$A CLO$E LOOK AT BILINGUALI$M RE$EARCH IN A$IA

Evynurul Laily Zen
Universitas Negeri Malang[i]
National University of Singapore[ii]
evynurul.laily.fs@um.ac.id

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Abstract

Asia is a 'homeland' for bilingualism research in regards to its diversity. It is considered as a vivid research site where there is significant growth of academic areas of exploration. Yet, there are very few scientific attempts to map bilingualism research in an Asian context so far. Thus, I bring the idea of mapping previous works through this literature study by specifically scrutinizing (a) bilingualism research in Southeast Asia, (b) bilingualism research in other parts of Asia, and (c) lessons to learn as a stepping stone to define the future of Indonesian bilingualism. The general data mapping I have explored includes Southeast Asian countries (Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam) and other parts of Asia (China, India, Israel, and Kazakhstan. The findings from the 33 previous works can be considered as empirical evidence that I will use to portray the research trends in Asia's bilingualism. The trends show that 19 (55%) works have approached bilingual data from sociolinguistics perspective, whereas the other 14 (45%) have framed their analysis under psycholinguistic approach. Based on the methodological concerns from these works, I propose two major areas of exploration: Family Language Policy (FLP) and trilingual acquisition. FLP in Indonesian is a promising ground, as it brings together issues in language maintenance and shift that instigate a wider aspect of investigation; these aspects include bilingual language dominance, cross language influence, and so forth. Trilingual acquisition, the situation most Indonesian children are growing with, has a potentially significant impact on education, especially where a language curriculum is carefully planned and implemented. In conclusion, this mapping will hopefully shed a light on how bilingualism has academically been very appealing and will continue to fascinate more researchers.

Keywords: Bilingualism; research trend; Asia

Asia has long been traced as a 'homeland' for bilingualism research in regards to its heterogeneity and diversity, even though the first bilingualism study conducted in Asia was by Ronjat (a French linguist) in 1913 and it was not in Asian context (Qi, 2011). With little empirical evidence at hand, one possible argument that one can build is that this relatively late appearance of bilingualism research in Asia is due to the late advancements of modern science and scientific methodology. On the other hand, this situation brings an academic benefit by making Asia such a vivid research site as there are still growing areas of exploration.

To figure out the nature of bilingualism research in Asia, I need to firstly refer to how Leitner, Hashim, and Wolf (2016, p. 1) define Asia in the eye of today's global world. They believe that in addition to vast geographical expansion, Asia 'can be seen as the site of large migrations, trading networks, and the expansion and exchanges of goods, political systems and powers, cultures, religions, languages, and scripts'. In the context of language research, such sophisticated trajectory has truly evoked researchers' consciousness on the linguistic challenges that they may encounter, especially when it comes to decide a point to start.

The literature study I conducted was not intended to do an analysis to any of the aforementioned sophistication, but to look more closely at previous works within the field. However, the term *bilingualism* itself is "tricky" due to its multidimensionality as a result of being used in multidisciplinary studies. To the very least, bilingualism has been studied using sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic approach. Sociolinguistic, as the term suggests, sees how two (or more) languages being used and manipulated in the society. On the contrary, psycholinguistics sees bilingualism from a cognitive perspective, investigating the internal processes of becoming bilinguals, such as finding out process of an individual when acquiring and developing two (or more) languages and documenting events during these developmental stages (Grosjean & Li, 2013).

Referring to the United Nations' geopolitical map, as suggested in Leitner et al. (2016, p. 2), Asia is divided into "six large sub-regions, that is, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia and North Asia". Looking at this division, it is no doubt that this is a very challenging research review to do, due to the linguistic sophistication I have mentioned earlier. Thus, I narrow down the scope of mapping mainly into

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South-East Asia countries and take samples of some countries from other parts of Asia.

I am referring to Andaya (n.d.), an Australian historian studying Indonesia and Maritime Southeast Asia, who divides Southeast Asia into *mainland* (Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam) and *island/maritime* (Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, and the new nation of East Timor). Correspondingly, Enfield and Comrie (2015) use the term "Mainland Southeast Asia" (MSEA, henceforth) in their exploration on *The Languages of Mainland Southeast Asia*, where the term refers to Cambodia, Laos, Peninsular Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, and Vietnam, along with areas of China south of the Yangtze River. Putting this information in mind, I would go along with this division in organizing the paper, that is, to present and review: (a) bilingualism research in Southeast Asia; (b) bilingualism research in other parts of Asia; and (c) lessons to learn as a stepping stone to define the future of Asia's bilingualism.

