the needs of today's six years curriculum.</p> |
| (8) Orientation and training subsystem | <p>The teachers' understanding of the outcomes of training is inconsistent.</p> |
| (9) Teaching-learning subsystem | <p>The teachers and students use only Chinese in class. The teachers barely give the students any support due to the use of only one language.</p> |
| (10) Post-literacy subsystem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are some books written in Dehong Dai language in the public library, Luxi. However, they are too difficult for the students. - The teachers found it difficult for the students to get help from the books to learn in both languages. |
| (11) Evaluation subsystem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation of two language instruction has never been done. - The students are evaluated by exams written only in Chinese. |