Wari Sarea Kanama

Lecturer in English Communication

University of Papua New Guinea

Graduate of University of Waikato, New Zealand

Master of Arts (Applied)

Outline of Presentation

1. **Introduction**

    1.1 Aim

    1.2 Definition of Bilingual Education

    (Freeman, 1998, p.3)

    1.3 Research questions

2. Discussion

    2.1 Types of Bilingual Education Programs

    (Baker, 1996, p.175)

    2.2 Findings

    2.21 Benefits of Bilingual Education

    2.22 Challenges of Bilingual Education

    Programs (PNG Experience - from 1994

    to 2013)

3. Conclusion

1.1 Aim

The aim of my paper is reporting on the benefits and challenges of Bilingual Education in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in primary schools from 1994 to 2013.

1.2 Definition of Bilingual Education (Freeman, 1998, p.3)

- Technical function/meaning and literal function (Freeman, 1998, p.3)

- *Technically, bilingual education means using two languages for instructional purposes. This same term, however, is actually used to refer to a wide range of programs that may have different ideological orientations toward linguistic and cultural diversity, different target populations, and different goals for those populations (Freeman, 1998, p.3).*

1.3 Research Questions

The data used as baseline were obtained from secondary sources. Three questions guided my review:

1. What are the benefits of implementing bilingual education in Papua New Guinea?

2. What were the challenges of implementing bilingual education in Papua New Guinea?

3. How can bilingual education be implemented effectively in Papua New Guinea?

2.1 Types of Bilingual Education Programs
(Baker, 1996, p.175)

The range of understanding of bilingual education is reflected in Baker's ten broad variety of programs:

1. Submersion (Structured immersion)
2. Submersion with withdrawal classes
3. Segregationist
4. Transitional
5. Mainstream with foreign language teaching
6. Separatist
7. Immersion
8. Maintenance
9. Two way/dual language
10. Bilingual education in majority languages

2.21 Findings: Benefits of Bilingual Education

- Baker (1996) classified the latter four programs (7, *8, 9, 10) as "strong forms of education" (p.175). **These programs promote bilingualism and biliteracy** and thereby maybe considered as addictive bilingualism programs.

- Additive bilingualism (and its contrast, subtractive bilingualism) is a termed coined by Lambert (1980). **Lambert was the first to prove that bilingual education was beneficial for (language minority and emigrant) children.**

Benefits of Bilingual Education

- Bilingual education develops learners' basic skills in literacy and numeracy that they may receive relevant education and experience fewer cognitive and linguistic problems when bridged to English, the second language (L2) (e.g. in PNG through Transitional Bilingual Education - TBE)

  - Students assimilate quickly (early) to L2 (e.g. English in PNG) and become fluent monolinguals in L2. This is the societal & education goal of TBE. (However TBE does not maintain students' L1, which may be forgotten and thus eventually lost. Baker (1996, p.175) thus classifies it as a weak form of education.)

– TBE is embedded in the Facilitation Theory or Threshold Theory as it is sometimes called.

– This theory was first proposed by Cummins (1978) to explain why students with Limited English Proficiency acquire English quickly and easily when they begin their education in their L1. (cf e.gs: Studies by Ramirez, Yuen & Ramey, 1991; and Thomas and Collier, 1995)

– There are two types of language proficiency thresholds:

1. BICS – Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills – emphasizes surface learning

2. CALP – Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency – emphasizes deep learning

– In summary, the Threshold Theory proposes that in order for the learner to attain CALP in L1, the learner first needs BICS in L1, and, in order for the learner to attain CALP in L2, the learner needs CALP as well as BICS in L1 plus BICS in L2.

- Bilingual education maintains learners' first language (L1) and helps them gain full bilingualism, biliteracy and cultural pluralism (e.g. PNG: Maintenance Bilingual Education Program - MBEP).

- MBEP puts emphasis on and maintains students' L1.

    – Baker (1996) therefore classifies it as a strong form of education (p.175).

    – Cummins (1981) supports MBEP because it is associated with positive cognitive benefits for enhancing L2 acquisition (cf: Cummins, 1978)

2.22 Findings: Challenges of Bilingual Education Programs (PNG Experience - from 1994 to 2013)

Source: *Education Reform Facilitating and Monitoring Unit (March, 2000*) & from my observations

- Using teachers who did not receive adequate and relevant training in bilingual education as bridging teachers;

- Using teachers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to that of their learners as bridging teachers;

- Bridging learners whose basic skills in literacy and numeracy which were not fully developed in the first three years of formal schooling made bridging to L2 difficult;

Bilingual Contexts/Settings

- Countries where bilingual education is being implemented successfully:
  - Canada (French immersion)
  - New Zealand (*Te Reo Maori* immersion)
  - Japan (Bilingual Education in Majority Languages)

- Note: <u>PNG is not a bilingual country</u>. It is a multilingual setting!

(*How can bilingual education be implemented in such a context?*)

- Writing the prescribed teaching and learning materials in all 800 plus indigenous languages was economically impractical so only English was used;

- Using only *Tok Pisin* as learners' L1 for bridging to English in urban schools, and

- Using a non-conducive classroom for learning the content areas in two languages – L1 and L2 - made learning difficult.