METHOD

It is a literature study through which I collected previous and current works within the topic of bilingualism in Asian context. The term "current" here is represented within the time frame of 2003 – 2016, except that of Nabanan's work in 1991. In addition to the time frame, the collection process was also based on the geographical division of Asia that as mentioned before includes Southeast Asia, East Asia, South Asia, Middle East, and Central Asia (Leitner et al., 2016) with the main concern of studies that made use of bilingual language data from the nation-states within these places. The thirty three previous works were thus far collected and reviewed. These thirty three comprise one (Malaysia), ten (Singapore), four (Indonesia), one (Thailand), one (Vietnam), five (China), two (India), eight (Israel), and one (Kazakhstan) that all of which will be discussed in the following.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bilingualism Research in Southeast Asia

Before moving further, it is important to note that MSEA's linguistic diversification, in particular, was most possibly motivated by the spread of both people and ideas. The lowland areas—with its denser populations—show more homogeneous linguistic and culture, due to the dynamic socio-political power. The sparsely populated upland areas demonstrate a more heterogeneous linguistic and culture, resulted from limited access of infrastructure, education, and power (Enfield & Comrie, 2015). This different degree of diversities might be shifting significantly over time due to many factors, as also noticed by the two aforementioned writers, such as variations in human movement, contact, and diversification (Ibid.).

In Malaysia, a country belonging to MSEA, bilingualism research falls mostly in the sociolinguistic area. Yunusa and Gan's (2011) study is one of the latest research carried out to scrutinize how students perceive the Malaysian government policies taken to improve English proficiency and use. The questionnaire was distributed to 60 undergraduate students, confirming that the larger number of them agreed to the Bilingual Education Policy, allowing English to be used in their education settings along with Malay language (Ibid.).

On the contrary, bilingualism research in Singapore has a more dynamic development. Based on literature, there are at least four previous works within the sociolinguistic area, these include Dixon (2009), Li and Ren (2013), Siew (2010), and Tupas (2016). Another six works look at bilingualism in the psycholinguistic area, such as Brebner, McCormack, and Liow (2016), Dixon, Shuang, and Daraghmeh (2012), Lydea, Brebner and McCormack (2014), Yah, Poon, and Liow (2013), Yeong and Liow (2012), and Zhao, Liu, and Hong (2007). Since I focus on the psycholinguistic analysis, I will only highlight findings from the three societal bilingualism studies very briefly.

Li and Ren (2013), Siew (2010), and Dixon (2009) are similar in the way that their concern is on how language policy plays a role. In this case, Li and Ren (2013) focus on a more local scope by observing the use of bilingual multiple resources in two Singaporean Chinese–English bilingual families to enhance bi-literacies. Their observation found that family language policy (FLP, henceforth) at home is greatly influenced by the cultural backgrounds and experiences, as well as educational ideology of the family members (Ibid.). Bringing policy into a broader scope, Dixon (2009) and Siew (2010) studied Singapore's national language policy. Siew (2010) uses the 'Speak Mandarin Campaign' as a point of analysis, where he finds the campaign very effective to spread Mandarin dialect to a larger number of Chinese youth. This is similar to the success of Singapore's Ministry of Education in promoting bilingual policy to enhance English; even though the success of the second, somehow, affects Mother Tongue language learning. Dixon (2009), on the other hand, examined Singapore's language-in-education policy by observing its impact in second language acquisition and academic achievement. The last research falling within the field of sociolinguistics is Tupas (2016), where he expanded an exploration on additive bi-dialectalism. He argued that the strategic use of Singlish helped to improve learners' competence in Standard English, together with the help of classroom strategies to assure attitudinal change and cultural affirmation.

Within the psycholinguistic exploration, all the six previous works collected data from pre-schoolers with different focuses. Brebner et al. (2016) examined the rate and pattern of English verb marking acquisition by placing 481 English–Mandarin bilingual children in a 10-item action picture test. His findings suggested that language dominance determines the different rate and pattern of acquisition between bilingual and monolingual. Unlike Brebner et al. (2016), Lydea et al. (2014) explored the English phonological ability of seventy Chinese Singaporean children (aged 4, 5, and 0–4) by dividing them into two groups: English-dominant and Mandarin-dominant. Using the Phonology Assessment of the Diagnostic Evaluation of Articulation and Phonology (DEAP), one of the most important highlights is that the Mandarin-dominant children had significantly less accurate consonant production in English and exhibited more interference effects from Mandarin phonology than English-dominant children (Ibid.). Focusing on similar linguistic feature, Yeong and Liow (2012) had previously worked on comparing L1 and L2 syllable and phoneme awareness in seventy English–L1 and Mandarin–L1 pre-readers. These were conducted within a three 6-month intervals and were using parallel task in both languages. The result revealed that the English–L1 children applied their L1 syllable and phoneme awareness to their L2 (Mandarin); on the other hand, the Mandarin–L1 children seemed to require exposure to English (L2) before they developed phoneme awareness in either language (Ibid.). All these previous works had conducted comparative analysis on the developmental processes of the languages in bilingual selves by looking at specific linguistic features.

