

COMMON BILINGUAL EDUCATION
PROGRAM MODELS
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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1. Introduction

The common denominator of all schools which profess to have a Bilingual Education program is simply that some or all of the content based subjects are delivered through the medium of a second language, which is not the mother tongue of the majority of the pupils. Some programs will aim at producing pupils who are bilingual at the end of their schooling. Others will aim at easing the transition from a minority language to a majority language, which might involve losing one language and acquiring another. Yet others will aim at increasing the pupils' competence in a foreign language so that, at the end of their schooling, pupils have a 'working knowledge' of that language. A variety of models exist around the world and differ in terms of :

- their goals,
- the characteristics (linguistic and otherwise) of the participating students,
- the sequencing and amount of instruction in the languages involved,
- their pedagogical approaches,
- the amount of support from the policy makers and the community.

2. Key Concepts

2.1 *Bilingual vs. Monolingual Education*

Bilingual education models refer to programs that use two or more languages in instruction, whereas monolingual education models use only one language in

instruction. Bilingual education models may be further separated into additive and subtractive models.

2.2 Additive vs. Subtractive Bilingual Education

Additive bilingual education models refer to bilingual education models which help students to continue to develop academically and conceptually in their first language (native language) as they add a second language. Subtractive bilingual educational programs denote bilingual education programs which seek to replace a student's first language (native language) with a second language, in this case English.

3. The Program Models

3.1 Programs for Language Majority Students (non-ELLs)

3.1.1 Mainstream Education in English with foreign language teaching. This model treats the foreign/second language as a subject in the curriculum rather than a medium for instruction, unlike the Immersion and Mainstream Bilingual Education (MBE) models discussed later. In a foreign language program, second language instruction and exposure throughout the school-day are minimal, perhaps as little as one thirty-minute class per day. And in terms of duration of foreign language study, while foreign language programs in other countries run kindergarten through twelfth grade in order to provide maximum exposure and experience within the foreign language model, in the U. S., foreign languages are most often taught at the secondary level, with only about a third of elementary schools including any foreign language instruction.

3.1.2 Immersion Bilingual Education for monolinguals. Immersion bilingual education was created in Canada in the 1960s. Within this program the second language is used as a medium of instruction and the goals are bilingualism and biliteracy. Importantly, in immersion programs minority languages are as valued as majority languages, rather than being assigned lesser prestige as may be the case in

other models. In order to prevent loss or lack of development in a student's native language, some programs, particularly partial immersion programs, support students' first languages to varying extents; total immersion programs may not, particularly early on. Immersion programs can be differentiated based on the age at which a child enters the immersion experience and the amount of time spent in immersion.

Early immersion begins in kindergarten, delayed or middle immersion starts in middle school, and late immersion commences in high school or junior high. Total immersion means that the student starts out being 100% immersed in the second language and that the immersion diminishes gradually to about 50% of the week being spent in the student's first language, and 50% in his or her second language. Partial immersion results in approximately 50% immersion in the second language throughout elementary and middle school. This eventual even ratio between first and second languages corresponds with immersion education's overall goal of bilingualism, rather than the substitution of a first language with a second language.

3.1.3 Mainstream Bilingual Education in two majority languages. Mainstream Bilingual Education is defined as the use of two (or more) majority languages in a school, with the goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, and cultural pluralism. Such schools typically educate majority language children, rather than a mixed student population of majority and minority language students. International Schools, which are found in over 80 countries throughout the world and primarily cater to the affluent, are one example of such schools, where curriculum is taught via two or more majority languages of international prestige. The schools in the European Schools Movement constitute another example, servicing some 15,000 children of wealthy members of the European community, with students receiving education in their native language and in a second language of English, French, or German throughout their schooling.

