The Effectiveness of a Bilingual Education Program at Chinese University-A case study of Business English Major in South-central University for Nationalities Wuhan, China

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Abstract. This study examined the effectiveness of a bilingual education program in business English major in Chinese education. Participants were 100 undergraduate students enrolled in their third year education program at a university in South-central University for Nationalities Wuhan, China. The research evidence indicates that, the use of English as medium of instruction in teaching is effective participants also confirms as the more they interact and get familiar with the medium of instruction. Furthermore, this implies that using bilingualism in teaching does contribute good effect in student’s engagement and academic performance. A mixed-methodological approach was used accompanied by a semi-structured interview of 100 undergraduate students majoring in Business English to better understand the efficacy of bilingual education programs. Both quantitative and qualitative results suggested that the bilingual education model successfully enhanced students’ level of English proficiency and the mastery of subject knowledge teaching quality was another aspect considered to be important factor in this research associated with the bilingual education program for Business English Major. Strengths and weaknesses of the business English major in bilingual education program model and its implications for educational practices in South-central University for Nationalities Wuhan-China education were explored.

Introduction

Bilingual education in China presents itself as derived from that the concepts associated with minority groups. However, there are many reference on literature on the history of bilingualism, bilingual educational practices, policies and research projects, particularly in the last three decades when the country has opened up to the world. Especially in the provision of English language teaching with the motivated aim of providing citizens with increased economic and social opportunities and increasingly faced with limited financial resources. There so, Chinese policy makers and other stakeholders are crucial for the economic development of the country and individual introduced Chinese–English bilingual education as media of instruction [1].
Literature Review

Language Policy in China

Language policy in China is greatly influenced by historical situation. There are almost three main stages. The first stage is preliminary exploration stage: In the 1950s, due to the positive Sino-Soviet diplomatic relations, Russian is warmly welcomed in schools, while English education popularity was reduced by several policies. However, in the 1960s, Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated, and diplomatic relations with the West and Asian and African countries has improved, so demand for English talents increased. Therefore, the state introduced several policies, such as the seven-year outline of foreign language education, and the establishment of foreign languages. School, etc. this is the official beginning of English learning in China [2].

The Second stage is adjustment stage. After the Great Culture Revolution, in 1978, the implementation of reform and opening up drives English education develop rapidly. Moreover, facing the huge gap between supply and demand in minority language, in March 1979, the Ministry of Education pointed out that the main task was to develop English education, but also to pay attention to education in other common languages such as Japan, Germany, France and Russia [3].

The third stage is stable development stage. In the mid-1990s, Deng Xiaoping proposed that education should face modernization, face the world, face the future, and improve the recognition of social foreign language for economic development. And then, reform and innovation was employed to solve the language talents lacking problem. Compound education, for instance, business English which combined English into business subject, is emerging and gradually developing [4].

Foreign Language Learning Environment

Everyone is bilingual [5], there is no consensus definition of the term bilingual but it can be linked as a teaching method which takes mother language and foreign language in which in this case will refer to English teaching media to assist students master the specialty knowledge.

It is well noted, linguistic environment is extremely important for the acquirement and development of language. Learning a foreign language especially in major like Business English also needs a better linguistic environment. The bilingual education can create a pleasing linguistic environment for students learning Business English major. But the main objective of business English major courses is not to improve students’ foreign language level. Its most important meaning is to strengthen the subject construction and train complex talents for economic globalization. With the help of qualified and skilled teaching method this can extend students’ knowledge scope, expand horizons, and make them master the specialty knowledge better, for the sake of adapting to the economic globalization.

Students Achievement, Comprehension and Engagement to Learning

Over the years, bilingual education has imitate many terms to as a choice of activities relating to second language learning. This is because education in more than one language and is necessary and common around the world [6]. In china, guidance in two languages have taken different forms, each with its own set of goals, design and manner of implementation. An assortment of labels, terminologies, program, models, and designs for Chinese population is
well documented in literature. Accordant to the research “students reported use of language switching when doing Business English courses” [7] told that the Chinese students would continue to patronize code-switching because it helps them a lot in apprehending and completing business courses task in mainstream classroom.

