

Zh. Uiego

Central national University, Beijing, China  
(E-mail: beijingzgw@126.com)

## The theoretical framework for bilingual social issues studies

The changing geographical, demographic, economic, political, cultural and other factors affect the process of bilingualism in their own way and collectively influence the history, current situation and future of a certain bilingual phenomenon. When different language groups coexist, geographical factors \ shape people's activity area and language usage and sharing and the distribution patterns of ethnicities and language groups affect the distribution patterns of bilingualism. The economic activities among different ethnic groups promote the development of bilingualism and the languages of countries with higher the level of economic development will be more likely to spread. The state apparatus can affect the language usage and cultural development in a country through various education program and cultural events. The culture and religions have influence on improving people's cohesiveness and formation of national consciousness, religious consciousness and language consciousness, which then exerts important effect on the types and development of bilingualism.

*Keywords:* bilingualism, social issues, theoretical framework, economic factors, national identity.

Bilingualism is a real phenomenon that attracts many scholars to study and also a very complex problem, which is difficult to have a theoretical system.

In 1997, Mr. Qingxia Dai and Mr. Junfang He, wrote an article in the sixth edition of Ethnic Studies that brought forward the subject name and concept of «bilingualism». Then the concept of «bilingualism» was gradually accepted with the formation of some academic groups named after «bilingualism» in China and usage of term «bilingualism» in papers by various scholars. However, the development of «bilingualism» theory still lacks a comprehensive and systematic theoretical framework.

The writer took the establishment of theoretical framework for Bilingualism as his goal in 2005, while he was writing his doctoral thesis. In the following years, he further improved and refined the idea of theoretical framework for Bilingualism and published the monograph «Outline of Bilingualism» in 2014.

In that framework, he defined Bilingualism studies as a sub-discipline of Applied Linguistics., which identifies, investigates, and offers solutions to bilingual-related problems in real life. The three pillars of Bilingualism studies will be bilingual learning, bilingual teaching and bilingual problems in society. Some of the academic fields related to Bilingualism studies are bilingual learning, education for bilingual students, the development of bilingualism problems in current society.

### 1. The Basic Principle of Bilingual Social Study.

In terms of social problem studies, Marx had formulated the method of historical materialism. In Marx's historical materialism theory, the material world determines the spiritual world, productivity determines the production relations, economic base determines the superstructure and the later in return influence the former. Although bilingualism phenomenon and problems are complex, in substance these phenomenon are determined by numerous factors in the human society and Bilingualism development will in return affect the society.

### 2. The Main Idea of Bilingual Social Study.

#### a) Geographical Environment and Language.

Geographical boundaries, such as mountains, rivers, oceans and deserts, can divide human activity areas and constrain the usage and sharing of language. For example, the eight major dialects are mostly classified by geographical region. In South Region of Xinjiang and Tibet, people's Chinese speaking and writing level is generally low, which is determined by geographical characteristics. Nation borders are artificial boundaries that limit people's activity areas, which affect the Bilingual formation in a similar way as geographical boundaries.

#### b) Demographic and Language Life.

Without the contact of different ethnic groups, there won't be the needs for second language learning and without frequent, sustained and large-scale contact in different linguistic groups, there won't be sustained, large-scale and high-level second language learning phenomenon. In the nationality history and linguistic history, the bilingualism in society often forms when there is mixing of different linguistic groups. In

Xinjiang, the bilingual level of the multi-nationality inhabited areas is obviously higher than that of the single-nationality inhabited areas.

c) Economic and Language life.

Economic activities are often the most direct, the most enduring and the strongest driving power for different nationalities to contact each other. The exchange of goods and the synergetic development of economies are driving the development of the bilingual phenomenon. In all multi-ethnic and multi-lingual countries, the language of the nationalities with higher economical power will spread more easily within the country. During the European industrialization era in the 18th and 19th centuries, English, French, Russian, German and Spanish were all influential languages in the world. However, with the rapid colonial expansion of Britain, English stood out from other western countries. After the World War II, the United States became the most powerful country of the world and English-speaking countries, Britain, the United States and other countries, continued to exert great influence on world politics and economy, which eventually leads to the fact that English became the most acknowledged international language [1; 123].

d) Politics and Language Life.

The economic base determines the superstructure and the superstructure is the concentrated reflection of the economic foundation. Superstructure is divided into political superstructure and consciousness superstructure and the core of political superstructure is state apparatus that plans and guides the language development in a country, which then affects the formation of bilingual types and the development of bilingual.

