Bilingual Education for Hmong Language Minority Children in Thailand
Successes and Challenges

Katherine Dooley
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Abstract

This research project investigates the successes and challenges of a bilingual education pilot project for minority language children in Thailand from the point of view of key stakeholders: qualified class teachers, untrained local bilingual teachers, headteachers and parents. Use of a local language in formal education is a new concept in Thailand, and the views of stakeholders in four village schools were researched using semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Results of grade 2 tests taken by students were also combined to present a fuller picture. The successes perceived by stakeholders related to the benefits for students’ learning include better literacy skills, understanding and participating in class, enjoying reading and learning, and having their culture and language valued. The perceived challenges fell under four different areas: difficulties with teaching staff, development of teaching materials, lack of sustainable financial support and opposition from the parents in the community. Using these broad themes, the different perceptions of stakeholders are analyzed and recommendations are made for the future of the project and bilingual education for minority groups in Thailand.
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Finally I would like to thank Dr Dennis Malone for the many hours he invested in editing the e-Book version of my work.
Abbreviations

ESA  Educational Service Area
FAL  Foundation for Applied Linguistics
KG   Kindergarten
MoE  Ministry of Education
NGO  Non-governmental organisation
OBEC Office of the Basic Education Commission, Thailand
OEC  Office of the Education Commission, Thailand
ONEC Office of the National Education Commission, Thailand
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
# Introduction

In the worldwide drive for quality education for all, a factor frequently overlooked is the language used for teaching and learning in the classroom. The majority of societies across the world are multilingual and multicultural, but education systems have historically selected just one or two languages as the language of instruction. For many children, school is therefore a place where they are expected to learn a new language and simultaneously use this language to study new concepts. UNESCO has called for minority languages to be valued as a resource in education, rather than despised as a barrier to learning, and to be used as a medium of instruction along with other national or regional languages (UNESCO 2003).

Bilingual or multilingual policies which make use of local languages in education are in place in countries as diverse as Mali, Papua New Guinea and Peru (Bühmann and Trudell 2008), though with varied degrees of implementation. In Southeast Asia there has not yet been a widespread acknowledgement of the value of local languages in education either at political or social level (UNESCO 2007). However, due to advocacy in recent years from UNESCO and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on educational quality and human rights, there has been a new openness for small-scale experimental projects (Kosonen and Young 2009; Benson and Kosonen 2012).

One such experimental bilingual project has been implemented in a minority language community in four government schools in northern Thailand, using the local Hmong language along with the Thai national language to improve teaching and learning. The project schools are situated in Hmong-speaking villages in the mountains of Chiangrai Province. The class teachers speak only Standard Thai and Northern Thai, leading to communication difficulties between teachers and students. This bilingual pilot project began in 2009 as a partnership between the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), the Chiangrai 4 Educational Service Area (ESA) and the Foundation for Applied Linguistics (FAL), a small Thai NGO. In order to deliver the bilingual curriculum, minimally-trained Hmong-speaking local teachers are employed to work with the certified class teachers.

This research investigates the benefits and challenges of the Hmong-Thai bilingual project from the point of view of some key stakeholders: the class teachers and local teachers, as well as headteachers and parents. As the students in the project range from four to eight years old and have only experienced schooling in the bilingual classes, their views of the project have not been sought directly, though educators and parents were asked for their impressions of the children’s experiences. The two research questions are:

Q1. What successes do educators and parents identify in the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project?

Q2. What challenges do educators and parents identify in the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project?

This first chapter concludes by defining some of the terms frequently used in bilingual education, as shown in table 1. The second chapter reviews literature on bilingual education in developing countries and the demands on bilingual teachers. The third chapter discusses the context of language and education in Thailand and gives some background on the Hmong-Thai bilingual project. The fourth chapter describes the design and methodology used for this research. The fifth chapter discusses the project successes and the sixth chapter presents the challenges which stakeholders identified in the Hmong-Thai project. The final chapter draws some conclusions and proposes recommendations on bilingual education for minority language groups in Thailand.
Table 1. Definition of terms (based on UNESCO 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition as used in this book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilingual education</strong></td>
<td>The use of two languages for literacy and instruction in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class teachers</strong></td>
<td>In the Hmong-Thai bilingual project, there are certified teachers who were already teaching in the project schools but who do not speak any Hmong. They are paired with the local Hmong teachers and act as their mentors. To distinguish them from the ‘local teachers’, they are referred to as ‘class teachers’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Certified teachers, Thai teachers, Government teachers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First language</strong></td>
<td>The language which a child learns from birth and uses in the home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mother tongue; home language)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First language-based bilingual education</strong></td>
<td>Schooling that begins by using learners’ first language for literacy and instruction, also teaching a second language that will be used for literacy and instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language of instruction</strong></td>
<td>A language used for teaching and learning the school curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Medium of instruction)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local teachers</strong></td>
<td>In the Hmong-Thai bilingual project, local community members are hired as bilingual teachers and assigned to work with a class teacher. They could be described as bilingual teaching assistants, as they are not trained or qualified teachers, but in the project they are most commonly referred to as ‘local teachers’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Teaching assistants, Hmong teachers or bilingual teachers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Majority language</strong></td>
<td>A language spoken by the majority of people in a country or area. May also be the language of a dominant social group, or seen as the main language in a country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dominant language, maybe national language)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minority language</strong></td>
<td>A language spoken by an ethnic or social minority group in a country or area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Non-dominant language; local, ethnic or community language)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multilingual education</strong></td>
<td>The use of more than two languages for literacy and instruction in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Script</strong></td>
<td>A graphic form of the units in a writing system, e.g. Roman, Thai and Arabic scripts or Chinese characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing system</strong></td>
<td>A standardised system for writing a language, including a script, spelling and punctuation. By this definition, synonymous with the term ‘orthography’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Orthography)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bilingual Education for Language Minority Communities

In bilingual or multilingual education, two or more languages are used as the medium of instruction across the curriculum. This chapter reviews literature on bilingual education for speakers of minority languages, components of an effective multilingual education programme and the roles of classroom teachers and bilingual teaching assistants.

2.1 Models of bilingual education

For children around the world who speak the language of a minority community, or a language seen as less prestigious in society, bilingual education is not their usual experience of schooling. The more common approach is to teach learners the majority language as soon as possible, by placing them in a school environment where they speak and study only in this language. This is referred to as ‘submersion’, as it is a ‘sink or swim’ situation for the learners (Baker 2006). The problem with this approach is that children are expected to learn a new language and new subject content at the same time, whilst struggling to understand what their teacher is saying (Dutcher 2004).

For bilingual education to be implemented, decision makers have to value both of the languages which will be used in education. For instance, private schools are responding to the demands of parents by offering bilingual Thai and English programmes in Bangkok. In this case, the students’ first language is a majority language widely used for education, and parents want their children to learn another prestigious language through a bilingual ‘immersion’ approach. The difference from the submersion approach is that students are supported as they learn the second language and they also develop academic skills in their first language (Baker 2006). First language-based bilingual education recognises students’ first language as a resource for learning, and therefore uses it along with a second language for teaching. A summary of the types of education for minority language speakers is given in table 2.

Table 2. Types of education programme for speakers of minority languages
(adapted from Baker 2006:215–216; Ball 2011:21–22)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of education</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submersion (Mainstreaming)</td>
<td>Minority language speakers receive education in a majority language they do not understand. There is no opportunity to develop literacy skills in their first language, and the aim is to assimilate the minority learners to the majority group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submersion (Mainstreaming) with Withdrawal Classes</td>
<td>Minority language speakers receive education in a majority language they do not understand, but they receive extra support such as ‘pull-out’ classes to help them learn the majority language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional bilingual (Subtractive bilingual; Bridging)</td>
<td>The minority language is used initially for literacy and as a medium of instruction. The aim is to transition entirely to education in the majority language. ‘Early-exit’ programmes transition to using the majority language for teaching abruptly after 2 or 3 years of school. ‘Late-exit’ programmes transition to the majority language when learners are academically fluent in their first language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance bilingual (Additive bilingual)</td>
<td>The learners’ first language is used from the start, but when the second language is introduced both languages continue to be used as media of instruction. The programme aim is for learners to become bilingual and biliterate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The early-exit transitional bilingual model is the one most commonly found in developing countries, as it is seen as more realistically achievable, and because of the pressure of national examinations held in...
a majority language (Trudell 2012). However, the most effective forms of bilingual education are where learners have the opportunity to develop their first language for as long as possible (Baker 2006). Thomas and Collier’s (1997) longitudinal study of bilingual education programmes in the United States concluded that the key factor in determining the academic achievement of bilingual students was the number of years for which they studied in their first language. Therefore a maintenance bilingual model is more effective than a transitional model, though either of these is more effective than a submersion approach.

As learners have to be able to draw meaning from a text to learn how to read fluently, it is more efficient for students to learn to read in a language they understand well (UNESCO 2008). Because developing literacy skills involves learning to associate meaning with marks on paper, ‘people learn to read only once, even if they learn more than one language’ (Smalley 1994:284). Research shows that phonological processing skills developed in one language are transferred into other languages, even when they have different scripts, such as Chinese, Arabic and Spanish (Kenner et al. 2002) or Chinese and English (Chow et al. 2005). The important point is that the readers know the second language well enough to understand what they are reading (UNESCO 2008).

There are also positive psychosocial implications of using learners’ first language at school, as children will learn better if their home language is valued in the education system (Ball 2011; Cummins 2000). Research about indigenous Quechua children in Peru shows how their transition from pre-school to school is negatively affected by the exclusion of their language and culture (Ames 2012). Therefore, the educational rights of indigenous and minority peoples to use their languages in education and to access national and global languages are recognised by UNESCO (2003) and UNICEF (2003a).

2.2 Effective bilingual education in developing countries

Although first language-based bilingual education is supported by sound educational principles, education policy is influenced by political, economic, historic and sociolinguistic factors. Not all languages in the world are accorded the same status in society, with some seen as more prestigious or more useful than others. Most nations prioritise just one or two languages as the medium of instruction; often a national language and possibly an international language.

To have a strong and effective bi/multilingual education programme, the factors just mentioned, as well as others, need to be considered. In the UNESCO handbook Promoting Literacy in Multilingual Settings, Susan Malone offers a helpful framework of the components of effective and sustained multilingual education programmes (Kosonen et al. 2007:15). Each of these factors is discussed in detail in the UNESCO publication, but it is helpful to note that the components range widely from policy and planning at the national level, to recruitment and training of staff and materials development at the project level, to awareness-raising at the community level.

2.3 Bilingual teachers and teaching assistants

Teachers are essential to the successful implementation of first language-based bilingual education. The following section will discuss how teacher beliefs on bilingualism affect practice, the additional demands faced by bilingual teachers in developing countries, and the role of bilingual teaching assistants.

2.3.1 Teachers’ beliefs on language-in-education affect practice

Whatever the policy on language of instruction in schools, teachers play a key role in determining the extent to which this is implemented in the classroom. For instance, the bilingual intercultural education policy in Peru was a top-down policy initiative (Valdiviezo 2009). Whilst teachers could see that using indigenous languages in school improved student confidence and learning, they also questioned whether it was practical to teach Quechua when students need to speak Spanish to compete in society. This belief diminished their use of minority languages in the classroom, so Valdiviezo concludes that ‘teachers are central to reproducing inequalities and contesting social structures through the implementation of policy’ (2009:61).
In a study in Laos, teachers in ethnic minority areas varied their teaching approach from almost exclusive use of Lao, to combining Lao with a local language, to using a local language almost exclusively to teach Lao texts (Cincotta-Segi 2011b). The research concluded that ‘teachers do not always do what we expect them to do’; therefore ‘education researchers, policy-makers, planners and development practitioners need to examine local practices in each instance’ (Cincotta-Segi 2011a:29).

