



The Case Study of English-Chinese Bilingual Programs in PS173Q Fresh Meadow School

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Background

As "New York Times" wrote, Chinese will be heard in the conferences around the world in 2040. Since 2005, Chinese has become the second largest foreign language of the United States and Japan. There are numerous South Korean students go to China to learn Chinese every year. Two thousand and three hundred universities in more than one hundred countries offer Chinese courses to over 30 million students.

In Taiwan, it is an important project to build up the students' English proficiency. In order to achieve this goal, the pupils start to learn English since first grade in New Taipei City. Besides, the five English Wonderlands provide the learners with immersion learning context. Recently, the promotion of Experimental Bilingual Schools is a new milestone in English teaching and learning. As a result, what should be done in this Experimental Bilingual project to benefit both the teacher and students is a crucial issue.

PS 173Q Elementary School was one school that we visited in New York. It is a private school with bilingual classes and the Chinese curriculum is mainly guided by three Mandarin teachers. The relevant information about Dual-Language Program classes is shown as below:

1. One class form first grade to fifth grade.
2. The students are taught in English for 3 days and Chinese for 2 days during a week.
3. Curriculum is taught in English and Chinese, which follows Common Core Standards.
4. Half of the students are English Language learners and the others speak English as their mother tongue.

The bilingual programs in PS 173Q School in New York provide a good model for the New Taipei City to refer to while promoting Bilingual Experimental School in the future. I believe that as long as a good fulcrum is found, the English education of New Taipei City will be lifted up.

Purpose

Currently, there are 12 Bilingual Experimental schools and 22 foreign teachers in New Taipei City. The curriculum of each school is designed based on their characteristics. The goals that need to be achieved through establishing Bilingual Experimental Schools are shown as follow:

1. Combining the cooperation between the Taiwanese and English teachers.
2. Designing proper English courses for the students.
3. Enhancing the students' English abilities and developing their global vision.

Research method

Classroom observation was adopted in the study. Two periods of observation in Class 3-323 were selected. The teacher, Mrs. Maguardt, had been in Taiwan in 2007 for teaching exchange. Peggy Chang, the Chinese teacher, is from Taiwan.

In order to understand the situation in bilingual classroom, my observation was from three aspects:

1. Teacher-student interaction.
2. Teaching and learning conditions.
3. Teaching materials.

Findings

1. Schedule

From the schedule, in Class 3-323, we can know the different sections of a day. The schedule was designed by both English and Chinese teachers together.

Speaking of lesson planning, there was no recess. One school day is divided into eight periods, 45 minutes per period, and 40 periods per week. The teachers have six periods free to prepare for lessons. Unlike Teachers in Taiwan, the teachers were not responsible for the students' lunch time. Totally, the teachers have 29 periods of lecturing per week.

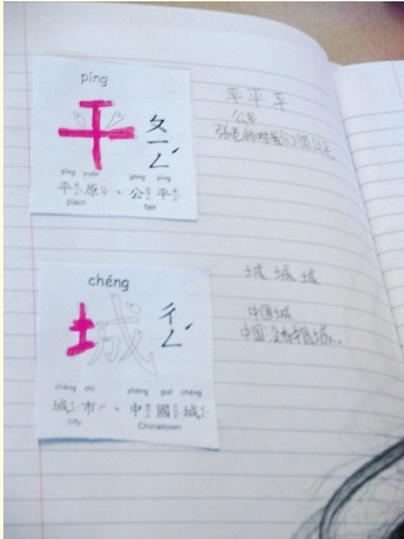
2. Chinese and English Curriculum Planning

Everything is connected to the core concept of Curriculum, a global vision in PS173Q. We saw a large carpet of the world, posters of national flags introductions, big wall paper of reading comprehension strategies in both languages. Students' teams were named by the continents. If one team performs well, the teacher will add merits to the team. "Hsieh- hsieh 謝謝," "Hen-hao 很好" were heard here and there in class which means "thanks," and "good job."

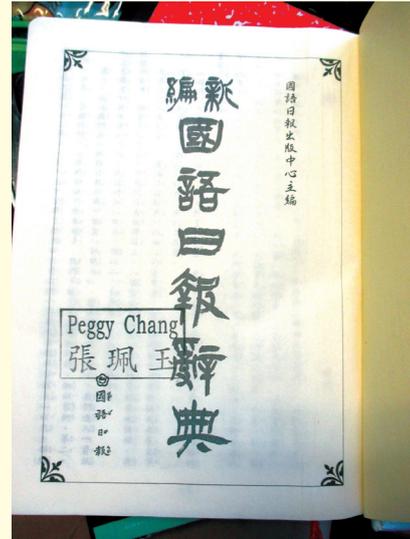
3. Teaching Materials

Subjects	Textbook	Content	Notes
Language arts (in English)	Worksheets.	i. Reading comprehension strategies ii. Writing guidance	With PowerPoint files
Social science (in Mandarin)	Worksheets.	i. Buildings of Egypt: Pyramids and Sphinx. ii. Sentence patterns.	i. Comparing with the famous New York buildings ii. With PowerPoint files

4. The Classroom Layout (Chinese Part)



Picture 1: Chinese sheet- practicing and making a new sentence.