*The influence of the state on its language life*

The main vehicles of impacting on the development of bilingualism are language legislation, language planning and the culture and education management. The government influences thousands of language learners and language teachers through the management of culture and education. The formation of common languages in many countries was impacted by the states. Australia is a nation of immigrants, which strengthened English to establish a unified country with British immigrants as the main body. When this goal was achieved, Australia began to develop a second language on the basis that English as the only official language will not be threatened to promote economic and it is beneficial for the independent continent to have more cultural exchanges with Asian, African and Latin American countries to achieve long-term and stable prosperity [2; 225]. Although the United States has not legally instituted English as the official language, it does not hamper the formation of the powerful language policy of «English-only». Because of the strong economic and technological strength of the United States, English occupies the only position in every aspect of social life. Despite all this, every big immigrant inflow to US causes social unrest in the United States periodically, while people think the status of English are threatened and propose to restrict the use of other languages and define English as the official language of the country in the law [3; 335].

*Political factors influence the status of the native language through the comprehensive strength of the country*

In the relationship between politics and linguistic life, political factors affect economic development, then affect the improvement of the country's comprehensive strength and ultimately influenced the status of the country's language. Although many countries use all kinds of administrative means to influence the language development and make efforts on improving their native language status, the effectiveness of these effort depends on the actual level of the comprehensive national strength, which ultimately depends on the political and economic development of the country. Since the Chinese reform and opening-up, the economic development and the improvement of comprehensive national strength are the solid foundation for the gradual improvement of international and domestic status of Chinese as a language.

*Different political forces have different proposition on language life*

In the political conflicts, every political force always puts forward and devotes itself to carrying out its own language development policies while bringing up its political and economic plans. Because of the nationality and external symbolism of a language, conflicts on language policies often become the precursor of economic and political conflicts. This phenomenon has been fully demonstrated in the process of East Pakistan's independence [3; 99]. Therefore, we should see the political and economic problems behind the language problems. In social management, we should not only take political and economic considerations, but also study and consider the language issues.

*Languages and politics cannot be equated simply*

The first attribute of language is the most important tool of human communication. Though language has a second attribute, cultural attribute, the second attribute is still based on the first attribute of a language. It is segmented to only pay attention to the tools property of language, but not to the cultural attributes of language when we are identifying and dealing with language-related problems. However, if we put the cultural attributes of language in the first place that surpasses the tools property of language, we will make a fundamental mistakes of putting the cart before the horse. A wise government will not simply equate language with politics, but strive to establish a language policy that is conducive to social harmony and progress.

#### 5. Culture (Religion) and Language Life

There are many kinds of cultural concepts. In this paper, I only selected religions, which play an important role in guiding the psychological world, as the example to study the relationship between culture and bilingualism. The basic ideas are as below :

Religion and language are inseparable. Sacred scripture, religious rites, religious spread and religious life cannot be divided from language and letters of a culture. Religion has a great influence on language development.

The process of religion in a culture spread to other countries is often also the process of language of that culture spreading to other countries. For example, with the spread of Islam in the world, it has become a multi-cultural worldwide religion across the three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa and at the same time Arabic has become a worldwide language.

Different religions have different attitudes towards language usage, which affects bilingualism phenomenon in different ways. Christian doctrine encourages missionaries to evangelize in the languages of all nations. Therefore, the Christian Bible translation progress is particularly prominent.

Religion strengthens the cohesiveness of the religious people and their national, religious and linguistic awareness, which has a great influence on the types and development of bilingualism. Jews have been dispersed around the world for more than a thousand years, but they still retain their own language and a major reason is the influence of Judaism which tells its followers that Jews are the selected by God, and the Pentateuch are the revelations God has given to Jews in Hebrew. Therefore, Jews learn and retain their language in awe of God.

#### 6. The significance of Proposing a Theoretical Framework for Bilingual Social Studies.

##### a) The Theoretical Significance.

The author tries to construct the general outline and basic process of the bilingualism development in discussion above. Geographical, population, economic, political and religious factors affect the formation of bilingualism phenomenon in the society initially. The first step of bilingualism is language learning, which brings the need of bilingual language teaching and the scaled bilingual education programs further promotes the development of bilingualism in society. Then the dynamic geographical, demographic, economic, political and cultural factors continuously influence process of bilingualism in the society. They all exert influence on the process of bilingualism through their own ways and ultimately form a joint force to determine the history, current situation and future of a certain bilingual phenomenon. From now, the three processes, bilingual learning, bilingual teaching and bilingual social problems , are integrated and interacted, which jointly decides the emergence and development of bilingualism.