3.2 *Programs for Language Minority Students (ELLs)*

3.2.1 *Structured Immersion/Submersion.* As mandated in Proposition 227, California's dominant model of language education for ELLs is one year of Structured Immersion, followed theoretically by movement into mainstream education if students have qualified as fluent in English at the end of that year. Structured Immersion is a monolingual program in which all instruction is in English but the teachers use simple or simplified English. Structured Immersion programs contain only language minority children, meaning that ELL students in California are not taught alongside native English speakers. The native language is not developed, but rather is replaced by English, with monolingualism in English being the goal. Typically, there is no first language support, although individual Structured Immersion teachers may or may not initially allow students to use a little of their native language in class.

Here's what an average day looks like for an ELL student at George Washington Elementary School in California :

- Pronunciation and listening skills, 20 minutes.
- Vocabulary, 30 minutes.
- Verb tense instruction, 20 minutes.
- Sentence structure, 20 minutes.
- Integrated grammar skills application, 20 minutes.
- English reading and writing, 60 minutes.
- Math (specially designed academic instruction in English), 40 minutes.
- Science, social science, P. E., 40 minutes.

Given these qualities, structured immersion clearly corresponds with California's English-Only political stance and the related linguistic orientation of language as a problem and linguistic ideology of assimilation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the country's current emphasis on rapid English acquisition, immersion in English, as is the case in Structured Immersion, is the favored model among the general population in the U. S. for educating ELLs.

One must keep in mind that Proposition 227's recommended time frame of one-year for structured immersion means that at the end of one year, if the student qualifies as fluent in English, he or she will be placed in mainstream education, a. k. a., Submersion, and taught all day every day in English, alongside native English speakers, and with the understanding that all students and teachers are expected to use only English. This means that after this one year of Structured Immersion and thus being moved into mainstream, the student would be offered no special help but rather would in effect be left to succeed or fail. In 2004, it was estimated that nationwide 50% of students categorized as having limited proficiency in English were in submersion, a. k. a., mainstream, classes without any additional help.

3.2.2 English as a Second Language (ESL). ESL is a monolingual model in which students spend the majority of the school day in mainstream classes but also have special sessions of tutoring in English with an ESL teacher in order to develop their competence in English. These sessions generally occur outside of the mainstream classes and are thus referred to as "pull-outs". In some cases, although less commonly than pull-outs, "pull-ins" may occur in which the ESL teacher comes to some of an ELL student's mainstream classes to give the student extra help in English. Both students and teachers are expected to use English. There are two varieties of ESL : ESL English and Content-ESL. Strictly speaking, ESL English is taught as a language and the goal is to learn English or, in other words, monolingualism in English ; goals do not include curriculum knowledge or skills. Content-ESL teaches content in English and also teaches English as a second language peripherally. Regardless of the variety of ESL, the goals and structure correspond with the English-Only political agenda, the language as a problem orientation, and an assimilationist ideology. Historically, ESL has been one of the most popular if not the most popular method of educating ELLs in the U. S.

3.2.3 *Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)*. TBE is a bilingual education model in which ELL students move from instruction via their first language to instruction via English. English is taught directly in a separate language class but all other classes are initially taught in a student's first language, gradually progressing to instruction in English with students' native languages used only for elaboration or clarification. TBE can be divided into early- and late- exit programs. Early-exit signifies a two year limit on assistance using the native language, while late-exit TBE permits approximately 40% of instruction to be conducted in the native language until the sixth grade. Both varieties entail segregation (separate classes) from fluent English speakers.

The goal of transitional programs is to facilitate the ELL student's transition into all-English instruction, while providing academic instruction in the first language to the extent required. Essentially, TBE is intended to enable students to continue acquiring content knowledge, understanding, and skills while learning English, rather than leaving students cut off from learning by language barriers. While acknowledging that TBE thus prevents students from stalling in their educational development. The replacement of minority languages with English and the lack of development of the minority languages amounts to a process of subtractive bilingualism and a goal, therefore, of relative monolingualism in English. As such, TBE aligns with the English-only agenda, the language as a problem perspective, and an assimilationist ideology.

