The biggest challenge facing bilingual in secondary students

In the last decade there has been a significant changes in the Educational field around the world , and the attention to bilingual education started to rise as one of the important subjects in the educational field, and this could be a result of the emergence of many international movements that promotes Human rights , anti-racism and tolerance , these movements played a crucial role in promoting the ideologies of language diversity in the educational , and lead to the emergence of what is known as Multicultural Education. Those movements argues that the bilingual population increased in many countries around the world a result of the significant increase of the percentage of immigrants from what is called ' Third World countries' mostly to the' Western countries' . Immigrants in western communities brought many changes to the population's structure , so there has been a strong demand for an educational changes and a new considerations in education planning and policy making , so the educational system would be more diverse to suit multicultural students. It is important that the educational system in Multicultural societies serve the education requirements for all the students in the society and support their development process, and there has to be many considerations of the students cultural backgrounds, and also the head educators who are responsible of planning and making learning policies has to be aware of bilingual learning requirements. The aim of bilingual education is to help the students who speaks more than a language to obtain a balanced developmental process academically , socially and culturally , which helps them to gain the main skills of benefitting from the languages they speak , and to extract a lifetime opportunities by using the aspect of bilingualism in a creative way that could lead to a significant career path.

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Rational

The years of secondary school is considered to be a main factor in shaping the journey of teenage student's to build their identity. Through the period of secondary school student's start to build their vision about life and most important their vision about themselves, they start to question " Who am I?" . This question is the beginning step to reach adulthood. In the period of secondary school all the aspects that took a part in the student's life in a younger age, will result in what kind of personality the student will develop , the effect of all the elements in the student's environment shapes their development process, and also it built their own sense of self-awareness and who they are , this self - awareness is defined as " Identity" and many

different aspects such as culture, society, education, shares the role in forming a student's identity, but it is important to define and discuss the term " Identity" from a social and educational prospects to have a clear sense about the concept of ' Identity'. It is important to mention that there is no clear or a specific definition of the term 'Identity'. To reach a clear classification of what does 'Identity' means and stands for, it is crucial to focus on the role of all the aspects and elements that shapes and forms what most of people know and identify as their 'Identity' .

Bilingual students faces many challenges and issues in secondary school, wither it is a internal challenge within the educational system that is created by the school policies , or if it is linked to the students social or cultural background . Many researches pointed to a various difficulties and challenges that affects secondary bilingual students and cause an identity struggle, such as , bilingual students' underachievement due to their weak performance in English education, also many researches pointed to literacy issues that can leave a continuance effect on the way student develop their self-esteem , as well as cultural resistance towards accepting foreign languages in some societies . While one of the most important challenges that were discussed is the learning policies that doesn't support language learning , which is considered to be a high profile challenge for bilingual students in secondary school , it could be devastating for many bilingual students to study in an educational institute that doesn't recognize their individuality and background differences , when secondary school years are the most critical period of students life , and many of them rely on education to help them finding the suitable life path for them, but instead they struggle

to cope with the school policies, while in the same time they struggle to express themselves within the limits of those policies that don't support their mother language in any means . This type of learning policies force the students to cast away their bilingual abilities and treat their bilinguality, this act leaves the students so confused that many of them could not obtain the kind of identity that their school policy promotes because they believe it does not represent who they truly are. And it makes the school seems like its treating the students bilinguality as an obstacle towards their academicals achievements, which is unfair to the bilingual students and it is an un-neutral act , especially in countries that has a large emigrants population . Therefore the dissertation will consider the learning policies as one of the major aspects to be discussed, regarding to the main role they stand for as the creators of the educational success and the responsibility of promoting a balanced learning system that is able to support all students , and to meet the educational needs of bilingual students to develop in all means academically as students and socially by developing a stable identity .

1. a . Aim

The principle aim of this dissertation is to uncover the main challenge that is responsible of causing identity issues for secondary students, and how this challenge or difficulty affects the process of developing a sense of belonging to the society and culture they live in , which is usually different than their original roots and main culture , because most of bilingual students in the UK are immigrants or international students who came from different parts of the world with a different cultural heritage. It is important to research the way that bilingual student can be able to form a vision about themselves and

their position in the culture they are living in, while at the same time preventing their bilinguality from causing an identity struggle or confusion. For this purpose, the focus of this dissertation will be revealing the biggest common challenge that causes identity issues for bilingual students in secondary school to have a plain view about the bilingual educational environment, and the sources that led to the formation of this challenge.