Picture 2: Mandarin Daily News Dictionary



Picture 3: Chinese Illustrated books



Picture 4: Chinese learning material

The teachers edited Chinese textbooks on their own. The increasing number of picture books and story books displayed indicated that Chinese learning has become more and more popular. However, more Simplified Chinese were more common to see than Traditional ones. Perhaps Taiwanese government and publishers should introduce books of Traditional Chinese more aggressively which may shed some light on Traditional Chinese visibility.

5. English Classroom Arrangement

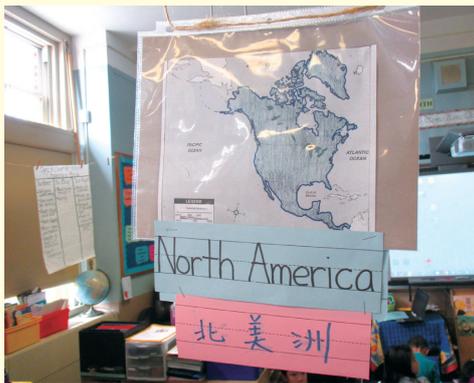
In the group time, teachers had two students browse the website of B.B.C.(British Broadcasting Corporation) to learn phonics. Most of the students were sitting in front of the classroom on the World's carpet map. So, teacher can catch the students' eyes and attention to learning.



Picture 5: Guide reading strategies in Chinese



Picture 6: Guide reading strategies in English



Picture 7: Grouping by World continents



Picture 8: Bilingual poster

Classroom Observation

1-1 The Implementation in a Social Science (Chinese Teaching by Peggy Chang)

Conducted in accordance with the school policies, lower graders were taught in Traditional Chinese, while third or higher graders were in Simplified Chinese. The teachers used the article prepared in advance for students to recognize and read.

1-2 Lesson Plan

Content	Aid	Time
<p>Activity one</p> <p>Students shew what they had already known about Egypt, such as famous buildings.</p> <p>Through the topic sentence, let the students know how to fill the blank.</p>	PPT	5
<p>Activity two</p> <p>When the students tried to say the sentence in Chinese, teacher wrote the sentence on the paper.</p> <p>Cutting the sentence into some pieces, the teacher gave each student a piece.</p>	Paper and pen	10
<p>Activity three (* Twice)</p> <p>Rearranging the right sequence of the mandarin sentence</p> <p>The teacher inserted a redundant word for students and asked them which word should be deleted.</p> <p>埃及 位於北非 神秘 * 最有名的 建築物 是 金字塔 和人面獅身像</p>	student	20

1-3 Examples

Teachers first helped students with their existing knowledge about New York. An example is as follows:

The New York City is located on North American, of which famous buildings are (Statue of Liberty) and (The Rockefeller Building) °

Comparing with Egypt, the topic sentence of can be modified as follows;

() is located on North Africa, of which famous buildings are () and() °

1-4 Observation

1. The students enjoyed playing the major roles on stages. They tried their very best to read the sentences correctly.
2. The text was short, but only the first topic sentence was practiced during the learning. We did not observe a complete class.
3. The students not only read Chinese sentences, but also examined the redundant words. The teachers paid more attentions to the pragmatic of Chinese learning rather than merely to the words recognition in the limited learning time.
4. The students used asking strategies in English to know how to say the Chinese word correctly. Students depended on their first language, English to learn the target language, Chinese.

2-1 Implementation English Reading Comprehension (English Teaching by Mrs. Maguardt)

Before giving reading instructions to students, small reading comprehension strategy cards were given, so that students knew which strategy can be used. The teachers used e-teaching equipment, SmartBoard and softwares, and taught students to recognize and read the phrases. Among the sentences, there was a new vocabulary that children had not learned. At this time, neither pictures nor other clues were provided to help but just words.

2-2 Lesson Plan

Content	Aid	Time
Activity one Before starting, teacher asked the children if they can recognize the Tricky Word or not. Then introducing Reading Comprehension Strategy 1: Using the Tricky Word.	i. SmartBoard ii. Short sentence	15
Activity two (* Twice) You can read from the text, figure it out with 5W1H. What/Why/Where/When/Who/How Then introducing Reading Comprehension Strategy 2: Reading between lines.	i. Long paragraph	30

2-3 Examples

2-3-1 Use what you already know

Material 1: "Mayor Smiley mopped the sweat from his neck with a silk handkerchief, although little Willy thought it was quite cool in the room."