Instead of examining the development of two languages, the rest of the other three researchers have laid their focuses on one language over the other. Zhao et al. (2007) decided to observe the preschooler's Mandarin oral competence of the English-speaking family (ESF) versus the Chinese-speaking family (CSF). Meanwhile, Yah et al. (2013) identified the predictors of Primary One bilingual children's reading accuracy and reading comprehension in English by observing 80 English−Mandarin-speaking girls (aged 6.5 years). Their analysis revealed that to a great extent, phonological awareness predicts reading accuracy and reading comprehension skills (Ibid.). Taking a different stance by focusing on building four language profiles, Dixon et al. (2012) examined the vocabulary scores of 282 bilingual Singaporean kindergarteners (167 Chinese, 70 Malay, and 45 Tamil) and came up with outstanding findings, which are: '(a) low SES children were most at risk for low proficiency in both languages, (b) middle and high SES children were most likely to demonstrate low ethnic language with high English proficiency, and (c) children exposed to both languages at home were most likely to show low proficiency in both languages'. These groups of work, especially Dixon et al. (2012), have interestingly pinpointed the contesting nature of two languages in bilingual selves during the developmental stages. Furthermore, these three have also drawn my particular attention to the fact that Singapore, as a research site, provides such a wealthy research topic that might go in line with the easy-to-manage data collection.

In the context of Indonesia, societal bilingualism research tends to dominate, at least from the literature study that I have conducted. In this paper, I will discuss four studies, all of which approach their data using sociolinguistic framework. Lamb and Coleman (2008) studied English literacy in Sumatra using two different stages: (1) one large-scale evaluation of English in educational curricula; (2) a case study of English learning at school. He proposed to clarify that young Indonesians' English literacy does not merely lie on individual matter, but is also confined by inequalities in socio-economic capital (Ibid.). Nababan (1991), who previously scrutinized that language curriculum in Indonesia was designed in communicative-based manner, further argued that this curriculum design does not influence the use of vernaculars, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, etc. Projecting bilingual practices in classroom context, Cahyani, de Courcy, and Barnett (2016) reported their ethnographic case study on how and why teachers switched between languages in tertiary bilingual classrooms in Indonesia. In their case, it was where the main language of instruction was English. Using three classrooms over one semester as the data source and using video, audio recording, semi-structured teacher interviews as instruments, they found that teachers' code-switching was frequently used to support students to gain understanding of unfamiliar concepts, managing students' behavior, and engaging in interpersonal and affective interactions with students (Ibid.). Apart from the mingling between bilingualism and education, Birnie-Smith (2016) observed the language choice and ethnic identity construction of four young Chinese Indonesians from West Kalimantan, Indonesia by using Social Identity model of De-individuation Effects (SIDE). Her findings suggested that the participants would adjust their language choice and self-representation to suit different online social variables; these include levels of anonymity, audiences, group identity, and personal identity. The three aforementioned studies had mainly valued bilingualism as an inseparable part of education system. Nababan (1991) believed that it is not a threat to the vernaculars, while Cahyani et al. (2016) viewed the two languages as complementing each other to help teaching and learning move effectively.

In Thailand, I have also found it challenging to document the previous works within the field. At the very least, Sisamoutha and Lahb's (2015) work is relevant. They studied the attitude toward Patani, Malay, and English of Thai undergraduates living in the southernmost provinces, where multilingualism is vital. By interviewing 30 undergraduates, they revealed that the positive attitude towards the three languages was due to several underlying reasons. For certain purposes, figuring out how bilingual speakers' attitude work is very essential in coping with multilingual setting, as it may affect the development of each of the languages.

Similarly, it is not easy to trace bilingualism research in the Vietnam context. Nguyen and Hamid (2016) observed a group of Vietnamese ethnic minority students' language attitudes in relation to their identity and minority language (L1) maintenance. Assessing speakers' attitudes towards L1/vernaculars, Vietnamese and English, the researchers conducted multiple semi-structured interviews to the eight college-age minority students. They found that students were seen to perform an integrative orientation to their L1 and an instrumental orientation to the Vietnamese and English. Surprisingly, their other findings also suggested that the positive attitude is not enough to maintain L1 and identity empowerment. Thus, institutional support is necessary to promote the use of minority languages.

