

Chinese Language Teaching in the Trilingual Schools of Indonesia: Problems and Prospects

Gunawan Wibowo* and Rui-Xin Wang**

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Abstract

Since the resurgence and rising popularity of Chinese language education in Indonesia after 1998, an increasing number of Indonesian schools have established teaching programmes in Chinese language. Apart from state-run and private schools, trilingual schools also offer Chinese language courses with more teaching hours and better quality of teaching than other schools. Much is expected from these trilingual schools to play an important role in Chinese language teaching in Indonesia. This study examines the present state of Chinese language teaching in trilingual schools and to delve into the problems confronting them and the prospects for further development. By focusing attention on the trilingual schools of Bandung and with data on these schools and interviews with senior personnel, this study will attempt to assess the problems of these schools and to identify appropriate strategies that would contribute to the future development of Chinese language teaching in Indonesia in general and Bandung in particular.

Keywords: Indonesian trilingual schools, Chinese language teaching, problems, prospects

Introduction

The years between 1966 and 1998 mark the “dark age” of Chinese culture and language in Indonesia (Hoon, 2008). Chinese language schools were forced to close and the publication of Chinese language mass media in the forms of newspapers, books and magazines was banned. Chinese Indonesians were prohibited to learn, speak or write Chinese, leading inevitably to the sudden end in the learning of Chinese for more than three decades.

Suharto’s exit from the political stage in 1998 was followed by an era of reformation. Many Chinese Indonesians resumed learning Chinese, some schools offered Chinese language

courses and Chinese mass media began to appear. This was to usher in the revival of Chinese language learning in Indonesia. In fact, the learning of Chinese language has long been a social phenomenon among the Chinese of Southeast Asia. In the immediate post-war years until the recent emergence of China as an economic power, the learning of Chinese language was subjected to varying degrees of state control throughout the region. The exception was Malaysia where Chinese primary schools are part of the national education system and where 61 schools at the secondary level operate independently.

This study is based on the trilingual schools of Bandung. The fourth biggest city in Indonesia with a population of 2.5 million and situated 150 kilometers from the capital city of Jakarta, Bandung is easily accessible to various other cities such as Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi by road and rail (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Bandung, 2020). The introduction of high-speed railway to Jakarta in the near future will be a major boost to its economic importance.

A new educational model has appeared in Bandung in 2000 when TK Nasional Citra Cemara school was established in the form of a trilingual school. The innovative features include the allocation of more hours of Chinese language class than in state-run, private, and even international schools. In fact, what seems to be a “new” model has been in practice in Malaysia for decades. There are currently more than 1,200 Chinese primary schools in Malaysia and they are a component of the national education system. In addition, 61 secondary Chinese schools operate on an independent basis. In so far as languages are concerned, Malaysian Chinese schools offer a trilingual package comprising Malay (the National Language), Chinese and English (Lee, 2011). The trilingual schools of Indonesia, like the Chinese schools of Malaysia, is to enable students of Chinese descent to learn their mother tongue and to be exposed to more opportunities to improve their spoken and written language skills (Chen et al., 2020).

The revival of Chinese language learning is a worldwide phenomenon motivated by the rise of China as an economic power and further inspired by the Belt and Road Initiative announced in 2013. It was in Jakarta that the President of China introduced the idea of the Maritime Silk Road during his state visit in October of the same year (see Voon, 2017). The learning of Chinese has become increasingly popular in Southeast Asia as the language gains economic clout in creating opportunities to employment created by growing investments from China.

The research problem of this study is focused on an examination of Chinese language teaching in the trilingual schools of Bandung so as to understand the current state of development based on an analysis of data of the schools and interviews of school administrators. It will delve into their origins in the context of changing conditions, to scrutinise their educational objectives and modes of operation, followed by attempts to identify various problems facing these schools in order to formulate relevant strategies to overcome existing problems. A brief review of their prospects is then presented on how to cope with the needs of future demands for Chinese language teaching. The trilingual schools in Bandung and those in other cities have similarities

in respect of language teachers, textbooks, and teaching method, as well as difference in local cultural values, government regulations among others. Hence a better understanding of various aspects of trilingual schools in one locality would be of value for reference to the school management in other localities. The strategies of the schools in Bandung may yield insights or lessons on Chinese language teaching in other parts of Indonesia.

