Embarking on a Journey towards Understanding the Role Technology is Playing to Assist Taiwan to Actualize Holistic Bilingual Education

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***Abstract*—As language learning technology continues advancing in leaps and bounds, words are occupying a philosophical and educational domain that is attracting less and less awareness in terms of helping learners to achieve practical L2 literacy. The groundbreaking steps that were taken to initiate holistic education in Taiwan were based around admirable educational philosophies, which included a focus on all-round literacy development. Holistic education in Taiwan has brought into play valuable educational philosophies which help place a learner's needs at the center with educator's learning alongside them. Furthermore, Taiwan has done much to build connections between the philosophy of holistic education and its relation to human beings. However, now that more and more importance is being placed on technology to actualize Taiwan's bilingual education policies, this study argues its role needs to be juxtaposed with earlier holistic education philosophies plus its usage needs to be practically determined; it is a fact that L2 literacy building is a key part of L2 acquisition and will ultimately support to achieve Taiwan's bilingual vision. For this reason, this study aims to bring into play certain philosophical notions which could assist current and future educators to clarify exactly how technology may be either helping or hindering bilingual education in Taiwan. This study is also somewhat grounded in constructivist psychology to build a complementary sense of how language learners relate themselves to their surrounding environments to effectively acquire L2 to support Taiwan's bilingual vision.**

***Keywords*—bilingual education, Taiwan, language learners**

I. Introduction

It is intended for this study to act as a prelude for a deeper educational philosophy and/or socio-linguistic study. To set this study in motion, let us consider Taiwan's current bilingual education standing. The groundbreaking initiatives that are being taken to convert Taiwan into a Chinese/English bilingual region are grounded in local teacher resources which also integrate the use of technology to varying degrees. From this viewpoint it is important to grasp the core meaning of what Taiwan is setting out to achieve. Therefore, within this study, a content-based analytical format will be utilized. It is often the case that we need to re-juggle our thinking to adapt our mindset to developing circumstances [1]. Foreign language learning operates in a similar manner in terms of the stages the language learner needs to go through to achieve fluency and gradually experience the 'bliss' of natural open-minded expression [2]. The learner may encounter certain crises when they arrive at a situation where they are unable to express themselves in L2 due to limitations of their learning or an over-reliance on learning materials. This study holds that while technology may be providing certain levels of convenience for Taiwan to bolster its efforts to achieve bilingualism, it is this reliance which could be causing language learners to put aside the imperative nature of actual 'on the scene' language immersion and real-life cultural experiences imbued in understanding words in L2.

Emerging studies are highlighting a trend whereby language learners are relying heavily on technology which only helps to build L2 acquisition up to a superficial level. It may be argued this generation of language learners relies on the usage of technology for learning, but in certain cases, studies cite an over-reliance on technology is causing learners to seek a (so-called) 'easy way out'. An over-reliance on technology diverts the learner away from going through the rigors of step-by-step progress to then enter the linguistic and syntactic stream of encoding L2 into the neural pathways of the brain [3]. Furthermore, while educational institutions place increased emphasis on boosting academic results, foreign language teachers are required to track student success, but without measuring the student's actual L2 abilities in accordance with their own range of perceived success. We only need to gaze into the not-so-distant past to comprehend that much of what is contained within language is passed down through oral traditions - without the assistance of any technology. The fact is that traditions of the past offer excellent insights into ways we can actualize modern-day holistic bilingual education. This study aims to unveil thought-provoking philosophies and arguments for Taiwan to consider the role technology

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is playing to support the region to achieve bilingual education holistically, realistically, and in a way which allows Taiwan to hold onto traditions while integrating them with new in-coming social trends [2].

Therefore, while keeping the above concepts in mind, it is important for Taiwan to consider its main goal of actualizing bilingual education through the use of technology. While technology may be playing a pivotal role in terms of aiding language learning, one must consider how digital language learning tools can be integrated comprehensively to extend and deepen L2 acquisition. By way of example, the now commonly seen term 'balanced use' is a guideline for parents and carers to consider ways of managing a safe approach for children to use digital tools together with traditional methods. This also means the harmful effects of overusing digital tools and the proven effectiveness of traditional methods both need to be weighed up [4].