Certainly, this has been the most popular form of bilingual education in the U. S. Perhaps it is owing to TBE's unequivocal goal of monolingualism in English that TBE programs are still the most common, given current legislative emphasis on rapid English acquisition. The overwhelming majority of programs serving Spanish-speaking students are TBE programs.

3.2.4 Dual-Language Programs. Dual-Language programs are additive bilingual education programs which, in general terms, strive for all students, language minorities and language majorities, to attain academic achievement, bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism (i. e., cross cultural-cultural competence). As such, unlike the above-mentioned programs directed toward ELL students, Dual-Language programs correspond with the English-Plus political agenda, the language as a right or resource perspectives, and a pluralist ideology. The program's specific goals are: high levels of mastery in both languages; the capacity to read and write at grade level in both languages; general academic success at or above grade level; positive intercultural behaviors and attitudes; and the preparation of individuals who value intercultural peace and respect for people of different cultural backgrounds. Unlike Heritage language programs, discussed next, which also use two languages (e. g., Spanish and English) in instruction, Dual-Language programs contain approximately equal numbers of language minority and majority students in a classroom - the ratio of language majority to minority students as between 30/70 and 50/50.

The two main varieties of Dual Language programs are the 50 : 50 model and the 90 : 10 model. In the former, teachers balance the two languages in instruction, as much in elementary grade levels as in upper grade levels, while in the 90 : 10 model, students begin their first year with 90% of instruction in the minority language and 10% in English, and gradually throughout their schooling approach a 50 : 50 balance. Traditionally, in both models the separation of languages is such that only one language is used in a class period.

3.2.5 Heritage language programs. Heritage programs, like Dual-Language programs, are additive bilingual education programs that strive for bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism, and thus also correspond with English-Plus, the view of language as a right and/or resource, and pluralism. As in Dual-Language

programs, classes contain a mixture of language minority and language majority students and both languages (e. g., Spanish and English) are used for instruction. However, unlike Dual-Language programs, Heritage programs often dedicate themselves more to the preservation of the ethnic (minority) language and culture, and, in many cases, have significantly more language minority students than language majority students. Heritage programs tend to use the minority language in more than 50% of the instruction as part of a plan to develop and maintain the minority language and a positive attitude for the minority culture, while developing English proficiency. It bears repeating that out of all the programs described only Dual-Language and Heritage programs are designed purposefully to educate both language majority and minority students together, with the same goals, same curricula, and same outcomes for all students.

4. Questions for Teachers

Here are some issues, which can start teachers thinking about the day-to-day decisions which a MBE teacher must make. For the sake of simplicity, they have been put under the following categories: Planning and Preparation, Communicative Strategies, Classroom Management. Note: there is some overlap.

4.1 *Planning and preparation*

Where do you find resources which are suitable for the age range and motivational levels of the pupils concerned whilst appropriate in terms of linguistic difficulty? How do you adapt authentic material? Do you adapt its linguistic content? Do you simplify/augment the cognitive demands? How do you plan a unit of work? Do the objectives of the unit of work relate to both foreign language and content matter? Is progression planned for in terms of linguistic terms and structures? How do you deal with the necessary delay compared with the monolingual colleague's unit of work? Do you go for a series of lessons in the FL and then a series of lessons in the mother tongue to ensure pupils are equipped with

mother tongue's specialist vocabulary? Do you set homework in mother tongue so that they acquire the specialist vocabulary independently?

How do you assess pupils? Do you assess their linguistic skills separately from their content knowledge? If the assessments are conducted in the foreign language, how do you deal with linguistic errors? How do you modify marking criteria in order to cater for the MBE context? How do you record progress in both content and linguistic skills and report this to parents and colleagues? Should you compare the pupils' attainments in their content knowledge with those of their monolingual peers? How do you plan a lesson? What place do the linguistic objectives have? What is the balance between linguistic and content matter knowledge and progression? How do you tackle the pupils' different abilities and learning styles in both language and content matter? How do you maintain motivational levels whilst ensuring progression within learning?