Literature Review

Chinese language teaching in Indonesian trilingual schools has attracted increasing attention from Indonesian and foreign researchers in recent years and published in both English and Chinese. Dawis (2008) confirmed that Chinese education in post-1998 Indonesia was inextricably conditioned by the political, cultural, and social conditions of the country. As in Malaysia and Singapore, the Chinese community in Indonesia initiated mother-tongue education when they settled down in the country. Throughout the period of Dutch colonial administration (1600–1942) to the Japanese Occupation (1942–1945), the Soekarno (1945–1965) and Suharto (1965–1998) eras and the Reformasi period (since 1998), the Chinese have encountered numerous situations that interfered with the development of their education system in the country. Literature of the Reformasi period focuses on the cultural, political, socio-economic, and cultural developments (Budianta, 2000 & 2003; Lane, 1999; Lubis and Santosa, 1999). Many of these works touched on the changing role and identity of the Chinese (Tan, 1999; Budiman, 2005). One area that scholars have overlooked are the conditions of Chinese education in the post-1998 period.

The current situation of Chinese education in Indonesia cannot be fully grasped without an understanding of the political and sociocultural background of the Suharto era. This will begin with a review of the history of Chinese education in Indonesia with references drawn from press reports, books, and in-depth interviews with current and past leaders in Chinese education. This review is supplemented with interviews with parents who choose to enroll their children in schools that offer Mandarin, as well as those who have opted not to do so.

In the 2010s, research has begun to focus on the teaching of Chinese in trilingual schools. Ong (2012) concluded that the trilingual school is an effective form of Chinese language teaching as it nurtures the overall development of students, integrates them into the Indonesian nation and broadens their vision. In his review of the history of Chinese language education in Indonesia, Chen (2014) contended that society may approve of Chinese language education to achieve “long-term political stability” through conforming to the government policies and integrating Chinese language education into the national education system. Both Ong (2012) and Chen (2020) raised many issues faced by trilingual schools especially in relation to problems of administration, curricular structure, teaching staff and students, and proposed suggestions on improvement. Several studies touched the development of Chinese language teaching of trilingual schools from aspects of curriculum, teachers, textbooks, teaching model, their problems as well

as suggestions for improvement (Cheng, 2016; Gao, 2016; Zhuo & Liang, 2019; Chen et al., 2020).

Shi (2015) indicated that the trilingual school is an important institution which would promote Chinese language teaching, provides conduit for Chinese language teaching in multicultural Indonesia, and plays a significant role in promoting Chinese language. The mushrooming of trilingual schools and revival of Chinese language demonstrate the importance of adopting a model that is compatible with the indigenous environment.

Research has also focused on the implications of the fall of Suharto on Chinese education and identity. Setijadi (2016) pointed to the role of Chinese community associations after the fall of Suharto in 1998 to usher in the revival of Chinese identity. In the era of regional co-operation, Chinese organisations play a crucial function as trade and cultural intermediaries. Drawing on both empirical and qualitative fieldwork data, she examined how Chinese organisations viewed their ethnicity, national belonging, and strategic position in the context of post-Suharto Chinese identity politics and Sino-Indonesia relations. Hoon and Kuntjara (2019) stated the fall of Suharto in 1998 opened up a new space for the public articulation of Chinese identity in Indonesia. Since the decrees that lifted the ban on Chinese language, Mandarin classes have boomed. In the geopolitical context of the economic rise of China and its promotion of soft power, new market forces were putting demands on Mandarin competency in Indonesia. Research has also shown that the younger generation attaches great importance to the economic value of Chinese language (Chen et al., 2020).

In general, research on trilingual schools in Indonesia has largely overlooked the Bandung situation. This study is an attempt to rectify this shortcoming and to contribute to a better understanding of various issues and prospects of trilingual schools.

Origins of the Trilingual Schools

Officially known as Sekolah Nasional Tiga Bahasa, the trilingual schools conduct courses in Bahasa Indonesia, Chinese and English. They are private schools established by former Chinese school teachers and students or local clan communities or business groups but operating within the context of Indonesia's multicultural setting. Besides the courses available in state-run and other private schools, these schools organise more Chinese language classes of between 8 and 10 hours a week or double the time in state-run and private schools.

