Bilingual teachers in the United States: The preparation and the recruitment

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to discuss the literature concerning the bilingual education in the United States especially in Ohio State with a focus on the preparation and the recruitment of qualified bilingual teacher candidates. The issues discussed in this paper include brief information of the present situation of bilingual teachers in Indonesia, bilingual teacher preparation (its strategies, programs, and services) in Ohio, USA and recruitment of bilingual teacher candidates in Ohio. It is expected that this discussion can contribute some ideas to any institutions of higher education in Indonesia which are currently trying to run bilingual teacher preparation programs. Also, the strategies, programs and services reviewed could serve as a template to evaluate the breath and the depth of the existing programs to ensure if they have designed and implemented the programs accordingly in order to produce qualified teachers in the areas of bilingual education.

Key words: bilingual teachers, RSBI, SBI, ISS, preparation, recruitment

INTRODUCTION

Since the enactment of Law Number 20, Year 2003 (article 50, paragraph 3) of the National Education System, which reads: “The Central Government and/or the Local Government hold at least one unit of education at all levels to be developed into an international educational unit”, a number of public schools at all levels (elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools including vocational schools) have filed a petition to be set as international standard schools. RSBI (Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional) is a status that must be passed by each school before the school can be defined formally as Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional (SBI) or an International Standard School (ISS). These schools must fulfill a number of requirements to be set as ISS. One of the requirements that must be fulfilled is that the teaching-learning process of Mathematics and Natural Sciences shall be conducted bilingually, i.e. using both Indonesian and English as the media of instruction. This means that the teachers assigned to teach Mathematics and Science must be able to speak both Indonesian and English because they must teach the above two courses bilingually.

One of the problems that immediately emerges directly is predictable, i.e. the schools are unprepared to provide teachers who can teach Mathematics and Science bilingually (using both Indonesian and English) because the teachers were not prepared to teach bilingually when they did their undergraduate program in the teacher training college. According to Astika, Wahyana, and

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Andreyana (2008) and Astika and Wahyana (2010), even most teachers of Mathematics and Science at the high school levels still experience many difficulties in delivering the teaching materials bilingually, especially when they have to teach the content in English. The above conditions have been exacerbated by the enactment of the policy at the school level that was originally started at the class level. The implementation of bilingual instruction at the school level requires that all core subjects in all grades (4 - 12 and their parallel grades) are taught bilingually (in Indonesian and English), while the implementation of bilingual classes at the class level requires that only certain classes (the students who are accepted in this class are usually those who have been carefully selected) should be taught bilingually.

This paper attempts to discuss the literature concerning the bilingual education in the United States especially in Ohio State with a focus on the preparation and the recruitment of qualified bilingual teacher candidates. Hopefully, the discussion can contribute some ideas to teacher training institutions which currently run bilingual teacher education on how to prepare and recruit bilingual teacher candidates in Indonesia.

### BILINGUAL TEACHER PREPARATION

Bilingual teacher preparation in the United States was neither required nor regulated until the 1970s, with the creation and reauthorizations of the federal Title VII Bilingual Education Program of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). As years passed and the need for bilingual education grew, the federal government began to offer competitive grants for states and institutions of higher education wishing to develop quality programs that effectively prepare teachers to work with English language learners. With the provision of federal funding, the federal government as well as the individual states began to hold these programs accountable for the preparation of “qualified” bilingual teachers. Currently, many states require bilingual teaching certificates. A survey of state education agencies imparted in 1999 declared that 41 states and the District of Columbia offered either bilingual/dual language teacher certifications or endorsements (Menken & Antunez, 2001).

Bilingual teacher preparation has also been affected by recent educational reform initiatives. According to Menken and Antunez (2001:3), “teacher preparation has become a target for national reform efforts as a means to ensure the ability of all teachers”. A contemporary concern is how to prepare better and more qualified bilingual teachers. Ovando et al. (2003) affirm that one of the major problems with the development of state licensing is the issue of outdated standards for bilingual teachers; many of these standards were developed in the 1970s or early 1980s, when ESL teachers were only required to teach English. But nowadays, ESL teachers are required to teach across the curriculum because English language learners must receive access to the full academic curriculum. Therefore, teachers of language minority students not only must possess knowledge of the subject matter and pedagogy but they must also have knowledge of (1) first and second language acquisition, (2) first and second language literacy, content, and assessments, and (3) students’ cultural backgrounds. It is up to each state to ensure that teacher preparation programs are producing teachers capable of teaching English language learners.