Kilala Devete-Chee: Bilingual Education in a Multilingual Nation (PHD Thesis, 14 February, 2014, University of Canberra, Australia) (cited on-line)

* Students appreciated *Tok Pisin* because it helped them in their learning of English. (This confirms Siegel's finding on Tok Pisin, 1997 cited in Devete-Chee.)

(*Why? Could it be that is because it is their L1, and, it has the same structure as English*?)

Kilala Devete-Chee: Bilingual Education in a Multilingual Nation (PHD Thesis, 14 February, 2014, University of Canberra, Australia) (cited on-line)

Major Conclusions

– Used a modified transitional model (Bali, 2010) but its goals were not achieved.

– The education reform encouraged bilingual education only as a bridge to learning English; this did not help with the development of *Tok Pisin* or children's vernacular.

– None of the schools (n=6; in Kokopo, ENBP) she gathered data from were bilingual schools.

Robert Litteral of SIL International (2004), highlighted some of these challenges in his article, Vernacular Education in Papua New Guinea (cited on-line)

- **Political challenges**
  - The main political challenge was to take a decentralised network of non-formal vernacular education with shared national, provincial, community and NGO responsibilities into a centralized, national, hierarchical system where ultimate administration, education and financial rested with the DOE (Department of Education).

- National Policy varies from province to province due to availability of experts to implement all aspects of the policy.
- At the village level, communities select those to be trained as teachers and chose the language for instruction.

- **Education challenges**
  - The greatest challenge was to provide sufficient personnel competent to operate a vernacular education system ….
  - Training of elementary teachers was another challenge. The trainers were selected teachers who only had experience in teaching English (L2 in PNG) and given short raining course (13 weeks) on vernacular education and received a Certificate of Elementary Teacher Training.

  The training received through lectures which emphasized education issues; no training was given for vernacular materials development and teaching.

  (*Who was the trainer of these trainers? Was the trainer of trainers qualified in vernacular education and curriculum development*?)

- Lack of alphabet for many smaller languages. Most provinces still lack trained personnel who can assist in alphabet development.

- Vernacular materials (i.e. not written using the two languages for instruction) and were not available to teachers in isolated schools because transportation funding was a problem.

- Monitoring and assessment is another challenge.

With the English system and its emphasis on standardised testing, assessment was not completed. But developing equivalent means of monitoring for national standards is difficult is difficult with so many languages are involved.

Note: There is a review of elementary training by the Australian Council of Education Research, funded by AusAid.

Conclusion

- I reviewed the benefits and challenges of the implementation of the Maintenance and Transitional Bilingual Education programs in Papua New Guinea from 1994 to 2013.

- Major conclusions

Both bilingual education programs, Maintenance and Transitional, were implemented prematurely without any proper establishments of learning resources such as bilingual-trained teachers, conducive learning facilities and relevant curriculum materials. As a result, firstly, Papua New Guinea ceased their implementation in 2013 and adapted the Standard Based Education.

Secondly, children's cognitive and linguistic learning in English in PNG is now being made difficult as they progress through the different levels of education.

Based on these challenges and conclusions, this paper argues that an empirical research of a multi-method approach is needed to find out how bilingual education can be implemented effectively in a multilingual setting like Papua New Guinea.

References

Baker, C. (1996) *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism.* 2nd Edition. Bristol: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Cummins, J. (1978) Metalinguistic Devlopment of Children in Bilingual Eduction Programs: Data from Irish and Canadian Ukraine- English Programs. In M. Paradis (ed.). *Aspects of Bilingualism*. Columbia: Hornbeam Press.

_____ (1981). *Bilingualism and Minority Language Children.* Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Toronto: OISE Press.

- Education Reform Facilitating and Monitoring Unit, (March, 2000). *The State of Education in Papua New Guinea*. Waigani: National Department of Education.

- Freeman, R. (1998). *Bilingual Education and Social Change.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

- Lambert, W. E. (1980). The Social Psychology of Language. In H. Giles.; W. P. Robinson.; P. M. Smith (eds) *Language: Social Psychological Perspectives.* Oxford: Pergamon.

- Ramirez, J. D. and Merino, B. J. (1990). Classroom Talk in English Immersion, Early-exit and Late-exit Transitional Bilingual Education Programs. In R. Jacobson and C, Faltis (eds) *Language Distribution Issues in Bilingual Schooling.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

- Ramirez, J. D.; Yuen, S. D.; and Ramey, D.R. (1991). *Final Report: Longitudinal Study of Tsurctured English Immersion Strategy, Early-exit and Late-exit Programs for Language-minority Children. Report Submitted to the US Department of Education. Sant Mateo, CA: Aguire International*

*Kilala Devete-Chee: Bilingual Education in a Multilingual Nation (PHD Thesis, 14 February, 2014, University of Canberra, Australia) (cited on-line)

*Robert Litteral of SIL International (2004), highlighted some of these challenges in his article, Vernacular Education in Papua New Guinea (cited on-line)