2.3.2 Demands on bilingual teachers in developing countries

Being a teacher in a bilingual context is complex, and the demands on bilingual teachers are even greater in developing countries. Benson (2004) suggests that bilingual teachers fill the expert roles of pedagogue, linguist, intercultural communicator, community member and advocate for bilingual education, often with limited support (see figure 1).

![Figure 1. Demands on bilingual teachers in developing countries.](image)

**Pedagogue:** Bilingual teachers have often experienced a submersion model of education themselves, where communication difficulties between teachers and students lead to pedagogic strategies such as yes/no questions, choral repetition and copying texts. With little additional training, bilingual teachers are expected to adapt their pedagogy to deliver education in the learners’ first language (Benson 2000; Benson 2004).

**Linguist:** Teachers are expected to be reasonably proficient in both of the languages in which they will teach. They need to be not just bilingual, but biliterate, that is, able to read and write two languages, even though literacy in their home language may not have been part of their own education (Benson 2004). Furthermore, minority languages may not yet have an established vocabulary to provide academic terms. Valdiviezo (2009) describes how bilingual teachers in Peru had to work together to choose suitable Quechua terms for the lessons they were planning.

**Intercultural communicator:** Bilingual teachers are also in the position of bridging the cultural gap between the local community and the educational system. For instance, bilingual teachers in the United States saw the need to involve parents in their children’s education, yet they also knew that ‘parents are often perceived by the school authorities as uneducated and ineffective’ (Ada 1995:240). Therefore, they saw themselves as the strongest link between the school and the community.

**Community member:** Bilingual teachers are frequently members of the local community, rather than being an outsider posted to a school from elsewhere. As they live in the community where they work,
they are subject to the same pressures as local families, and know the views of local parents on school
issues (Benson 2004). Bilingual teachers in Kenya struggled to implement the policy of using local
languages in early primary school grades, due to civil unrest and pressure from the community to
transition to English and Kiswahili at an earlier stage (Jones and Barkhuizen 2011).

Advocate: As first language-based bilingual education is often a new concept for parents and the
wider community, teachers often find themselves having to advocate for the programme, even if they
still have doubts (Benson 2004; Jones and Barkhuizen 2011). The Quechua-Spanish teachers in Peru
considered parents’ attitudes a ‘major obstacle’ to the bilingual programme (Valdiviezo 2009:74). Some
teachers became reluctant to involve parents in the programme as it was ‘counterproductive’, while
others felt that ‘informing parents was key to garnering their support’ (2009:75).

These factors all put additional pressure on teachers in first language-based bilingual education, and
underscore the importance of having good training and support systems in place.

2.3.3 Teaching assistants in bilingual education

Teaching assistants are rarely used in developing countries due to the extra expense of hiring them, but
in high-income countries bilingual teaching assistants may provide support to children who are
mainstreamed or ‘submerged’ in the majority language. The local teachers in the Hmong-Thai bilingual
project are minimally trained teachers, and are assigned to work with certified teachers, so their role
falls somewhere in between that of bilingual teacher and bilingual teaching assistant.

Bilingual teaching assistants in Hong Kong who support students from South Asian backgrounds see
their role as helping students to learn Chinese based on their understanding of their first language. They
also act as 'cultural mediators' between the home and the school cultures (Gao and Shum 2010).
Similarly, bilingual teaching assistants in England see part of their function as ‘effectively bridging
communication between home and school’ (Baker 2012:6).

However, Bourne (2001) argues that because of power asymmetries in the classroom, the role of
bilingual teaching assistants depends on the teacher’s beliefs on bilingualism. Teachers in England felt
that an effective bilingual teaching assistant should ensure the smooth running of classroom activities,
not facilitate bilingual learning. This was a source of ‘tension for the bilingual assistants who believed
they were not well utilized for children in their community’ (Baker 2012:8). Kenner et al. (2008) also
found that even if teachers consider bilingualism to be an asset, they might still be unaware of what
bilingual strategies could be used with their pupils.

2.4 Class and local teachers in the Hmong-Thai project schools

The class teachers in the Hmong-Thai project schools speak Thai but do not speak Hmong, so despite
their teaching qualifications and experience, they cannot fulfil the role of bilingual teacher. The local
teachers who are hired from the Hmong community are bilingual in Hmong and Thai, but are not well
trained or certified as teachers. This adds an interesting dynamic to the demands on the teaching staff in
the project, as there is an imbalance in the status of the class teacher and local teacher. Figure 2
illustrates how the class teachers and local teachers share the roles of pedagogue and advocate, but only
the local teachers are also linguists, intercultural communicators and community members. Meanwhile,
the class teachers in the Hmong-Thai project take on the role of mentor to the local teachers and
curriculum expert as they develop lesson plans for the bilingual programme.
Susan Malone’s model of an ‘effective and sustained MLE program’ (Kosonen et al. 2007) and the models in figures 1 and 2, which emerge from a review of literature related to bilingual education and bilingual teachers, have informed the design and methodology for my research.
3
Language and Education in Thailand

As language in education policy is not decided on a solely pedagogic basis, this chapter provides an outline of the sociolinguistic context in Thailand. It begins with an overview of the languages spoken in the country, briefly describes the education system and recent developments in bilingual education, and ends with some background information on the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project.

3.1 Languages in Thailand

Thailand has a population of over sixty-seven million people and official narratives maintain that ‘the vast majority of the population are ethnic Thai who speak Thai as their common language’ (Laungaramsri 2003:158). The de facto national language is Standard Thai, which is based on Central Thai, although there are actually seventy-six languages spoken in the country. The majority of people do speak a Thai-related language as their first language (Lewis et al. 2013), and Standard Thai (commonly referred to as Thai) is the language of instruction in government schools (Prapasapong 2009). The Ministry of Education classifies the languages of Thailand in three groups: national, regional and community languages (Prapasapong 2009:104).

Among the community languages of Thailand are two languages from the Hmong-Mien language family: Hmong Daw (White Hmong) and Hmong Njua (Green Hmong). The Hmong ethnic community is formed by speakers of many different Hmong languages, with over seven million people living throughout China, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand. There are about ninety-two thousand ethnic Hmong people living in Thailand, of whom thirty-two thousand are speakers of White Hmong and sixty thousand are speakers of Green Hmong (Lewis et al. 2013). Since 1959 the Hmong have been one of nine ethnic minority groups in the highlands of Northern Thailand designated as ‘hill tribes’ by the Thai government. This definition positions the minority ethnic groups living in mountainous areas as ‘other’ to the ethnic Thais living in the lowlands (Laungaramsri 2003).

The four village communities involved in the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project speak White Hmong, and are located in the mountains of Chiangrai Province in northern Thailand, near the border with Laos.

3.2 Bilingual Education in Thailand

The present Thai education system is shaped by the National Education Act of 1999 (ONEC 2002). There are nine years of compulsory basic education (6 years of primary and 3 years of lower secondary schooling) with a further three years of upper secondary schooling (MoE 2008). The aim of current educational reforms is to promote ‘quality education for all, a better quality of life’ and ‘the increased competitiveness of the country’ (OEC 2008:5). These reforms also call for decentralisation to 185 Educational Service Areas (ESAs) and for school-based management (OEC 2008:5).

Pongwat (2010) writes that the Teacher and Educational Personnel Act of 2004 aims to counter the low morale and increase the sense of professionalism among teachers. Teacher training courses have increased in length from a four-year Bachelors of Education to a five-year programme, aiming to produce a ‘new breed of teachers’ (Pongwat 2010:159). To become a teacher in a government school, desirable because of the benefits of becoming a government employee, teachers sit for an examination at any ESA with teaching vacancies. Those who pass are posted to schools within the ESA, with more recently certified teachers often sent to the most remote posts.

The National Education Act of 1999 and the National Basic Education Curriculum of 2001 do not address the issue of language of instruction in Thailand, but they do allow schools to use up to 30 percent of learning time for a ‘local curriculum’ tailored to community needs (Kosonen 2008). Prapasapong (2009:107) noted that surveys by the Ministry of Education in 2006–7 showed that children living in border areas have lower Thai literacy rates and underachieve in school, with many teachers recognising that the main problem in the classroom is that ‘many students in border and remote areas do...
not understand what the teachers are teaching’. Prapasapong noted also, however, that neither educators nor parents question the use of Thai as language of instruction, because it is widely accepted that to be educated and prosper in Thai society is to speak, read and write good Thai.

In recent years, advocacy by NGOs, academics and civil society in the Asia-Pacific region has raised awareness of the potential of first language-based multilingual education in multilingual contexts (UNESCO 2007; UNESCO 2008; Kosonen et al. 2007; Kosonen and Young 2009; UNICEF 2003a). Thailand’s first National Language Policy was signed by the Prime Minister in 2010, and supports the use of minority languages ‘to strengthen the study of the Thai language and to support the cognitive development and education of children’ (cited in Kosonen 2013:46). Although there is no plan for widespread implementation of this policy as yet, it is in this context that pilot projects in first language-based bilingual education have started with several minority language communities since 2007, including Patani Malay, Mon, Northern Pwo Karen and White Hmong (Kosonen 2013; Kosonen 2008).

### 3.2.1 The Hmong-Thai bilingual education project

The Hmong-Thai bilingual education project began in four government schools in Hmong-speaking villages in Chiangrai Province in 2009. The project is a five-year partnership between Chiangrai 4 ESA, OBEC and FAL and is due to run until 2014. The project schools are a thirty to sixty-minute car drive away from the Chiangrai 4 ESA Office in the town of Thoeng, climbing steep but paved mountain roads. All the schools offer two years of kindergarten (KG) education, six years of primary schooling and three years of lower secondary education. The smallest school has just under three hundred students, with one class per grade, and the largest school has over 550 students with two or three classes per grade, depending on the size of the cohort.

Classes in the bilingual project began in kindergarten 1 (KG1) in May 2009, and each year the project has expanded to another grade. Table 3 shows the number of classes in the project across all four schools from 2009 to the present academic year of 2013–2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>KG 1</th>
<th>KG2</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Total classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009–10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010–11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011–12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012–13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013–14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Hmong-Thai project uses an early-exit transitional model of bilingual education, as it is likely that teachers will be using only Thai as the language of instruction by grade 4. The planned use of languages in teaching and learning for bilingual education is illustrated in table 4.
Table 4. Planned progression in languages of instruction and literacy in the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language used in teaching and learning</th>
<th>KG1</th>
<th>KG2</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>Hmong - Explain concept; Check understanding; Summarise</td>
<td>Hmong - Check understanding</td>
<td>Hmong - Check understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai - Key vocabulary</td>
<td>Thai - Explain concept; Summarise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong - Listening, Speaking</td>
<td>Thai - Listening, Speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong - Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing</td>
<td>Thai - Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English - Listening</td>
<td>English - Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To become a local teacher in the bilingual project, applicants must have completed nine years of basic education and demonstrate fluency in Hmong. The salary for local teachers is currently 4,000–4,500 Thai baht (£80–90) a month. On 1 January 2013 the government introduced a national minimum wage of 300 Baht a day (£6) (Alexander et al. 2013). At thirty days a month this would be a salary of 9,000 Baht (£180) or, if calculated at twenty weekdays, 6,000 Baht a month (£120) – so the local teachers’ salary does not compare well.

Even though the wages of the local teachers are low, their salaries are the major expense of the bilingual project. For the academic year 2013–14, there are thirty-eight local teachers needed for the bilingual classes across the four schools (see table 5), making the monthly budget for salaries over 152,000 Baht (£3,000), or around 1,824,000 Baht for the year (£35,500). FAL also employs two project coordinators from the local area to oversee the development and production of the Hmong language instructional materials.