II. Taiwan's Foreign Language Hopes and the Influence of Technology

To move towards a clearer idea as to why technology and language learning are being married-up to strive towards a new approach for bilingual education, the hard question remains: how might it be that educators are simply following so called 'new' pedagogical standards which compromise basic language and literacy skills at the expense of integrated use of technology? From this line of questioning, we could consider why concerns are being raised around the effects of prolonged use of digital platforms and the relation to scattered student attention spans. Furthermore, how might an over-dependance on technology within foreign language learning environments cause learners to later struggle with simple reading and written production tasks in L2? Some studies hold the view that prolonged use of digital tools as the main tools for L2 acquisition results in (mainly) passive learning – even though many platforms claim to be 'interactive'. The interaction between human-to-digital tools to acquire L2 cannot compare with the effectiveness of human-human interaction. Whether it be L1 or L2, a language lexicon functions in a way which allows one to connect with the world to complete basic communication tasks. It is from this view that we may take steps to re-evaluate the philosophical foundations behind the usage of digital tools and language learning and to what extent they allow the learner to actually connect with the world of L2 [5].

This leads us to consider that for a region such as Taiwan, educators need to ponder on this question carefully: if the direction we are now taking to actualize bilingual education through extensive use of technology is merely putting us in a position where L2 pedagogy is gradually retrogressing towards a form of linguistic primacy, what could be done to turn around this situation? Wong [6] puts it in the following way:

> The only point I wish to make is that the doctrine of syntactic primacy rested on the idea that language was separate from experience, that its acquisition was based on innate appreciation of structure without regard to meaning and use, and that how the language was encountered did not matter, save that the encounters provide a decent sample of the surface structure of the local language that would allow for recognition of its likeness to linguistic universals.

The reality is that the journey of L2 acquisition alone is a complex journey. The direction Taiwan is seeking to achieve bilingualism is an even more complex journey and this means we need to consider ways to better leverage technology and draw on culturally immersive philosophies to gradually walk towards regaining L2 literacy within a holistic bilingual education framework.

III. Technology as a Tool for Reigniting Interest in Foreign Language Learning

This study aims to promote the practice of 'self-reflection' within the basic philosophies of pedagogy to assist educators in Taiwan to consider both the region's present and future bilingual education state of play, while striving towards a bilingual education framework which reasonably inducts the use of technology. For example, the reality within which Taiwan needs to establish its bilingual education reforms can be likened to classic Buddhist philosophy which allows us to grasp how present actions are like seeds which accumulate and form a cycle (or perpetual wheel) which then align with the present and ultimately dictate either bliss or suffering in the future. We are of course aiming towards assisting Taiwan to achieve a state of future bilingual education bliss! Accordingly, an ethical philosophical standpoint (of sorts) must be adopted to help analyze the current use of technology and its role within education settings in Taiwan to garner information of how technology could better be honed to assist bilingual education to gather greater momentum [7].

Let's consider one example of a digital tool which some thought could revolutionize the pathway for implementing foreign language learning – Apple's iPad. It was originally considered the iPad's multitouch screen would revolutionize learning (in general) by enabling the user to come into contact with life-like language learning experiences in the palm of their hands. However, when weighing up the pros and cons of such tools we need to firstly consider that in the example of the iPad, it has certainly made technology more accessible and engaging. However, certain emerging risks are revealing themselves due to an overreliance of the iPad and similar digital tools. Put simply, a multitouch screen is not enough to allow a learner to delve into the deeper levels of L2 acquisition and on a broader scale assist a monolingual region to actualize bilingual education. Furthermore, students may be able to aim for good grades with the integrated use of the iPad, but language acquisition is not simply about good grades, it is about a lifelong learning journey [1, 8].