Political and Legal Background

Trilingual schools in Indonesia owe their origins to fundamental changes in the legal status of local Chinese community. The relaxation of legal and political restrictions following the end of the Suharto era has created opportunities for the revival of the teaching and learning of the Chinese language. The trilingual schools are a symbol of this change. They are established based on the decrees of Indonesian Ministry of Education and in recognition of political status

and identity of the Chinese community. The first part of Pasal 31 Undang Undang Dasar 1945 (Basic Law 1945 Clause 31) decrees that every citizen has the right to receive education; Instruksi Presiden Nomor 4 Tahun 1999 (Presidential Instruction Number 4, 1999) states that Chinese of Indonesian nationality, i.e. those born in Indonesia, are no longer obliged to apply for Indonesian Nationality Proof Document. Additionally, former President Habibie approved the resumption of Chinese education and officially announced the lifting of the ban on Chinese language education. Presidential Decision Number 6, 2000 rescinds Presidential Instruction Number 14, 1967, that restricted Chinese religious, folk, and cultural activities. Law Number 40, 2008, entitles Indonesian Chinese to the same rights as other communities and Presidential Decision Number 12, 2014, adopts the use of “Tionghok” to replace the pejorative term of “Cina” for China and “Tionghoa” instead of “Cina” for the Chinese community and culture. The Indonesian Ministry of National Education also issued a Ministry of Education regulation in 2014 confirming that there are three types of education setup in Indonesia. These are the national education setup (include state-run and private schools; Islamic schools education setup; and international schools (known as Satuan Pendidikan Kerjasama or SPK). Trilingual schools are recognised as a component of the national setup and are thus have the legal basis to develop into a manner envisaged by the founders.

Social Background

Indonesian Chinese language education has gone through many ups and downs. Improved Indonesia-China diplomatic relations and increased bilateral economic, political, cultural and tourism exchanges would stimulate Chinese investments and tourists to reverse its economic downturn (Chen et al., 2020). Despite the relevance of Chinese proficiency to market requirements, the majority of young Indonesian Chinese lack language skills and familiarity with Chinese culture. The obvious remedy is through Chinese language courses in a school environment. However, the rapid trend of growth of language courses in informal and non-academic settings has revealed serious bottlenecks and weaknesses.

The trilingual school is regarded as an innovative education model to cope with the new socio-economic conditions and the education needs of the present generation. To date, there are more than 70 trilingual schools throughout Indonesia, located mainly in Java and Sumatra. In 2007, student enrolment was between 50,000 and 60,000 (Huang, 2007). In response to the increasing demand, some playgroups, kindergartens, and primary schools have evolved into trilingual schools to become junior and senior high schools. These schools are playing an important role to raise the level of Chinese proficiency of the young Indonesians. A recent study of a school in Purwokerto indicates that about 20% of the students and 52% of the Chinese language teachers are of non-Chinese descent (Chen et. al., 2020). The multi-ethnic environment is a conducive factor in contributing to ethnic understanding.

The Current State of Chinese Language Teaching in the Trilingual Schools of Bandung

The current state of Chinese language teaching in Bandung is typical of the situation in Indonesia. There are three trilingual schools in Bandung, namely, Sekolah Nasional Tiga Bahasa Citra Cemara, Sekolah Nasional Tiga Bahasa Harapan Kasih, and Sekolah Nasional Tiga Bahasa Pelita Fajar, all were established more than ten years ago. The kindergarten of Citra Cemara was first established in 2000, followed by its primary school in 2007 and the secondary school some years later. The Citra Cemara Foundation has also established Akademi Bahasa Asing Internasional Bandung or an international academy of foreign languages. With the support of Xiamen University of China, it offers three-year Chinese language teaching programmes at the diploma and degree levels. The kindergarten and primary school of Harapan Kasih were established in 2006, three years after it started a Chinese language tutorial study centre in 2003. It then established a junior high school in 2014 and a senior high school in 2017. Pelita Fajar is the most recent and was established in 2007.

The founding of these trilingual schools was made possible by the generous donations of former Chinese school teachers and students, the clan organisations and Chinese business groups and educational savings funds. Citra Cemara was funded by former teachers and students of the Qiaozhong Chinese School, Harapan Kasih by the Bandung Hakka clan organisation, and Pelita Fajar was supported by former teachers and students of Qinghua Chinese School.

The study will make available necessary data and insights through interviews and other means of compilation to reveal the nature of the operation, the curricular structure, and various problems and weaknesses that are confronting the schools and, at the same time, to afford an opportunity to examine the prospects of the development of Chinese language teaching in the near future.

The study of these schools was carried out between 2017 and 2019 for a postgraduate research project and supplemented by interviews with school administrators in 2020. The enrollment of these schools has remained stable in recent years. Citra Cemara has 100 kindergarten pupils and about 200 each in the elementary and secondary sections. Pelita Fajar's enrolment in the kindergarten, primary and secondary sections exceeds 300. At each of the levels of kindergarten, elementary and junior high school there is only one class for each grade. At the senior high school level, there are two parallel classes for the Sciences and Humanities. The subjects at trilingual schools are basically similar to those of governmental schools. A major difference is the longer hours allocated for Chinese language as well as six to eight hours of Comprehensive Chinese language, an hour each of Conversational Chinese language and moral values per week.