Table 5. Number of classes in Hmong-Thai bilingual project by school in 2013–14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
<th>School C</th>
<th>School D</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total per school</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>38 classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class teachers who work at the two project schools farthest from the town of Thoeng often board at the school during the week, and these two schools have a higher turnover of teaching staff than the two schools nearer town. Monthly salaries for teachers who are full government employees start at 15,000
Thai Baht (£300) and rise up to 25,000 Baht (£500), whereas monthly salaries for contract teachers who
are hired on a yearly basis start at around 9,000 Thai Baht (£180 GBP).

The assigned roles of the class teachers and local teachers in the classroom vary slightly depending
on the grade which they are teaching. Table 6 outlines the assigned roles of the class teachers and local
teachers in the Hmong-Thai bilingual programme.

Table 6. Roles of class teachers and local teachers in Hmong-Thai bilingual project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Role of class teacher (Thai-speaking)</th>
<th>Role of local teacher (Hmong and Thai-speaking)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KG 1</td>
<td>Semester 2: teach spoken Thai language twice a day (total 30 mins.)</td>
<td>Teach all lessons/activities through Hmong language (maths, health, art, language, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ages 4–5)</td>
<td>Supervise/mentor local teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson plans and documentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KG 2</td>
<td>Teach spoken Thai language twice a day (30 minutes in total)</td>
<td>Teach all lessons/activities through Hmong language (maths, health, art, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ages 5–6)</td>
<td>Supervise/mentor local teacher</td>
<td>Teach Hmong literacy (Thai script)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson plans and documentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Introduce Thai vocabulary for key concepts in all subjects (maths, science, social studies, etc.)</td>
<td>Teach all subjects through Hmong language (maths, science, social studies, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ages 6–7)</td>
<td>Semester 1: Teach spoken Thai</td>
<td>Teach Hmong literacy (Thai script)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semester 2: Teach Thai literacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervise/mentor local teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson plans and documentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teach English as a foreign language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Introduce Thai vocabulary for key concepts in all subjects (maths, science, social studies, etc.)</td>
<td>Teach all subjects through Hmong language (maths, science, social studies, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ages 7–8)</td>
<td>Teach Thai literacy</td>
<td>Teach Hmong literacy (Thai script)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervise/mentor local teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson plans and documentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teach English as foreign language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Teach Thai vocabulary and key concepts in all subjects (maths, science, social studies)</td>
<td>Introduce Hmong vocabulary for key concepts and check understanding in all subjects (maths, science, social studies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ages 8–9)</td>
<td>Teach Thai literacy</td>
<td>Teach Hmong literacy (Thai script)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervise/mentor local teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson plans and documentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teach English as foreign language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.2 Writing the Hmong language

Tan (2012) posits that the most widely recognised writing system for the Hmong language in Thailand is the Romanised Popular Alphabet, which was developed in Laos in the 1950s and uses the Roman script. Although a writing system for Hmong using Thai script was developed in Thailand in the 1960s, it gained only localised interest or use (Tan 2012). When preparations for the Hmong-Thai bilingual project began in February 2009 a three-day workshop with school and community representatives took place at the Chiangrai 4 ESA Office in Thoeng to decide whether the bilingual project should use the Roman-script writing system or a Thai-script writing system for Hmong language materials (Tan 2012). Tan writes that even though initially the Hmong representatives were in favour of using the Roman-script system, as this is widely used in Thailand, Laos and the United States, they changed their mind and opted for a Thai-script writing system when education officials said this would help the children to learn Thai more quickly. The Hmong writing system used in the bilingual project is an adaptation of the 1960s Thai script writing system, and is used only by local teachers and students in the project. This issue will be addressed in detail in chapter 6.
4

Research Design and Methodology

This chapter explains the design of this research project: the aim, the methodological approach, the methods of data collection and analysis, strengths and limitations of the research and ethical considerations.

4.1 Research topic and questions

This research explores the successes and challenges of the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project from the perspective of some of the key stakeholders: class teachers, local teachers, headteachers and parents. There are four schools in the project and one aim was to make the research as representative as possible. Although students in this bilingual project are important stakeholders, they have no clear point of comparison as all their education has used a bilingual approach. Furthermore, as the age range of students in the project is four to eight years old, it was decided not to seek their views directly in this research, but rather to focus on teachers. However, class teachers, local teachers, headteachers and parents were asked for their perceptions of the experience of students in the project. There are two central research questions addressed in the research design:

Q1. What successes do educators and parents identify in the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project?
Q2. What challenges do educators and parents identify in the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project?

4.2 Rationale and methodological approach

The decision to combine qualitative and quantitative research methods was influenced by my rationale for undertaking the research project. A mixed methods approach to research can make use of the strengths and address the limitations of a solely qualitative or solely quantitative approach (Creswell 2008). Having worked with teachers in the Hmong-Thai bilingual project for several years in 2009–2012, I was keen that the research on the project’s benefits and challenges should be based on their experiences and opinions. Semi-structured interviews seemed to offer the best way to collect this rich type of qualitative data, offering the opportunity to ‘access people’s perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality’ (Punch 2005:168). At the same time, I was aware that the future of the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project would be decided in early 2014, so I wanted this research to be accessible and as credible as possible to decision and policy makers. As one of the main criticisms of qualitative research is that it lacks generalisability (Creswell 2008), I chose to interview a large sample of teachers and also use questionnaires to collect some quantitative data, so that I could check whether the interview data was representative of the wider group. I also had access to secondary quantitative data from the Chiangrai 4 ESA: test scores for grade 2 students in the four bilingual project schools and six comparison schools, taken in February 2013. Although analysis of this quantitative data is not the main focus of the research, it has provided a useful source against which to compare the impressions of parents, teachers and headteachers about the progress students have made.

4.3 Data collection methods and fieldwork

The data was collected at the Hmong-Thai bilingual project schools in Chiangrai Province during the last two weeks of June 2013. Two consecutive days were spent at each school, with interviews conducted each day whenever participants were available; questionnaires were given out on the first day of a visit and collected on the second day.
4.3.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the main method of data collection, as they allow the flexibility to set areas for discussion while responding to participants’ interests. There are thirty-eight classes across the four schools, making a total of seventy-six teachers, although not every class always had both a class teacher and local teacher at the time of the data collection. To ensure the interview data was as representative as possible, sixteen interviews were carried out with teaching staff: eight with local teachers and eight with class teachers. These were equally distributed across the four schools (see table 7). Three of the four headteachers were also interviewed, with the fourth unavailable at the time of my visit. The two Hmong coordinators from the local community were also interviewed. Due to time constraints and availability, only a small sample of parents were interviewed in three small group interviews. All the interviews were conducted in Thai and audio recorded; although Thai is not the first language of the researcher or the interviewees, it was the common language of communication. During one of the group interviews a mother understood the researcher’s questions in Thai but preferred to answer in Hmong, which was then translated into Thai by the coordinator (see appendix A for interview questions).

Table 7. Number of interviews conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
<th>School C</th>
<th>School D</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local teachers</td>
<td>2 interviews (KG2 and Grade 2)</td>
<td>2 interviews (KG2 and Grade 2)</td>
<td>2 interviews (KG1 and Grade 1)</td>
<td>2 interviews (KG2 and Grade 2)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class teachers</td>
<td>2 interviews (KG2 and Grade 1)</td>
<td>2 interviews (KG2 and Grade 2)</td>
<td>2 interviews (KG1 and Grade 1)</td>
<td>2 interviews (KG2 and Grade 3)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headteachers</td>
<td>1 interview</td>
<td>1 interview</td>
<td>1 interview</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and Coordinators</td>
<td>1 interview (one parent together with coordinator)</td>
<td>2 interviews (focus group of 3 parents; coordinator)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1 interview (focus group of 2 parents and a local teacher)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of interviews</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.2 Survey questionnaires

Two similar versions of the survey questionnaire were prepared in Thai in advance of the school visits by the researcher and language was checked by a native Thai speaker: one version for class teachers and one for local teachers (see appendix B for class teacher version). Due to time constraints the questionnaires were not piloted, although alterations were made to the layout after use at the first two schools. These were distributed to around two-thirds of the seventy-six teachers in the project, depending on availability during the school visits. This survey asked for some background information, and then gave forty-three or forty-five statements seeking the participants’ opinion on the bilingual programme using a five-point Likert scale. The rationale for using questionnaires was to reach a wider sample of teachers, and also to provide a more anonymous opportunity to give feedback than is possible in an interview setting. Twenty-eight of the class teachers returned questionnaires, although four were not fully completed or valid, and local teachers returned twenty-two questionnaires, making a total of forty-six valid questionnaires (see table 8).
Table 8. Number of valid survey questionnaires returned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
<th>School C</th>
<th>School D</th>
<th>Total all schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KG. 1–2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1–3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KG. 1–2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1–3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total by school</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.3 Grade 2 Test Results

Test results for grade 2 students in bilingual and comparison classes were received from the Chiangrai 4 ESA after the period of the fieldwork. Students were tested in the four bilingual project schools, four comparison schools in nearby Hmong village schools and two comparison schools in Thai schools in the nearby town of Thoeng. The students took tests in Thai language, mathematics and science in February 2013, with the bilingual students also taking a test in Hmong language. All students took the Thai language test in Thai, but the maths and science test papers were translated into Hmong for students in the four bilingual schools. The Thai and maths papers are standard tests used across the Chiangrai 4 ESA, and the science paper was developed especially for the bilingual project. Table 9 in the next section summarises the number of classes and students for whom the test data is available.

4.4 Data analysis

The interview data was translated directly into English during transcription by the researcher. A selection of interviews was coded in detail, comparing the emerging themes within each interview and between interviews. Then the rest of the interview data was coded focusing on those themes, adapting the categories to ensure they fitted the data from all interviews well. The two key research questions were used to give a general shape to the categorisation of the themes.

The questionnaire data was coded and put into a spreadsheet format, and analysis of this quantitative data was intentionally left until some of the interview data had been coded, to ensure that there was no false imposition of the pre-prepared questionnaire themes on the interview data. The questionnaire response data was analysed within each data set, then data from local and class teachers were cross-compared and finally these results were compared with the interview data.
Table 9. Number of grade 2 students tested in Thai, maths and science in Hmong-Thai bilingual project schools and comparison schools, February 2013 (Data from Chiangrai 4 Educational Service Area)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>School Code</th>
<th>Class Code</th>
<th>Male students</th>
<th>Female students</th>
<th>Total no. students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools implementing Hmong-Thai Bilingual Education (HB = Hmong Bilingual)</td>
<td>HB1 (School A)</td>
<td>HB1.1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HB1.2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HB2 (School B)</td>
<td>HB2.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HB2.2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HB3 (School C)</td>
<td>HB3.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HB4 (School D)</td>
<td>HB4.1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HB4.2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 schools</td>
<td>7 classes</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison schools in Hmong-speaking villages in mountains, using Thai language for education (HC = Hmong Comparison)</td>
<td>HC1</td>
<td>HC1.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HC2</td>
<td>HC2.1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HC3</td>
<td>HC3.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HC4</td>
<td>HC4.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 schools</td>
<td>4 classes</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison schools in Northern Thai-speaking town, using Thai for education (TC = Thai Comparison)</td>
<td>TC1</td>
<td>TC1.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TC2</td>
<td>TC2.1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 schools</td>
<td>2 classes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All schools in grade 2 testing</td>
<td>10 schools</td>
<td>13 classes</td>
<td>155 boys</td>
<td>132 girls</td>
<td>287 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The test data was analysed last as it was received by email after the fieldwork. The average test scores of each class were calculated as a percentage, so that the data was comparable between classes. This simple quantitative indicator of student achievement was compared to stakeholders’ perceptions of student progress in interview and survey questionnaire data. In this way the three sets of data enriched the findings to answer the research questions.