According to the research “Bilingual Education the Acquisition of English, and the Retention and Loss of Chinese” [8] stated that in teaching tertiary level it is more productive if the use of Bilingual approach so that they can totally comprehend the ideas that are want to impart to them. Together with the research “Conveying the “Right” Kind of Message: planning for first Language and Culture within the classroom, that teachers must highlight and emphasized things that is needed to be indicated in using the first-language of the students so that the “right” message will be conveyed [9].Moreover, the interaction of two languages as academic resources [10] stated that the students who are using dual-language in school are more effective, they have the greater level of comprehension and they have greater increased in linguistic and conceptual understanding. Also [11] understanding of strategies for accommodating the needs of English language learners teaching literacy and content material to students developmental, meaning-based, interdisciplinary, experiential approaches are compatible with strategies for teaching language.

Therefore, according to the research making the use of bilingual question and interview data some of the content from the field through bilingual interview data this would connect to globalization and would connect to diverse societies through the use of English language (Halai, 2009). [12]. Together with the inquiry “diversity in family participation in student’s learning business English courses in the university, culture language and identity [13] further diversity and complexity and also lively for parents to engage in using more than one language so that the students will be open to diverse culture and through knowing many language this would encourage unity and uniformity.

Methodology

Studies can be cited to support either side of the debate on whether bilingual education programs work better than Chinese-only programs. However, early studies failed to deal with the non-random selection of limited English proficient students into bilingual education programs. Students who participate in bilingual education are systematically different in observed and unobserved characteristics from students who do not, so the achievement difference between participants and non-participants could not be causally attributed to bilingual education. In addition, studies dealt with bilingual education in China are limited in sample size and or several decades old. There so in this study a mixed-methodological approach was used to better understand the efficacy of bilingual education programs.

Student Engagement

Questionnaire was administered to the students by the researcher who is the author where the items were based in the unit that was discussed in Management class. The group of students was composed of 100 students who were exposed to Bilingual course in their Management course as shown in table 1.
Table 1. Student Engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1st semester</th>
<th>2nd semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score | Descriptive value

1st semester | 2nd semester

Over all mean | 4.11 | Very satisfactory | 3.11 | Satisfactory

- **Excellent**: if all the students participate in the class activity.
- **Very satisfactory**: if almost all the students participate in the class activity (5-15 students do not participate)
- **Satisfactory**: if half of the class participate in the class activity.
- **Fair**: if almost all students do not participate in the class activity (5-15 students only participate).
- **Poor**: if all of the students do not participate in the class activity.

The table above shows the mean scores of Student’s Engagement of the 2nd semester and the 1st semester to the 7-day observation of each final weeks of the semester that is being conducted in the Management Classes of the students. In the over-all mean of the 2nd semester, it obtained 4.11 which means, the interaction and participation of the students in the class discussion is very satisfactory, while the mean score of the 1st semester is 3.11 which mean that their interaction and participation in the class discussion is satisfactory. The implication of this is the Engagement of students who are more and frequently exposed in bilingual classes is greater as they keep interacting and exposing to such courses. Students who are more and frequently exposed in bilingual classes are greater as they keep interacting and exposing to such courses.
Table 2. Student’s Academic performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Descriptive value</th>
<th>2nd semester</th>
<th>1st semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-85</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-75</td>
<td>Very satisfactory</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>55.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-60</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59-45</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 &lt;</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.2667</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the experimental the 100 students who were exposed to bilingual management course for 2 semesters, showed the 2nd semester score had a mean of 15.27 which is an indicative of the 48.89%. And for the 1st semester the students mean was 14.44 which is satisfactory in value. This means that the majority of the students had obtained a score from 74 to 60. This shows that there was fair academic performance during their first semester and the scores improved as to the second semester of their bilingual major class.

Discussion

The result of the study showed that there is differences between the scores of students as there are displayed to more bilingual classes. The scores of the 2nd semester are better than the 1st semester. This implies that the integration of Bilingualism is effective in Teaching and Learning Process for the Academic Performance and the Engagement of Students is increases as he/she gets more familiar to the medium of instruction. Moreover, this study agrees with the theory “Theory of Bilingualism” by Jim Cummins which states that students who are exposed to Bilingualism environment promotes Student’s greater Understanding.