According to the Indonesian Trilingual Schools Association, the main objectives of trilingual schools are to enable students to integrate into the Indonesian society and to meet market demand by adapting to the national education curriculum to design Chinese language courses and adding English subjects to improve the educational model.

The Bandung trilingual schools offer 8 hours of Chinese language learning each week at the junior and senior high school levels. The 8 or 10 hours of Chinese language are basically from the time allocated to the subjects of Moral Ethics, Music, Handwork, Arts, Physical Education, Computer, and other subjects. Apart from the visiting teachers from China, the local teachers of Indonesian Chinese origin. Most of them have earned the Bachelor's degree in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language from universities in China. There are two native Chinese teachers among 11 local teachers at Citra Cemara, one out of 12 at Harapan Kasih, and none among 10 at Pelita Fajar (Table 1).

Tabel 1

Basic Statistics of Local Chinese Teachers of Bandung Trilingual Schools

Gender		Educational Qualifications			Age (years)			Length of Service (years)			Total
Male	Female	Junior College	BA	MA	<40	40-60	60+	0-2	3-7	8+	
1	32	13	16	4	30	0	3	6	21	6	33
3%	97%	40%	48%	12%	91%	0%	9%	18%	64%	18%	100%

Source: Gunawan, 2019

Most of the language teachers at the trilingual schools are young, well to suitably qualified, and with a teaching experience of several years. The schools seem to use different texts in teaching (Table 2).

Tabel 2

Chinese Language Textbooks of Trilingual Schools, Bandung, 2020

No	School	Educational Level	Students Origin	Textbook
1	Sekolah Nasional Tiga Bahasa Citra Cemara	Kindergarten		self compiled/ self composed study materials
		Primary School		<i>Hanyu</i> 汉语 (which is written by Beijing Chinese Language and Culture College, published by Jinan University Publishing House)
		Junior High School	Citra Cemara primary school graduates and the ones whose Chinese language skills are good	<i>Hanyu</i> 汉语

No	School	Educational Level	Students Origin	Textbook
			Other primary schools' graduates or the ones whose Chinese language skills are not good	<i>Meihua</i> 梅花 (which is published by PT ASTA Ilmu Sukses Jakarta)
		Senior High School		HSK textbooks and study materials
2	Sekolah Nasional Tiga Bahasa Harapan Kasih	Kindergarten		self compiled/ self composed study materials
		Primary School		<i>Zhongwen</i> 中文 (which is written by Jinan University)
		Junior High School	Harapan Kasih primary school graduates and the ones whose Chinese language skills are good	<i>Hanyu Jiaocheng</i> 汉语教程 (which is written by Beijing Language and Culture University)
			Other primary schools' graduates and the ones whose Chinese language skills are not good	<i>Hanyu</i>
		Senior High School	Harapan Kasih junior high school graduates and the ones whose Chinese language skills are good	<i>Hanyu Jiaocheng</i> 汉语教程
			Other junior high schools' graduates and the ones whose Chinese language skills are not good	<i>Hanyu</i> 汉语
3	Sekolah Nasional Tiga Bahasa Pelita Fajar	Kindergarten		self compiled/ self composed study materials
		Primary School		<i>Zhongwen</i> 中文
		Junior High School		<i>Zhongwen</i> 中文
		Senior High School		<i>Zhongwen</i> 中文

Note. These interviews were conducted with senior administrators Mr. Liu Jiesheng of Citra Cemara, Mr. Rao Zhiqiang of Harapan Kasih, and senior language teacher Mdm. Lin Meiying of Pelita Fajar on December 22 and 25, 2020.

