

MAINSTREAM TEACHERS' ATTITUDE AND APPROACHES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S BILITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN AUSTRALIAN CLASSROOM CONTEXT

Muhammad Basri Jafar

(muhbasri@yahoo.com)

Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

Abstract: This article examines the role of mainstream teachers in supporting children's biliteracy development and bilingualism in a public primary school where English is the medium of instruction. It reports a research conducted in a public primary school in Australia. The research employs a longitudinal ethnographic approach to collect data on how the teachers perceive biliteracy and the extent to which the approaches they adopt impact on their biliteracy and bilingualism development. The research result demonstrates that the more supportive the teachers for biliteracy development and bilingualism are, the more constructivist their teaching approach is and the more varied the activities they encouraged in their classrooms to create opportunities for biliteracy and bilingualism engagement and learning are.

Key words: Teacher perception, bilingualism, literacy activity, impact

"Mami...Mami...Mami...guru saya bisa bahasa Indonesia (Mum...Mum...Mum... my teacher can speak Indonesian)" proudly commented a smiling Fasya, a boy from Indonesian family background who had just come back from his local primary school where officially instruction is conducted in English. This experience marked the beginning of him feeling comfortable in his Australian school where he had just gone to for three weeks. He was very happy to see that his teacher had learnt to speak to him in some words of his home language, Indonesian. In his first couple of weeks at the school, Fasya

kept silent in the classroom and was only able to watch other children doing their daily activities because of having no understanding at all of English.

The situation of language minority children in mainstream schools has attracted an increasing number of researchers over the last three decades, reflecting what Suarez-Orozco (2001) has highlighted that migration or as Papastergiadis called 'global people flows' (2000) is one of the distinctive defining features of globalization. McLeod (1994) argues that a rising number of language-minority students have given greater attention on the topic of language differences in the classroom. Hornberger (2003:3) identifies the need for those in public school systems to have an understanding of biliteracy because of the growing number of minority language children in their classes. Kenner (2000) demonstrates that failing to take into account the potential of individual bilingualism in the way that the school curriculum is structured at an institutional level is a significant deficiency in current educational policy in English dominant countries, such as the UK and Australia.

In Australia most minority language children are studying in schools where English is the only official language of instruction. These children have the potential of becoming both bilingual and biliterate, but most are not able to realise this potential and obtain the resulting benefits that accompany the achievement of additive bilingualism. In their classrooms, the medium of instruction is the children's L2, English, and the majority of classmates do not speak the children's L1. Drawing on the conceptual work of theorists such as Hornberger (2002) and Muhlhausler (1996), an important underlying philosophical tenet of the approach adopted in this research is the concept of language ecology and, specifically, the potential for educational policies and practices in school, home and community that preserve and develop language diversity, rather than suppressing it. This paper will address this issue, specifically considering the role mainstream teachers play in supporting children's biliteracy and bilingualism in a public primary school in which English is the only official medium of instruction. How does the teacher's level of knowledge about, interest in and approach to supporting bilingualism and biliteracy impact on the child's biliteracy development and bilingualism?

There is a growing body of evidence that teachers have the potential to foster multiliteracies in their classrooms. For example, based on their action research, Schwarzer, Haywood and Lorenzen (2003) outlined a range of teaching strategies that can enable students to develop multilingual literacies regardless

of whether the teacher her/himself has knowledge of the languages in question. Skilton-Sylvester (2003) described how teacher policy-making at the micro level of the classroom can subvert dominant macro level language ideologies and policies. Cahyono (2009) explores the teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesian classroom context emphasising the role of English as 'a means of communication between people from non-English speaking countries' (p.194). Yet studies such as that of Rueda and Garcia (1996) also highlight how teachers themselves, despite the presence of research that supports the value of an additive perspective (eg Cummins, 1989), may have perceptions and beliefs about bilingualism and biliteracy in relation to literacy instruction and assessment that mitigate against the incorporation of L1 in their classrooms.

AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL CONTEXT

The Australian social context is the context in which the children in this study were living. Australian society is multicultural with a significant proportion of the population (16%) speaking a language other than English at home with the most cultural and linguistic diversity evident in the main urban centres such as Melbourne, where this study was carried out, and Sydney, in each of which cities there were more than 25% of the population who spoke a LOTE at home (Clyne and Kipp, 1999). Despite this diversity English is the official national language and the main medium of instruction in virtually all public schools. State and federal policies encourage, to a greater or lesser extent, second language learning for all students from primary school age, but, with some exceptions, such as, in private bilingual schools, where the languages taught in most such programs are best described as tokenistic. Most involve limited hours of instruction per week (less than 1 hour in many cases) and are normally not the home language of the majority of students in any given school. The linguistic diversity of the migrant population and the lack of concentration of any one ethnic group within particular geographical areas mean that virtually all non-English speaking background students do not have access to home language study in their local school. There is an extensive network of out of hour language schools, which receive some degree of government support, but a small proportion of ethnic language minority background children attend these out of language school activities.

In the state of Victoria, The Victorian Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET) has demonstrated a strong commitment to giving opportunity for students to learn a language other than English (LOTE) in all primary schools, including one that might be their home language (DEET, 2000: 7). Although Department of Education recognises the early development of literacy as the foundation of all learning, and supports extensive resources to schools in Victoria to ensure that all children become literate in English, becoming biliterate to enable students to understand the benefits of languages in an increasing global society is also highly recommended, The government of Victoria even emphasises the teaching of LOTE starting from Prep to year 10 in all Primary and Secondary public schools (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2002).

School Context

The school in which this research took place is a public primary school located near a large university in suburban Melbourne in a lower middle class-working class area of high linguistic and cultural diversity. More than 70% of children in the school came from home backgrounds in which English is their second language, either because they were dependants of international students or because they were the children of permanently resident migrants from non-English speaking countries. Whilst many of the international student families are only living in Australia temporarily, others may aspire to applying for permanent residence at the conclusion of their studies, an opportunity that current Australian immigration policy supports. In the school there were children from more than 33 different languages and cultural backgrounds. The school motto "Growing, Caring, Achieving Together" reflects the school official ethos and this is further expressed in its official statement of its educational commitment to realising the promotion and development of: excellence in learning; a safe, care environment; positive partnerships within the school, self esteem; creativity; learner responsibility; respect and tolerance of individual differences; co-operation and courtesy.

The classroom environment is made colourful with the students' productions in literacy learning in the right, left, front and above of students learning centre. The classroom was also equipped with 5 networked computers and a mini library in the corner. Children also spent time working at their tables which were clustered in groups around the classroom. The space just close to

the classroom teacher's table was enough to accommodate all children sitting in a circle to have the activity of teacher's reading stories to the whole children in the classroom.

The other corner in the back of the classroom had also enough space to facilitate small group works. Most of the teachers in the observed classes divided children into some groups to do some work in literacy teaching and learning in the classroom particularly in the literacy block hour. One of the activities was doing a listening post where children work in a small group, usually consisting of 3-5 children, listening to the stories in the cassette already set up by their teacher in the back corner of the classroom. The classroom was also set up by the teachers to provide enough space for all children in the classroom to easily move around as the literacy activities changed in every 15 minutes to follow the learning schedule already written in the whiteboard such as reading, writing, and computer literacy activities.

Mainstream Classroom Teachers

Mainstream classroom teachers are teachers who are responsible for teaching the core areas of the primary school curriculum which include literacy/English, Science, Mathematics, Technology, and Study of Society and Environment. All but one (Chameli) mainstream classroom teachers in the school where the study was conducted are of from Anglo-Australian background although some have studied Italian or Spanish languages at some stages in their education. In this school the teachers were all fully trained primary teachers, but none of them had undertaken specialist training in TESOL, 'special' education or another area that might have given them specific knowledge and skills for teaching bilingual children. This article will address the following questions: (1) what differences are there in the way the mainstream classroom teachers perceive biliteracy and bilingualism and how do these translate into their classroom practices? ; and (2) to what extent do the approaches they adopt in relation to the children's bilingualism and emerging literacy impact on their biliteracy development and bilingualism?