4.5 Positionality, limitations, and strengths

Having previously worked with the Hmong-Thai bilingual programme as an adviser and coordinator, I had some good contacts, relationships and background knowledge of the context as a researcher. At the same time, many of the research participants knew me as an advocate for bilingual education, which could have influenced the degree of openness with which they shared their opinions. On the other hand, I was no longer working with the project and had not visited the area in nearly a year, which put me back in the position of an outsider. This distance allowed me to reflect more objectively on the research, and may have made it easier for participants to express their opinions on the Hmong-Thai project more freely.

The limitations of this research include the ambitious scope and amount of data collected, which was challenging to analyse comprehensively in a short time. The questionnaires were rather too long, which meant that some of the participants appeared to have marked their answers without reading the statements clearly. This led to four returned questionnaires being deemed invalid, which could have been avoided through piloting the instrument. It would have been good to interview more parents with
children in the project, but this was not possible to arrange during the fieldwork, and would have further extended the amount of time needed for analysis. Other stakeholders who were not included in the research design are students, community leaders and education officials from the ESA, FAL and OBEC.

However, the large amount of data was also one of the strengths of this research. The themes which emerged across data suggest that perceptions across the four schools were similar but not the same, so it was productive to include a wide range of participants.

4.6 Ethical considerations

The most important ethical consideration in undertaking the research for this book was that participants should be aware of the purpose of the data collection and its planned use, and that they were free to choose whether or not to participate. Furthermore, all participants were to remain anonymous wherever possible, to avoid publishing names or information that would make identification of the participants easier. All interviewees were given a short information sheet written in Thai, and also received an oral explanation of the purpose of research. Written consent was deemed culturally unnecessary, so oral consent was sought from potential participants both to participate in the interview and to have the interview audio recorded. The same information was included on the cover sheet of the questionnaires, and participants were given a blank envelope in which to place completed questionnaires, which were returned to the researcher anonymously. The ethical review procedure of the Department of Education and Social Work at the University of Sussex approved the project as low-risk.
5 Perceived Successes of Bilingual Education Project

The successes which educators and parents identified in the first four years of the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project are concerned with the way it has benefited students. This indicates that the project has to some extent had the desired impact on teaching and learning. The four themes emerging are students’ progress in literacy, their understanding in class, their enjoyment of learning and the value of the Hmong language being recognised in school.

5.1 Students making progress in literacy

Students’ ability to read was the theme most frequently mentioned by all groups of stakeholders, referring to both Thai and Hmong. This is key in their measurement of the success of the project. All the local teachers talked about it, comparing the progress of children in bilingual classes with other students in the school but not in the programme:

- The children have gained the most: they can read and write. (Local teacher, School A, Interview 3)
- The results you can see are the reading and writing. Yes, with the reading, they can spell things out and read the words... in Thai. (Local coordinator, FAL, Interview 6)
- If you take a grade 1 child and compare them with a grade 4 child who is not studying in (the bilingual) way, the grade 4 child won't be able to read it, but the grade 1 child can. You can see the difference. (Local teacher, School A, Interview 5)

Local teachers also contrast their students' progress with their own struggles learning to read Thai, with most of them saying it took them until grade 3 or 4 before they could read and spell, rather than repeat or copy words. One local teacher told of how when reading comprehension questions in grade 5 or 6 she would just choose a paragraph to copy out as an answer, as she did not understand enough Thai to find the key point.

Parents also use literacy as the measure of success, comparing the progress of children in the project with their older siblings who have been taught using only Thai. It was generally agreed by educators that parents who were initially concerned about the project changed their minds once their child reached the end of grade 1, when Thai literacy had been taught for a semester. However, they also explained that unless the parents saw this with their own eyes, they were unlikely to be convinced.

Class teachers also talked about children’s improved reading skills, though with less enthusiasm than the local teachers. They recognise that the children are developing reading skills, but some of the teachers are concerned that progress in Thai literacy is not fast enough. Similarly, the headteachers were pleased with the progress of the students in primary grades, and are confident that the bilingual programme is having a positive effect on the students’ Thai and literacy skills. Yet they reserved judgment about whether using the Hmong language would bring about the desired results in the National Tests for grade 3 students in February 2014.

These interview findings broadly reflect the survey questionnaire data, with class teachers and local teachers differing slightly in their evaluation of how much the bilingual programme was helping student literacy. The response class teachers made to the survey statement ‘Students in the bilingual project can read and write better than other students’ was mostly agreement, although more local teachers were in agreement than class teachers (see figure 3). In both groups of teachers there is still around a third of the group who responded that they are not sure how good students’ Thai literacy skills are, which may reflect the opinion of managers that the real proof will come when students sit the grade 3 National Tests.
The optimism of those educators who feel the students are doing well in Thai and Hmong literacy is supported by the results of the Thai language test taken by grade 2 students in February 2013 (see figure 4). The average test score across the seven classes in the bilingual project was 62 percent, compared to an average of only 41 percent across the four classes of students in other Hmong villages, and 62.5 percent for the two classes in Thai schools in town. This shows a good level of achievement that should reassure teachers and parents.

Figure 3. Class and local teacher responses to question 22 of survey.

Figure 4. Average class scores in grade 2 Thai language test, February 2013. (Data from Chiangrai 4 Educational Service Area)
5.2 Students understand, participate and ask questions in class

Students’ improved understanding and increased participation in class was the theme most emphasised by class teachers, and also highlighted by local teachers and headteachers. Class teachers recognise that their students can understand more when they teach with the help of a local teacher who speaks the students’ language:

When we teach, the children understand … They have a better understanding of what we’re teaching. If you compare it to the old way of teaching and learning, it’s better. (Class teacher, School B, Interview 11)

Another class teacher recognised that students have more opportunities for development when their own language is used in school:

Also it’s a foundation, they say, to be able to develop the children’s thinking skills, using their imagination, learning to analyse, which children show by speaking. If they’re using Thai, which they don’t understand well, then they won’t be able to show it. (Class teacher, School C, Interview 14)

Several class teachers remarked on the self-confidence that the children show in class, speaking to their teachers and asking questions in a way that is not seen in students who are not in the project. The local teachers painted this same picture of students who are confident and enthusiastic to take part in classroom activities, and who will come and ask the local teachers for help when they do not understand. The survey responses for the statement ‘Students ask questions of the teachers’ shows that more local teachers agree with this assertion than class teachers, most probably because students are still more likely to approach the teacher who can speak Hmong’ (see figure 5).

![Q24. Students are confident to ask questions of the teacher](image)

Figure 5. Class and local teacher responses to question 24 of survey.

Many of the local teachers contrast this boldness in the classroom with memories of their own experiences at school: some of them remember not daring to speak to their teacher until grade 3 or 4, for fear of getting the Thai wrong. The memories of their own struggles to understand are still vivid, and several of them mentioned that their motivation for continuing as a local teacher is to provide their students a better experience than they had:

When the teacher said something I would never dare answer. I was scared I would say it wrong and the teacher wouldn’t understand me. (Local teacher, School A, Interview 3)
If we didn’t understand what the Thai teacher was teaching, we wouldn’t dare to ask the Thai teacher. But now that there’s a Hmong teacher, if the children don’t understand they’ll come and ask, ‘What am I meant to do here? I don’t understand, what do I need to know to understand it?’, and the Hmong teacher explains it. So that’s better than when I was studying. (Local teacher, School B, Interview 12)

I regret all that time that went by without my understanding anything. They focused on us being able to read it, read it, read it, but we didn’t understand what it meant. (Local teacher, School C, Interview 15)

However, although both class and local teachers recognise that students can understand more than previous groups, this has yet to lead to confidence among the class teachers that this is really helping the students to learn. Figure 6 shows teacher responses to the statement ‘Using Hmong language helps students do better in all subjects’. While nineteen of twenty-two local teachers agreed with the statement, only twelve out of twenty-four class teachers did so, while nine were undecided. So it appears that not all the teachers are convinced yet that using Hmong in teaching and learning is truly helping the children across all subjects, and that class teachers are less convinced than local teachers.

![Graph showing teacher responses to Q25](image)

**Figure 6.** Class and local teacher responses to question 25 of survey.

The results of the mathematics and science tests that grade 2 students took in February 2013 serve as an indicator of students’ learning in non-language subjects. Figure 7 shows the class average score in the mathematics test. The average class score in each of the seven bilingual classes was higher than in each of the four Hmong comparison classes, with an overall average of 67 percent in the bilingual project and just 43 percent across the Hmong schools. This also compares well with the average of 56 percent in the Thai comparison classes. Interestingly, the lowest average (52%) in math for students in the bilingual classes was higher than the highest scores in the Hmong schools and almost as high (55%, 56%) as the two town Thai schools.
Figure 7. Average class scores in grade 2 mathematics test, February 2013.
(Data from Chiangrai 4 Educational Service Area)

Figure 8 shows the class average score in the science test. The average class score in each of the seven bilingual classes was higher than in each of the four Hmong comparison classes, with an overall average of 63 percent in the bilingual project and just 35 percent across the Hmong schools. This again compares well with the average of 63 percent in the Thai control classes. However, the gap between the average score in different classes within the bilingual project schools (such as Class 4.1 with 68% and Class 4.2 with 44%) is wider than that for mathematics, so more research is needed to find out the reason for this.
It seems that class teachers in particular may be underestimating the positive effect that the use of Hmong as language of instruction is having on the students in their classes, perhaps because the majority of the learning is taking place in Hmong. The local teachers seem to have a better appreciation than the class teachers of the positive impact on the students’ learning, partly because of their own experience of struggling to understand at school, partly because of the classroom interaction in Hmong. Another point of interest is that the maths and science tests were taken in Hmong in the project schools and in Thai in the comparison schools. This may have led many Thai teachers and principals to be unsure (perhaps anxious) that this success would be repeated in National Tests in grade 3, which all grade 3 students take in Thai.

5.3 Students enjoy school and learning

As well as students’ improved literacy and understanding of their lessons, stakeholders also identified students’ enjoyment of school, of reading and learning as a success of the project. Several of the kindergarten class teachers explained how the transition from the home to the school environment was more positive for children in the bilingual project:

The children are familiar with the language they speak at home. So when they meet a Thai teacher they’re scared – but when they come to the bilingual classes, we can take care of them – it’s good. (Class teacher, School A, Interview 2)

The headteachers also recognise the positive effects that the bilingual project has on students’ motivation and their attendance at school:

Students aren’t stressed anymore, and they want to come to school. The teacher can understand the students; the students can understand the teacher. So they are happy…. And the children want to come and learn. (Headteacher, School B, Interview 10)
Parents have also noticed their children’s positive attitude towards school: a mother whose child is now in grade 3 in the project smiled as she said how much her child enjoys coming to school and never misses a day (Interview 9). A class teacher told how a parent at a school meeting said how pleased they felt when one day their child got home from school and sang an English song they had just learned, complete with actions (Interview 23). This teacher said how proud she was that her students were sharing what they had learned at home, when they never used to do so.

A class teacher at a different school related how several parents stood up in a meeting about the project to say that they were happy with the project because their children ‘like reading’ (Interview 21). This same teacher said she had noticed how much the colourful big books used in the projects drew the children’s interest. During my fieldwork at the schools, I regularly observed children poring over the Thai and Hmong books produced for the project during their free time. A local teacher also talked about how much his young students enjoy using their literacy skills:

The children love to read. So when they’ve finished this story, they want to find a new story….The children like writing, as well, writing the Hmong language. (Local teacher, School C, Interview 16)

As well as the children’s improved attendance and enjoyment of learning, the headteachers also commented on their self-confidence and good social skills:

The students have skills in Thai language, they’re confident to participate, they have skills in group work... and having the character... the characteristic of loving to learn. They love to learn. They’re not shy, they have confidence to express themselves. (Headteacher, School B, Interview 10)

Many of the teachers shared a similarly positive view of students’ participation in class:

The thing that I think has been successful is the children, the children themselves, the children express themselves. And also, the children have self-confidence. Whatever they’re doing, they’re confident in themselves. (Local teacher, School C, Interview 16)

A majority of teachers in the project believe that ‘students in the bilingual project are more creative than other students’ in the school, with seventeen out of twenty-two local teachers and twelve out of twenty-four class teachers agreeing with this statement (see figure 9). This also shows that local teachers are more likely to perceive their students as creative than class teachers are, which may be due to the language barrier between class teachers and their young students. As one of the local teachers pointed out, using the local language in school means that children can express ‘whatever they are thinking’ (Interview 15) when the local teacher asks for their thoughts.

