

## Bilingualism In African And Middle East Communities In New York

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**Abstrak:** Tulisan ini ditujukan untuk memberikan ulasan Bab 9, 10, dan 11 buku “Bilingual Community Education and Multilingualism: Beyond a Heritage Language in a Global City by Ofelia Garcia, Zeena Zakharia, and Bahar Otcu”, yang terbit tahun 2013. Dalam mengulas 3 bab ini, reviewer menggali isue cara mendalam, memberikan argumentasi pada kekuatan dan kelemahan analisis penulis buku ini dan kemudian mengambil kesimpulan. Mengulas bab-bab ini, reviewer mengidentifikasi bahwa pada bab 9, penulis menghadirkan isu dengan menarik. Penulis juga sangat baik dalam menghadirkan isu Inisiatif Bahasa Warisan. Jelas juga terlihat bahwa para penulis buku ini mampu menghadirkan istilah-istilah yang menambah daya Tarik dalam membacanya. Namun demikian, tidak bisa dipungkiri bahwa para penulis mengalami kendala dalam menggali secara mendalam Bahasa-bahasa tertentu Afrika, oleh karena begitu banyak variannya. Ketika membahas bab 10, reviewer harus mengatakan bahwa para penulis telah menunjukkan keahliannya secara sempurna, oleh karena mereka mengulas isu secara menyeluruh tentang bagaimana dan mengapa komunitas Iran di New York terlibat dalam Pendidikan komunitas dwibahasa. Di bab 1, para penulis telah menunjukkan kekuatan analisisnya. Inisiatif erletak pada acara para penulis menempatkan diri sebagai ilmuwan, tidak lebih dari itu. Juga di bab ini, para penulis menunjukkan kemahirannya dengan menunjukkan pengetahuannya secara politik. Mereka menjelaskan apa yang terjadi di pertengahan tahun 2000-an dalam kebijakan Amerika Serikat, serta implikasinya. Dalam dua bab ini, reviewer tidak menemukan kelemahan dari para penulis.

**Abstract:** This paper is aimed at arguing chapter 9, 10 and 11 of the book “Bilingual Community Education and Multilingualism: Beyond a Heritage Language in a Global City by Ofelia Garcia, Zeena Zakharia, and Bahar Otcu”, published in 2013. Arguing those three chapters, the reviewer explore the issue deeply, give arguments on the strengths and weaknesses of their analysis, and finally, the reviewer takes a conclusion. Examining these chapters, the reviewer identified that in chapter 9, the author showed the issue interestingly. Also, the authors were very good at presenting the issue of heritage language initiatives. It is obvious also to see that the way the writers presented the certain phrases add an attractiveness to read this chapter. However, it is hard not to argue that the authors have some constraints to explore deeply on specific languages of Africa. Since there are various languages in African society. In Chapter 10, the reviewer would say that the authors have shown their expertise perfectly, since they addressed the issue in a very comprehensive way on how and why the Iranian community in New York engage in bilingual community education, In Chapter 11, the authors showed their strength of the analysis. Also, the strength of this chapter is on the way the authors show their good knowledge politically by explaining what happened in the mid- 2000s in U.S. policy, and the implication of this policy. In chapter 10 and 11, the reviewers didn't identify the weaknesses of the author.

**Key Words:** Bilingual, Multilingual, Heritage Language.

### Introduction

This paper is aimed at arguing chapter 9, 10 and 11 of the book “Bilingual Community Education and Multilingualism: Beyond a Heritage Language in a Global City by Ofelia Garcia, Zeena Zakharia, and Bahar Otcu”, published in 2013. In examining these chapters, I will argue in the following outline: First, the issue delivered by the author will be criticized chapter by

chapter concerning to their central's claim or assumption, the evidences presented, the possible strengths and weaknesses, the possible counter arguments proposed, the reasons why the problems or arguments presented interesting, or important. After that, it will be reacted on how each of the chapters relates one another, what the author position, and whether there is a different aspects of an issue discussed. And finally, it

will be drawn a conclusion on the author's claims or arguments and the counter arguments proposed.

### **Reviewing**

In chapter 9, the authors address several issues concerning with community-based initiatives that focus on teaching African languages to children of African immigrant. To introduce this issue, the author proposed a disagreement on understanding what countries belong to Africa. This is followed by another matter on what languages belong to African languages. Coming into the solution of those matters, the authors focused on Sub-Saharan countries rather than the Arab-speaking North Africa. The countries like Senegal, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Southeastern Liberia. Therefore, the languages that the authors investigated those used in Sub-Saharan countries. Since they are various, the authors described them as "Plurality in Singularity".