4.2 Communicative strategies

How do you make yourself comprehensible in the foreign language? Which Modern Language Teaching strategies can you employ to teach content matter? What strategies do you teach the pupils in order for them to cope with being taught in the foreign language? What strategies do you use for the teaching of difficult concepts? How do you keep the linguistic skills progressing so that the pupils can deal with ever increasing levels of cognitive demands? How do you train the pupils to understand and respond to an ever-increasing level of classroom commands and instructions? How do you encourage the pupils to use classroom commands and general instructions with one another? Who owns the discourse? Do you provide real debates? How can you encourage the pupils to communicate rather than merely regurgitate? How do you encourage spontaneous conversations with the pupils and among pupils? How do you handle their language errors? How do you intervene in their conversations or explanations? What decision should you

make about accuracy of language versus message? How do you handle 'code-switching', i. e., reverting to mother tongue when competence in the foreign language is insufficient to express opinions or facts?

4.3 *Classroom management*

How do you ensure pupils' learning and organize it? How do you teach them suitable discrete skills which are appropriate for both content matter and language (e. g. dictionary skills, independent learning skills, etc.)? How do you create a suitable environment in which pupils feel rewarded for taking risks and learn to become more autonomous? How do you manage central and peripheral discourse? How do you encourage pupils to use the foreign language when talking to each other and to you about matters not pertaining to their learning (social, administrative and pastoral matters)? How do you encourage pupils to assess their own learning whilst using the foreign language? What decision do you make regarding turn-taking; regarding who owns the discourse; who has the right to speak, when and about what? How do you administer discipline whilst using the foreign language? What is the balance between group work, pair work and class work? How do you encourage the pupils to use the foreign language whilst working in pairs or groups? How is the seating arrangement conducive to the type of classroom atmosphere which you wish to create? How can you bring together good content teaching and good language teaching methodologies and techniques?

5. **Stages of Second Language Acquisition**

All new learners of English progress through the same stages to acquire language. However, the length of time each students spends at a particular stage may vary greatly.

5.1 *Stage I: Pre-production*

This is the silent period. English language learners may have up to 500 words in their receptive vocabulary but they are not yet speaking. Some students will,

however, repeat everything you say. They are not really producing language, but are parroting. These new learners of English will listen attentively and they may even be able to copy words from the board. They will be able to respond to pictures and other visuals. They can understand and duplicate gestures and movements to show comprehension. Total Physical Response methods will work well with them. Teachers should focus attention on listening comprehension activities and on building a receptive vocabulary.

5.2 Stage II: Early production

This stage may last up to six months and students will develop a receptive and active vocabulary of about 1,000 words. During this stage, students can usually speak in one- or two-word phrases. They can use short language chunks that have been memorized although these chunks may not always be used correctly. Here are some suggestions for working with students in this stage of English language learning :

- Ask yes/no and either/or questions.
- Accept one or two word responses.
- Give students the opportunity to participate in some of the whole class activities.
- Use pictures and realia to support questions.
- Build vocabulary using pictures.
- Provide listening activities.
- Simplify the content materials to be used. Focus on key vocabulary and concepts. When teaching elementary age ELLs, use simple books with predictable text.

5.3 Stage III: Speech emergence

Students have developed a vocabulary of about 3,000 words and can communicate with simple phrases and sentences. They will ask simple questions, that may or may not be grammatically correct, such as “May I go to bathroom ?” ELLs will also initiate short conversations with classmates. They will understand

easy stories read in class with the support of pictures. They will also be able to do some content work with teacher support. Here are some simple tasks they can complete :

- Read short, modified texts in content area subjects.
- Match vocabulary words to definitions.
- Study flashcards with content area vocabulary.
- Participate in duet, pair and choral reading activities.
- Compose brief stories based on personal experience.