Bilingualism in Other Parts of Asia

To be able to view the topic in a broad perspective, I am going to discuss previous works in bilingualism in China, India, Israel, and Kazakhstan. The exploration still aims at tracing the past direction of bilingualism research and to finally be able to draw a gap among these previous works.

In the context of China, there are five previous works that needed mentioning; these works include Chena, Xuc, and Guion-Anderson (2015), Cheng (2012), Jia (2003), Wanga, Perfettib, and Liub (2005), and Wang (2015).

Wanga et al. (2005) investigated cross-language and writing system relationships in bi-literacy acquisition of children learning to read two different writing systems: Chinese and English. Examining the Chinese-L1 and English-L2 reading skill to focus on phonological and orthographic processing, forty-six Mandarin speaking children were included in their study. They argued that Chinese onset matching skill is considerably linked to the English onset and rime matching skills. This was also added with the fact that Chinese tone processing skill supplies a variance in predicting English pseudo-word reading, which clarified that the orthographic processing skill in the two writing systems did not do much on each other's word reading (Ibid.). In a similar effort to compare English-L1 and English-L2, Jia (2003) conducted a five-year study with 10 native Mandarin-speaking children who immigrated to US between ages 5 – 16 years, in order to see how they acquire English plural morpheme using picture description task and spontaneous speech. She compared this development to those of English-L1 and found particular evidence that the age of initial exposure to English and language environment explained individual differences (Ibid.). The two previous works are similar in holding a focus on two language skill development, but differs in methodology; Wanga et al. (2005) did comparative analysis to the two languages, while Jia (2003) focuses only on English language development with its different order of acquisition.

The two other studies took a place in an education setting, with a focus on examining the implementation of English immersion program in China. Cheng's (2012) research saw how the second language immersion can facilitate primary school students' second language acquisition without shifting their first language proficiency. His methodology was divided into three broad areas of investigation: (1) student academic achievement of English-L2, Chinese-L1, and Mathematics; (2) cognitive predictors of English reading and listening achievement; and (3) Chinese-English immersion teachers. On the other hand, Wang (2015) was more concerned on strategies to put together content-based instruction features and immersion, aimed to help improve English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching for non-English majors in China's higher education. Apart from how bilingualism and education has been put in place, Chena et al. (2015) brought this topic into a smaller scope of bi-dialectism. He observed three groups aging around 20, 40 and 60 to examine their prosodic realization of Quanzhou Southern Min and Mandarin dialects. Referring to the order of acquisition, Southern Min is followed by Mandarin in childhood. Results confirmed that the correlation between the increasing amount of L2 experience and the increasing native-like PFC production in L2 (Ibid.).

I move to bilingualism research in India, which seemingly faces a similar challenge to those in Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam—the lacking of attachment to psycholinguistic approach. It is Petrovic and Majumdar (2010) who confirmed the correlation between language policy and equal educational opportunity (EEO). They examined "three-language formula" applied in India, along with its problems. On the other hand, Hasnain (1991) documented the available previous works in language maintenance and shift, where she argued that 'there exists a complex pattern of language behavior depicting both the language shift even after centuries of steady bilingualism and the language maintenance in spite of linguistic convergence and assimilation, thus depriving any description of bilingualism of a dependable predictive force regarding future social behavior'. These two previous works have brought very significant findings to respond to the multilingual situation in India shown by Petrovic and Majumdar (2010) and the future of this multilingualism outlined by Hasnain (1991).

Despite of the difficulty of finding preceding works in bilingualism, Middle Eastern countries seem to provide very resourceful research in the area. This is especially true for Israel, where there is a growing interest in this field of research. Henceforth, I am going to briefly outline eight previous works by Palviainen, Protassova, Mård-Miettinen, and Schwartz (2016), Schwartz and Asli (2014), Schwartz, Kahn-Horwitz, and Share (2014), Schwartz, Moin, and Leikin (2011), and Schwartz and Gorbatt (2016). These works studied bilingual preschool language development in bilingual education. On the other hand, Altman, Feldman, Yitzhaki, Lotem, Walters (2014), and Yitzhaki (2011) sought insights from a sociolinguistic viewpoint.