A. From Wisdom to Cleverness

Connections have been established between the uprise of technology and the downfall of morals and ethics. Educators in Taiwan are faced with a multitude of ethical issues and among these issues, many affect the quality of

education within different institutions and the public's ideals in terms of the importance of morals and ethics. It could be possible to demonstrate a certain state of morals and ethics within Taiwan's education system through educators and students demonstrating correct and effective use of devices such as the iPad to bolster bilingual education. Furthermore, we need to consider ways in which we can harness the educational benefits of such tools while looking into the past and recalling why students in Taiwan have been praised for their ability to master learning within difficult subject fields. This is where reality and education need to marry up so as to keep the development of technology on-track and in-check with human morality. Confucianism contains important values which can be used to guide oneself as well as the trajectory of bilingual education within Taiwan. Confucianism has always been praised for its ability to hold humaneness at the center of political thought and governance. It is now high time to reignite an interest in Confucian education and enable Taiwan to develop its bilingual strategies in a way which it can retain past values within the areas of education it has often excelled in, however, bring these values into play in a manner relevant to today's society [9, 10].

B. Gluing and Un-gluing Relationships

For the purpose of this study and future like-minded studies which focus on Taiwan, on one hand we need take a critical stance towards the development of technology and guide its usage towards playing a pivotal role to bolster bilingual education. Taiwan has a demonstrated history of successfully implementing holistic education into a range of education programs. The core values of holistic education could now be utilized as a platform to critically review the role of technology alongside bilingual education. The initial steps of any such review need to refer back to holistic education's core developmental values. A key factor which supports a child to develop holistically is the values they are surrounded by throughout growth stages. In the past, such values served as a type of 'glue' which insured families and communities were often united in thought and action. One example of such values is the role of forgiveness. It is widely understood that forgiveness is a virtue that can be applied to family units, to societies, to governments, and to international relations. Forgiveness plays a role of helping to reconcile and improve the state of one's own mental health as well as others. For the policy makers and those in positions of influence within education departments and related institutions, we need to consider if technology has been 'ungluing' such bonds and casting away importance that was once placed on the role of forgiveness – all due to over-indulgence and cultivating cleverness at the expense of morality.

IV. Fundamental Holistic Education Values to Bolster Taiwan's Bilingual Education

To discuss the concept of holistic education parallel with bilingual education and economic development, a grounded approach which integrates technology but provides English content for a range of situations is required. This notion is pointing to a way technology and L2 acquisition can be viable partners – so long as technology is carefully introduced into bilingual education in a manner which allows for real life language learning experiences to be enhanced. Furthermore, it could be considered that real L2 acquisition occurs alongside the difficulties and complexities one encounters within day-to-day life while learning communication strategies to implement L2 and resolve these difficulties. Furthermore, it is worthwhile to consider that in order to allow educators to carve out pedagogical pathways and implement this type of integrated technology model in Taiwan, parents and carers need to be guided to understand the importance of allowing children to build self-esteem through making their own decisions – rather than being coached through a traditional approach which does not allow L2 acquisition to develop in a coherent manner. It is from this viewpoint that Taiwan may consider policy adjustments to allow bilingual education to be implemented in a more effective manner [1, 11].

A. Language Acquisition, Hard Work vs Holistic Values

While we consider the goals of L2 acquisition and weigh up Taiwan's goals to achieve bilingualism, it is necessary to consider insights per Ref. [12] below:

> Taiwan is not being "internationally competitive" enough because English has yet to become a common language in the country. Learning English as a school subject and a foreign language apparently does not give Taiwanese people the key to open "the gateway to globalization", nor the international communication ability and perspective "to cope with the trend of globalization and internationalization".

This excerpt is pointing to the steps Taiwan needs to take in order to step away from an ESL mode of rolling out bilingual education strategies. Taiwan needs to adopt a mode of broadening its scope of communication strategies to rein in a new era of globalization. However, at the same time, to realistically support learners across all levels to assist Taiwan to actualize this mode, pedagogical pathways need to cross over to build a new communicative, expressive, and creative space to establish L1 and L2. This approach could pay large dividends and assist learners to link everyday life experiences to both languages – together with their respective cultural nuances. Holistic education in Taiwan has developed more rapidly than other nations may realize. Taiwan is actually in a position where it can tap into its many years of successful holistic education strategies and now gear existing strategies and progress towards the standards set out it in the 'Bilingual Nation 2030' policy. This approach will help to promote a broader field of communication expression while integrating new (say) English language into existing school and university subjects [13].