![Figure 9. Class and local teacher responses to question 26 of survey.](image-url)
These descriptions of children’s enjoyment of school are indicators of the kind of school environment that can foster good learning, as emphasised in a UNICEF publication on best practices in education: ‘The social and emotional environment of the classroom and the interactions among children and teachers are critical to creating a quality learning environment (UNICEF 2003b:23).’

5.4 Local language and culture valued in school

Several of the research participants also referred to the value of Hmong students seeing their language and culture recognised in the education system, helping them to maintain their heritage language and giving them a positive view of their dual ethnic and national identity. One class teacher said of the use of Hmong in schools, ‘I think it’s good. It’s valuable because they won’t forget their own language. Secondly, their culture… is not lost – it remains part of their identity (Class teacher, School A, Interview 4’

A local teacher echoed this sentiment, explaining that the bilingual project offers a way for children to learn the Thai language well whilst not having to abandon their own language and culture (Interview 19). This teacher contrasted this approach with the experience of children who are sent away to study in a Thai town from a young age, in the hope that they will do better in their studies, but who then return to their village unable to speak Hmong. She expressed the hope that using the Hmong culture and language in school would raise its status in the eyes of society, and in the way that Hmong children thought of themselves.

Two local teachers contrasted the experience of the young students in the bilingual classes with their own school days, when teachers tried to impose a system of fines for any secondary school student who spoke Hmong instead of Thai on school premises (Interviews 8 and 15). One of these teachers said that although she recognised this was because their teachers wanted them to improve their Thai, the effect was to make her feel stressed (Interview 15). She continued to relate how some of their teachers had ridiculed them for wanting to listen to Hmong songs, asking why they wanted to remain ‘stupid’.

One headteacher explained passionately that the Thai education system needs to change the way it sees local languages, valuing unity in diversity rather than imposing assimilation (Interview 1). He spoke of how the Northern Thai language and culture have been neglected because of the education system, and how ethnic minority people like the Hmong have been made to feel ashamed of their roots. He explained how the bilingual project offers the opportunity to teach children to be proud of their dual identity as good Thai citizens who are also Hmong, beginning from their familiar surroundings:

The language they speak, the thoughts, the beliefs, the culture, the customs they have – and then teach them that this is a part of Thailand…. The language that they speak is also a part of Thailand. (Headteacher, School A, Interview 1)

Overall, data from interviews and survey questionnaires indicate that what educators and parents perceive as most successful in the Hmong-Thai bilingual project is the impact on students’ learning, literacy, understanding, self-confidence and enjoyment of their schooling experience. Whereas most class teachers were not convinced of the effectiveness of local language-based bilingual education at the start of the project, believing that Thai was the only language needed in schools, data from the interviews and questionnaires show that the majority now believe it has at least some value (see figure 10).
Figure 10. Class and local teacher responses to questions 28 and 29 of survey.

It could therefore be said that another success of the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project has been to create a new awareness amongst educators about the potential benefits of first language-based bilingual education. Almost all of the teachers responded that they now ‘see bilingual education more positively than they had before’ (survey question 31), with twenty-one out of twenty-four class teachers and twenty-one out of twenty-two local teachers agreeing with the statement. One class teacher wrote on their questionnaire that ‘this project should continue up to grade 6’ (Class teacher, Survey 24).

The successes and benefits of the bilingual education project as perceived by educators and parents can be summarised as follows:

- Most educators say students have good Thai literacy skills
- Students are also able to read and write Hmong
- Many parents are pleased and proud of children’s literacy

- Teachers see that students understand better in class
- Students feel free to ask and answer questions
- Grade 2 test results show students are achieving well

- Students like coming to school and are rarely absent
- Students enjoy reading story books

- Students’ language used for teaching
- Students’ culture is reflected in some teaching materials

Figure 11. Perceived successes of bilingual education project.
6 Perceived Challenges to Bilingual Education Project

The challenges identified by educators and parents in the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project are complex, but can be grouped under four broad themes: staffing challenges, issues with teaching materials, lack of funding or policy support and lack of community acceptance.

6.1 Challenges with staffing

There are several interrelated challenges regarding staff in the project which will be discussed in three sections: the high turnover of staff and low salary of local teachers, the low qualifications and status of local teachers, and the lack of motivation of class teachers.

6.1.1 Staff turnover and salary of local teachers

Local teachers, class teachers and headteachers all see the high turnover of teaching staff as a threat to the continuity and quality of teaching in the project. Because the schools are in a rural area, it is common for class teachers to transfer to another school at short notice in the middle of term, often with a considerable wait before a new class teacher arrives to replace them. There has also been a high turnover of education managers. For instance, two of the four current headteachers were not present at the start of the bilingual project in 2009. When local teachers were hired for the bilingual project from nearby Hmong villages, it was hoped that they would provide continuity for the students, but in fact this has not generally been the case.

Many of the interviewees explained that when teachers leave midway through the year, the new teachers have no training in bilingual teaching methods or in the rationale of the project. When new class teachers arrive having missed the training workshop at the beginning of term, they are surprised to find themselves sharing the classroom with a Hmong-speaking local teacher, and they have to rely on other class teachers in the school to explain and share their experience.

In the case of local teachers, it is widely recognised in the project that the low salary they are paid is the major challenge in retaining them:

Things are expensive to buy, but the monthly salary of the local teachers is only [Thai baht] 4,000; it’s not enough to live on.... [Some local teachers] want to stay, but they can’t stay, because the money’s only a little, and there’s lots and lots of work. The money’s not enough. (Local teacher, School A, Interview 5)

Data from the survey questionnaire confirms that dissatisfaction with their salary is widespread among the local teachers. Only one of twenty-two local teachers agreed with the statement that they were ‘satisfied with their salary’, whereas nine disagreed, eight strongly disagreed and three were unsure (survey question 6). One of the headteachers mentioned that the school was having difficulties hiring new local teachers because of the low wages. A class teacher stated that this problem affects local teachers:

They can’t live on it, so they have to leave, and we have to find new people. And when you’ve got the new people, you have to train them again. If you don’t train them then they can’t do it. (Class teacher, School C, Interview 14)

Another class teacher linked the salary of the local teachers to the quality of teaching and learning in the project in a comment that was added to their questionnaire: ‘I would like more money for the teachers in the project, so that there is greater continuity for the children (Class teacher, Survey 5).’

A related issue brought up by several of the local teachers is the lack of a clear handover process when one teacher leaves and another arrives. This led to students either being taught the same content again or missing part of what they should have been learning (Interview 15). One local teacher told of...
how she saw a clear negative impact on the skills and behaviour of students in a class with a high turnover of teachers in the previous year (Interview 18).

When local teachers join the project at short notice, they have the additional problem of not being familiar with the Thai-based writing system for Hmong, a point which was highlighted by a headteacher as well as local teachers. Although earlier research on the Hmong-Thai project found that local teachers could learn the new writing system relatively easily given time, especially if they are familiar with the Roman-based writing system (Tan 2012), it is difficult at short notice to gain sufficient fluency to use it as the language of instruction. One local teacher explained her initial experience of using the Thai-based Hmong writing system as follows:

> When they hired me it was nearly the start of term already…. So I went straight to the teacher training workshop. Then I came back to teach the children, though I still didn’t know how to read and write Hmong…. It was difficult. (Local teacher, School A, Interview 5)

Another local teacher told of how one newly-hired teaching assistant began to teach their grade 1 students by writing on the board in Hmong using the Roman script, which of course the students had never seen before (Interview 16).

### 6.1.2 Qualifications and status of local teachers

The fact that local teachers are not qualified teachers was identified as another challenge, with several educators suggesting that bilingual education would be stronger and more viable with a qualified, bilingual local teacher. Despite receiving only a week or two of training each year, local teachers are expected to deliver much of the curriculum. During the interviews one local teacher reflected on the difficulties experienced when first teaching:

> The first day I came in, the teacher didn’t give me any advice on how to teach…. She just left me, and I couldn’t manage the children, and the first day I couldn’t cope. (Local teacher, School C, Interview 15)

This demonstrates how the development of teaching skills in the local teachers is initially highly dependent on the mentoring skills of the class teachers.

Although Hmong is the language which the local teachers speak at home and in the community, for many of them it was not a language of literacy before joining the project, and certainly not using the Thai-based writing system. It is also not a language that they have used to discuss academic subjects before. One of the local teachers described the challenge of the finding the right Hmong terms:

> The difficult thing is… the Hmong vocabulary…. When it’s more academic. Where it’s like you don’t really know what word to use, so that… I have to think of it myself…. Well, I do it according to what I understand…. This word has this meaning, so it would probably come out as this word. (Local teacher, School C, Interview 15)

The questionnaire data in figure 12 below reflect the fact that the local teachers are more confident using Hmong to teach literacy than they are using it to teach other subjects across the curriculum, with only three unsure of their literacy skills but seven unsure of their skills in other subjects.
Several of the local teachers felt that their lack of qualification also meant that a minority of class teachers would not respect or accept them as teachers. The examples they gave of treatment that made them feel slighted included being ordered around and sent on errands (Interview 3), being scolded for using the school photocopier for worksheets (Interview 5), being made to feel stupid when they asked for advice on teaching (Interview 15) and being publicly shamed (Interview 8). Although these local teachers emphasised that only a minority of the class teachers behaved in this way, it still affects their job satisfaction. One teacher said this was a major factor in former colleagues leaving the project, as it was impossible to stay when they felt continuously stressed or slighted (Interview 3). A comment written by a local teacher on a questionnaire addresses the same issue:

There are some Thai teachers who don’t respect the authority of the local teachers. They use them to do errands. Some things that the local teacher doesn’t know or doesn’t understand they’ll complain or speak to them like they don’t respect the authority of the local teacher. Sometimes I feel discouraged. (Local teacher, Survey 9)

In addition to their lower level of education and qualifications, the survey background data shows that local teachers are often younger (average age 25) than the class teachers (average age 36) – and of course they are also from a minority ethnic group. In Thai culture it is normal for ‘seniors’ to expect ‘juniors’ to run errands, which a local teacher acknowledged during the interview, but went on to say that in a few cases it occurred ‘more than it ought to’ (Interview 3).

One of the class teachers felt that the local teachers did not always know the correct way to behave according to Thai culture (Interview 2); and another class teacher suggested more strongly that the local teachers did not have the maturity, commitment or professionalism needed to be teachers (Interview 7). It is unsurprising that differences in culture and status may lead to some tensions between the teachers:

Having two teachers together like this can cause problems. Because each person has a different level of education, a different culture, and then people are of different minds. When two teachers

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1 The survey questionnaire for teaching assistants (local teachers) is not included in appendix B, ‘Survey Questionnaire for Class Teachers’, but is cited in References under Dooley 2013c. All other survey questions for teaching assistants discussed in this book are the same as questions for class teachers.
come to work together there will be things that are uncomfortable, and then not working to the full extent. (Local coordinator, FAL, Interview 6)

It is testament to the good will of the majority of staff in the Hmong-Thai project that most of the local teachers and class teachers surveyed agreed that they have a good working relationship with the teacher with whom they are paired (see Q8, figure 13), although their perception of the ‘cooperation between class and local teachers across the school’ is less positive (Q7, figure 13).

![Figure 13. Class and local teacher responses to questions 8 and 7 of survey.](image)

Building a good working relationship is made more difficult when there is a high turnover of teachers. Most of the teachers interviewed had been paired with more than one teacher during their time in the project, and in two cases they had worked with four different teaching partners due to staff leaving.