In today’s educational arena, state licensure is meant to ensure teacher quality. But the problem is that tests alone cannot prove how much subject knowledge is needed to teach all students to high standards, nor can they measure teaching skills (Education Trust, 1999). Therefore,
National education associations have created guidelines and standards to be followed by teacher preparation programs in order to train teachers to effectively educate language minority students. These standards are specifically designed to address the needs of English language learners and are based on standards created by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) of the U.S. Department of Education for general education programs (Menken & Antunez, 2001). More and more, these standards are being used by states and institutions of higher education to make certain that new teachers are aware of the needs of English language learners and how to better serve them.

For example, in 1992 the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE) created a set of six National Standards for the Preparation of Bilingual/Multicultural Teachers. These standards focus on issues concerning teacher preparation programs which include: (1) program administration, (2) recruitment, retention, and advisement of program candidates, (3) bilingual/multicultural program curricula, (4) language proficiency in both English and non-English languages, (5) field experiences in bilingual/multicultural settings, and (6) life-long commitment to professional development (NABE, 1992). The following table illustrates these six standards, including some selected indicators, which were designed and approved by the National Association of Bilingual Educators during their 1989 annual conference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARDS</th>
<th>SELECTED INDICATORS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Institutional Resources, Coordination, and</td>
<td>1. Adequate resources to insure that the bilingual/multicultural teacher preparation</td>
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<td>Commitment</td>
<td>program is equivalent to other teacher preparation programs</td>
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<td>2. Qualified faculty teach all courses and supervise all field experiences in each</td>
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<td>program of professional preparation</td>
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<td>3. An assessment system that regularly evaluates the effectiveness of the program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and its faculty and staff</td>
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<td>2. Recruitment, Advisement, and Retention of</td>
<td>1. The institution uses multiple procedures to determine applicant's personal</td>
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<td>Potential Teachers</td>
<td>qualities and pre-professional qualifications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. The institution provides opportunities for potential teachers to improve and</td>
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<td>further develop both their English and non-English language proficiency and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>cultural competencies</td>
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<td>3. The program reviews each candidate's competencies and informs the candidate of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>his/her strengths and weaknesses</td>
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<td>3. Bilingual/Multicultural Course-work and</td>
<td>1. History and foundations of education with emphasis on bilingual/multicultural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>education</td>
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<td>2. Curriculum development and information on how to revise and adapt curriculum for</td>
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<td>diverse populations</td>
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<td>3. Classroom management, methods, and techniques specifically for bilingual</td>
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<td></td>
<td>students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Assessment strategies</td>
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<td>5. Theories and application of second language</td>
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</table>
| 4. Language Proficiency in English and Non-English Languages and Abilities to Teach Those Languages | 1. Courses in second language acquisition theory and second language pedagogy  
2. Classroom experience in bilingual teaching  
3. Courses in teaching literacy and the content area in the native language |
|---|---|
| 5. Field Work and Practicum Experience in Bilingual/ Multicultural Classrooms | 1. The field experience occurs in multiple settings that provide an opportunity for interaction and work with children from a variety of ages, and developmental levels and who reflect social, cultural, and linguistic diversity  
2. Classroom teachers and university supervisors who supervise candidate’s field experience are bilingual/multicultural teachers and have academic preparation and successful experience in teaching children from diverse backgrounds |
| 6. Life-Long Commitment to Professional Development | 1. Opportunities for teachers to pursue graduate or advanced degrees after initial certification  
2. Opportunities to be involved in research projects in bilingual/multicultural education  
3. Opportunities to publish their ideas in educational journals and opportunities to participate and present at professional conferences. |

In Ohio, the State Board for Education Certification (SBEC) has also created standards for beginning educators in order to describe what all newly certified beginning teachers should know and be able to do in Ohio public schools. In an effort by the state of Ohio to align classroom instruction with teacher preparation and certification these educator standards are based on and linked to the Ohio Essential Knowledge and Skills (OEKS), the statewide curriculum for Ohio public schools. The intent is for all beginning teachers to know the material that students need to graduate and for the public schools to be held accountable for teaching practices. Below are the SBEC standards for bilingual education teachers.

**Bilingual Education Standards (Ohio State Board for Educator Certification, 2002):**

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<th>STANDARDS</th>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>The bilingual education teacher has communicative competence and academic language proficiency in the first language (L1) and in the second language (L2).</td>
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<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>The bilingual education teacher has knowledge of the foundations of bilingual education and the concepts of bilingualism and biculturalism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>The bilingual education teacher knows the process of first- and second-language acquisition and development.</td>
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The bilingual education teacher has a comprehensive knowledge of the development and assessment of literacy in the primary language.

