

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

This study examined to what extent the selected bilingual education programs in China support the students' CALP development. It revealed that the Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education program faces a number of difficulties. On the other hand, the Chinese-Dong bilingual education program was better equipped to deal with some of the issues found in the Dehong Dai program. This chapter summarizes the discussions and answers the research questions. Finally, a few suggestions are made for further studies in this field.

#### 6.1 Findings

Findings of this thesis are summarized in the four sections below.

##### 6.1.1 An evaluation model for bilingual education programs

Before the research questions of this study are answered, the evaluation model used in this study should be examined. This evaluation model for bilingual education programs is associated with a recent Applied Linguistics theory (the CALP theory) and a model of program management (Bhola's total literacy system). An initial concern in this study was how to apply the CALP theory into the practical evaluation processes. The solution was to focus on the two basic principles of CALP development: 1) Instruction in two languages; and 2) Long term transfer process between two languages. Adapting the total literacy system into the evaluation is another unique part of this study. Although the system was originally designed for adult literacy programs, the set of eleven subsystems of the total literacy system is a useful tool to illustrate the characteristics of the selected bilingual education programs.

During the field research, there were a number of obstacles that were found in the application of the model. For example, many local teachers could not understand what is professional support or who provides such support. It

probably means that the concepts of some subsystems are sometimes unfamiliar to the local teachers. Therefore, when other evaluations are conducted in other contexts, some additional explanations or alternative questions may be needed. This was also a problem with the interviewer's language skills. Four languages were used as media in this research: English, Chinese, Dehong Dai, and Dong. English was used between the interviewer and the English-Dehong Dai interpreters. Chinese was used between the interviewer and the interviewed teachers. It was also used between the interviewer and the Chinese-Dong interpreter. Dehong Dai and Dong languages were used between the interpreters and the interviewees. As shown, there were many different channels in communication. It made the interviews difficult especially because the interviewer is unfamiliar with both Dehong Dai and Dong languages. The communication was limited even with the help of the interpreters. Moreover, the interviewer experienced difficulties conducting the oral interviews in Chinese due to his intermediate proficiency level. Therefore, it is suggested that the evaluation model should be used by a person who has relevant and sufficient language skills. Another difficulty of this study is that this study treats the institution building and organizational subsystem in a different way from the other subsystems. That is because the whole program structure itself does not directly impact what languages of instruction are used in classes or how long a transfer process is considered in the program. This study defined the institution building and organizational subsystem as: 1) the links between other subsystems; and 2) the consistency over the whole program. However, this definition fits any other healthy program, not only CALP development supportive programs. Therefore, to identify the CALP supportive characteristics in the subsystem, different understandings of the institution building and organizational subsystem may be suggested in future studies.

#### **6.1.2 A CALP supportive program and a non-CALP-supportive program**

According to the evaluation results (see Figures 15 and 17, in Sections 4.4 and 5.4), the Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education program scored 2.33 on average while the Chinese-Dong bilingual education program scored 4.07 on average. The scores represent to what extent the programs are supportive to the students' CALP development: 5 = promotive, 4 = permissive, 3 = non-discriminative, 2 = tolerative, and 1 = prohibitive. If the score between a supportive program and a not-supportive program is set to 3 (= non-discriminative), the evaluation results concluded that Chinese-Dehong Dai bilingual education program is not supportive to the students' CALP development while Chinese-Dong bilingual education program is supportive.

Figure 18 below compares the results of the two programs.