METHOD

The data in the one-year (4 terms) ethnographic research were drawn from a set of in-depth qualitative interviews and classroom observations undertaken with eight classroom teachers ranging from grade prep/1 (5-6 year olds) to 5/6 (10-12 year olds) (refer to Table 1 for summary of these interviewees). All the teachers have students with Indonesian background in their classes, aged 5-11 years. Half of the students are dependants of parents who were studying at nearby universities and half are children of permanent residents in Australia in the past 2-3 years. All the children were in the process of becoming bilingual in the broader Australian social context described above.

Table 1: Summary of Interviewees (all names are pseudonyms) with English Speaking Background (ESB), and Non English Speaking Background (NESB) Teachers

Teacher's Name	Age	Gender	Prior teaching experiences (years)	Indonesian children				Teacher Background
				No.	Name	Grade Level	Age	
Lily	27	F	4	3	Nanda	Prep/1	5,2	ESB
					Fasya		5,1	
					Hendra		5,4	
Chameli	36	F	7	2	Nanda	½	6,1	NESB
					Fasya		6,0	
Amanda	28	F	5	3	Haris	¾	8,1	ESB
					Wendy		8,3	
					Waliul		9,5	
Hillary	47	F	12	1	Wendy	¾	9,2	ESB
Robinson	46	M	17	1	Haris	¾	9,0	ESB
Ann	31	F	1	1	Haris	¾	9,2	ESB
Rosemary	27	F	5	2	Lukman	5/6	10,4	ESB
					Hasyim		10,5	
Lawrence	24	M	2	1	Lukman	5/6	11,0	ESB

All eight teachers within the school who had students with Indonesian background in their classes were invited to participate in this study, and all of them agreed to participate. 7 teachers are English native speakers with Anglo Celtic background, while 1 is an English teacher with Hindi speaking background.

The eight classroom teachers were interviewed by Jafar at the beginning and the end of each term (16 interviews). In addition, he visited the school weekly to carry out classroom observations during the literacy block activities across Grades Prep/1 to 5/6 (80 classroom visits).

The interviews at the beginning and at the end of each school term per teacher and the weekly classroom observation for each teacher cover 3 main areas:

- Differences in the way mainstream classroom teachers perceive biliteracy and bilingualism
- Characteristics of the teachers' approach in their classroom practices
- Impacts of the approach on children's biliteracy development and bilingualism

Interview transcripts were coded in relation to the main areas of interest. From this a number of themes emerged that seemed to be influential in the way the teachers perceived biliteracy and bilingualism which was reflected through their classroom practices. In explicating these themes, in addition to the interview material, other material from classroom journal observation and some literacy documents from children were also collected. Classroom practices were analysed for the types of literacy activities employed, the use of L1 and L2 in relation to these activities, and the teacher's involvement in facilitating biliteracy development. In analysing the data, the approach adopted by each teacher was categorised drawing on Rueda and Garcia's (1996:314) and others (Richardson, et al., 1991; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; and Clark, 1988:5) distinctions in contrasting different approaches to literacy teaching with at one end of what might best be considered a continuum are those based on a constructivist approach where students are seen as active agents in the literacy acquisition process with the teacher's role being to facilitate opportunities for students to develop themselves as readers and writers with authentic meaningful engagement with print and modelling of proficient performance; and at the other end of this continuum are approaches based on a theoretical framework that assumes the importance of teacher directed and explicit instruction often with a

sequential approach and systematic instruction to develop phonic and phonemic awareness and decoding and encoding strategies.