The bilingual education teacher has a comprehensive knowledge of the development and assessment of biliteracy.

The bilingual education teacher has a comprehensive knowledge of content-area instruction in L1 and L2.

It is obvious that preparing bilingual teachers requires additional training beyond that expected of mainstream teachers. For this reason, the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) of the George Washington University, in partnership with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) conducted research to investigate current practices in the preparation of teachers for English language learners in institutions of higher education and in state-level requirements for teaching licensure (Menken & Antunez, 2001).

For this study, NCBE developed a matrix, which delineates three critical areas of knowledge that must be included in the preparation of bilingual teacher education. This matrix allows analysis and comparison of state certification requirements to requirements established by particular institutions of higher education. The critical areas defined by the matrix are (a) knowledge of pedagogy, (b) knowledge of linguistic, and (c) knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity (Menken & Antunez, 2001). Below is the reasoning behind each of these three knowledge areas:

A. Knowledge of Pedagogy

Teachers of English language learners need to become skilled in a variety of instructional methods for teaching literacy and content. In addition, bilingual teachers teach the students’ native language and English, and in many cases teach the content area subject matter through both languages. For this reason, “it is imperative that teacher preparation programs expose teachers to all of these different methodologies, and to the most effective methods for promoting student achievement in English literacy, native language literacy, and content area knowledge” (Menken & Antunez, 2001, p. 10). In addition, bilingual teachers need to understand the nature and implications of assessment, particularly assessment of language literacy, English literacy, and content area knowledge. Moreover, it is important that pre-service teachers experience teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students.

B. Knowledge of Linguistics

Teachers of English language learners need to understand the theories of first and second language acquisition and how they influence each other. Also, Menken and Antunez (2001) state that, “It is important for future teachers to fully understand the components of the structure of the English language, the structure of the students’ native language(s), and the similarities and differences between the two.” Nonetheless, they need to be familiar with the stages and characteristics of language acquisition and how to help students move along in the process. For this reason, “it is important for teachers of ELLs to have exposure to the fundamentals of linguistics,
especially related to the education of ELLs."

C. Knowledge of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Teachers need to be aware of and understand the cultures of their students; since "research shows that student achievement is higher when teachers, schools and the curriculum are inclusive of students' native languages and cultures, and culturally responsive to students" (Menken & Antunez, p. 12).

When analyzing the requirements for bilingual teaching certification, NCBE found that there were huge discrepancies between states. States either require courses or mandate areas in which bilingual education teachers must be competent or proficient. In fact, many states require a combination, but, primarily insist on courses (e.g., bilingual methods) while allowing competencies to be demonstrated through exams (Menken & Antunez, 2001).

In the case of Ohio, it was found that under the area of knowledge of pedagogy the state requires courses covering: native language literacy, ESL, content in L1, in addition to requiring a practicum in a bilingual setting. In reference to knowledge of linguistics, Ohio law requires knowledge of psycholinguistics and first language acquisition theories. Finally, for the knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity, Ohio teachers are only required to have some knowledge of cultural anthropology or the study of specific ethnic or linguistic groups (Menken & Antunez, 2001).

From this study as well as from the current literature we can deduce that there is no magic formula for the preparation of bilingual teachers (Gandara & Maxwell-Jolly, 2000; Menken & Holmes, 2000; Nieto 2000). Moreover, Milk, Mercado & Sapiens (1992), upon reviewing the literature on bilingual teacher preparation programs, suggested six recommendations for preparing bilingual teachers. These include:

1. Prepare teachers who can operate at the whole-school level and avoid efforts to prepare teachers to work within their isolated classrooms.
2. Prepare teachers to deliver instruction that promotes higher-order cognitive and social skills that take sociocultural and linguistic knowledge into account.
3. Prepare teachers by providing them the opportunity to experience directly through their training the extent to which successful academic learning depends on language experiences and interactive communicative processes.
4. Prepare teachers by providing them with multiple opportunities to interact with English language learners and their families.
5. Prepare teachers with the required knowledge and skills necessary to address the needs of language minority students. In addition, institute a second language requirement for all prospective teachers in order to create a stronger awareness of the needs and experiences of second language learners.

It is evident that the past thirty years have seen notable progress on the preparation of bilingual teachers. Standards have been created, and programs for bilingual teachers. States, school districts, and institutions of higher education are now being held accountable for preparing "qualified" teachers to work with English language learners.
RECRUITMENT OF BILINGUAL TEACHER CANDIDATES

There have been many recruitment strategies on the part of teacher preparation programs to enroll bilingual teacher candidates.