Implementing new bilingual education strategies does not a signal the end for certain pedagogical methods. Educators in Taiwan are in the process of diligently creating a type of unified front to promote bilingual

education's cause. However, long-used rote learning methods need not be done away with. Even though such methods may not be considered ideal in a current modern-day holistic education context, there is enough grounded research available to justify key benefits of rote-style learning. Put simply, this style of learning stimulates memorization and allows knowledge to flourish within the brain throughout various stages of learning – and can be useful for STEM fields. However, now that STEM is being infused with the arts and STEM is becoming STEAM, arts fields which support language acquisition could be pooled together to allow for maximum L2 penetration into Taiwan's STEAM classrooms, while integrating with holistic education strategies to also penetrate cultural boundaries. In fact, this approach is not new in other industries; for example, for decades we have been witnessing how organizations deploy broad social and cultural strategies to adapt marketing strategies for different countries [5].

B. Human Development and Partnership Education

From another angle, Taiwan could observe the ways in which other regions who support holistic education have worked to break the boundaries of rote-style learning. It would also be worthwhile to consider how holistic learning plays a pivotal role in terms of allowing the actual notion of learning to be less individualized and more collaborative. This is pointing to the practice of partnership learning; there are numerous strategies that could help leverage concepts ensconced in partnership learning to guide the trajectory of bilingual education in Taiwan towards supporting learners to harness real-life experiences while providing opportunities to apply combinations of L1 and L2 during partnership activities in the classroom or other learning environments [1]. When we take the time to view bilingual education from a holistic viewpoint, it becomes easier to understand the interconnections between both of these fields. We can start to see emerging educational pathways which allow for bilingual education to be customized and suit each individual learner's learning and career goals. It is in this manner educators can tap into learners' goals and guide them to realize the global opportunities that exist around them as they step through the interwoven levels of L2 acquisition [14].

C. Cautious Usage of Technology

Nowadays, customizing education could include leveraging the convenience of technology to support curriculum. With this in mind, however, educators in Taiwan need to be clear about the specific role technology is meant to play to support bilingual curriculum. This means both positive and negative aspects of technology and its inherent usefulness in terms of bolstering bilingual education in Taiwan need to be weighed up. For example, it is known that in some cases students who are skilled in certain videogame genres also display increased cognitive development [15]. Although this may be the case, while 'Bilingual Nation 2030' is reaching out to both educators and learners to expand their learning and assist Taiwan to increase its global competitiveness, an overreliance on technology is likely to lead to depersonalized learning outcomes.

Another extreme to consider is that unless a system is established which allows for parents to provide voluntary videogame parental ratings to monitor violence, the effects of exposure to violence can actually do more harm than good and thwart efforts to holistically integrate videogames into education [16]. Another point to consider is the reduction of important human-to-human knowledge and possible videogame addiction due to overuse of videogames in education. Since 2005 the World Health Organization (WHO) has categorized addiction to videogames as a type of mental disorder [17].

V. Weighing up the Pros and Cons of AI and Mechanical Translation

Now with the advent of Taiwan setting its sights on becoming bilingual, educators need to participate in forums to discuss exactly in which (practical) ways education-based technology may assist Taiwan to increase the effectiveness of bilingual education? There is no doubt that a range of technologies have proved their effectiveness in educational fields. However, the key lies in understanding how such technologies could be utilized to support traditional learning methods. An example is the way AI is providing us with a wealth of bilingual teaching resources such as: adaptive language quizzes, smart flashcards, and interactive comprehension activities. Also, machine translation can be useful for the transitional translanguaging environment where translation activities must be completed within a short space of time. Furthermore, AI is helping to iron out bugs found in machine translation tools; but the reality is AI still encounters difficulties when processing idiomatic expressions and mistranslations often occur. The major machine translation platforms operate in ways that are too literal to comprehend the depth of idiomatic expressions [3]. AI and machine translation's flaws are among some of the reasons why governing bodies and educators in Taiwan need to carefully discuss the role technology will be playing now and, in the future, to assist bilingual education. Also, apps or programs need to be carefully tested before implementation into bilingual classrooms.