Conducting analysis to bilingual preschoolers, Schwartz et al. (2011) conducted semi-structured interviews to four families who were Russian-speaking that had moved to Israel. Their study found that all the parents aimed their children at both maintaining the heritage language and acquiring the host language through certain strategies; these strategies differ in that some chose bilingual kindergarten while some others had monolingual programs. In another similar context, Schwartz and Asli (2014) investigated the language-teaching strategies used in a bilingual Arabic-Hebrew kindergarten in Israel using a mixed method. They found that the teachers frequently employed flexible bilingualism, which included code-switching, to ease the second language teaching and learning. The two previous studies both are in the context of bilingual education; however, Schwartz et al. (2011) decided to study the future direction of bilingual education for the sake of maintaining their native language and developing the foreign language. Meanwhile, Schwartz and Asli (2014) concerned on the current bilingual language practices in classroom.

Using psycholinguistic approach, Schwartz et al. (2014) shared their study on the literacy acquisition of EFL of 88 sixth-grade children. He divided the children into three groups: (1) Russian–Hebrew bilinguals who acquired basic reading skills in Russian as their L1 and were literate in Hebrew as L2; (2) Russian–Hebrew bilinguals learning to read in their native Russian, but had acquired Hebrew as their first literate language; and (3) monolingual Hebrew children who were literate in Hebrew. The hypothesis was that the similarity between the Russian and English orthographies would make the L1 Russian speakers more superior in English. After 4 years of English instruction, all three groups showed evidence of self-teaching on naming speed and orthographic recognition. Using a different scheme, Schwartz and Gorbatt (2016) study the meta-linguistic talk of 29 children (19 L1 Arabic and 10 L1 Hebrew) in a bilingual Arabic–Hebrew preschool. He used a language-focused listening activity to conduct the study and concluded that the observed children had constructed their social relationship and ethnic marking through active discourse management within intergroup contexts. Focusing more on the education system, Palviainen et al. (2016) looked into language practices of five bilingual preschool teachers in three different settings: (1) in Finland with Finnish–Swedish; (2) in Finland with Russian–Finnish; (3) and in Israel with Arabic–Hebrew bilingual context. They found a change on the bilingual education model from a strict language separation to a flexible separation that employs code-switching, contextual and linguistic supports, and role-modeling (Ibid.). These three works offer varied, yet rich perspectives when discussing bilingualism in education.

In addition to the previous five works that scrutinize bilingual education, the rest have studied the data from a sociolinguistic point of view. Altman et al. (2014) studied the relationship between FLP and other variables—such as language choice, use, and proficiency in Russian and Hebrew—from 65 Russian-speaking immigrant parents and their bilingual preschool children. His goal was to basically see how the Russian language maintenance was related to FLP. Their finding was considerably surprising; instead of seeing the development of Russian, children's production on complex syntax is better in Hebrew and code switching into Hebrew was used more compared to their home language (Ibid.). Taking a broader scope of analysis, Yitzhaki (2011) studied Israel's language policy on the Arabic language as an official language. This is quite contradictory, because in reality, its usage is marginal in Israel. Collecting data from 466 Jews and Arabic college students, his findings interestingly indicated a clear hierarchical domain of use, as well as a tendency, among Jewish respondents to favor a multilingual policy over a Hebrew-Arabic bilingual policy (Ibid.). Both Altman et al. (2014) and Yitzhaki (2011) suggested a fundamental property of bilingual policy was either within a family domain or nationwide.

A limited number of research in Central Asia have favorably been about bilingualism. We consider Kazakhstan, where Mongilyova (2015) study was similar to Yitzhaki's (2011); they both discussed the official status of a language that contradicts with the real communication possibilities in the society. Using questionnaires distributed to ethnical Kazakhs, his findings have shown that Kazakh is mainly spoken as an ethnical self-identity of Kazakhstan, while also finding that the preference of speaking Russian by young respondents and the loss of Kazakh in information space (Ibid.).

Lessons to Learn: A Stepping Stone to the Future of Indonesian Bilingualism

After conducting a brief review to all the aforementioned previous works, I would like to move further to highlight some essential parts of the works. These include the interdisciplinary scopes, methodological concerns, research significances, and most importantly the possible direction of future bilingualism research in a (general) Asian context and (specific) Indonesian context. Before beginning each discussion, it is crucial to see the general data mapping that I have attempted to carefully trace. Thus, we are concentrating more attention to the Southeast Asian countries (Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam) for practicability and accessibility, whilst taking samples from some other parts of Asia (including China, India, Israel, and Kazakhstan).