1. b. Objectives

Give an accurate perspective on the influence of bilingualism on the process of developing secondary students' identity.

Investigate the main factor and circumstances that caused the emergence of the challenge, wither if it is educational, social, cultural or any other hidden factor.

Identify the factors that contributed in creating the main challenge for bilingual students .

Evaluate the key role that the challenge plays in forming an obstacle in the way of students to obtain a normal balanced identity that supports them to develop in the most greatest means.

2- Methodology

The research for this dissertation will depend on a qualitative method; by depending on a secondary data collection , the focused material for this research will be two of the most important researches in the bilingual education field. The researches that been chosen are researches that discussed the difficulties and challenges facing bilingual students , the

dissertation role will be to study each research in an analyzing means while discussing both researches from a comparative prospective.

There is a practical reason for choosing the comparative method of research in this dissertation, that is to add a continuing work to the researches that were done about the subject. And in the mean time , the intention is to construct additional information's and facts , which will help this research to narrow down the different issues , and focus on the most common difficulties so in a final approach it will reveal the main challenge that face bilingual students in secondary school to achieve their identity.

3- (Identity) definition and theory

Identity is a wide complicated term which contains a broad range of aspects that takes part in forming it , such as , the persons personality , character , culture , language , political views , religious believes . All these things components of our lives is responsible of what type of identity we have, and why we can have different identities at the same time , for instance , people from the same culture have the same general 'Cultural Identity' , but at the same time their differences in their political views makes their 'Political Identity' defers from one to another . It is normal for a person to have more than one identity but in some cases people find themselves judged as hypocrites for having a double identity if they can't realize the difference between the cultural and political identities .

Psychological theorists presented many theories about the concept of identity from their prospective, some of them explained the term Identity as a concept that is based on two parts. The first part is internal which is the

persons own personality, and the second part is the way he/she interacts with others and the surrounding culture and society , so that can be reflected on their self awareness that " might be linked with the generation of a sense of identity " (Rossiter, 2002). This psychological approach concentrate on the role of culture in shaping the concept of identity, and it is important to consider the culture as a main factor and a static ground in the process of identity formation. While Educational theorists focused on the term ''identity'' mostly from an academic prospective " the willingness of students to take on an 'academic identity' and commit discretionary time to academic effort when peers are making other choices'' (Jackson, 2003). They discussed the importance of the ' Social construction' and the school success in leading students to achieve their identity , moreover their views on identity is concerned about all the different aspects of schooling that are directly linked to the process of building students identities , not just academically but also building their identities as individuals through education .

It is a common sense that most of students go through a general pattern to step into the period of adolescence, which is built on their different formed identities as individuals. But for bilingual students it seems that it is a different case . For bilingual students there are many aspects involved in the process to build their self -awareness and identity, meanwhile the challenges facing bilingual students are broadly different than the challenges facing monolingual students. Bilingual students face more significant challenges as well as the common challenges that face monolingual secondary students to achieve a sense of belonging to the community they live in.

4- Identity and education

Centers of formal education should not only promote knowledge but they should also contribute to the development of the self (Coll , Falsafi. 2010). The process of learning requires contribution and such contribution requires learning. It is through such participation the individuals become part of communities and so they take a specific place in them. This participation allows each and every person to be recognized both in high profile or low profile. People are considered and also consider themselves as' part of a given context in the extent in which they have been recognized' (Wenger, 1998). Like in the case where a person receives recognition as a good worker so will it be easier for him to develop a sense of belonging in such profession or kind of work.

Therefore, in order to maintain a community of professionals it is very important that it be accompanied by learning and the development of identity. At the same time, a lack of learning in the professional field can lead to feelings of doubt towards sense of belonging, for instance, whenever a small child does not learn how to play basketball as would be expected of him, the sense of belonging in the basketball team would be minimal, in himself and others (Coll & Falsafi 2010).

In all ways the systems of education require creating an environment where students can explore all ways in which they can make the most of opportunities through a learning process. There is a need for them to take into consideration the ways that made them become who they are as persons and learners in their different situations and the reason for their choices and actions (Coll , Falsafi. 2010).' The technologies related to the

formation of the self refer to concrete actions and methodologies that make this exploration possible, like through talking, writing, engagements and collective reflection' (Foucault , 1988). However it is important that the students be provided with relevant doctrines that would support such exploration. In order to facilitate self reflection students can be provided with time and venues for reflections and also use of journals (Coll & Falsafi 2010).