The authors' central claim is that African languages are learned in many informal educational spaces, dovetailing with the African concept of teaching and learning: everyone is a teacher, any space is an appropriate educational space. Before going into depth exploration on their claims, they proposed such hypothesis by questioning first whether there are any community-based African language initiatives. If so what is the operational structure? Then second: what are the attitude of African immigrant toward learning African language in New York City?. Believing those initiatives existed, the authors presented a research showing the interest in maintaining an ethnic language

among children of immigrant. This is largely influenced by parents' and peers' attitude toward this language. In supporting this belief, the authors showed the people from the wide range of Sub-Saharan countries represented in New York City meaning various languages used there (Swahili:Kenya, Twi:Ghana, Wolof, Mandigo, Pulaar:Senegal, Igbo, Yaruba: Nigeria, Dinka: Sudan, Amharic: Ethiopia, Kru: Southeastern Liberia). They further described that most African immigrant believe in improving their English proficiency is more important than learning other language since it facilitated and enhanced their commercial activities.

The research is focused on exploring the phenomena on how people from Senegal maintain their heritage language. The research, on one hand, confirmed that African language teaching exists in informal community level. It is conducted by mothers and grandmothers. The resource materials used in their teaching are newspaperclipping written in African languages and video and recording of TV program from their home countries. It, on the other hand, confirmed on the various attitude on maintaining their languages. This is proved by describing the tendency of the people there on seeing the phenomena. The first tendency described that three out of five female children did not see the benefit of learning African language because English is used in NYC. twenty out of twenty five adult males think the same. The second one described that All younger males view that learning African language is essential for identity or cultural maintenance. The latter attitude is believed that it promotes bicultural competence. The

authors finally came into conclusion that African languages are complex. Thus it is not surprising that there is no formal language learning for it.

To me, the authors mostly have presented the issues interestingly. This can be seen on the way they introduce the controversy on what countries belong to Africa. This implies on the next disagreement on the language to be discussed in this chapter. By presenting this non-consensus ideas, they seem to succeed in warming up the readers' brain to come into the core of the issue discussed. Also the authors are very good at presenting the issue of heritage language initiatives. They succeed in answering the WH questions of the program: what, who, why, where, which and how. For example, what heritage language programs are concerned, who involved in concerning the programs, why they involved in the program, where they concerned with the program, and how they concerned with it. All the answers of these questions can be clearly found in this chapter. It is obvious also to see that the way the writers presented the certain phrases add an attractiveness to read this chapter. The term 'Plurality in singularity' which is commonly used in linguistics, the keeper of culture, the guardian of familial heritages are the example of the phrases. How they exposed the words 'American African' or 'African American' which may mislead meaning also add a positive credit in this chapter.

However, it is hard not to argue that the authors have some constraints to explore deeply on specific languages of Africa. Since there are various languages in African

society. The reality that the African heritage language was carried out informally make this issue seem to be superficially explored. The best words for this chapter analysis is complete covering the whole, but superficially.

In chapter 10, the authors addressed the issue in a very comprehensive way on how and why the Iranian community in New York engage in bilingual community education. They examined efforts being made to teach Iranian culture and Persian language to children. To do so, the authors presented two evidences. Evidence taken from exploring the migration history of Iranian in the U.S and the case study data with Iranian American parents and educators in New York City. Then they described the migration of Iranian in three phases clearly. The first phase was prior to 1950. Here the migration was carried out by Iranian individually. It was about 2000 people recorded. The second phase was during the pre-revolutionary era (1951-1979). During this phase, it was described that there was a gradual increase in the number of Iranian in the U.S. The peak number recorded was between 1975 to 1978. The last phase was during the post-revolutionary era (1979 to the present). It was described that during this era highly educated people migrated to western countries including to the U.S as political or religious refugees.

After that, with the data from the case study, the authors showed how Iranian parents are responsible for teaching their heritage language. Parents were reported as the ones who concerned with the teaching of Iranian culture and Persian language. They believed bilingualism not only as a source of

preserving ties and cultural heritage, but also a source for developing a new transcultural identities and academic competencies.