All the trilingual schools make use of self-compiled study materials for kindergarten pupils. The contents comprise of expressions such as greetings, asking for help and basic vocabularies

such as parts of body and the family members, colours, numbers, and various simple characters. At the elementary school level, Citra Cemara uses the text called *Hanyu*, while the adopted textbook of Harapan Kasih and Pelita Fajar is *Zhongwen*. Both refer to the Chinese language, except that the former term is popularly used in China and the latter among Chinese overseas. At the junior high school level, Citra Cemara uses the locally published Chinese language textbook *Meihua* which literally means plum blossom and *Hanyu* for the new students who have no Chinese language basic at all. On the other hand, Harapan Kasih uses *Hanyu Teaching Module* and Pelita Fajar uses *Zhongwen*. At the senior high school level, Citra Cemara emphasises instructions based on the *Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi* (HSK) textbooks and exercises on the previous HSK tests to prepare students to sit for the official Chinese Proficiency Test that is equivalent to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the English proficiency test. On the other hand, Harapan Kasih continues with the *Hanyu Teaching Module* and Pelita Fajar with *Zhongwen*. According to one study, about a tenth of the students feel that Chinese language textbooks and study materials are unattractive (Chen et. al., 2020).

The assessment of Chinese language subject is based on homework, projects, quizzes, mid-term and final tests which comprise of oral and written assessments. Hitherto there is as yet no standard format for Chinese language tests on a national level that is equivalent to *Gaokao* or university entrance examination in China, the Malaysian School Certificate examination in Malaysia, or the Cambridge O and A Level Tests in Singapore. Instead, the evaluation process is mainly in the hands of the Chinese language teachers.

Problems of Trilingual Schools and Teaching Programme

Attempts to resume the teaching of Chinese language in Indonesia after the 32-year break during the Suharto era are bound to pose various problems and challenges. These are inseparable from the adequacy and quality of staff, teaching materials, teaching methods, and problems of funding, among others. These major problems are serious challenges to the operation of trilingual schools and their stakeholders. It is essential to overcome these problems in order to consolidate the trilingual schools as a viable educational model for the teaching of Chinese language in Indonesia.

Shortage of Chinese Language Teachers

Three decades of closure of Chinese schools have left a legacy of deep-seated problems of which the most immediate is the near void in the knowledge of the Chinese language and the lack of language teachers. The revival of the teaching of Chinese has been made possible by the support of former Chinese school teachers and students of the pre-Suharto era. They have taught or learnt the language and have a superior command of language skills and proficiency, are familiar with Chinese culture, teaching, and classroom management. But they lack standard pronunciation skills of Mandarin, grammar, and contemporary teaching methods. These have

hampered attempts to solve existing problems especially in the teaching of beginners. The communication gap between teachers and students indicates a general deficiency in language knowledge among the young. Young language teachers, despite having learnt Chinese as a second or foreign language in Chinese universities and possess the Bachelor or postgraduate degrees, are still wanting in their vocabulary and writing skills, familiarity with classical language, or philology. These junior teachers encounter various difficulties in teaching intermediate or advanced level learners.

The lack of teaching experience may be compensated by native Chinese language teachers from China. They possess good Chinese language skills, knowledge, and proper teaching methods. However, the contribution of these invited teachers may not be fully effective as they are on short stints of duty and are not familiar with the local culture and social values. They face difficulties in explaining to students in the meaning of words and phrases in the local context. In the teaching of grammar, a basic knowledge of the grammar of the Indonesian language may enhance the quality of their teaching. One way to upgrade their service is to allow a longer stint of duty for them to better adapt to local conditions.

Another issue is that of remuneration of local Chinese language teachers. There is a preference among the young for better paid positions in business enterprises or as translators, interpreters, tour guides, event organisers, entertainers, or air stewards or stewardesses. Although the resumption of Chinese language teaching began 20 years ago, the average service of teachers in the trilingual schools is only six years. The overwhelming majority of local Chinese language teachers are females and the average of age of these teachers is 33 years. After marriage, Chinese language teachers prefer to opt for jobs that pay better in order to meet increased living expense. The relatively high turnover as teachers implies that teaching is looked upon as a means of livelihood rather than as a cultural mission to promote the learning of Chinese. This phenomenon is damaging to the professional development of Chinese language teaching. Many experienced language teachers have left too soon to train fresh graduates in Chinese language teachers and to transmit their teaching experience, skills, and teaching techniques.

Teaching Materials

Issues pertaining to teaching materials are one of the more common concerns of language teachers in many countries (Voon, 2018). In Malaysia, Chinese primary schools follow a national syllabus while the independent Chinese secondary schools prepare their students to sit for the United Education Certificate which is accepted as entry qualifications for many foreign universities including those in China and Taiwan. In Indonesia, the continued absence a nationwide or even regional Chinese language curriculum is a serious drawback to future development. The implications and consequences of the current state of affairs are obvious. Even at the local level such as Bandung, the trilingual schools are in disagreement on a standard curriculum. Instead, each decides on its own textbooks, resulting in a disarray of teaching materials, standard of language proficiency, and student communication skills.