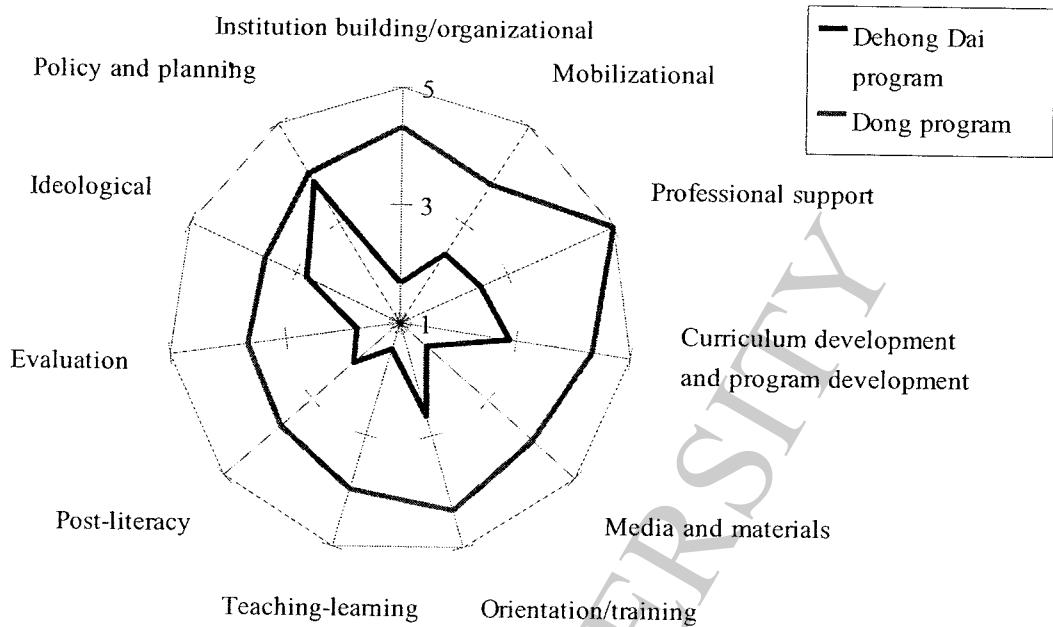


Figure 18: Evaluation results of the selected bilingual education programs

The institution building and organizational subsystem is most significant in the comparison of these two case studies (2.66 points difference). The Dehong Dai program lacks professional support and training specialized for bilingual education. The program also has a problem in the consistency between the understandings of the government and local teachers. On the other hand, the Dong program is equipped with all eleven subsystems. The government and local teachers showed relatively similar understandings on the ideologies and policies of the program. The media and materials subsystem is another significant subsystem in the graph above (2.43 points difference). The Dehong Dai program no longer uses bilingual textbooks. An old supplementary Dong textbook, *Translation Handbook*, is also out of date and does not meet the needs of the current curriculum. The Dong program is provided with textbooks in Dong language for bilingual education. In these ways, this study proved that the Dong program is better equipped to deal with some of the issues found in the Dehong Dai program.

On the other hand, the policy and planning subsystem had comparably similar results between both cases, although the Dong program was expected to be much higher. This is because the Dehong Dai program is strong in this subsystem, but it does not match with the other subsystems. At the same time, the policies in the Dong program are weak in terms of how much time is supposed to be spent on both languages. It also appears that bilingual education is often understood only as Dong

classes in the preschool, whereas it should take more than five years according to the CALP theory. Two years in preschool is definitely too short. More political efforts for the Dong program are required.

Table 55 compares the eleven subsystems of the two programs.

Table 55: Summary of the eleven subsystems of Dehong Dai program and Dong program

Subsystems	The Dehong Dai program	The Dong 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The government policies for the program do not clearly set the purpose on the students' CALP development.</li> <li>- The local teachers show their ideological support to students' CALP development more clearly.</li> </ul>
(2) Policy and planning subsystem	The government strongly recommends the local schools implement the use of two languages for instruction. However, the school policies do not positively support the use of two languages for a long term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The policies and planning in the local level are more supportive to bilingual education with long term transfer.</li> <li>- However, the government policies of the program have some weaknesses especially in the 'long term' part. The program might need more effort in the policy and planning subsystem.</li> </ul>
(3) Institution building and organizational subsystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gap of ideologies and policies between the government and the school/teachers.</li> <li>- Lack of professional support and training specialized in bilingual education for ethnic minority students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The program has all eleven subsystems and is strong in the institution building and organizational subsystem.</li> <li>- The whole literacy system of the Dong program is much more consistent than the Dehong Dai program.</li> </ul>