To certain degree, it may be insufficient to represent bilingualism research in Asia by referring only to the thirty three previous works, especially due to the high level of diversities and contacts that Asian people have long been experiencing. However, after evaluating these works, I believe we now have enough empirical evidence to portray the research trends in Asia's bilingualism. Nineteen (55%) of the works were approaching the data from a sociolinguistic perspective, whereas the other fourteen (45%) were under the psycholinguistic perspective. This quantification is very important as it allows us to claim that the previous works in bilingualism had also put a concern on the cognitive processes of being bilinguals, even though there have been more works that look at bilingualism in the society.

Sociolinguistics, being a multidisciplinary perspective, was used more frequently as a part of data exploration. The research trends tend to fall into the topic of bilingual policy, either nationally or locally. We see that the national bilingual policy is seen from the perspective of state and education, even though both areas do not seem to have a clear cut division, as the state policy is most commonly transferred in the education system. However, some of previous works often put them separately as they aim for different research purposes. In this case, Singapore has positive responses to the issue of bilingual policy through "Speak Mandarin Campaign", used as an attempt to promote a unified Chinese dialect to maintain the spread of English (Dixon, 2009; Siew, 2010). Meanwhile, Yunusa and Gan (2011) has uplifted the coming of English within Malaysia's bilingual education policy by referring to students' perception. Lamb and Coleman (2008) and Nababan (1991) have contributed their insights on how English works in Indonesian curriculum. Similarly focusing on English in non-English speaking communities, Sisamouth and Lahb (2015) from Thailand and Nguyen and Hamid (2016) from Vietnam have also captured students' attitude toward English in their multilingual setting. These research groups have all argued that English has been living hand-in-hand with other local languages and that this particular situation often goes along with the national policy of each country. In contrast, Mongilyova (2015) from Kazakhstan and Yitzhaki (2011) from Israel have addressed the language policy other than English, bearing in mind the competing language practices between the official language and other local language(s). Beyond these multiple dimensions of language policy, I must agree to the stance that policy has indeed taken a crucial role of setting up a certain language into a certain linguistic status in bi/multilingual society. One cannot avoid the languages from being in contact with one another, as they have interdependecies to the speakers' multiple background; each language may employ a different 'status' and 'domain of use' in practice. In this circumstance, policy might be an acceptable solution to 'control' language use and attitude.

Apart from the need to investigate national policy, some previous works have a more local scope of research by scrutinizing family language policy. As previously stated, there are Li and Ren (2013), studying the extent of FLP in enhacing biliterarcies in Mandarin-English in Singapore, and Altman et al. (2014) with their focus on bilingual proficiency in Arabic – Hebrew in Israel. This locality triggers the less practical significance that can be a contributing factor of unpopularity of FLP in Asia's bilingualism. Moreover, King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry (2008) have described FLP as the new, barely explored, emerging field.

Numerous previous studies have also attempted to explain the involvement of psycholinguistics in Asia's bilingualism. Some are interested to compare two languages in bilingual selves to examine the nature of dominance. These works include: Brebner et al. (2016) and Yeong and Liow (2012) in Singapore's English – Mandarin bilingual context; and Wanga et al. (2005) and Jia (2003) in China's Chinese – English bilingual situation. The first group of researchers claimed that language dominance determines the pattern of acquisition as well as interferences across languages. Meanwhile, the second has put the phonological and orthographic processing of English – Mandarin into consideration, with the addition of age of exposure, to examine bilingual language development.

On another note, other previous studies have also explored the developmental stages of one language over the other. These works include: Zhao et al. (2007) on Mandarin oral competence of bilingual children growing up in an English-speaking family and a Mandarin-speaking family: Yah et al. (2013) on English the reading accuracy of English – Mandarin bilingual children; and Schwartz et al. (2014) on the English literacy developed by Russian – Hebrew children. The benefits of focusing on only one language is that the researchers can investigate a larger number of participants, as done by Yah et al. (2013) with their 80 6.5-year-old children. Schwartz et al. (2014) followed the same strategy with their 88 sixth-grade children, despite the arduous challenge of doing an in-depth qualitative analysis to each dataset. With two languages to examine, it is not easy to conduct such large-scale data collection, even though it is possible to execute in practice.