The children's development was evaluated from the observational data in terms of both their level of classroom engagement and through consideration of material compiled into a literacy portfolio for each child, which included both samples of the quality and quantity of each child's literacy output and also the tasks and results of the teachers' regular literacy assessments of each child, which were undertaken at the end of each term as part of the process of monitoring each child's development and reporting this to parents. Table 2 summarises results of the analysis of the different teachers' approaches and the characteristics and their impact.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following table presents the outline of the differences in the way the mainstream teachers perceive biliteracy and how they translate into their classroom literacy activities, as well as the impact on the children's biliteracy development and bilingualism.

Table 2: Classification and Characteristics of the Teachers And Summary of Impacts on Children's Biliteracy Development and Bilingualism

Group	Teachers	Classification	Characteristics	Impacts on children
A	Robinson Chameli Lawrence	Strongly supportive of biliteracy and bilingualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constructivist approach in teaching literacy - Develop innovative literacy activities that create opportunities for L1 literacy in class. - Supportive of biliteracy development within class - View L1 as a facilitator of L2 learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lot of improvement in L1 and L2 literacy - Good progress in the new learning environment - Confident in productive skills in both languages - Positive outcome in biliteracy development/ bilingualism

Table Continued

B	Lily Rosemary Hillary	Transitionally supportive of biliteracy and bilingualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Varied approaches in teaching literacy from constructivist to more teacher-centred - Positive attitude to spoken L1 in the class - Supportive of L1, but not as much as in group A for L2 literacy. - More likely to view L1 as a potential barrier to L2 learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress in L1 ranges from similar to L2 to not as much as in L2 - Feel well connected to the class through the use of L1 and L2 - Active participation in classroom activities - Enjoy literacy learning
C	Amanda Ann	Strongly focused on English literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher-centred approach in teaching literacy - Allow use of L1 to assist in enhancing communication in early stages but not encouraged in analysing words. - Entirely focused on teaching and learning of English literacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spoken L1 maintained as a mode of communication in classroom. - Literacy development only in L2. - Continuous progress but slower in L2 literacy learning (compared with that under group A) - Passive participation in classroom activities

Classification and Characteristics of the Teachers' Perspectives on Biliteracy/ Bilingualism

The mainstream classroom teachers demonstrate different ways of supporting biliteracy/bilingualism in their classroom. Their approaches have been

classified into three broad types: (1) strongly supportive of biliteracy/bilingualism; (2) transitionally supportive of biliteracy and bilingualism; and (3) strongly focused on English literacy.

Strongly Supportive of Biliteracy/Bilingualism

Three classroom teachers, Robinson, Chameli and Lawrence, have been categorised as being strongly supportive of biliteracy and bilingualism. They all perceive biliteracy and bilingualism as being very important and valuable for the bilingual children in their classroom. They view one language as helping the other, for example, in explaining why she encourages speaking and writing in the children's native language in class, Chameli says "...they [students] should never ever be made ... to feel that they only have to read and write and speak in English. It is fantastic if they know another language because one language helps another one" (Interview with Chameli, 22/06/2004). These teachers also assume that people who are confident and competent in the home language will acquire a similar command of English and they view the home language as providing a basis for second language learning. Robinson explains "...if they [Indonesian students] come to us and say the words in Indonesian, that means they've got a grammar structure, so all we have to do is put English words on top of it" (Interview with Robinson, 30/03/2004), revealing on the one hand his lack of formal understanding of second language acquisition processes, but also his belief in the value of the child's L1 knowledge. Lawrence, on the other hand, lets his students develop their writing in their L1, but they have to explain it in English as well as to write it in English version later on (Observation, 20/6/2004).