##### b) The Practical Significance.

There is a phenomenon in the study of Chinese ethnic and linguistic issues, which is people are keen to follow a certain trend. For example, when the Soviet Union was founded, it chose the form of federalism according to its own national conditions. At that time, some people thought that China should also practice federalism and attributed all ethnic and linguistic problems in China to the absence of federalism. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the world pattern changed from polar antagonism to superpower and the United States became the world's leading power. At that time, some people began to think that the national policy of the United States was successful which only emphasized the national consciousness, but not on the national consciousness and created a strong national consciousness a of the nation. Their argument is China should learn from the United States, which totally ignores the huge differences in history and reality between China and the United States.

Some people cannot see the alleged «universal value» of «democracy and freedom» comprehensively and practically, who ignores the special factors of China's history and reality, they simply apply it on identi-

ifying and solving Chinese national and linguistic problems and totally deny all efforts made in solving national problems since the New China founded.

Actually, Marxist historical materialism is still a powerful tool for us to analyze society. The criterion to test the correctness of a policy is «three benefits» that are: It benefits the improvement of social productivity, it benefits the enhancement of national comprehensive strength and it benefits the improvement of people's material and cultural life. Every policy that deviates from this goal will not be effective, no matter how ideal it sound. The constructive goal of language development plan should be improve social harmony and development.

## References

- 1 Burke, P. (2007). The cultural history of language: languages and communities in early modern Europe. Peking University Press (Xiaoxiang Li, Lu Li and Yu Yang, Transe).
- 2 Country, nationality and language (study on language policy by country). Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in the Chinese Language Press (2003).
- 3 The Foreign Language Policy and Language Planning Process / Institute of Nationalities. Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in the Chinese Language Press (1999).

Ж. Уейго

### Қостілділікті әлеуметтік мәселе ретінде зерттеудің теориялық негіздері

Өзгеретін географиялық, демографиялық, экономикалық, саяси, мәдени және басқа да факторлар қостілділік үрдісіне өз әсерін тигізеді және белгілі бір екі құбылыстың тарихына, қазіргі жағдайына және келешегіне әсер етеді. Түрлі тілдік топтар өмір сүрсе, географиялық факторлар / адамдардың қызмет ету аймағын қалыптастыру және тілдерді ортақ пайдалану, сондай-ақ этникалық топтар мен тілдік топтардың үлестірілу үлгілері екі тілде таратудың үлгілеріне әсер етеді. Өртүрлі этникалық топтардың экономикалық қызметі қостілділікті дамытуға ықпал етеді және экономикалық даму деңгейі жоғары елдердің тілдері кеңінен тарайды. Мемлекеттік аппарат әртүрлі білім беру бағдарламалары мен мәдени шаралар арқылы елдегі тілді қолдану мен мәдени дамуына әсер етуі мүмкін. Мәдениет пен діндер халықтың бірлігін нығайтуға және ұлттық сананың, діни сана мен тілдік сана-сезімін қалыптастыруға және де қостілділіктің түрлері мен дамуына ықпалы маңызды.

*Кілт сөздер:* билингвизм, әлеуметтік мәселелер, экономикалық факторлар, ұлттық болмыс.

Ж. Уейго

### Теоретические основы изучения двуязычия как социальной проблемы

Изменяющиеся географические, демографические, экономические, политические и культурные условия влияют на процесс двуязычия, а также на историю, текущую ситуацию и будущее определенного двуязычного явления. Автором статьи изучены особенности влияния разных факторов на языковое функционирование, обнаружена взаимосвязь между распределением этнических групп, географическими факторами и распространением двуязычия. В результате систематизации ряда научных фактов и гипотез автор приходит к выводу о том, что экономическая активность различных этнических групп способствует развитию двуязычия, наиболее распространенными будут языки стран с более высоким уровнем экономического развития. Подчеркнута роль государственного аппарата во внедрении двуязычной культуры посредством различных образовательных программ и культурных мероприятий. Помимо экономических факторов, на развитие двуязычия оказывают серьезное влияние факты, формирующие национальное самосознание, в том числе и религиозное сознание.

*Ключевые слова:* билингвизм, социальные проблемы, экономические факторы, национальное самосознание.