Identity has been considered as an important topic the education of young and adult persons in different discipline is concerned (Creese et al. 2006; Gee 2000; Osguthorpe 2006). In the words of Hoffmann (2005: 14) " identity has become the bread and butter of educational diet" whereas Wenger (1998: 215) argued that " learning is an experience of identity". Wenger is also credited for having established the intrinsic relationship between learning and identity. Moreover, the identification of identity serves as an analytical aid in the context of education and that an investigation of identity construction of the students can help in understanding their educational experiences as well as academic results (Gee 2000; Sfard & Prusark 2005).

5- Bilingualism and Bilingual Education: Definition, Theory and Ideology

This section will define the concept of Bilingualism and discuss some of the theories that is related to the concept, by viewing two of the most important models of bilingualism , which they are 'The Separate Underlying Proficiency 'and 'The Common Underlying Proficiency' , it is important to discuss the different theories about Bilingualism to have a close approach to understand how the human brain operates with two languages . Also the next part will view an example of a common challenge that faces bilingual students , and it

will present a research that was made to measure the Bilingual literacy development for 3 students .

Bilingualism is the ability for a person to speak two languages, and the ability to speak more than two languages is identified as ' Multilingualism'. Grosjean (2010) defined bilingualism by emphasis on the Regular use of languages rather than fluency in every day '' Bilinguals are those who use two or more languages (or dialects) in their every day lives'' (Baker, 2011). While there has been many arguments that a bilingual person should speak the two languages in the same fluency or in a balanced level , and this can be explained in the 'Balance Theory' this theory argue that in the brain there are rooms for language in the brain and the 'Monolanguage' (The first language) is bigger than the second language , so when a person receive data in the Monolanguage it won't be transferred to the second language according to Cummins (1980), who defined this idea as the 'Separate Underlying Proficiency Model of bilingualism' , he explained this term by picturing two'' languages operating separately without transfer to one another and with restricted amount of room for languages '' (Baker, 2011). This theory assumes that the two languages are separated in the human brain without any interaction which proved to be untrue.

According to Baker (2011)'' the evidence suggested the opposite'', the languages are not separated in the human brain and the languages interacts and there is a transferring from a language to another. The example he gave for his argument is in the school lessons where the lessons in English they do not feed the English part of the brain only, or if the lessons are in other languages, for example, Spanish the data won't be transferred to the

Spanish part only . The data learned in one of the languages can be simply transferred in the brain to the other part, so in this case a concept learned in English can be used immediately in Spanish. This idea of the of bilingualism is called Common Underlying Proficiency (Cummins, 1980, 1981) It is explained as the Iceberg Theory, where the two languages takes a part in the brain seeming to operate separately like two icebergs on a surface, but underneath the surface the icebergs melts into one direction which is the central operating system where both languages interacts an function through the same central operating system (Ibid). The main point in the Iceberg theory is the shared function of the two languages depending on one main source, which puts the two languages on the same level of sufficiency. But this is not a general bilingual law, there are many bilingual people who tend to use one of the two languages more often because they are more capable of expressing their thoughts or feelings in one of the two languages more than the other language , despite they master both languages.

The Separate Underlying Proficiency model and the Common Underlying Proficiency model of bilingualism do not give a definite idea about the function of the brain and bilingualism, and each person's brain analyze the income information and translate it to language in a different way, and most of the researches in the field of bilingualism tried to figure how does the human brain deal with language, these researches target was to have a clear approach to achieve balanced bilingualism. Therefore another theory aimed to reach an approach the relationship between cognition and level of bilingualism, this theory in known as the Thresholds Theory and it was first presented in 1976 and 1977 by Cummins, Toukomaa and Kangas , this

theory explained the bilingualism as two threshold each one is a level of language that'' has consequences for a child'' (Baker, 2011). The first threshold for a child is to avoid the negative consequences of bilingualism , which might be confusion of language and balancing between two languages. The second level is to obtain the positive benefits of bilingualism (Ibid). This second threshold is when the child gains the social and educational skills to benefit of the aspects of being bilingual, this skills are the main step to achieve bilingual balance when a child learns to benefit from the two languages to the maximum limit in supporting his/her developmental process. This idea gives a reasonable approach to the child bilingual ability and how he/she learn to adjust this ability to improve their lives and use it as a tool in their development process. Meanwhile Dodson (1978) presented his view on bilingualism from a different perspective. He argued that ''a child's mind is focused mainly on the language itself.'' In message- oriented communication, the child's aim is to communicate a message which is not about language, so that language becomes the tool rather than the focus of attention''.(Daniel , 2002) ''He then proposes that the latter should be an integral part of every second language activity unit at the infant and junior school levels'' (Dodson, 1978). In Dodson's theory the language is just a tool that the child learn to benefit from it to develop in all ways, instead of focusing on developing the child's language ability itself .