Transitionally Supportive of Biliteracy and Bilingualism

Three teachers (Lily, Rosemary, and Hillary) have been categorised as transitionally supportive of biliteracy and bilingualism because they view L1 positively and encourage its use but focus on its value primarily transitionally to aid the process of the child in adapting to the English medium classroom. They have a positive attitude to having children from many different cultural backgrounds in their classes and support the limited use of L1 in the classroom primarily as a facilitator and bridge to second language learning as Hillary says "We use home language as a springboard onto English". At the same time,

however, they may be inconsistent in their approach to supporting biliteracy development and bilingualism in the classroom, viewing the home language as an impediment to second language learning, particularly learning about tenses in English. Two of the three, Rosemary and Hillary expressed this, for example, Rosemary said "...it is just a language barrier, everyone talks in his mother language and they come from different cultural backgrounds". They generally tend to promote the use of the home language in the classroom just for the new students who come to their class and do not understand English at all. Lily, for example, actively fosters literacy in L1 such as providing books in L1 displayed in her classroom mini library where students can borrow and read or take home reading as she says: "I have some Indonesian books in the display, and children are free to have a look, borrow and read both in silent reading and recess time or take home reading". Rosemary, on the other hand, says: "we provide opportunities for children to share their L1 in the buddy program where upper grade come to the lower grade reading books in their L1, discussing the contents of the books in their L1, but they have to write a report in English".

Strongly Focused on English Literacy

Two teachers, Amanda and Ann, have been classified as strongly focused on English literacy as they do not pay any attention at all to the students' home language in the classroom. The target of their literacy teaching and learning is only English. Whilst they tolerate children speaking their home languages to each other in the classroom, they ignore their use, pretending not to notice the language being spoken and not responding to it either negatively or positively. As Amanda says "They may be talking about someone or may be talking about me, I don't know, and I don't care". Amanda seems to have a neutral position in relation to using L1 in her classroom even though she does not care if her students use their L1 in her classroom, but she is really concerned with her students' target language, English, with the students' being more actively communicative and participative in the classroom literacy practices. Ann is even stricter in the English literacy learning in the classroom as she says: "I always ask my students whose English is not their first language to directly communicate their thoughts both in spoken and written communication in English".

Impacts on the Students' Biliteracy Development and Bilingualism

The approaches of the three groups of teachers in supporting biliteracy development and bilingualism appear to have impacted on the students' biliteracy development and bilingualism. The evidence of this can be seen in the individual cases of experiences of the children. Of particular interest in relation to this are the differences in the responses and literacy development of the same child when studying in the class of teachers who have different attitudes and approaches to biliteracy and use of L1 in the classroom, such as is the case of Nanda, Haris and Lukman. Thus, in addition to outlining in broad terms how each approach has appeared to impact on the children's responses and development, particular consideration will be given to how these different approaches have impacted on the development of these specific children.

Students with Teachers who are Strongly Supportive of Biliteracy and Bilingualism

Students of teachers in this group generally showed a lot of improvement in both L1 and L2 literacy and as they settled into the class and became familiar with the teacher's approach and expectations they became highly engaged and active in participating in class. Their L2 literacy development was steady and continuous in writing and reading and they moved from being quiet to talkative and confident in using both Indonesian and English in the classroom. For example, Nanda, when she was taught by Chameli, demonstrated a lot of progress in writing and reading as well as her level of engagement in the classroom. When she first entered Chameli's class, Nanda had a very passive style of learning similar to what is normally expected in Indonesian schools and pre-schools. She was shy, appeared nervous and mainly kept silent when the teacher came near her. Whilst she did interact a little with the other children in class, this was mainly in response to the teacher's request to work in a group with others. In contrast, by partway through the first term she had become more comfortable and talkative, and always raised her hand either to answer or ask a question to her teacher. She constantly smiled and talked to others in the class, happily describing books that she had read both in L1 and L2. Nanda became very effective in using new vocabulary and integrating things she had learnt during each morning's reading group time into the writing that she did later in the day. As the weeks went by the amount that she wrote in English steadily

increased in both its length and complexity. Her reading fluency in both languages increased rapidly, although in the first term she focussed on decoding the relationship between the letters and letter combinations and their corresponding sounds and spoken words. In her second term under Chameli's guidance she started to improve her understanding of the meanings in the written texts. This was reinforced at home as her parents were encouraged by Chameli to question her about what they were reading when they read to her and with her at home both in English and Indonesian. In the interview conducted at the end of her second term of teaching Nanda, Chameli says, "Nanda [grade 1] is doing very well in reading and writing. Her spelling is good, her reading is flying. She likes reading in the classroom, she reads in the hired room, she borrows books from library, she reads regularly and takes books home and whenever she has time, she is reading a book. She has produced a very beautiful story:

"Once upon the time, there is a little girl called Lucy, she has a cat call Lucy. Lucy is 80 years old and she went to visit to grandma after that she get home and her parrot is gone somewhere. Lucy called the police, Lucy found it, and Lucy said thank you very much. Lucy had a great time finding her parrot".

Prior to being taught by Chameli, Nanda had spent just over one term being taught by Lily (transitionally supportive). Lily made a big effort to assist Nanda in feeling comfortable in the classroom, even learning some words of Indonesian and linking Nanda up with an Indonesian speaking older 'buddy' to share reading in L1. However, it was only when Nanda was subsequently taught by Chameli that she started to actively participate and to markedly progress in both L1 and L2. This change was facilitated by Nanda's experiences at school where she had been exposed to the English environment with the teacher who still supported the use of L1 in the classroom, and she had already adjusted herself to her new environment as she followed through her silent period in acquiring her second language, English.

Students with Teachers who are Transitionally Supportive of Biliteracy/Bilingualism

Students of the teachers in this group demonstrated less progress in L1 literacy development compared with those taught by teachers in group A, but appeared to progress at a comparable rate to those in group A in their L2, Eng-

lish. For example, Lukman, who was taught by Rosemary in group B for two terms and Lawrence in group A for another two terms progressed differently under each teacher. When he was with Rosemary, Lukman was very happy to engage in literacy learning and became very talkative and confident. He made a lot of progress in his L2 literacy development and was autonomous in his approach, reading the instruction guide himself when he was not sure what to do. His journal writing developed from just a few words to full and gradually more complex sentences with more use of English syntax and morphology. He enjoyed writing and started to develop ideas to put into his writing. He was happy to talk in his L1, Indonesian, in the classroom, and was very sociable and relaxed in chatting with his friends in class, primarily in Indonesian. The encouragement of Rosemary for him to use spoken L1 in the classroom aided him in moving from being a little bit worried at the start of the year to being very confident. His L2 literacy development gathers pace as he grows in confidence. In the two terms following this when Lukman was taught by Lawrence, he demonstrated progress in L2 similar to what he was making under Rosemary, but there was a noticeable difference in his L1 progress. Under Lawrence he was encouraged not just to read and speak in L1, but also to write in L1 and to share this writing with other children in the class (irrespective of whether they knew his L1). For example, one weekend Lukman was cherry picking in country Victoria within a group of families from the Indonesian community, and he wrote about this when he came to school the following Monday as follows:

Saat hari sabtu kita pergi ke tempat yang banyak cerinya. Kita menuju ke tempat itu sekitar 3 jam. Begitu kita sampai, kita langsung mengambil bak untuk ceri aku dan Ramanda balik mengambil 2 bak masing masing. Kita mengambil yang banyak lalu kita gabungkan setelah itu kita makan bersama Saat hari sabtu kita pergi ke tempat yang banyak cerinya. Kita menuju ke tempat itu sekitar 3 jam. Begitu kita sampai, kita langsung mengambil bak untuk ceri aku dan Ramanda balik mengambil 2 bak masing masing.