The indiscriminate adoption of foreign Chinese language textbooks (including *Hanyu* and *Zhongwen*) had disregarded the need for local adaptation to local situations. A lesson in *Hanyu Jiaocheng* includes the character “beer” in the list of vocabulary. The fact that alcoholic drinks are prohibited among Muslim communities has been overlooked. Inclusion of the characters for Chinese-style dumplings or buns is also inappropriate they are not part of Indonesian cuisine. The use of Chinese units of currency should instead be replaced by Indonesian Rupiah. The reference to foreign cultural sites would be more relevantly replaced by those in Indonesia such as Borobudur, Kraton or Yogyakarta. Lessons on Chinese folklore may also be more fittingly complemented by the use of the rich Indonesian folktales or fables. In the case of local Chinese language textbooks such as *Meihua*, the number of new words in each lesson varies so widely as to impose hardship to students. Local Chinese organisations with interest in Chinese language education would do well to adapt textbook contents to suit Indonesian situations.

Teaching Methods

Teaching methods comprise conventional and modern approaches by incorporating the use of computer software, programs and applications to raise learning efficiency and to use relevant games to motivate student interest. That 11% of students feel that there is insufficient classroom interaction may point to the need to switch from the teacher- or textbook-centred approach to one that caters more to the interest of students (Chen et al., 2020; Gunawan, 2019). Out-dated teaching methods have tended to suppress the desire to learn and to explore.

Attempts to devise effective teaching methods must be appropriate to the local and national setting and not divorced from practical considerations. Conducting research and surveys on Chinese language teaching by local and foreign teachers or researchers with pedagogic expertise on teaching may help to develop more effective and innovative teaching styles. The use of stimulating teaching approaches may motivate student interest and their desire to learn. They would also improve teacher-student relationship and interaction in a conducive atmosphere to learn.

Problems of Funding

Trilingual schools are private educational institutions. Their acceptance into the national education system does not guarantee their existence and sustainability. The issue of sufficient funding is crucial for the healthy growth and development the schools. Funding is the key to the provision of basic infrastructure, human resource development, recurrent administrative and maintenance costs and various other budgetary items for staff training, the sustenance of cultural and creative activities. It is a fact that the continued existence of trilingual schools is inseparable from the fund-raising activities of the local Chinese community. It is indeed the responsibility of the community to ensure that financial support is forthcoming on a regular basis. As in Malaysia, the raising of funds from the public is a regular and indispensable feature of Chinese society.

Fund-raising in support of education is a major traditional and cultural obligation of Chinese communities overseas. This activity is a social imperative driven by the humanistic orientation of Chinese culture. The concepts of *ren* or benevolence, *yi* or righteousness, and *shan* or generosity are core values that obligate Chinese society to a collective effort to make available funds for the founding of schools, their operation, and maintenance on a permanent basis. *Ren* is the love for humanity manifesting itself in the idea of nurturing the self as well as nurturing others. In short, donating for the cause of education is the most direct means of nurturing others. Indirectly, this act will contribute to the general well-being of society at large. *Yi* is the embodiment of extending help to others not out of selfish intent but with care and concern. The support for education is hence an expression of contribution to the benefit of the larger community. *Shan* is being kind-hearted and charitable and a sign of the inherent kindness of all conscientious persons. The practice of *shan* towards education is the attempt to render education as a common good for the benefit of society (Lau, 1979; Fu, 2010; Voon, 2012). Fund-raising is therefore a regular exercise for which the tireless efforts of community leaders, benefactors and the community in general are pooled together for a common and noble cause.

Prospects of Chinese Language Teaching of Trilingual Schools

The prospects of the Chinese language teaching of trilingual schools are determined by both external and internal circumstances. The former refers largely to China's rapid overall economic performance in development, trade, investments as well as in expansion in education, tourism, and foreign collaboration. As the second largest economy and the largest trading nation of the world, China's growing political stature will boost the economic appeal of the Chinese language for business, employment, or career advancement especially among students. The learning of Mandarin has become a popular option as a second or foreign language among students in many countries. The diffusion of Mandarin has also become more evident under the influence of the Belt and Road Initiative (Voon, 2017). There is growing evidence of the trend in learning Chinese in Southeast Asia. As Indonesia has the largest community of Chinese overseas, the prospects for the continued expansion of the teaching of Chinese are bright. How these prospects may be realised would depend on how well the government and the Chinese community take advantage of and manage new opportunities.