6- Bilingualism and Ideology

Bilingualism and Civic ideology: ''It expects language minorities to adopt the public values of the politically dominant majority while allowing freedom in the private values of individuals ''(Baker, 2011). But there is no official

recognition of the minority language , also there is no support for other languages , civic ideology ' is characterized by an official state policy of non-intervention and non-support of the minority languages and cultures'(Bourhis, 2001). Meanwhile Wiley (2002) considered this language policy as a tolerance- oriented policy, but this policy is officially denying the minority's identities and cultural heritage , also it underestimates the minority role in the society and generalize a specific cultural model on the whole society despite of their background differences, while it is tough to encourage the minority to adapt the common values of the majority if they were labeled in the public policies as a second degree citizens. In contrast to the civic ideology , pluralist ideology supports the individuals freedom in all means of life , such as, work, learn, the supporters of this ideology argues that the minority are included in the tax payment system , and as a tax payers they have the same rights of the majority,' it is equitable that state funds be distributed to support the cultural and linguistic activities of the majority and the minority group' (Bourhis, 2001). And Schools ' the judiciary and civil administration will expect to operate bilingually, where reasonable, and not in opposition to national coherence and unity' . Canada's Official Language Act (1969, 1988). But unlikely to the Pluralist ideology , the Assimilation ideology is the most dominant ideology in many countries where there are immigrants according to Baker (2011) , the assimilation ideology is based on the idea that language is one of the areas in people's life where the state has the right to interfere . In this case Immigrants should desert their mother language , so they would not appear as if they have no loyalty to the nation , because the state policies in most cases promotes the idea that minority languages causes conflict and confusion to the unity of the nation

(Baker , 2011). This ideology is known as the idea of a' melting pot' (Dicker, 2003). Where the immigrants values and languages is been merged to make a joint society with the same language and values. But in the same time Assimilation ideology supports equality of opportunity for all the cultural and ethnic groups in the society , so the minority and the majority will share the same rights and privileges. 'While their vision is built on the idea of a monolingual and monocultural nation ' (Ibid). Mean while there are many ideologies of bilingual minorities and it defers depending on the political system in each country , besides the social and cultural back ground of the majority is a key factor in which ideology does the country fosters . However education is an essential area where all the ideologies are concerned of, and the most important aspect in applying the majority's values and language . Education is the tool that any ideology needs to succeed and achieve its long term goals, for example, English is the official language in the United States of America , where the American nation is built of ethnic groups and minorities , and It is a common sense that the minority groups are encouraged to learn English, and it is presented as an important step to a person to gain the American citizenship , at the same time immigrants tend to learn English to achieve a higher income economically and obtain a position as a part of the American society by becoming an English speaking citizen. Veltman (2000) has reported depending on the US census data that many US immigrants ' are often adopting English as their primary and preferred language , even abandoning use of their mother tongue , such as, Germans and Scandinavians '(Veltman, 2000). While in contrast Spanish , Chinese and Greek immigrants are mostly maintain bilingualism.

7- Bilingual Education

The term ''bilingual education'' may be confusing.' It can refer to a situation in which language minority children are taught in the language of the majority group' (Admiraal, Westhoff , de Bot. 2006) . Or It can also refer to another situation in which a foreign language is not the language of the larger society (Ibid). In Europe for example, the opining of the inner border and the free trade policies in 1992, brought to attention the need for a broad educational changes especially when it comes to teaching foreign languages. Besides the massive language diversity in Europe makes it important that each society benefit from language skills for better communications with others in the same European Union . For instance, ''foreign language skills have been important in Dutch society for a long time. More than 90% of its members live in less than 100 miles distance from a language border'' (Ibid). this diversity in the European languages has led the way for change in the educational system in most of the European countries, even in some of the most resistant societies, these societies realized that bilingualism is an important aspect to be a part of the global trade system also in the tourism field, most of people would not be encouraged to visit a county if they know that the people there do not speak the English language. Therefore many countries started to focus on bilingual education to present more capable students, so they would be able to work in jobs that need more than one language, such as, Diplomacy, communication, international economy and trade system jobs, United Nations jobs. And many more that are considered to be a high profile jobs. While bilingual education is the key factor in producing skilled students that are more able to communicate not just at the level of language but also on a cultural level.