On Saturday, we went to a cherry fruit picking place. It took 3 hours to get there. When we arrived, we directly took a tray for the Cherry. Ramanda and I took 2 trays each. We picked up cherries as many as possible and put them in one tray and ate together. Before the cherry ran out, we picked up the fruit once more and after that we lied down in the grass root while we were waiting for the others. At that time we were overslept, then others waked us up for going to a beach place. On the way to go to the beach area, we stopped in the rest area for taking a rest

Table Continued

<p>Kita mengambil yang banyak lalu kita gabungkan setelah itu kita makan bersama sama. Sebelum ceri kita habis, kita mengambilnya lagi. Sesudah itu kami berbaring di rumput sambil menunggu yang lain. Saat itu kami ketiduran, jadi kami dibangunkan untuk pergi ke pantai. Di perjalanan kami berhenti untuk istirahat dan ke toilet. Dan menunggu yang lain kita membeli fish and chips untuk cemilan. Sesudah itu kita pergi ke pantai. Saat di pantai kita mendapatkan ubur-ubur lalu kita lemparkan ke satu sama lain. Dan kami membuat Sandcastle yang besar sekali. Kita sudah selesai membuatnya tiba tiba kita di suruh pulang. Kita segera mandi dan siap siap pulang. Begitu sampai di rumah saya tertidur dan besoknya saya pergi ke sekolah untuk menceritakan semuanya (Lukman Portfolio, 2004)</p>	<p>and going to toilet. While waiting for others in this area, we bought fish and chip to eat. Then we continued to go to the beach. When we arrived at the beach, we found see- star and threw it to one another. After that, we made a big big sand castle. Soon after we finished building the `castle, we were asked to go home. So, we took a bath for getting ready to go home. After we arrived at home, I directly went to bed, and in the following morning, we went to school to tell all the stories (Translation).</p>
---	--

This piece of writing was impressive, for normally Indonesia children at age 11 are not expected to produce such an extended piece of writing that shows a well developed structure, a number of complex sentences and sophisticated vocabulary. His quality of writing in Indonesian was far higher than what would have been expected of children in Indonesia at this age in year 5/6. Interestingly, though, the features in the Indonesian (eg. ke tempat, ke pantai) show evidence of language contact with English syntax and semantics.

Students with Teachers who are Strongly Focused on English Literacy

Students of the teachers in this group tended to speak their home language as a mode of communication in the classroom. Their literacy development was only in English and whilst their L2 literacy learning progressed, the rate of progress was noticeably slower than that of students being taught by teachers adopting the other two teaching approaches. Haris, for example, who had been

taught by teachers in Group A and C, exhibited a substantial difference in his progress dependent on the teacher's approach. When he was with both teachers in Group C (Amanda for two terms and with Ann as a replacement teacher for a half term), his L2 literacy progress was slow. His participation in the classroom was quite passive and he did not produce many literacy products and the texts that he produced were quite unimaginative and boring. When Robinson taught him for just over a term, after Amanda left, the difference in his behaviour and progress was very noticeable. He tried very hard and listened and became confident and appeared to understand what he was being asked to do. The encouragement and opportunity to write and read in L1 stimulated him into producing a lot more literacy products and he started to be quite creative in what he produced: writing poetry, integrating pictures and text. When he started to feel confident, he put words together in new ways, and he structured his sentences better and also became a competent reader in L1 and L2, demonstrating a high level of both fluency and comprehension. Whilst part of this change in Haris may have been in response to having a teacher of the same gender as himself and his growing understanding of English, it appeared that the active encouragement of the use of L1 in literacy activities was also important in making Haris feel comfortable and valued within the classroom. As Robinson, Haris classroom teacher, says: "Haris is doing very well in the classroom. He understands what he is asked to do, English, so he is a confident student, tries very hard and listens very carefully. His progress can be seen in the result of the reading test on March and August or November. We also keep his work and compare with other students, so that each student has his own record especially in reading and writing".

CONCLUSION

The mainstream teachers in this school, teaching children from Indonesian background as well as those from many other language backgrounds, demonstrated some marked differences in both their attitudes to children's bilingualism and biliteracy and in their classroom teaching practices in teaching children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These differences did not seem to relate to the length of their teaching experience, or the era in which they received their teacher training, although it is interesting to note that both teachers in the group who were strongly focused on English literacy had 5

years or less teaching experience and there has been a move away from a 'whole language' and other constructivist approaches to ones that include more teacher directed activities and a stronger focus on explicit teaching of phonics and knowledge about language over the past decade in teacher training programs in Australia. In contrast to these strongly focus on English literacy teachers, Lawrence in group A and Lily in group B were also relatively newly trained and exhibited very positive attitudes to the use of L1 in their classrooms.