### 6.1.3 Motivation of class teachers

In contrast to the local teachers, class teachers did not choose to join the bilingual education project, but became a part of it when their school joined the programme. Those class teachers who were working in the school the year before students reached their grade have been involved in workshops to develop lesson plans and materials. Those who arrived at the schools midway through a semester may not have attended any bilingual training workshops before they started teaching. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that only fourteen of twenty-four class teachers surveyed agreed that they understood about bilingual education before they began teaching in the project, which is a lower proportion than the local teachers who ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ (see figure 14).
Many of the class teachers said that their first reaction to the idea of using the Hmong language in the school was a ‘strange new’ thing. A couple of the class teachers were open enough to explain that their first reaction was that it was a bad idea:

I thought that... well truthfully, I thought the same as the villagers, that the children are coming here to learn Thai, as they’ve already got a foundation in the Hmong language. They use that already, they can speak it, they’ve used it since they were born, they should already have those skills. (Class teacher, School C, Interview 14)

Only one class teacher said that they had agreed with the idea of using the local language from the start, because they had previously taught in a Karen-speaking village, and had seen how useful it was to use some Karen phrases to help children learn:

You have to show them, that... you want to know the vocabulary in the local language too. So if the Thai word is this, how do you say it in the local language? On the whole, the grade 1 and 2 children won’t understand yet, so you have to ask the older ones – ask them, this is the Thai word, so how do you say it in Karen? So the older ones will tell the younger ones, and the younger ones will say, ‘Oh, right!’ Then they’ve understood. (Class teacher, School B, Interview 11)

However, this initial reaction was the exception. Class teachers working the Hmong-Thai project explained that many of their colleagues in the rest of the school still do not understand the bilingual project and believe that it is unnecessary, which is discouraging for them.

A couple of the class teachers also explained that at first it was difficult to step back and allow an unqualified teacher to teach the students instead of them, especially when the local teacher struggled to get things right (Interviews 23 and 14). On the other hand, some of them also mentioned that it has been helpful to have an extra person to help manage the children, especially in kindergarten when the children really do not understand any Thai yet (Interviews 7 and 14).

The headteachers also explained that the bilingual project has gained a reputation for demanding attendance at long workshops outside of term time, which has meant that some teachers have requested not to teach in grades with bilingual classes:

If you ask the teachers, you need someone to come and work in the bilingual project, it’s hard to ask them to. If I’m honest, it’s because of the training workshops.... Because they don’t want to come, they don’t want to join the project, because you have to go to workshops often. Other people don’t have to go,.... but they have to go for ten days. (Headteacher, School A, Interview 1)
There was a wide divergence of opinion among class teachers responding to the questionnaire statement ‘the bilingual education project has made me work harder’ (see Q4, figure 15): eight teachers disagreed that the project was harder work, while ten agreed or strongly agreed, and six opted for the neutral ‘not sure’ response. There does not appear to be any strong correlation between these responses and factors such as school, age or grade of the teacher. On the other hand, a clear majority felt the project had given them opportunities for their professional development (Q6, figure 15).

Figures 15. Class teacher responses to questions 4 and 6 of survey.

Class teachers in the rural project area also have administrative and other special duties in the school, and this work is commonly undertaken during the school day. This was brought up as a matter of concern by several local and class teachers, although more frequently in some schools than others, possibly due to different styles of management. One class teacher said that the principle of the bilingual project was right, and that so far it had helped students, but it could improve if other duties were not assigned to teachers:

If you want it to be better, more successful than it has been so far, then the teachers, the Thai and the local, have to be able to just teach, without other duties or things interfering. If they’re just teaching, following the steps, and they are paying attention, the children ... will definitely succeed. (Class teacher, School B, Interview 11)

Several of local teachers were concerned that some of the class teachers do not fulfil their shared teaching role as expected in the bilingual project model, and that the children’s learning is suffering because of this:

If there’s so much work, why can’t they hire teachers especially to do that, and then let those who are teaching actually teach? If you make the one teaching go and do all that work, who’s going to teach the children?... If the Thai teacher teaches wholeheartedly, then the children will learn. But if they don’t teach, then the children really won’t learn. (Local teacher, School B, Interview 8)

It appears that, in contrast to one headteacher’s assumption that the project benefits from two teachers per class, some of the classroom activities are in practice being conducted by one unqualified teacher without supervision. Some of the educators also felt that in a minority of cases, the absence of the class teacher from the classroom during teaching hours could reflect apathy or opposition to the bilingual project. One local teacher pointed out that the teacher in her classroom worked hard to complete her other duties outside of teaching hours, and questioned why other teachers could not manage to do the same (Interview 18). A headteacher recognised the same problem:

Another issue is the attitude of the teachers towards the bilingual project. This is an important thing. If they have a negative attitude towards it, they will have little acceptance of the
bilingual activities, or they won’t do it according to the bilingual model. (Headteacher, School B, Interview 10)

Unless class teachers are engaged, motivated and supported in their role in the bilingual project, there will be a negative impact on student learning, local teacher development and the effectiveness of the bilingual education pilot project.

6.2 Teaching materials and lesson plans

Educators also brought up challenges related to the development and production of the lesson plans, books and other teaching materials in the bilingual education project. Each year, teachers find that the lesson plans and materials are not ready at the start of term, especially if it is the first year that grade has been taught. This is stressful and one local teacher explained that it can cause tensions between the two groups of teachers, as they are not sure how to teach without the necessary resources.

Designing lesson plans based on the national curriculum, but which also reflect principles of bilingual education, puts pressure on the class teachers. Teachers explained that before the start of term in May 2013, some of the class teachers from grades 1–3 had attended a ten-day workshop to develop lesson plans in Chiangmai, followed by another five days working at the Chiangrai 4 ESA offices. Responding to the survey statements that workshops were ‘well-organised’ and that they ‘learned something new’ each time, the class teachers were less positive overall than the local teachers (see figures 20 and 21).

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<th>Q16. I learn something new at every workshop</th>
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Figure 16. Class and local teacher responses to questions 15 and 16 of survey.

One of the headteachers explained that although he accepted that the workshops were necessary for the teachers and the bilingual project, the approach needed to be improved:

There should be benefits for them – looking after them and facilitating things for those attending the training – I’d like to see that changed and improved. Not just going because they’ve been ordered to … ‘You have to do what I say, just like this’… that’s not right. (Headteacher, School B, Interview 10)

Class teachers were also less likely than local teachers to be satisfied with the quality of the lesson plans for their grade of the project (see Q17, figure 22). Some concerns about the quality of the lesson plans were expressed during interviews by both teachers and headteachers. One headteacher was worried that the bilingual curriculum would disadvantage students because lesson plans are not based closely enough on the textbooks used by other schools (Interview 1). A class teacher was worried about children in grade 3 using a transition primer and simple reading books designed for the project, when
they had a National Test at the end of the academic year (Interview 21). Another class teacher suggested that children are not being introduced to a full curriculum in terms of Thai literature, and suggested that education officials who are curriculum experts should be involved in checking the lesson plans to ensure their quality (Interview 23).

![Figure 17. Class and local teacher responses to questions 17 and 18 of survey.](image)

There were also some challenges identified regarding the production of reading books and worksheets for the project classes. Again, the local teachers were more likely to be satisfied with the Hmong language materials than the class teachers were with the Thai language materials (see Q18, figure 23). During my fieldwork visits to the schools in late June, teachers were just printing a new set of A3-size Thai language reading books for the grade 2 classes. Headteachers indicated that the materials use a lot of school finances, while teachers pointed out that the practicalities of photocopying, printing and producing materials on time was a challenge each year. One class teacher suggested a more efficient system should be put in place, so that teachers do not have to produce all the materials themselves (Interview 7). One of the project coordinators said that it was difficult to ensure that all the schools prepared the teaching materials needed on time, as without follow-up from the ESA some schools were less efficient than others (Interview 6). A local teacher also suggested that the materials from previous years needed to be more carefully checked, as some of the lesson plans and Hmong worksheets still had mistakes in the second year of use (Interview 16). So although the children clearly enjoy reading the locally-developed stories and books, it seems there is room for more efficiency in the production of the materials year by year.

### 6.3 Sustainable funding and policy support for bilingual project

Underlying the challenges of staffing and teaching materials is the broader problem of a lack of planning for a sustainable source of funding and policy support for the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project. The headteachers, class teachers, local teachers and even some parents realise that the difficulties in securing enough funding for the salaries of local teachers has been a regular stumbling block in the effective running of this pilot project, and is the biggest obstacle to the project being able to continue in years to come. Headteachers in particular emphasised how difficult it is to retain trained and experienced local teachers when the monthly salary they receive remains low. Furthermore there is no guarantee of their future prospects in the project:

You have to build up confidence in the Thai teachers and bilingual teachers that the bilingual project will not just go for two years then probably end, or go for three years then probably end, or go for four years then probably end…. We have to make it so they feel, the people who are
involved, that the results are important…. Let them see that there is some security. (Headteacher, School B, Interview 10)

This view was echoed by both class teachers and local teachers, who felt that no further bilingual projects should be started unless there was long-term funding support planned:

They have to find the funding first. Not just like, we’ll do it for two or three years and see if it’s good or not, but in the future I’m not sure if it will succeed. (Class teacher, School A, Interview 2)

If there isn’t enough funding, and they’re just thinking of doing it for a year or two, then I’d say it would be better not to do it…. Because it won’t get results…. The most important thing is that there would be bad consequences for the children … for the teachers and then for the community, these three things. (Local teacher, School C, Interview 15)

There is a general recognition among stakeholders that in order for the bilingual education project to become truly sustainable, it needs to have policy support from the Ministry of Education, with plans for implementation. One class teacher wrote, ‘Bilingual education (Thai-Hmong) ought to become policy of the Ministry of Education, in order to manage it systematically with results for quality’ (Class teacher, Survey 25).

Planning for the recruitment, training and payment of qualified bilingual teachers would also need to be part of sustainable implementation:

The thing of most concern is the issue of the local teachers…. It would have to be people from OBEC, they would have to be the ones who set the criteria, saying that this school, the schools involved in bilingual education, need contract teachers or government employees with the following characteristics. (Class teacher, School C, Interview 14)

We have to cooperate to improve this project so that it … can become part of government policy. Because once there is a salary that is sufficient, then it will encourage people to want to come. (Local coordinator, FAL, Interview 6)

Headteachers, class teachers and local teachers in the Hmong-Thai bilingual project are all aware that the project is not currently sustainable in the long-term. One of the class teachers points out that the solution to strengthening the project lies beyond the teachers:

It can’t just depend on the teachers. It can’t just depend on the school. It has to involve the school, the community, the teachers, everything, if it’s to succeed, both the government and private sectors. (Class teacher, School C, Interview 14)

6.4 More effective awareness-raising needed with the community

The final challenge identified by participants in this research is that the local community – and especially parents who have children in the project – are not yet fully convinced of its value. When teachers and headteachers were asked whether parents support the bilingual project, the most common answer was that at first almost all parents were opposed to it, but now opinion is divided, with a majority in support and a minority still opposed to bilingual education: ‘One group (of parents) likes it, the other group doesn’t like it. But if you look at it at the moment, there are more people in the group that like it’ (Class teacher, School B, Interview 11).