A. Critical Considerations around AI and Short-Lived Benefits

At this stage of AI's development within language education, we as educators need to be wary of the decisions we are making now which may cause current and future language learners to feel oppressed. Particular AI-based L2 acquisition tools are known to create learning limitations; this is (again) pointing to a lack of meaningful human interaction due to overreliance on AI. For Taiwan, this means educators need to be clear about not simply expecting language learners to accept technology imbued strategies put in place to achieve bilingualism. Without clear open dialogues, an atmosphere of oppression could arise [18].

There also needs to be at deeper understanding of the relationship between bilingual education and cultural

exchanges, this may make it easier to select suitable digital tools for Taiwan's bilingual classrooms. When engaging in dialogues, educators need to consider that language acquisition is often about casting aside one's own cultural perspectives and immersing oneself into the language world and the encompassing culture of L2; however inadequate or inappropriate teaching resources can create setbacks [12].

Taiwan will do well to take more of a holistic stance while weighing up bilingual education strategies and tools for the entirety of its population – which includes both youth and the elderly. Wong [6] provides some interesting insights in relation to the rise and decline of cognitive development and considers the angle of understanding such theories based on the deterioration of basic human faculties during later stages of life. Wong [6] also provides rich food for thought which is relevant to both L2 acquisition and bilingual education and gives us good footing to peer into a future world where AI could play a more prominent role in education.

B. Assistance from Technology and Game-Based Learning

We need to consider from which angle(s) technology such as videogames may be allowing for the development of (actual) holistic education platforms. Some argue videogames targeted towards L2 acquisition can help stimulate learning and feed interest. However, to what extent can these types of videogames challenge a language learner's mental lexicon and cause them to consider ways to expand it? Others argue the vast majority of videogame – based L2 acquisition tools offer little assistance and in fact overwhelm the senses; and such educational tools are not dissimilar to other forms of fun entertainment [15]. Another serious consideration is videogame addiction. It is said until one encounters a person who suffers from videogame addiction, we cannot truly understand the actual effects of this mental disorder. From what is understood so far, often it is the case the sufferer cannot escape the suffering of insomnia and various anxiety and eating disorders, all of which are detrimental to their holistic well-being [16].

VI. Taiwanese Holistic Bilingual Education Strategies and AI Associated Risks

If holistic bilingual education could be envisioned as an ultimate goal of bilingual education in Taiwan, then perhaps we need to take a stand (of sorts) against AI and its infiltration into the bilingual education sector. From some perspectives it could be said the more AI is utilized the more information the user feeds into the AI machine's system, thus helping it to become more intelligent. Some argue that while AI builds its intelligence it is actually competing against humans, while others argue that AI learning works on completely different processes to human learning and both do not really need to compete. For example, AI based machine translation is weaker in terms of processing rhetorical analysis [3].

At the same time, it is necessary as educators to understand that we may have the best of intentions by inducting AI-based technology such as videogame L2 acquisition software into the bilingual classroom, but what sort of learning hinderances could AI create for those who are perhaps newer to walking the path of L2 acquisition? In Taiwan, there are educators whose teaching subject is not English and they wish to allocate more English content into their subject field through leveraging AI-based English L2 educational videogames. However, it is often the case that even the most highly trained eye cannot see through to the algorithms that are set in place behind so-called nonviolent and educational videogame software. It is only after some time that we start to see the effects of long-term usage. Unfortunately, it is very hard to detect which types of psychological tactics are being deployed to keep the player engaged [14].

The reality is, before we can verify the safety of videogame learning tools long-term trials are required.