Additionally, other factors were revealed which presented the development of various categories exposing the attitudes and the differences between students as there are exposed to more bilingual classes. The argument in addition focused on the categories that led the candidates to embrace such behavior.

Students' Positive Attitudes to English Medium of Instruction by Choice and preparation

Few differences are there between regarding English as an international language used for global interaction and regarding it as a tool for demonstration usage even in a global wide. For instance, English is a manner of language participating in various activities over undergraduates and graduates across the European countries, and in Stockholm University both English as well as Swedish are used in the meanwhile for instruction [14]. This is exact the same in China that there is such English as illustration pattern for foreign and Chinese students to have related programs. Those Chinese students are required to have regular exams held by universities to learn to what extent they've mastered the English. While only foreign language school among all the schools (in South-Central University for Nationalities) mainly taught in English (others generally in Chinese), there are still chances for students of other majors and schools to come and enjoy the course freely though not in the restrained lists of course. And these students also show their interest in programs with English as a tool for
teaching after be post-graduates. The first participant in the program showed her support for it by saying. The author has the analysis of the opinion of the participant, implying that they quite agreed to be educated in English in their present program. The participant also chose to enter a fully English-instructed program rather a Chinese-instructed one which favors her in research purpose, like in searching and reading reference. In the dialogue, she advised to apply English-based instruction in condition that all the mentors can teach the course in good English. Thus, also other participant stated the spending of most of their time finding and reading the English related books of the Business Major. As for the authors, the participants reflected there is a lacking means to satisfy students' needs and this is quite significant for educationally-based organization. After analyzing the questionnaire from the participant the it clearly shows the expressing of their attitudes and comparing their schemes with that of famous university in Wuhan University. Another perspective is that the policy-makers know this but work out no alternative for us. Therefore, the author concluded the majority of students are willing to introduce English instruction within the country and hope that the policy-makers can re -consider how to change the medium of instruction of the program.

Students' Confidence to English as a mean of Instruction by Choice and Preparation

It has been recognized that English has been taught in universities, and is also used as an international language in non-English nations. For instance, European countries regard English as the popular language in undergraduate and graduate education, some like Stockholm University even use mother tongue and English equally. In China, native college students get to English just like foreigners. And some universities use exams to justify students' language ability.

In South-Central University for Nationalities, only foreign language department have programs which are instructed in English, and the students favored them for the more choice of roster in selected programs. Furthermore, there exists eagerness for English-medium programs for post-graduate studies among them. The authors analyzed this point from the feedback of participants, and proclaimed that it is rather important to assess and understand the needs of students who study programs in foreign language in Universities and college compared to other big reputable University like with Wuhan University, the participants also demonstrated their perspective towards the English-medium program scheme and expectation of English test until being senior lecturers. From the questionnaires, it shows that majority of the students are willingly to undertake their further studies with English as the instructing language.

Self-distinctive as International Researchers

With the largest population, China is expected to have the largest number of students learning English [15]. Moreover, students in almost all department welcome their English names, however, especially the department of Business English and the phenomenon that they are addressed by their English name for the whole duration of their studies even though some of their course are not English-instructed interprets that English is warmly received in South Central University for Nationalities. However, it is considered as a necessity these days because academic researcher are suppose to update and contact other researchers of the same field or same interests. Students find bilingual education in their program an academic network which promotes the rapid conveyance of knowledge and a better understanding of experiment research by other scholars. The participants of this survey have directly pinpointed that some of the cause of 'academic network' as an essential reason for their
positive attitudes and perception towards opting the major of Business English in general and using English as a medium of instruction in current and future programs in particular.

**Students Achievement, Comprehension and Engagement to Learning**

Through the years, bilingual education has gained many terms to skilled activities relating to second language learning. This is because education in more than one language is necessary and common around the world [16] In Business English department of South-central University china, instructions in two languages have taken different forms, each with its own set of goals, design and manner of implementation. A collection of labels, terminologies (technical words or expressions), program, models, and designs for the students is well documented in class. According to the answer from the questionnaire reported use of language switching when doing Business English courses”, however, a famous scholar [17] also stated in his study that is more desirable and preferable for the students to keep switching languages during studies, assignments and other related task because of their dependence on Chinese language.