Teacher: So, It's a tricky words, right?

Teachers :(Sentence by key word.) Sound likes /hand + ker + chief/.

Teacher: And try different sounds that part you can deal with /er/ sound..

Teacher: /k/ + /er/, It's /ker/ sound.

Students:(Action) /ker/ sounds.

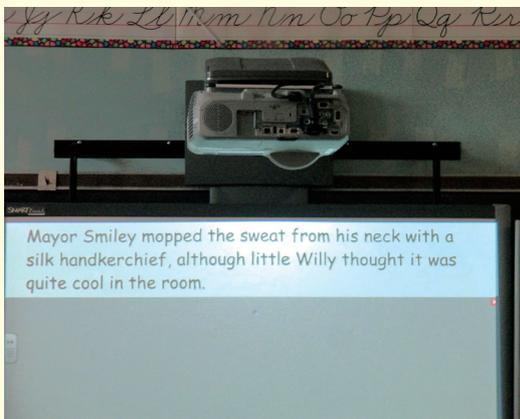
2-3-2 Use a hint-guess

Teacher: You got to sweat on your neck. I saw the word "hand", that will help me a lot....

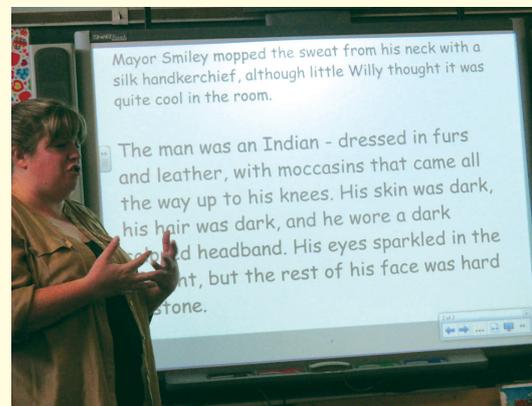
Teacher: (Imagination) What did you do when you sweat?

Students: (Action) Wipe her sweat..

What mentioned above was the conversation between Mrs. Maguardt and kids. Creating and exploring the new meaning of Tricky Word was based on kids' experience, instead of being told.



Picture 9: Short sentence



Picture 10: Long paragraph

2-3-3 Reading between the Lines

Material 2: " The man was an Indian – dressed in furs and leather. With moccasins that come all the way up to his knees. His skin was dark, his hair was dark, and he wore a dark colored headband. His eyes sparkled in the front, but the rest of his face was hard stone."

From the text, the protagonist is the Indians. Firstly, his clothing was introduced. There was a clue, "all the way about the knees", so students can guess. Seemingly, some clothing related to one's feet was talked about.

2-4 Observations

1. In the Language Arts, the teachers put emphasis on reading comprehension strategies, instead of the meanings, pronunciations about the single word, vocabulary.
2. Through WORD GUESS strategy of lower graders, using of texts or examples was to make students to understand TRICKY WORD and to reduce the difficulty of reading the text.
3. For medium or higher graders, guided essay were carried out. It's the foundation to build writing ability. Using 5H1W questions, students can get a clear picture of the whole article. The answers to the questions did not have to be fixed but at least must to be context-oriented. After writing their own answers, the teacher invited students to share their thoughts.

Conclusion

At the school entrance, there is a carpet printed in different languages to welcome the visitors. When visiting the school, stickers of different languages will help people with the professional and instant assistance from school. The notifications in multiple languages are ensuring families from different cultures can receive the correct messages equally.

On contrast, in Taiwan, every Bilingual Experimental School set up Bilingual website. But the relevant information is still Chinese interfaced. Foreign teachers said that it's a challenge to take advantage of "School Administration Systems"(校務行政系統), which is still based on Chinese information and interface, too.

In addition, the frames of school-based curriculum plans are prepared in the beginning of each semester. Every teacher should develop their own lesson plans. Without textbooks, teachers are given more responsibilities to develop curriculums in order to achieve the Common Core of N.Y.C. (New York City). Fully professional exchanges and discussions are needed.

So many different teaching philosophies bombard my mind such as language arts only for reading comprehension strategies, teaching without textbooks; teaching professional development communities are formed by needs, not demanding, teaching in bilingual language in every academic subjects, well-prepared administrative actions for each language, each family, each child and parents.....so on. Which one can be utilized in Taiwan teaching contexts?

Private or public school alike, as long as teachers can absorb new classroom management skills, and fully understand the essence of teaching connotation then the change is around the corner.