A. Role-Modelling and Holistic Life-Long Learning Habits

Taiwan could consider strategies to break away from habits being formed from an overdependence on technology in the bilingual language learning classroom. Taiwan's educators need to gather their wisdom and do things differently from other regions. Understandably, it is difficult to break such habits, so for this reason it is important to make holistic connections between the bilingual classroom and the surrounding community. The aim is to create on-the-scene immersive language experiences such as international festivals, or perhaps CLIL language immersion camps [6].

From another angle, the ever-important effective communication and active listening skills that a teacher demonstrates in the classroom are vital for building the foundations of intercultural holistic bilingual education. These skills can only be acquired through real life contact with teachers who are proficient in demonstrating these skills. Put simply, we cannot simply assume that students will learn independently through the use of technology as technology cannot take the place of a good human role model who is capable at overseeing learning [13].

VII. Considerations and Discussion

This study was only really aimed to act as a prelude for a deeper education/socio-linguistic study. To further help educators to assist L2 learners to negotiate the path of language acquisition, Taiwan could consider casting its view back to early research into Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Much can be learned from the ways in which early pioneers understood how to utilize immediate feedback features to reinforce language learning. In any case the teacher must still oversee learning, but in terms of assisting Taiwan to achieve bilingualism, it is the case that consistent practice over an extended period of time is what brings language acquisition into fruition. In the early stages, basic recall and retention skills need to be developed, therefore through the use of new technology plus older practices, newer technology can be honed in a more effective

fashion to assist bilingual education [13]. In Taiwan, this could materialize in the form of L2 acquisition software test trials coupled with an older style of CALL pedagogy.

In more recent times the uptake of the usage of Apple's iPad has seen phenomenal increase in the education sector. Apple's App Store provides learners with an almost unlimited range of choices for learning languages. However, Peters [8] gives us some ideas below as to how we can draw out the iPad's true inherent educational value.

> With the right apps, the iPad can become more than just a content consumption device for videos, music, and electronic books. It can be an educational and content production device for kids as well, generating documents, spreadsheets, presentations, music, and video, while also giving children a window into a vast array of knowledge. This ability to make content, given the right apps, immediately increases the iPad's value as a useful educational device.

Traditional schools of educational psychology consider that amassing knowledge requires long-term effort coupled together with a regulated learning schedule. But it is still important to remember that a device such as the iPad is simply a production device. This means educators need to be aware of the ways and means which can be implemented to assist students to implement goals for holistic language learning.

It is not only the technology itself which we must learn to hone effectively to bring about the bilingualism which Taiwan is seeking to achieve, it is also a matter of reconstructing the routines or schedules which are used inside classroom and this will require tacit understanding between educators and their institutions' administrative divisions. It could be the case that various forms of online education could prove to be more budget friendly than face-to-face education – both for learners and schools, but even still it is adamant to maintain clear routines which can oversee students' progress in both L1 and L2 [1].

VIII. Concluding Remarks

Taiwan needs to add its own flavor to bilingual education. Taiwan is a region that is steeped in Buddhist culture and doctrine and pioneering bilingual educators from within Taiwan and abroad need to understand Taiwan's culture and take steps to analyze current motions in Taiwan's society and how bilingual education will carry the region forward into the future. Taiwan may be keen on achieving bilingualism within a set timeframe, however craving for this achievement while lacking awareness in terms of cultural shifts will thwart efforts to propel bilingualism forward. This is pointing to the reality to avoid an over-emphasis on technology too early into Taiwan's rollout of bilingual education. Personal human educational touches are necessary to create curriculum relevant to learners' current and future needs.

Taiwan could also seek to do things a little differently by considering how a range of other nations seek lifestyles which move away from extreme tendencies such as either creating a leisure class or otherwise an overfocus on capitalism. Bilingualism needs to be carefully guided alongside key holistic education goals which typically put the student at the center while targeting key areas of holistic growth and creativity. This will help to bring about a future where a passion for L2 acquisition is apparent without doing away with valuable cultural and linguistic aspects of L1.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

Alexiou Kon is responsible for assembling the main content of this study, which forms the basis of the analysis and research plus reviewing literature and writing the paper, etc.; Bin Jiang modified the content and provided suggestions; both authors had approved the final version.

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