English language is one of the most important languages in bilingual education , it has been the area of focus for many researches in bilingual learning , these researches tried to analyze the main issues that faces bilingual students and measures their bilingual abilities development. Bilingual students face different challenges especially because in most of cases they're living in a foreign country and they attend schools that teaches in a different language than their mother language. There are some basic issues and difficulties most of bilingual students faces , and one of the most common issues literacy difficulties, which is the most common challenge for students in the early years of education, but what many parents don't realize is that literacy issues affects their children in many ways not just academically but it can shake their confidence and the way they think about themselves, while it could cause a confusion of identity later on in the years of teenage during the period of secondary school , because all the child's experiences in education are connected and each experience leaves a mark in an area of his/her life , it reaches the child's personality and social life . All the experiences in students lives are like a long chain , they are connected and attached strongly to each other , they shapes students personalities and abilities, and it lead them to develop by depending on the experiences they gain socially and educationally , these social and educational experiences cannot be separated , and each part affects the other directly . Meanwhile all experiences of a child become the frame which he/she form his/her character and identity within . Therefore it is necessary to discuss bilingual education to detect the whole aspects that affects bilingual students' learning process.

Bilingual literacy is an significant subject which many researchers investigated and discussed , they focused on the process of bilingual students to reach the level of mastering more than one language . One of the researches that was made in this propose is the International PIRLS-study in Norway, the project focused on bilingual literacy and linguistic performance in two languages. The project focused on three students , all 10 years old when the project started and all born in Norway and bilingual in English and Norwegian . The main area of the study was reading literacy in the national language (which in this case is Norwegian), and writing and speaking in two languages. Wagner and Uppstad (2005) explained the method that was used to collect narratives and useful data for this study . The tool that was used is a 8 picture story (Space Story) , the 3 students were shown the pictures one by one , and they were asked to take a good look at each one of the pictures , when they're done they can move to the next picture and they were given the all the time they need , while there is no aid or guidance , the students than start to write a story depending on the pictures they observe , they write on a keyboard. In the first writing attempt the students wrote their stories in Norwegian, than after a 5 minutes break they write about the same picture in the other language which is English. After 6 months the students were asked to write again the same story but this time in English,'' By this design we carry out assumptions and predictions of a hypothetical bilingual student whose strongest language is considered to be Norwegian. Capital letters indicate major effort, while ordinary letters indicate minor effort'' (Wagner, Uppstad, 2005) . The purpose of this method is to measure the students ability to formulate their thoughts and ideas in their strongest language (Norwegian) , than the most

challenging task is asking the students to write the same story in their weaker language (English), the struggle for the students is that they already arranged their thoughts and structured their story in their strongest language, which they have a wider range of vocabulary to use in it , and then they have to reform their thoughts and structure to re-write the story in another language which they are not strong at it like their first language (Ibid). This method of researching bilingual abilities could be considered as an accurate method to measure the dimensions of both languages' development , also it could help in giving a better understanding to what kind of difficulties does bilingual students struggle with.

Conclusion

In the beginning of this dissertation a general view was presented about the reason of focusing on identity developing for bilingual secondary school students , because it is the most critical period in peoples life , it's the period when a person start to form a sense of belonging and self-awareness , and facing any kind of challenge in this period can affect their process to build and form a stable balanced identity. But in the case of Bilingual students the effect of issues in the secondary school can be much more difficult and complicated , because of their cultural background and language differences . Also it is important to note that one of the main goals of education is to promote equality of opportunity in learning, and support all students' self- identity through learning regardless of any kind of differences . For that reason there was a necessitate to present and review the important informational background about the topic . Starting with defining the key terms of the subject , which are 'Bilingualism' and 'Identity'

in a general and educational context to build a static informational

background to be the first threshold to inter the deep aspects to understand

bilingual students experience of school . Therefore the topic of this

dissertation is the main challenge that affects bilingual students' identity

development and causes identity disorders, it is an attempt to make a clear

approach to the most crucial aspect that cause to hold back