<p>(4) Mobilizational subsystem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The students are not encouraged to use two languages in their learning activities.</li> <li>- Most of the teachers could not think of how learning two languages benefits the students' CALP development.</li> <li>- According to the teachers, the students are interested in learning in only one language through the whole curriculum.</li> </ul>	<p>The teachers allowed the students to use both minority languages and Chinese, They also encourage the students to read books in both languages. However not many teachers could articulate the benefits of learning in both languages for the students' CALP development.</p>
<p>(5) Professional support subsystem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The professionals do not mention or support the use of two languages for instruction.</li> <li>- Many teachers answered that there is no professional support in the program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The teachers think that the professionals strongly recommend the use of both languages until Grade 6.</li> <li>- The professional support of the program matches exactly with the CALP theory and the concept of CALP development.</li> <li>- However, many teachers were not aware of the professional support available.</li> </ul>
<p>(6) Curriculum development and programming development subsystem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The government recommends a curriculum which uses two languages until Grade 6. However, the school canceled the Dehong Dai classes a few years ago.</li> <li>- 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The curriculum is positively supportive to the principle of instructions in both languages. It tries to let the students have opportunities to use Dong in Dong language classes until Grade 6.</li> <li>- The teachers seem to split into two different groups about attitudes toward the curriculum.</li> </ul>
<p>(7) Media and materials subsystem</p>	<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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The pilot project prepared the textbooks in Dong language for their bilingual education.</li> <li>- During the observation, it was found that the Dong textbooks are rarely used in classes.</li> </ul>

(8) Orientation and training subsystem	The teachers' understanding of the outcomes of training is inconsistent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher training was convened by the government and SIL.</li> <li>- The teacher training suggested that the teachers should use both languages until Grade 6.</li> </ul>
(9) Teaching-learning subsystem	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The teachers are positively supportive to the principle because they at least use both languages in class.</li> <li>- The teachers also show their positive attitude to long term transfer.</li> <li>- However, the communication context in class (lectures/books/questions) lead students to use Chinese more than Dong.</li> </ul>
(10) Post-literacy subsystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are some books written in Dehong Dai language in the public library, Luxi. However, they are too difficult for the students.</li> <li>- The teachers found it difficult for the students to get help from the books to learn in both languages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Dong newspaper is published every two months and a VCD was produced in November 2001.</li> <li>- The teachers mostly show positive feedback to the post-literacy which provides students with learning in both languages.</li> <li>- However the books in the school library are all in Chinese.</li> </ul>
(11) Evaluation subsystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluation of two language instruction has never been done.</li> <li>- The students are evaluated by exams written only in Chinese.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The evaluation subsystem can be scaled permissive.</li> <li>- In Guizhou Province the entrance exams to middle and high schools are all conducted in Chinese.</li> <li>- In the pilot project, the students take exams in Dong at least for Dong language classes.</li> </ul>

### 6.1.3 Weakness of Chinese governmental bilingual education programs in the institution building and organizational subsystem (a hypothesis)

Another aspect of this study demonstrates a comparison between a governmental bilingual education program since the 1980s and an experimental NGO-initiated

program. The Dehong Dai program represents the former and the Dong program represents the latter.

As discussed above, the most significant difference between the selected programs is in the institution building and organizational subsystem. The Dehong Dai program is strongly supported by the government policies. However, it is not appreciated by the local teachers at Zhefang Central School. The teachers are either unaware or in disagreement with the government policies regarding the use of minority languages in class.

We need to ask the question, “what caused such an information gap?” It seems that there was miscommunication between the local leaders and local teachers. Many teachers in the Dehong Dai program were unsure about who provide them with curriculum, professional support, and training for bilingual education. It is assumed that the local teachers have too few opportunities to discuss the special education for their minority students with local leaders.

Secondly, the local leaders also may not really understand the benefits of bilingual education. China uses a 'top-down' decision making system. The local policies and laws usually just follow the national ones. In some cases, the local leaders neglect the principles of using two languages instruction for a long term. If this is so, it is not possible for them to provide effective support to the local schools. This obstructs the development of the minority students' CALP.

It is evident that lack of support, such as textbooks and training, was also influential in the Dehong Dai program. The teachers had the impression that the government is unsupportive of the use of minority languages in class. That was because their bilingual textbooks were too old and not useful for the current curriculum and there was no teacher training specialized in bilingual education. The teachers either do not have any minority language materials that they can use in classroom or may not know how to use minority languages in their classes. Dehong Dai classes in the school were canceled without any official announcement from the government. In this way, the evaluation results show that the program is missing the links between the subsystems and consistency over the whole program. This study proposes a hypothesis that the weakness in the institution building and organizational subsystem is one of the main factors which caused the slowing down of bilingual education in the 1990s. In order to confirm the hypothesis, more cases need to be examined in the future.