Write in dialogue journals. (Dialogue journals are a conversation between the teacher and the student. Students can write about topics that interest them and proceed at their own level and pace. They have a place to express their thoughts and ideas).

5.4 Stage IV : Intermediate fluency

English language learners at the intermediate fluency stage have a vocabulary of 6,000 active words. They are beginning to use more complex sentences when speaking and writing and are willing to express opinions and share their thoughts. They will ask questions to clarify what they are learning in class. These English language learners will be able to work in grade level math and science classes with some teacher support. Comprehension of English literature and social studies content is increasing. At this stage, students will use strategies from their native language to learn content in English. Student writing at this stage will have many errors as ELLs try to master the complexity of English grammar and sentence structure. Many students may be translating written assignments from native language. This is the time for teachers to focus on learning strategies. Students in this stage will also be able to understand more complex concepts.

5.5 Stage V : Advanced Fluency

It takes students from 4-10 years to achieve cognitive academic language proficiency in a second language. Student at this stage will be near-native in their

ability to perform in content area learning. Most ELLs at this stage have been exited from ESL and other support programs. At the beginning of this stage, however, they will need continued support from classroom teachers especially in content areas such as history, social studies and in writing.

6. Key Definitions

6.1 Bilingualism. Using two languages on a regular basis.

6.2 Simultaneous bilingualism. Learning two languages as “first languages.” Infants who are exposed to two languages from birth will become simultaneous bilinguals.

6.3 Consecutive bilingualism. Learning one language after already know another. This is the situation for all those who become bilingual as adults, as well as for many who become bilingual earlier in life.

6.4 Receptive bilingualism. Being able to understand two languages but express oneself in only one. This is generally not considered “true” bilingualism, but is a fairly common situation worth naming here.

7. Types of Bilingual Families

Type 1

Parents ~ The parents have different native languages; each parent has some degree of competence in the other’s language.

Community ~ The language of one of the parents is the dominant language of the community.

Strategy ~ The parents each speak their own language to the child from birth.

Type 2

Parents ~ The parents have different native languages.

Community ~ The language of one of the parents is the dominant language of the community.

Strategy ~ Both parents speak the non-dominant language to the child, who is only

fully exposed to the dominant language when outside the home and in particular when he or she starts nursery school.

Type 3

Parents ~ The parents share the same native language.

Community ~ The dominant language is not that of the parents.

Strategy ~ The parents speak their own language to the child.

Type 4

Parents ~ The parents have different native languages.

Community ~ The dominant language is different from either of the parents' languages.

Strategy ~ The parents speak their own language to the child from birth.

Type 5

Parents ~ The parents share the same native language.

Community ~ The dominant language is the same as that of the parents.

Strategy ~ One of the parents always address the child in a language which is not his or her native language.

8. Common questions parents ask when raising a child bilingually

8.1 What are the advantages of my child becoming bilingual?

8.1.1 Cognitive Advantages

a. You become smarter. Speaking a foreign language improves the functionality of your brain by challenging it to recognise, negotiate meaning, and communicate in different language systems. This skill boosts your ability to negotiate meaning in other problem-solving tasks as well.

b. Your memory improves. Educators often liken the brain to a muscle, because it functions better with exercise. Learning a language involves memorising rules and vocabulary, which helps strengthen that mental “muscle.”

c. You build multitasking skills. Bilingual people, especially children, are skilled at

switching between two systems of speech, writing, and structure. This “juggling” skill makes them good multitaskers because they can easily switch between different structures. (Pennsylvania State University Study)

d. You become more perceptive. Bilingual people are better at observing their surroundings. They are more adept at focusing on relevant information and editing out the irrelevant. They are better at spotting misleading information. (University of Pompeu Fabra, Spain, study)

e. Your decision-making skills improve. Bilinguals tend to make more rational decisions. Any language contains nuance and subtle implications in its vocabulary, and these biases can subconsciously influence your judgment. (University of Chicago study)

f. You improve your English. Learning a foreign language draws your focus to the mechanics of language: grammar, conjugations, and sentence structure. This makes you more aware of language, and the ways it can be structured and manipulated. These skills can make you a more effective communicator and a sharper editor and writer. Bilinguals also develop a better ear for listening, since they’re skilled at distinguishing meaning from discreet sounds.