What is evident is that the more supportive the teachers for biliteracy development and bilingualism were, the more constructivists their teaching approach was and the more varied the activities they encouraged in their classrooms to create opportunities for literacy engagement and learning were. The activities included cross-age peer mentoring learning, involvement of parents and other L1 speakers in classroom especially valuable for L1 literacy given that the teachers were not in the position to do anything other than facilitate L1 use. To take Hornberger's concept, these teachers created 'ideological and implementational space' (2002:30) in their classrooms for biliteracy development and, by doing this, they were particularly effective in promoting their students' biliteracy development, and in engaging and integrating them into the class in a way that made them feel valued.

REFERENCES

- Borland, H. 2006. Intergenerational Language Transmission in an Established Australian Migrant Community: What makes the Difference? *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 180, pp. 23-41.
- Cahyono, B.Y. 2009. The Teaching of EFL Listening in the Indonesian Context: The State of the Art. *TEFLIN Journal*, 20(2): 194-211.
- Clyne, M. and Kipp, S. 2006. Australia's Community Languages. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 180, pp. 7-21.
- Cummins, J. 1986. Empowering Minority Students: A Framework for Intervention. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56: 18-36.

- Clark, C.M. 1988. Asking the Right Questions About Teacher Preparation: Contributions of Research on Teacher Thinking. *Educational Research*, 17: 5-12.
- De la Luz Reyes, M. 1992. Challenging Veritable Assumptions: Literacy Instruction for Linguistically Different Students. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62: 427-446.
- Hornberger, N.H., 2002 Multilingual Language Policies and the Continua of Biliteracy: An ecological Approach. *Language Policy* (1): 27-51.
- Hornberger, N.H. 2004. The Continua of Biliteracy and the Bilingual Educator: Educational Linguistics in Practice. *Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. 7 (2&3): 155-171.
- Kenner, C. 2000. Biliteracy in a Monolingual School System? English and Gujarati in South London. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 13 (1): 13-30.
- McLeod, B. 1994. *Language and Learning: Educating Linguistically Diverse Students*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Muhlhausler, P. 1996. *Linguistic Ecology: Language Change and Linguistic Imperialism in the Pacific Region*. London: Routledge
- Papastergiadis, N. 2000. *The Turbulence of Migration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Richardson, V., Anders, P., Tidwell, D., & Lloyd, C. 1991. The relationship between Teachers' Beliefs and Practices in Reading Comprehension Instruction. *American Educational Research Journal*, 28: 559-586.
- Rueda, R. & Garcia. E. 1996. Teachers' Perspectives on Literacy Assessment and Instruction with Language-Minority Students: A Comparative Study. *The Elementary School Journal*, 96 (3): 311-332.
- Schwarzer, Haywood and Lorenzen 2003. Fostering Multiliteracy in a Linguistically Diverse Classroom. *Language Arts*, 80 (6): 453-460.
- Skilton-Sylvester, E. 2003. Legal Discourse and Decisions, Teacher Policy-Making and the Multilingual Classroom: Constraining and Supporting Khmer/English biliteracy in the United States. In Creese, Angela (Ed). *Multilingual Classroom Ecologies: Inter-relationships, Interactions and Ideologies*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

- Suares-Orozco, M.M. 2002. Globalization, Immigration, and Education: The Research Agenda, *Harvard Educational Review*, 71 (3): 345-365.
- Tabachnick, G., & Zeichner, K. 1984. The Impact of Student Teaching on the Development of Teacher Perspectives. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 35: 28-42.
- Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2002. Language Other than English, *A Handbook for Primary Teachers*. Melbourne: Department of Education.