The Maritime Silk Road initiative announced in Indonesia in 2013 is a confirmation of the importance of the Indonesia-China bilateral relations. China is now Indonesia's most important partner of economy and trade. In the fourth quarter of 2019, China surpassed Singapore as the largest foreign investor of Indonesia with US\$1.4 billion. In the first quarter of 2020, China was second with a total of US\$1.3 billion of foreign investment (Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal (2020). Indonesia exports to China reached US\$27.96 billion in 2019, compared with US\$23 billion in 2013 (Trading Economics, 2021).

Internally, Indonesia is one of the largest developing countries in the world, with a population of 267.7 million in 2018 and the largest in Southeast Asia. China is one of the largest potential markets for Indonesian products and services. The economic clout of the Chinese in Indonesia and the legalisation of Chinese language teaching in 1998 have prompted a growing number of Indonesians to learn the Chinese language.

As a city which plays an important role in the economic and trade relations between China and Indonesia, Bandung may help to demonstration the economic value of the Chinese language.¹ The number of students with interest to learn Chinese language is remained fairly stable (Table 3). This is reliable proof that there are good opportunities for expansion in Chinese language teaching in Bandung in the future.

A study has shown that, according to the Language Centre of Indonesia's Ministry of Education, about one-fifth of the country's universities now offer Mandarin, compared to just 5% a decade ago (Tsai, 2010). A major obstacle to rapid increase in capacity is the shortage of qualified teachers, a not surprising phenomenon given the prolonged ban on the teaching of Chinese, and efforts have to be made to recruit teachers from China. The current situation is one in which opportunities and possibilities in the expansion of Chinese language teaching are severely challenged by shortages and bottlenecks in the supply of teachers, teaching materials, outmoded teaching methods, funding, and various other problems. All these are in urgent need of solution before Chinese language teaching embarks on the next stage of development.

Table 3

Student Enrollment of Trilingual Schools in Bandung

School	Educational Level	Number of Students (in 2017-2020)
Sekolah Nasional Tiga Bahasa Citra Cemara	Kindergarten	within 100
	Primary School	around 200
	Secondary School	around 200
Sekolah Nasional Tiga bahasa Harapan Kasih	Kindergarten	around 30
	Primary School	around 130
	Secondary School	around 130
Sekolah Nasional Tiga Bahasa Pelita Fajar	Kindergarten	around 30
	Primary School	around 130
	Secondary School	around 130

Note. Based on interviews as indicated in Table 2.

Some Suggestions

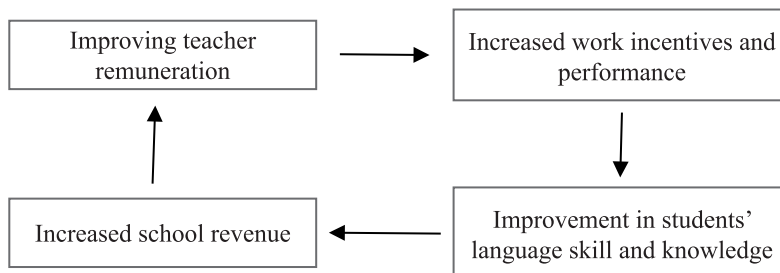
Based on the examination of the current situation and problems of trilingual schools, four response strategies may be suggested for consideration by school management and stakeholders.

The first strategy is to raise the qualifications of language teachers. In recent years, many colleges and universities in China have offered scholarships and specific financial support to suitably qualified candidates to further their studies at the under- or post-graduate levels in the Teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language. This has become an effective approach for Indonesian Chinese teachers to upgrade their language skills, improve the quality and performance in language teaching by means of proper teaching methods and techniques. In a speech in Universitas Indonesia in Depok, West Java on Wednesday 27th May 2015, Sudjadi, chairman of the organizing committee of China Education Exhibitin (CEE), indicated that since 2010 the number of Indonesian students in Chinese universities has reached 13,700 people with an annual increase of 10%. The majority of these students had specialised in the study of the Chinese language (PREC Edu Services, 2015)

The next strategy is to adjust the remuneration of local Chinese language teachers. It is important that teaching is an attractive and respected profession and well-qualified teachers should suitably rewarded for their dedication. The teaching profession must be seen as a competitive and viable career path for fresh graduates. A wide discrepancy in the remuneration of teachers and other employment especially in the business and other sectors will fail to appeal to and retain good teachers. Education is a noble profession, and many are sufficiently dedicated not for financial rewards but as a mission to promote Chinese cultural heritage. Yet the remuneration system should avoid being lacking in prospects or to force some to resort to giving private language classes or to take up a part-time job in order to make ends meet. If teaching is perceived as a profession not of choice but as a stepping stone to better jobs, the prospects of trilingual schools will not look bright at all. An attractive remuneration package should be seen in a positive light, as a means that would help to evolve into a virtuous cycle of improving work incentives and performance, motivating student interest, and learning, and promoting enrolment to raise financial turnover (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Relations between Teachers Remuneration and School Revenue