Furthermore, from the research of Chen [18] they stated the interaction of two languages as academic resources which assists the students in school more effective and provides greater level of comprehension and conceptual understanding [19].Therefore, according to the use of bilingual interview data, it would connect to globalization and diverse societies through the use of English language (Feng, 2013) [20].

**Leadership Seat**

Leadership is a practical skill contained the ability of an individual or organization to "lead" or guide other individuals. The leader has to be able to acquire skills that may be creative, flexible and critical in enabling them to be strategically centered. Also their achievement should be smooth as possible. In all background, leaders must be very patient, have strong visions, and be capable and confident of dealing with different issues in a logically and systemically way. Furthermore, they need to have a very good spirit of teaming or socializing with different kinds of people, say, local, international people, and colleagues. They also should be able to build a strong trust among one another. However from the result of our study, some participants suggested that it is expected from effective English educational background only, leaders to be in China will speak English that facilitates a better and easier communication with all stakeholders, particularly teachers and students. What’s more, English has become a requirement for promotion in jobs and an essential factor in obtaining a leadership role in many scenes. In this concern, the author came to the conclusion. all possessed one common meaning related to obtaining a leadership position, according to them it is very necessary to have a deep understanding about English language, including its vocabularies. The shared story of participants is interesting, as it shows the challenges that people who are considered as' leaders in school are facing while communicating.

In summary, the researcher focused on the understanding the student engagement and the academic performance why students opt such major, what are their future plans. what reasons for adopting these strategies and the participants’ perceptions of the strategies in relation to their disciplinary and language learning as pointed out by Spolsky [21] and [22].
Conclusion

It has been more than ten years since the country proposed the establishment of bilingual education, and universities have also opened bilingual courses at a certain rate. In general, most college teachers and students believe that the opening of bilingual classes is necessary and important. Broadly speaking, bilingual teaching is in line with the needs of China's social development and will be more able to meet the needs of society. What’s more, in bilingual teaching, teachers could practice the latest outstanding educational ideas and teaching methods and means; students are more able to improve professional knowledge and English simultaneously, and form a variety of modes of thinking. According to analysis of the questionnaire, some students stated they admire the bilingual education because they could be more creative and cope with matters with multiple points of view. Additionally, for further studies research or exchange training abroad, the open thinking and good communication skills brought by bilingual courses will greatly increase the learning potential and capability.

However, we have to admit that the availability of bilingual teaching courses offered by universities is uneven. This certainly has various external constraints on each university, but the core is to understand the essence of bilingual teaching. The Longman Applied Linguistics Dictionary explains the bilingual education is the use of the second or foreign language in school for the teaching of content subjects. However, many teachers misunderstand bilingual teaching is to "use English in class"—even they are not qualified, and emphasis is placed on teaching in a foreign language (the medium) but not in a professional (the content). In South–Central Universities for Nationalities, most teachers has a Ph. D but still could not teach the classes in English. For Business English major, which consists of several inter-disciplines, for instance, negotiation, students believe the insistence of English-medium teaching will lead misunderstandings, and most of professional courses should taught in Chinese. Therefore, futile bilingual education will influence the quality and process of teaching negatively, and the burden of lesson preparation also increase. Secondly, from the perspective of "learning", students’ comprehensive English ability is uneven, so it leaves a question that some students many get lost and be fed up with study. In the discussion, there are indeed several participants who have weak language ability have difficulties in study and then be fed up with courses. Moreover, the ability to generally be low is to return to a teacher-centered teaching model, which is even worse. The consequence is that students can’t understand most of the teacher’s lectures, and the students could not improve the English level, and the professional knowledge of the school will not be learned, either. Another situation is that students and teachers simply cannot exchange professional knowledge in English. The result is that the teacher has to give up English, switch to pure Chinese or just mix it in one simple English, this kind of "bilingual teaching" has lost the bilingual teaching the meaning of itself.

Despite of all, the study reveals that as the teacher uses Bilingualism in teaching, the academic performance and the engagement of the student inclines and still Chinese-English bilingual education programs do not enjoy legal protection. The Language Law of People’s Republic of China unequivocally stipulates that “schools and other institutions must use Putonghua and standardized Chinese characters as the basic spoken and written language in education and teaching” [23]. The flourishing Chinese-English bilingual education programs are indicative of an educational centralization process that has been happening in China.
References