In terms of methodologies, these previous works have offered a plenty of data collection strategies. To examine attitude towards bilingual policy, the researchers have utilized questionnaires most frequently in such an attempt to find more effective and efficient way of data collection (Yunusa and Gan, 2011; Yitzhaki, 2011). In contrast, to get a closer look at how language attitude works, Sisamouth and Lahn (2015), Nguyen and Hamid (2016), Schwartz et al. (2011), and Altman et al. (2014) have chosen interviews as the relevant method with relatively smaller number of participants. Using interviews, they could do an in-depth exploration towards the phenomena being observed as well as conduct more qualitative analysis to provide an adequate explanation of the findings. Observation was also exploited to bring both linguistic and non linguistic factors together (Li and Ren, 2013; Dixon et al., 2012; Zhao et al., 2007; Birnie-Smith, 2016; Cahyani et al., 2016; Chena et al., 2015; Schwartz and Asli, 2014; Palviainen et al., 2016). Similarly, observation in language research is proven to be a reliable data collection as the researchers can capture a more authentic language use. In addition to these three methods, experiment was brought into practice to primarily give certain linguistic treatment to the children (Brebner et al., 2016; Lydea et al., 2014; Yeong and Liow, 2012; Wanga et al., 2005; Jia, 2003). To put together a larger number of participants in a specific linguistic situation where the researchers can have the participants' language production, experiment is generally employed. Most of all, it is the researchers' adequate knowledge that finally matters in implementing the relevant methodological details that fit into the overall research purposes. Some might make use of one single method while some others mix two or more methods depending on the nature of data sources.

In terms of research significance, the previous works that I reviewed are all significant theoretically and practically. Some of them bring the two significances together and some others give more attention to the one over the other. On the surface level, all abovementioned works have contributed to the theoretical enrichment within a specific domain of bilingual acquisition and development. In other words, most researchers in the context of my literature study have made use of language acquisition theories in approaching their data as well as contribute the new findings to it.

Among those who work to develop this theory are Brebner et al. (2016) with their analysis of English verb marking acquisition, Lydea et al. (2014) on the English phonological acquisition, Yeong and Liow (2012) on the comparative analysis of syllable and phoneme awareness in English–L1 and Mandarin–L1, Wanga et al. (2005) on cross-language writing system, Jia (2003) on the English plural morpheme acquisition, Schwartz et al. (2014) on the English literacy acquisition, and Schwartz and Gorbatt (2016) on the meta-linguistic talk. The ways these studies constructed and reconstructed the previous language acquisition theories is by contesting two languages in bilingual selves to figure out the nature of language dominance, by conducting experiments to optimize the two languages or one language over the other, and by situating the processes of bilingual acquisition. With the fact that most of them had centered their focus on English acquisition, it constructs a research gap by itself. It is to say that local or heritage language acquisition and maintenance should be the actual research gap that the research on Asia's bilingualism has started to close.

In addition, there are some practical contributions given especially those who worked on the sub field of language and policy. It includes Yunusa and Gan (2011) who studied the students' perception on improving English in Malaysian context, Siew (2010) on Singapore's 'Speak Mandarin Campaign' policy, Sisamoutha and Lahb (2015) on the students' positive attitude toward Patani, Malay, and English, Nguyen and Hamid (2016) on the relationship between Vietnamese language attitudes and their minority language maintenance, Yitzhaki (2011) on Israel policy on Arabic language, Mongilyova (2015) on the ethnical identity in Kazakh language and Russian as the globalization language, Dixon (2009) on Singapore's language-in-education policy, Petrovic and Majumdar (2010) on the correlation between language policy and equal educational opportunity (EEO) in India, Li and Ren (2013) on Chinese – English biliteracies in Singapore, Altman et al. (2014) on the relationship between family language policy (FLP) and Russian language maintenance, and Schwartz et al. (2011) on Russian-speaking families language policy. Research scrutinizing language policy seems to dominate, at least from the data that I have collected. It shows how important it is for the nationwide interests even though it has also been coming to reach a small scope of family recently such as conducted by Schwartz et al. (2011), Li and Ren (2013), and Altman et al. (2014).

FLP is found to be a potential research topic to take a place in the future of Asia's bilingualism. Beyond these contributions, this field of research is critical to the future of languages, be either (any) local language as an identity marker or English as a part of taking a role in globalization.

Studies in bilingual education are seen to give a more influential impact. Such works include Cheng's (2012) who examined the influence of second language immersion, Wang (2015) who put his concern on English immersion in non English speaking country, Chena et al. (2015) who brought the issue of bidialectism in China's education context, Schwartz and Asli (2014) who investigated bilingual language teaching for children, and Palviainen et al. (2016) who examined a model in bilingual education. Their observations were very significant in evaluating and improving the quality of bilingual education. By bringing research into schools, the researchers themselves can also take an advantage from educational institutions in obtaining a large scale data as they can get more access to the bilingual participants. Furthermore, the elaboration of more than one data collection method will be very possible to do, such as conducting an experiment to bilingual students, an interview to teachers, and classroom observation as a complementary data collection.