A few of the teachers who were with the project from the beginning have very vivid memories of the strong opposition that they had from parents at the time. This was because parents expect their children to go to school to study Thai:

At first the parents didn’t agree with it. They said their child would not learn Thai. (Class teacher, School A, Interview 4)

And they don’t agree with having a Hmong teacher teaching. ‘They learn Hmong language at home every day, and then they come to school and study Hmong again! Why don’t you teach them Thai?’ The parents say things like that. (Local teacher, School A, Interview 5)

It has already been mentioned in Section 5.1 that the main factor in parents changing their mind about the bilingual project is when they see that their own child has learned to read Thai successfully,
often by the end of grade 1 or in grade 2. It is the local teachers who are most likely to hear criticism of
the project, as they live in the same community:

When we went to work in the fields together, there was ... one parent said, ‘Before, I used to say
that you didn’t teach well, but I don’t say that anymore now. My child can read and write, can
read so well that it makes me ashamed that I can’t read yet, when my child can read.’ So that’s
something to be proud of. (Local teacher, School C, Interview 15)

However, some parents who only have children in the early years of the project, or whose children
have difficulties learning to read, remain opposed to the use of the Hmong language in school
(Interviews 15 and 18). This minority are not convinced by teachers, the school or the testimonies of
other parents. As one local teacher explained, parents still do not see how Hmong could help their
children to learn:

[Some parents] still don’t understand the principles of the project, so they’re still opposed. It
depends on the person, the people who understand. Because ... what they want ... is for the
children to know Thai, to write Thai. (Local teacher, School C, Interview 16)

A parent who does support bilingual education suggested that the parents who do not understand
the project or do not agree with it were those who had little education themselves (Interview 20). The
general perception among teachers is that community leaders, who agreed for the project to go ahead in
the schools, are more supportive of bilingual education than the parents (see figure 18). One local
teacher suggested that the community leaders and school board members may have been less concerned
from the start because they do not have young children in the school (Interview 16).

In addition to the concern that teaching Hmong in school will impair their children’s acquisition of
the Thai language, some parents are also worried about the use of the Thai script-based writing system
for Hmong, as most of them have only ever seen Hmong written in the Roman script. Local teachers
reported their encounters with parents:

At the very beginning they protested and said, ‘What language are you teaching? Why aren’t you
teaching them the Roman letters? If you teach them like this the children won’t understand!’
(Local teacher, School B, Interview 8)

‘And if they’re going to teach it [Hmong], why don’t they teach the Hmong language, why do they
teach reading Hmong that uses Thai letters?’ (Local teacher, School B, Interview 12)
Several of the local teachers said how their first impression of the bilingual project was related to the ‘strange new’ system for writing Hmong, which at first they found confusing and even strongly disliked. One of the local teachers has a sibling in the first cohort of the bilingual project, and described her initial reaction to the project and the writing system as follows:

The first time I heard about it was when the children went into the kindergarten in the first year. ...It was only Hmong language. And Thai, they couldn’t read a single letter.... And then they started teaching reading and said ‘This is Hmong language’, and I looked at it and it wasn’t. So at first I didn’t like it …. I was opposed to it. (Local teacher, School A, Interview 5)

One of the parents interviewed, whose child is just starting grade 1 in the programme, remains vehemently opposed to the bilingual education project because of the use of the Thai script to write Hmong. In his opinion, Hmong cannot be written or pronounced properly using the Thai alphabet, and students will be confused when trying to read Thai (Interview 9). In fact, survey data shows that three local teachers and six class teachers still share this belief that the Thai-based Hmong writing system confuses the students (see figure 19), although the local teachers and coordinators who have been in the project for a few years already were quick to explain that this was not a problem.

![Figure 19. Class and local teacher responses to question 23 of survey.](image)

The use of the Thai-based Hmong writing system may make it quicker for students to learn to sound out Thai words, but it also disconnects their parents from their education, as was recognised by both class and local teachers:

But when the children go home, the parents ask them, ‘What does this say, how do you read it?’ The parents can’t read it, but the children read it aloud to their parents. (Local teacher, School B, Interview 8)

It’s good in that it can be linked and transfered to Thai. But if you look at the acceptance of the community, they still don’t really accept it, because they can’t read it. Sometimes … they take home the small books, and the children read them to the parents. But the parents can’t teach their children in their language. (Class teacher, School C, Interview 14)

The current feeling among educators is that most parents do accept the bilingual project now, although a minority are still opposed, and the Thai-based writing system remains a source of confusion for some of the parents. This was reflected in the small sample of parents interviewed, with four parents with children in higher grades expressing their satisfaction with the project, one parent expressing vehement opposition because of the writing system, and another listening silently to his friend’s concerns.

In the light of this experience, there was unanimity amongst local teachers, class teachers, headteachers, coordinators and parents that if bilingual education were to be implemented elsewhere, it would be essential to consult the parents and community about whether they wanted such a programme.
A couple of the local teachers said that this was the very first thing that should be done, before anything else was planned or begun:

I’d want them to build understanding with the parents first. In the first place. In the very first place. Because the children, you teach the children something, they'll learn in that way. But if the parents don’t understand, the community doesn’t understand, it will be difficult to work, and then ... it’s a very big obstacle. (Local teacher, School C, Interview 15)

They ought to invite the parents, to explain the basis/evidence of the project.... Because if the parents don’t understand, then however good our evidence is, the parents won’t be interested. (Local teacher, School C, Interview 16)

A class teacher wrote an additional comment at the end of a questionnaire which shows insight into the importance of having strong cooperation between school and community for bilingual education to be accepted and successful for minority groups in Thailand:

Bilingual education is useful for ethnic minority children who are all from the same ethnic group, and for education to be successful it must involve the school, community, parents, including leaders and people who have knowledge of local cultures from each community. (Class teacher, Survey 17)

6.5 Summary

The four key areas of challenge identified by educators and parents in the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project are staffing, instructional materials, project funding and policy support, and community engagement. This is summarised in figure 20:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff turnover, salary and status of local teachers, motivation of class teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• High staff turnover gives training and continuity problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local teachers have low salary and status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Class teachers are not always motivated in project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges in production of teaching materials and lesson plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Development of lesson plans difficult for class teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Production of materials inefficient and costly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some concerns over quality control of curriculum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insufficient funding and policy support for project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Insufficient funding for local teachers' salaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of financial planning and security of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No policy or technical capacity at national/local level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More effective awareness-raising needed with community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Parents not well-informed before project; thus some opposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opposition to the Thai-script writing system for Hmong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 20. Challenges in bilingual education project.
7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

The class teachers, local teachers, headteachers and parents who have been closely connected with the implementation of the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project over the last four years have gained valuable insights into benefits and challenges of bilingual education for their community. These insights warrant comparison with those by other participants in minority language bilingual education projects elsewhere in Thailand and beyond.

The successes that educators and parents have identified in the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project all relate to the positive impact which they have observed it having on students in the programme. The challenges identified range from issues which relate to internal project management, to relations with local community, to the level of education policy. These successes and challenges are summarised in figure 21.

Figure 21. Successes and challenges identified by educators and parents in the Hmong-Thai bilingual education programme.

Malone’s model of the features needed for a strong and sustained multilingual education programme addresses many of the areas that stakeholders have identified as problematic in the Hmong-Thai bilingual project. Staffing problems in the bilingual project refers to the high turnover of teachers, the low salary, status and qualifications of local teachers, and the motivation and commitment of the class teachers. Malone’s model advises recruitment and training procedures that ‘bring motivated and respected people into the programme and build their professional capacity’, as well as ‘policy support’

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2 First mentioned in section 2.2.
and ‘initial research’ which identify resources for their sustainable employment. The difficulties in
developing and producing the lesson plans and materials are covered under Malone’s headings of
instructional materials, graded reading materials and programme monitoring, as well as by the
identification of resources and funding. The challenges of insufficient funding and policy support relate
to the points of preliminary research, supportive language and education policies with directives for
implementation, and cooperation among supporting agencies. The presence of community opposition
relates both to the points of awareness-raising and mobilisation, and also the writing system which needs
to be acceptable to both community and authorities.

The Hmong-Thai bilingual education project faces challenges to its effectiveness and sustainability,
many of which might have been avoided or diminished by careful consideration and planning with
reference to Malone’s model at the start of the project. Yet despite these issues, the project has also
provided educators and parents a good example of how children can benefit from using their first
language in school.

7.2 Recommendations

Educators and parents in the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project have learned to see the value and
potential of education using minority languages in Thailand, but they also had some very clear
suggestions about the changes that would be needed if this type of programme is to be viable in
Thailand. The recommendations in this research are based on their suggestions and categorised into four
areas: teachers, materials, funded policies and advocacy.

7.2.1 Teachers for bilingual education

Bilingual education cannot be implemented without bilingual teachers. The approach used in the
Hmong-Thai project of pairing a qualified teacher with an unqualified teacher has made it possible to
deliver a bilingual education programme for Hmong students, but in its current form this arrangement is
not sustainable. The expense of paying for one teaching assistant per classroom is considerable, and the
low wage received by the local teachers means that they cannot remain in the project in the long term.
Many of the educators interviewed suggested that bilingual education in Thailand would be more viable
if qualified teachers could be recruited from minority language communities, and trained in bilingual
principles and methods. This would mean that only one salary would be needed in each bilingual
classroom, making the programme more financially viable. While one class teacher suggested that it
would be easy to recruit such teachers if teacher training scholarships were offered to minority
communities, another class teacher pointed out that there would also need to be appropriate processes
for teacher deployment in place, as the current system does not take into account the local languages
spoken by teachers or communities. This would require policies, planning and cooperation between the
Ministry of Education, OBEC, teacher training universities, ESAs and schools in areas with minority
language populations, informed by comprehensive research. As there are many demands on bilingual
teachers, especially those who are from minority language groups, good training and support networks
are essential.

7.2.2 Lesson plans and Teaching materials

In order to ensure that all the bilingual teaching materials needed are ready at the start of term, there
needs to be careful planning of what different resources are needed, who will develop them and how
they will be produced. The involvement of local teachers in the development of Hmong language reading
materials has produced some attractive and interesting books which are much enjoyed by the students,
but there is a need for a better system for the printing and reproduction of materials efficiently and cost
effectively. Many of the class teachers have grown in their professional skills through their involvement
in designing lesson plans, but currently the timescale of the workshops is too pressured, and there also
needs to be a larger technical team who can to advise and consult on matters of curriculum.
7.2.3 Policy, planning and funding

When the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project began in 2008–9, there was no clear plan for how it would be supported financially or logistically over the five-year period. Although those initiating the project began with the best of intentions, there was no initial research into the extent of support that would be needed, or any clear agreement of expectations between the implementing partners of which party would assume responsibility for finances and project implementation. The results have been clearly felt by the schools, teachers, headteachers, ESA, OBEc and FAL since then, as those working with the project have felt insecure as to whether the bilingual programme would continue, and the local teachers have been underpaid in their role. Therefore, in addition to a clear process for recruiting, deploying and retaining bilingual teachers, there also need to be supportive policies with clear planning for implementation between stakeholders in education and teacher training at national, provincial, ESA and community level. Planners need to consider the financial, technical and logistical input that is needed for a bilingual programme to run smoothly, including support for teacher training, monitoring and evaluation, materials development and engagement with the community.

7.2.4 Advocacy and Awareness-raising

First language-based bilingual education is still relatively unknown in Thailand, and therefore poorly understood from the level of minority language communities up to higher governmental levels. Educators and parents in the Hmong-Thai project have been very clear in their recommendations that there should be no expansion of bilingual education programmes for ethnic minority groups in Thailand unless it is supported by the Ministry of Education at policy and implementation levels, and also not unless bilingual education is understood and accepted by the parents whose children will be in the project. First language-based bilingual education offers an excellent opportunity to strengthen relations between schools and communities, but only if the parents agree with the programme being implemented. In the Thai context, the script and writing system used for minority languages is apparently a sensitive issue which will affect community acceptance of a bilingual programme, so this must be carefully researched and taken into account.