On the other hand, the Dong program is strong in the institution building and organizational subsystem. That is because the whole program is more consistent than the Dehong Dai program. During the research, it was found that SIL International provided support in many aspects of the program, such as editing and printing textbooks, and providing teacher training. Cooperation of an NGO helped the Dong program built a consistent structure. The results show the possibility of building a CALP supportive bilingual education program in China with an NGOs' cooperation and their flexible support. At the same time, it is recommended that the government organize dialogue sessions with the local school teachers to discuss the policies of instructional languages. This is to ensure that the teachers do not have the wrong impression that the government requires the teachers to use only Chinese in class.

#### **6.1.4 Bilingual education misconceived as minority language classes added to the national curriculum**

In this study, it was mentioned a few times that bilingual education in China often means just having minority language classes as an added subject. Tsung (2009) points out that this tendency is often shown in transitional bilingual education programs. She mentions that “the constraints teachers encountered in bilingualism are increased by the centralized syllabus while curriculum with bilingual programs are seen as a means of phasing students into Putonghua, and the first language is usually phased out in Year 3. Therefore, it is not treated as an educational learning in its own right.... the 'pyramid model' [transitional] policy for minority students in Yunnan, which uses first language to be eventually eclipsed, could be considered a form of transitional integration” (2009:176). Both programs examined in this study adopt the approach of transitional bilingual education. The Dehong Dai local teachers thought that the bilingual education program was canceled when the Dehong Dai language classes were canceled. This is despite the fact that the government did not announce either canceling the bilingual education program or the use of two languages for instruction. That is because, for the teachers, bilingual education means two separate subjects of minority language and Chinese. Lack of bilingual textbooks and communication between the government and local teachers enhanced such misunderstanding of bilingual education. The Dong program has a similar tendency. The government policy in the Dong program implies their support only for the minority language classes in preschool. As a result, the five extended schools only applied Dong language classes for preschool but kept the national Chinese-only curriculum for primary school.



The CALP theory suggests that the students' CALP is developed through two languages of instruction. The use of two languages for instruction should not depend on which subjects are taught. Perceiving bilingual education programs as separate language subjects, i.e. Dong or Chinese, could even cause a burden to the students. This is because the language which they learned would not be used in other classes so the students could not take advantage of their bilingualism at all.

In order to avoid the problem being discussed, two solutions are recommended. First, government policies should clearly state their support of using two languages of instruction for the entire primary education. The Dong program needs to be improved in this field. Secondly, the policies should be spread to the local schools and teachers through teacher training and the other outside support. This is a recommendation for the Dehong Dai program. This study recommends that all the bilingual education programs in China should follow these two solutions in order to achieve the principles of CALP development.

## 6.2 Further Studies

This study emphasized the building of an evaluation model based on CALP theory and the total literacy system. However, the model was assessed at only two locations while this study actually needs a larger number of cases to be examined. Therefore, more research is expected in the future. This is especially since the Dehong Dai program is replicated in numerous schools within the province. It is also proposed that the research be expanded to include other bilingual education programs in the rest of China. This will test the hypothesis stated earlier. In order to expand the number of research subjects, the research can be done by mailing the questionnaires to the local schools as well, instead of relying purely on field research. In this case, the questions should be chosen carefully to avoid any doubts or confusion.

The study itself is an evaluation of bilingual education programs. However, it could be more beneficial to studies in other aspects of bilingual education programs, such as language use, language attitudes, and so on. This evaluation model identifies CALP supportive and non-supportive programs. The two types of programs can be compared in terms of exam results, graduation rates, language use, and language attitudes. The derived results could reveal how 'CALP supportive' programs influence actual students' learning activities and achievement. The research associated with sociolinguistics may find differences in the students' language use and language attitudes between CALP supportive and non-supportive programs. It

may also be a boost to the retention of minority languages through bilingual education programs.

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