This "little journey" of compiling bilingualism research files across Asian countries has lent me research experiences from which I learn to construct theoretical foundation as well as practical implementation. Those previous researchers' experiences have also made think of the diversities that really exist in this continent together with the challenges. The diversities of ideas, in particular, are very obvious as shown by the 'randomness' or variety of research topic conducted in each country. The term 'randomness' here is really to mean very positive in the sense that any researcher can obviously start from anywhere that means that the availability of data of bilingualism in Asia has provided flexibility for researchers to take their starting point. This, in a point of fact, shows us how they gradually move to a similar research context, such as from analyzing the development of one language over the other to contesting two languages in an individual, from seeing the importance of improving English as a global language to bringing the heritage language home, and from putting more concerns on nation-wide context to the family context.

The process of unveiling trends in Asia's bilingualism has shed a light to what is important and less important to study. Some might argue that child bilingualism is more crucial rather than adult bilingualism, while some others consider the opposite. Those who situated their research on a language acquisition would presumably choose to interact with children as the data source even though the process of acquiring language could also happen to adult in the case of second or third language. Those who consider the noteworthiness of large scale survey have taken some steps to gain a large number of language users on bilingual language policy, use, and proficiency to enable certain group of policy taker, usually a government, to set a future plan to invest on language. However, some who have taken care of a family language policy might believe that everything starts from the smallest point and, at the same time, gives a sense that a nationwide policy may come from a decision taken by family or groups of family in that nation.

Beyond the choices that every researcher has made, I argue that there is nothing left unimportant because language is embedded in both individuals and group of individuals. Embedding in a bilingual, the two or more languages are acquired in certain specific circumstances that differ from the other bilingual speaker. Therefore, we need an in-depth exploration to see how such individual develops his or her bilingual competence. On the other hand, looking at how languages are developed by a larger group of children is also essential to get an overall picture of language acquisition features even though it may not be easy to explain individual differences that occur within that group. In other words, studying bilingualism in the context of acquisition and development either using a case study or a larger scale study carries both strengths and weaknesses.

Above all, as this literature review process goes on, it turns out that the nature of bilingualism research in Asian context is very diverse. Southeast Asia, in particular, has shown to be dominated by sociolinguistic approach with language attitude and policy as the most frequent topic. Some other parts of Asia, especially China have currently conducted more studies in the field of bilingual education by giving more attention to English in non English speaking settings. Apart from the distribution of research topic as well as region, a study using multi-method in collecting data and a study in the area of FLP scrutinizing heritage language maintenance are the gaps that the future works need to close.

Bringing the research trend in Asia's bilingualism, I would like to draw my closer attention to Indonesia as a potential research site. This country has long been a home for around 740 languages that became an empirical evidence of Meyerhoff's (2006) hypothesis stating that no nation in the world is completely monolingual. To briefly describe the potency of the country, I refer to the preliminary survey-based findings of Zen and Apriana (2015) that figured out that most children are born multilingual; speaking one local (heritage) language and one official language (Indonesian) in addition to learning and occasionally using one foreign language (English). This multilingual situation should have attracted researchers' interest.

However, it does not confirm the current finding as it was only a small number of works within this field. This lacking of interest has put Indonesia to be a potential research site for those who are interested in bilingualism.

Having a flexibility to set the future of bilingualism research in Indonesia, there are two major aspects of exploration; FLP and trilingual acquisition. To be more specific, FLP is a promising ground in regard to its interrelationship to the nature of bilingual maintenance and shift. The maintaining and shifting of languages in bilingual selves can somehow trigger a wider aspect of investigation, such as bilingual language dominance, cross linguistic influence, and so forth. FLP is also significant for the fact that family is perceived to be central in one's life. In other words, Indonesian natives hold the value of family very tightly that to certain extent makes it an influential place where languages are acquired and developed. The second major aspect is tringual acquisition as it is a situation that most Indonesian children are growing to be. The latest issue has a closer connection to education where a language curriculum is carefully planned and implemented. The three languages including Indonesian, local language (heritage), and foreign language are taught as an independent subject at school. This educational policy should have been stimulating a scientific curiosity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this literature study has collected and briefly reviewed thirty three previous works in the field of bilingualism using sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics perspectives in the Asian context. It provides details on how these studies were carried out with an expectation that it can open up the possibilities to bridge the gaps in approaching Asia's bilingualism. Moreover, beyond the lessons contributed, we should agree that these works have shed a light on how bilingualism has actually been very appealing in academic sphere. In a specific context of Indonesia, we could take FLP and trilingual acquisition topics into a serious account to gear a more promising research on "our" bilingualism.

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[i] The institution where the author is affiliated
[ii] The institution where the author pursues her doctoral degree