In conclusion, the experience and perceptions of stakeholders in this pilot project for bilingual education offer a rich resource for advocacy and planning for future strategies to ensure quality education for minority language groups in Thailand and beyond.
Appendix A: Interview Questions for Class Teachers, Local Teachers, Head Teachers and Parents (English and Thai versions)

Interview Guide for Class Teachers – หัวข้อการสัมภาษณ์กับครูไทย

1. Why did you become a teacher? Do you like your work? Why or why not?
   ทำอะไรคุณถึงมาเป็นครู คุณชอบเป็นครูไหม เพราะอะไร

2. When was the first time you remember hearing about the use of the Hmong language in teaching? What did you think at that time?
   ครั้งแรกที่คุณได้ยินเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาม้งในการเรียนการสอนคือเมื่อไร จําได้ไหมว่าในตอนนั้นคุณคิดอย่างไร

3. Do you think Hmong is a good language to use in primary teaching? Why or why not?
   คุณคิดว่าภาษาม้งเป็นภาษาที่เหมาะกับการเรียนการสอนในระดับประถมศึกษาไหม เพราะอะไร

4. Have you ever used Northern Thai in your teaching in other schools? Why or why not?
   คุณเคยใช้ภาษาคําเมืองในการเรียนการสอนที่โรงเรียนอื่นไหม เพราะอะไร

5. How do you find it working together with a teaching assistant (local teacher)?
   คุณรู้สึกอย่างไรกับการทํางานร่วมกันครูท้องถิ่น

6. What do you think are the successes of the bilingual education project?
   คุณคิดว่าโครงการทวิภาษาประสบความสำเร็จในด้านไหนบ้าง

7. What do you think are the problems or obstacles in the bilingual education project?
   คุณคิดว่าโครงการทวิภาษามีปัญหาหรืออุปสรรคในด้านไหนบ้าง

8. What do parents/guardians think about this bilingual project?
   ผู้ปกครองคิดอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับโครงการทวิภาษา

9. What are your recommendations for the future of bilingual education in Thailand?
   คุณมีข้อเสนอแนะอะไรบ้างเกี่ยวกับการเรียนการสอนแบบทวิภาษาในอนาคตที่ประเทศไทย
Interview Guide for Teaching Assistants (Local Teachers) –
หัวข้อการสัมภาษณ์กับครูท้องถิ่น

1. Why did you become a teaching assistant (local teacher)? Do you like your work? Why or why not?
   ทำไมคุณถึงมาเป็นครูท้องถิ่น คุณชอบเป็นครูไหม เพราะอะไร

2. When was the first time you remember hearing about the use of the Hmong language in teaching? What did you think at that time?
   คุณได้ยินเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาม้งในการเรียนการสอนเมื่อไหร่ จับได้ไหมว่าในตอนนั้นคุณคิดอย่างไร

3. Do you think Hmong is a good language to use in primary teaching? Why or why not?
   คุณคิดว่าภาษาม้งเป็นภาษาที่เหมาะสมกับการเรียนการสอนในระดับประถมศึกษาไหม เพราะอะไร

4. What was your experience of language use in school as a student?
   ในสมัยที่คุณยังเป็นนักเรียนนั้น การใช้ภาษาที่โรงเรียนเป็นอย่างไร

5. How do you find it working together with a qualified (Thai) teacher?
   คุณรู้สึกอย่างไรกับการทํางานร่วมกับครูไทย

6. What do you think are the successes of the bilingual education project?
   คุณคิดว่าโครงการทวิภาษาประสบความสําเร็จในด้านไหนบ้าง

7. What do you think are the problems or obstacles in the bilingual education project?
   คุณคิดว่าโครงการทวิภาษามีปัญหาหรืออุปสรรคในด้านไหนบ้าง

8. What do parents/guardians think about this bilingual project?
   ผู้ปกครองคิดอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับโครงการทวิภาษา

9. What are your recommendations for the future of bilingual education in Thailand?
   คุณมีข้อเสนอแนะอะไรบ้างเกี่ยวกับการเรียนการสอนแบบทวิภาษาในอนาคตที่ประเทศไทย
Interview Guide for Headteachers – หัวข้อการสัมภาษณ์กับผู้อำนวยการโรงเรียน

1. How long have you been a headteacher? Do you like your work? Why or why not?
   คุณเป็นผู้อำนวยการนานกี่ปีแล้ว คุณชอบงานด้านบริหารไหม เพราะอะไร

2. When was the first time you remember hearing about the use of the Hmong language in teaching? What did you think at that time?
   คุณได้ยินเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาฮ์มังในการเรียนการสอนเมื่อไร จ้าได้ยินไหมว่าในตอนนั้นคุณคิดอย่างไร

3. Do you think Hmong is a good language to use in primary teaching? Why or why not?
   คุณคิดว่าภาษาฮ์มังเป็นภาษาที่เหมาะสมกับการเรียนการสอนในระดับประถมศึกษาไหม เพราะอะไร

4. (If speak Northern Thai) Do you think Northern Thai would be a good language to use in primary teaching? Why or why not?
   คุณคิดว่าภาษาคัมภีร์เป็นภาษาที่เหมาะสมกับการเรียนการสอนในระดับประถมศึกษาไหม เพราะอะไร

5. Do you think the teachers and teaching assistants (local teachers) work well together?
   คุณคิดว่าครูไทยกับครูท้องถิ่นทำงานร่วมกันอย่างดีไหม

6. What do you think are the successes of the bilingual education project?
   คุณคิดว่าโครงการทวิภาษาประสบความสำเร็จในด้านไหนบ้าง

7. What do you think are the problems or obstacles in the bilingual education project?
   คุณคิดว่าโครงการทวิภาษามีปัญหาหรืออุปสรรคในด้านไหนบ้าง

8. What do parents/guardians think about this bilingual project?
   ผู้ปกครองคิดอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับโครงการทวิภาษา

9. What are your recommendations for the future of bilingual education in Thailand?
   คุณมีข้อเสนอแนะอะไรบ้างเกี่ยวกับการเรียนการสอนแบบทวิภาษาในอนาคตที่ประเทศไทย
Interview Guide for Parents – หัวข้อการสัมภาษณ์กับผู้ปกครอง

1. In what ways do you think education is important for your children?
   คุณคิดว่าการศึกษาสำคัญสำหรับลูกๆคุณอย่างไรบ้าง

2. When was the first time you remember hearing about the use of the Hmong language in teaching? What did you think at that time?
   คุณได้ยินเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาม้งในการเรียนการสอนเมื่อไหร่ จําได้ไหมว่าในตอนนั้นคุณคิดอย่างไร

3. Do you think Hmong is a good language to use in primary teaching? Why or why not?
   คุณคิดว่าภาษาม้งเป็นภาษาที่เหมาะสมกับการเรียนการสอนในระดับประถมศึกษาไหม เพราะอะไร

4. (If went to school) What was your experience of language use in school as a student?
   สมัยที่คุณเป็นนักเรียน การใช้ภาษาที่โรงเรียนเป็นอย่างไร

5. What do you think of having teaching assistants (local teachers) working in the school?
   คุณรู้สึกอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับครูท้องถิ่นที่โรงเรียน

6. What do you think are the successes of the bilingual education project?
   คุณคิดว่าโครงการทวิภาษาประสบความสำเร็จในด้านไหนบ้าง

7. What do you think are the problems or obstacles in the bilingual education project?
   คุณคิดว่าโครงการทวิภาษามีปัญหาหรืออุปสรรคในด้านไหนบ้าง

8. What are your recommendations for the future of bilingual education in Thailand?
   คุณมีข้อเสนอแนะอะไรบ้างเกี่ยวกับการเรียนการสอนแบบทวิภาษาในอนาคตที่ประเทศไทย
Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire for Class Teachers (English translation only)

Questionnaire for Class Teachers

Study information

This research study aims to explore the benefits and challenges of the Hmong-Thai bilingual education project from the point of view of stakeholders. It is your decision whether you wish to participate or not. Any opinions you give will be reported anonymously and any personal information you give will be kept confidential. Your name will not be used in published material or kept in stored documents. This research will be used in my dissertation for the Masters in International Education and Development at the University of Sussex in England. It will also be presented at the International Conference for Language and Education in Bangkok on 6–8 November 2013. A summary of the results will be made available in Thai at the project schools by the end of 2013. It is possible that parts of the research may be published for academic purposes in the future.

Thanks for your help, Kat Dooley (084-3699040)

Personal background

Gender: Male / Female Age:

Where do you live: School you teach at: 

Do you live at the school during the week? Yes / No (please circle)

Marital status: Married / Single / Divorced / Widowed Number of children: 

Highest level of education completed: 

Teaching qualification: 

Are you currently studying to upgrade your qualifications? Yes / No

For how many years have you been teaching? 

How many schools have you worked at (including this school)? 

For how many years have you worked at this school? 

Have you requested, or are you planning to request, a transfer from this school? Yes / No

What grade are you teaching this year? 

When did you start teaching in the bilingual education project? (mm/yyyy) / 

Did you attend any workshops on lesson plans or teaching materials before you started teaching in the bilingual education project? Yes / No

Did you attend any training on teaching methods before you started teaching in the bilingual education project? Yes / No
Please tick ✓ the box which best represents your opinion.

### Section 1: Role as teacher

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I enjoy working as a teacher in the bilingual education project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I feel confident teaching using the bilingual education methods.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>I am satisfied with the quality of my teaching.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The bilingual education project has meant a lot of extra work for me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I am satisfied with my role in the bilingual education project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The bilingual education project has helped my professional development.</td>
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### Section 2: Working relationship with teaching assistant

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Teachers and teaching assistants in this school work well together.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I have a good working relationship with the teaching assistant in my classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I discuss lesson plans with the teaching assistant in my classroom ahead of time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The teaching assistant in my classroom teaches well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The teaching assistant in my classroom fulfils their role with responsibility.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The teaching assistant in my classroom listens to my opinions.</td>
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### Section 3: Training and Materials

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I am satisfied with the training I received on teaching methods for bilingual education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I am satisfied with the training I had on developing lesson plans for bilingual education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Training workshops for the bilingual education project are well-organised.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I learn something new/helpful each time I attend a workshop on bilingual education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I am satisfied with the quality of the lesson plans for the grade I teach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I am satisfied with the quality of the Thai language materials for the grade I teach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Having project advisors/supervisors observing my lessons has helped my teaching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Observing lessons in other bilingual education classrooms has helped my teaching.</td>
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### Section 4: Students

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Bilingual education students learn to speak Thai more slowly than other students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Bilingual education students learn to read and write Thai better than other students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Writing the Hmong language using Thai letters confuses students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Students in bilingual education classes are confident to ask questions of their teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Using Hmong in teaching and learning has helped students learn all subjects better.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Students in bilingual education classes are more creative than other students.</td>
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### Section 5: Opinions about bilingual education

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I understood the purpose of bilingual education before I started teaching in the project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I think bilingual education would be helpful for students in other schools in Thailand.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I think bilingual education is unnecessary – children just need to learn Thai.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I feel confident explaining the purpose of bilingual education to others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I feel more positive about bilingual education now than when I first heard about it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I think Northern Thai students would benefit from studying in Northern Thai.</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I would recommend the bilingual education model using a qualified teacher and a teaching assistant to other schools.</td>
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### Section 6: Support from the school

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>The headteacher understands the bilingual education project well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>The headteacher is supportive of teachers in the bilingual education project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>The headteacher visits my classroom often.</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Teachers in the school who are not in the project understand about bilingual education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>The school board understands the bilingual education project.</td>
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## Section 7: Support from the community

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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>I think teachers in this school understand the community well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Parents in this community see their children’s education as important.</td>
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<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Parents of students in the project support bilingual education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>I have helped to explain this bilingual education project to parents/community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Community leaders support the bilingual education project.</td>
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Any further comments: (please continue over the page)

________________________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your help!
References


Dooley, Katherine. 2013a. Interview questions for class teachers and local teachers. Ms.
Dooley, Katherine. 2013b. Survey questionnaire for class teachers. Ms.