With the data taken from the research also, the authors also proved that Iranian heritage language was maintained formally in Institutionally affiliated schools. The schools are first the Ferdowsi Persian Language School which was established in 1986 by the Iranian American society in New York. It was aimed at promoting the Persian language and culture. The second is the Razischool. It is private Islamic school located in Queens. It provided language classes as parts of its curriculum. The authors further explained that the efforts in maintaining Iranian heritage language was carried by Community based-programs in the form of play group, theatrical performance or language classes which was carried out at home as well as community and religious institutions. To strength this the authors presented weekend classes for community building which was organized by Mogan and Forough, a professor and novelist who sees language study as the best way to learn about other cultures and embrace cultural diversity.

Besides, those efforts, many other Iranian-American parents were reported doing so to reinforce Persian language and Iranian culture at home. The writers completed their writing by arguing that the educators' claim that suggested bilingual education can create ineffectiveness in learning English is not supported by this case study. Also they highlight the crucial role of parents in creating and participating in the efforts of maintaining Iranian-American heritage language. Finally, the

authors stressed on the values of learning Iranian heritage language which was described as the avenues to expression to their children, connection to their families, exposure to culture diversity, and resources to further their intellectual development and academic proficiency. With this explanation in this, I would say that the authors have shown their expertise perfectly.

In Chapter 11, the authors addressed first a political economical approach to look at the immigration history of Arabic-speaking peoples since the late 1800s. This is aimed at understanding the historical, sociopolitical and transnational dimension of contemporary Arabic language education in a global city. To do so, the authors reported the vividly life of Arab American. They were reported speaking in distinct dialects, participating in various religions, reflecting a range of socio economic statuses, having a variety degree of formal education, hailing from diverse countries in Western Asia and Northern America, and they came to America in the wave of migration. Second, the authors highlighted a concept of from the field of peace studies to introduce the notion of language education for positive and negative peace. They frame contemporary Arabic language programs within the security agenda for negative peace. While bilingual community efforts reflect the marginalized interests of education for positive peace. They further described the role of sociopolitical context as central to understanding the challenging of teaching and learning Arabic language. To support their assumption, they argued on how Arabic get its popularity through cultural, religious, and economic influences. It is also obtained

through political concerns. Educational studies and personal narratives from the late 1980s and the early 1990s suggests that children of Arabic decent were largely invisible in New York City schools, despite their influx as a consequence of political strife in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq.

Politically, in the mid 2000s, U.S government released a policy called for Arabic as a 'critical need' language. This policy increased the number of studying Arabic. Early immigrant assimilated into urban life. However, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the U.S led war in Iraq and Afganistan catapulted Arab American and Arab-Muslim-American in particular from invisible citizen to the visible one framing them as a new problem of American society. Though, the authors argued that the Arabic language problems run under watching seriously by security agency. The majority of these programs are available in New York City to students in grade K-12. They are offered through mosque and Islamic centers. According to the Islamic Consultative Network. The impetus of founding has most commonly been a response to community demand. Several school officials have indicated that, because the Arabic language plays a central role in Islam. The teaching Arabic as a positive peace were reported running by social service organization like The Arab-American Family Support center. Other community based organization such as Alwan for the Arts, an arts and cultural organization also were reported offering several level of Arabic Instruction. 2010 was the momentum for Arabic teaching in school. It was due to the policy of the New

York City Department of Education office of English Language Learners which listed one middle school and one high school as having transitional bilingual education programs that support Arabic speakers.

The last but the least that the authors highlight is the case of Islamic school in Brooklyn. This school was reported being established to give opportunity to develop students' ability in speaking and writing "fush", a classical Arabic taken from Alqur'an and become Modern Standard Arabic. The strength of the analysis for this chapter is located on the way writers place themselves as the expert, not more than that. They explained positive and negative peace neutrally, without attacking or defending one side. Also, the strength of this chapter is on the way the authors show their good knowledge politically by explaining what happened in the mid- 2000s in U.S. policy, and the implication of this policy. While I don't find any weaknesses to give negative credit for this chapter. Thus, this chapter is described in a very neutral by the writers.

## Conclusion

The writers of this chapters have shown his expertise by understanding the issue comprehensively and deeply. In very particular issue, they seemed to have some constraints to comprehend it.

## Reference

Ofelia Garcia, Zeena Zakharia, and Bahar Otcu. 2013. **Bilingual Community Education and Multilingualism: Beyond a Heritage Language in a Global City.** Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.