g. You stave off Alzheimer’s and dementia. Several studies have been conducted on this topic, and the results are consistent. For monolingual adults, the mean age for the first signs of dementia is 71.4. For adults who speak two or more languages, the mean age for those first signs is 75.5. Studies considered factors such as education level, income level, gender, and physical health, but the results were consistent.

8.1.2 Communication Advantages

a. Within the family. Being able to communicate with each parent in the parents’ preferred language may contribute to making the parent-child relationship closer and enables parents to pass on part of their own heritage to their child. Furthermore,

bilingualism is valuable in enabling children to communicate with extended family.

b. Outside the family. Being bilingual opens doors of communication to new people at work, at home and in the community. It allows the bilingual person to make friendships in two or more different communities, and to make connections with new and interesting people both at home and abroad.

8.1.3 Cultural Advantages

a. Multicultural. Bilinguals have the opportunity to experience two cultures, complete with behaviour systems, traditions, stories, and greetings. In short, they have two windows on the world.

b. Greater tolerance and less racism. It seems likely that bilinguals would be more tolerant of difference and diversity and less likely to be racist, but this is yet to be scientifically tested.

8.1.4 Character Advantages

a. Raised self-esteem. This may depend on the attitude of the wider community to the languages spoken. However, in general, in Europe, Japan, and the U.S., being bilingual is seen as a positive thing. Also, the praise and recognition of the second language given by parents in order to achieve bilingualism may also help self-esteem.

b. Security in identity. Bilinguals have close links with their heritage, they know who they are and where they come from. Children who lose one half of their linguistic heritage may regret this later.

8.1.5 Curriculum Advantages

a. Increased curriculum achievement. Studies have found that bilingual children who have a fairly well developed knowledge of two languages do better at school. This may result from multiple factors, such as higher self-esteem, creative thinking and a wider worldview.

b. Increased confidence. Bilinguals find it easier to learn a third language than

monolinguals find it to learn a second language. It is not yet known why this should be, but it may be a result of higher self-confidence.

8.1.6 Financial Advantages

a. Economic and employment. Studies show that bilinguals earn more on average in the U. S. and more recently in the UK. As companies become more and more international there is a need for bilinguals in media, sales, marketing, and customer services. Although children may resist one language, but the time that they are young adults almost without exception they are extremely grateful to have two (or more) languages. The short term struggle is worth it in the long run.

8.2 Are there any disadvantages to raising a child bilingually ?

There are some disadvantages that bilingual children have in the early stages which include the following :

a. Slower to learn languages. Even though bilingual children are better at multi-tasking they are also found to be slower to acquire vocabulary than are monolinguals, because bilinguals must divide their time between two languages while monolinguals focus on only one. Studies show that bilingual children start speaking three to six months later than monolingual children.

b. Mixing of languages. It is normal for bilingual children to mix up languages until about the age of 4. If children are lacking the right word in language A, they will borrow from language B to communicate their message. It means that they may temporarily mix the languages, affecting the way they interact or communicate their ideas or messages to others.

c. Identity issues. Depending on where the child grows up, the child can feel confused about their cultural identity. For example, if a child in Japan speaks both Japanese and Korean, will there be pressure to identify more with the culture of Korea ?

d. Added academic load. Classes in most schools are taught in only one language.

For the child to become fully fluent in reading and writing in a second language, there will be additional work for the child to learn the second language. The time spent could take away from other activities and studies, which could be a major tradeoff.

e. Increased work for the parents. Often children who can achieve native fluency in a second language grow up in an environment where the parents need to be actively involved to teach the child the second language. This can be extremely time consuming for the parent.

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