1. Early recruitment
   Some states provide opportunities to high school and middle school students to tutor and work in classrooms as well as to help these students to complete high school and to attend college, in some cases even providing some summer college preparatory courses.

2. Scholarships and loan-forgiveness programs
   Many states provide some kind of scholarship or forgivable loan to candidates agreeing to teach for a certain period of time in areas where there is a teacher shortage.

3. Making efforts to recruit teachers' aides, minorities, students from community college, or personnel from the military and business sector.

4. Social support systems, such as improving test-taking skills and providing academic counseling and tutoring.

5. Collaboration between local school districts and teacher preparation programs.

   In fact, many of these efforts have been classified into five categories (Berry et al., 1999): (1) pre-college recruitment programs, (2) programs used to increase the recruitment of college students, (3) pathways between community colleges and universities, (4) programs to recruit paraprofessionals and teacher aids, (5) programs that attract mid-career teacher candidates.

Moreover, Diaz-Rico and Smith (1994) believe that there are four philosophical elements that unify university and school district efforts in the recruitment and retention of bilingual teachers. Firstly, they affirm that there should be a personal connection between school and university, as this lowers anxiety for potential bilingual teacher candidates. Secondly, school districts and teacher preparation programs should be in alignment to bring together theory and practice. Thirdly, school districts and teacher preparation programs should take an active role in making teachers and teacher candidates feel valued by directly responding to specific concerns such as placement preferences and classroom problems. Finally, it is imperative that both sectors fully support bilingual teachers and bilingual teacher candidates.

Specifically in Ohio, the Ohio Education Agency (1999) suggested some strategies to increase new teacher recruitment:

1. Develop an Ohio Education Scholarship for outstanding high school students and individuals changing careers who enroll in teacher certification programs.

2. Put into effect a loan forgiveness program for those who prepare for and teach in shortage areas.

3. Fund the Ohio Future Teachers Loan Fund and publicize the program.

4. Provide financial incentives to institutions that certify teachers in shortage areas.

5. Ohio should create a compensation plan for those institutions offering field-based activities to pre-service teachers.

6. Provide discretionary funding to encourage higher education institutions and school districts to collaborate on activities to address critical teacher shortages.

7. Employ staff whose responsibility is to enlist the media to publicize the teacher shortage problem as well as develop opportunities to enter the profession.
8. Develop, implement and fund teacher induction programs in Ohio public schools to assist new teachers in their first years.

9. Provide financial support to teachers already in Ohio classrooms who are willing to work toward new certification in a shortage field.

The Sid W. Richardson Foundation in its report *Excellent teachers for all Ohio schools: Proposals for engaging educational stakeholders in concerted action* (2001), has also proposed recommendations for the preparation of educators in all teaching fields. Specifically for university/college Deans and faculty, they suggest:

1. Actively promote university-wide-faculty participation in the preparation of teachers by recruiting outstanding faculty and rewarding them for their work in this critical function.

2. Expand and strengthen the network of professional development schools and partnership schools working with the university to ensure exemplary and supportive sites for the preparation and development of teachers.

3. Actively recruit bright, capable, service-oriented students to pursue teaching as a career.

4. Ensure that the educator-preparation degree programs include the information contained in Ohio Essential Knowledge and Skills (OEKS) and Examination for the Certification of Educators in Ohio (ExCEO) standards.

5. Develop university-wide mentoring structures that support undergraduate teacher candidates as they advance through the teacher-preparation program, focusing on engaging arts/sciences faculty in advisory work.

All these strategies, in addition to the most commonly utilized programs by institutions of higher education such as financial aid packages, faculty and peer mentoring, academic and financial aid advising, and leadership opportunities have the potential to assist in the preparation and recruitment of teacher candidates in the high need of bilingual education, thus increasing the number of bilingual certified teachers.

**CONCLUSIONS**

In this paper I have reviewed several possible strategies, programs and services that are designed and implemented in the recruitment of bilingual teacher candidates. Hopefully, the strategies, programs, and services that have been discussed could serve as a guide by which teacher preparation programs could evaluate the importance and intensity of their recruitment programs and could be used to decide if the programs are adequate to meet the needs of the bilingual teacher candidates.

For Indonesia (the Ministry of National Education and Culture), especially the universities which are currently running bilingual teacher preparation programs, it is expected that the strategies, programs and services reviewed above could serve as a template to evaluate the breadth and the depth of their existing programs to ensure if they have designed and implemented the programs accordingly to produce qualified teachers in the areas of bilingual education. It is also expected that any institutions interested in running bilingual teacher preparation programs for all school levels could benefit from this discussion.
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Education Agency.  