The third strategy is to formulate a nationwide policy to standardise teaching goals, curriculum, and textbooks in Chinese language teaching. Perhaps the relevant groups may take into account the work and experience of Malaysia's Dong Jiao Zong (Combined Board

of Directors and Teachers of Independent Chinese School of Malaysia) and their curricular structure. Organised groups that manage the Chinese language teaching and Chinese language teachers such as Badan Kooordinasi Pendidikan Bahasa Mandarin (Board for the Co-ordination of Chinese Language Education in Indonesia), Perkumpulan Pendidikan Bahasa Tionghoa Indonesia (Indonesian National Organisation of Chinese Education) and other regional teachers' organisations ought to pool their resources to formulate broad guidelines, goals and standards of Chinese language teaching in Indonesia.

In the immediate future, the trilingual schools of Bandung may discuss the standardization of the goals and assessment of Chinese language teaching (Chen et al., 2020). These would include specifications on mid-term, year-end, and graduation tests to assist these trilingual schools to better evaluate the teaching process, the progress of students, and hence the effectiveness of this development strategy. The school boards have to standardise the curriculum, the common use of textbooks and study materials that are compatible with the local context to raise the efficiency of language teaching. Local Chinese language teachers may play a supporting role in curricular revision to improve the understanding of students concerning local conditions and those of China's. The school boards may also organise local discussions, seminars, or teacher training on a regular basis to upgrade the quality of teaching and teaching methods to learn from native speaker teachers, foreign experts and experienced local teachers.

Another important strategy is to establish a sound fund-raising mechanism by fully using the social and cultural strength of the Chinese community to ensure the long-term development of trilingual schools. There are other means which may supplement the financial resources of trilingual schools. One of this is to make maximum use of various forms of assistance from China especially in training and further studies in China. Another is to take advantage of government subsidies in aid of teachers and students offered by the Ministry of Education through Bantuan Operasional Sekolah (Assistance for School Operation), the Hibah Fund, and other forms of subsidies.

The above-mentioned strategies of the schools in Bandung may provide any insights or lessons to the development of Chinese language teaching in other parts of Indonesia. The experience of the trilingual schools of Bandung may be relevant to trilingual schools in other cities as there are similarities in language teachers resources, the textbooks and the teaching methods, but also differences in certain conditions such as local cultural value, local government regulations and others.

Conclusion

After three decades when the Chinese language was banned by the Suharto government, a new era in the teaching of Chinese language is beginning to make a definite and sure return to the past tradition of making available opportunities for mother-tongue education to the next generation. The trilingual schools offer an alternative model to existing schools and mark a

milestone in the revival of Chinese education in Indonesia. These schools are now a new feature in language teaching in several major urban centres.

The study of the trilingual schools in Bandung has allowed a deeper understanding of the nature, operation, problems, prospects and related aspects of these schools. It is clear that the operation of these schools independently of each other or the community as a whole is not a sound basis for healthy development. Without the support and co-operation of the government, Chinese community, related educational organisations and institutions, the many problems of these schools, particularly in the area of formulating a uniform curricular structure, methods of evaluation, and training of personnel, are unlikely to be resolved. Apart from the schools and their operation, the welfare of the teachers, many of whom are just embarking on their career, cannot be ignored and overlooked. There is evidently an urgent need to overhaul the existing system by infusing new ideas and a unity of approach and purpose to promote this common community project. By overcoming existing restrictions and problems, the teaching of Chinese language in Indonesia would seize the many opportunities created by the Belt and Road Initiative to elevate itself to the next level of development.

* Gunawan Wibowo (黄景泰) is a Chinese language teacher at Sekolah Kristen Kalam Kudus, Bandung, Indonesia. Email: oeijkingthaj@gmail.com

** Dr. Rui-Xin Wang (王睿欣) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education, New Era University College, Kajang, Malaysia. Email: ruixin.wang@newera.edu.my

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Notes

- Bandung was the venue of the Afro-Asian Conference of Non-Allied Countries in 1954 in which Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai play a major part in promoting solidarity among the participating countries.