

Week 2

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Bilingual education refers to instruction in two languages. Typically, bilingual education is offered in the societal language and in another language. In the United States, bilingual education usually refers to the type of instruction provided to students who are limited-English proficient, also known as English language learners. These students receive instruction in their native or home language and in English. Most programs focus on Spanish and English because the majority of English language learners are Spanish speakers. In international contexts, bilingual education is offered to students who do not know the societal language and to students who are native speakers of the societal language. When the latter students are given the opportunity to learn a second language, bilingual education becomes prestigious and is viewed as an educational advantage.

HISTORY OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Although James Crawford reports that bilingual education existed during the early history of the United States, it was not until 1968, when the United States Congress authorized bilingual education through the Bilingual Education Act, or Title VII of the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary Education Act, that it became an approved means of education for students who were limited-English-proficient. A Supreme Court ruling, *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), contributed to the spread of bilingual education when the Court declared that placing Chinese students who were limited-English-proficient in regular classrooms, without special efforts to address their second language status, was a violation of their civil rights. The Office of Civil Rights in the United States Department of Education then decided that the preferred method to address students' second-language status was bilingual education. Crawford explains that after 1987, the types of programs funded under the heading of bilingual education expanded to include English instruction without a native language component. For example, in 1987–1988, Congress allowed up to 25 percent of federal funding to be used for all-English programs. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, a few states restricted or outlawed bilingual education programs with native-language instruction, providing English-language learners only with some form of English instruction. In 2002, with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, the English Language Acquisition Act (Title III), replaced the Bilingual Education Act. States now could choose how to address the second language needs of English-language learners, as long as they established English proficiency standards, quality academic instruction in reading and mathematics, and quality language instruction based on scientific research for English acquisition. They also had to provide English language learners with highly qualified teachers and annually assess the English proficiency and reading and mathematics performance of English-language learners. In 2005, forty

states still had bilingual education programs that used the native language and English, with the rest offering some type of English-as-a-second-language (ESL) instructional program.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION VERSUS INSTRUCTION IN THE SOCIETAL LANGUAGE

Opponents of bilingual education often claim that their grandparents were immigrants who learned the societal language and acquired jobs without bilingual education. They warn that students will not learn the societal language if they are not immersed in it at an early age. They voice concerns about students not acquiring the societal language as fast as possible and argue that time on task is important for language acquisition. Katharine Davies Samway and Denise McKeon explain that past immigrants had less need for a high school education and could survive with lower levels of English proficiency than current immigrants due to the types of employment available. Diane August and Kenji Hakuta counter the early immersion and time-on-task warning by explaining that older students, who already have acquired their native language, are more effective second-language learners than younger students. The older students can use what they have learned about their native language to approach learning about a second language. Additionally, Stephen Krashen explains that mere exposure to a second language is not enough for second-language acquisition because students need to receive structured course content that is comprehensible to them. Jim Cummins (1979, 1981) points out that it takes time for English language learners to acquire the type of language needed to perform at grade level in English. He distinguishes between the skills needed to communicate orally in English and academic language proficiency—the skills needed to read and write in English and learn new material at grade level in English; Cummins observes that English-language learners can acquire English oral proficiency in two to three years of instruction but may need four to seven years of instruction to acquire academic language proficiency. Cummins (1979) also argues that students who have developed academic language proficiency in one language can make use of this proficiency for learning in a second language. Virginia Collier's synthesis of research with immigrant children from advantaged backgrounds provides some evidence that supports Cummins's theory. Collier found that English-language learners who had no formal instruction in their home countries, needed seven to ten years of instruction in English to reach grade-level in English, whereas English-language learners who had two to three years of formal schooling in their home countries and who entered schools in the United States between ages 8 and 12 needed five to seven years of instruction in English to reach grade level. In a review of empirical data, Diane August and her colleagues (2008) also support Cummins's claim. They concluded, "Language minority children who are literate in their first language are likely to be advantaged in the acquisition of English literacy. Studies demonstrate that language minority students instructed in the native language (usually Spanish) and English perform, on average, better on English reading measures than language-minority students instructed only in English" (p. 171).

TYPES OF PROGRAMS

There are different types of bilingual education programs. The most common program is Transitional Bilingual Education, which typically is offered to English-language learners in the elementary grades for up to three years, most often from grades 1 to 3. Students usually receive some amount of native language instruction so that they do not fall behind in their literacy or content learning as they are acquiring English. The percent of time that they are taught literacy and content in the native language changes so that by the end of third grade, most, if not all of their literacy and content instruction is in English. Teachers in these programs are supposed to be proficient in both English and the native language and state certified for teaching at the particular grade level and in bilingual education. Although funding for this type of program is available for three years, individual students are excited from the program as soon as they are classified as English proficient. Once exited, they are placed in all-English classrooms without additional second-language services. Another type of program is called maintenance, developmental, or late-exit bilingual education. English language learners typically stay in these programs throughout elementary school, or from grades K–5 or 6. Similar to those teaching in transitional bilingual education, teachers in this program should be proficient in English and the native language and state certified at the respective grade level and in bilingual education. Students learn literacy and content areas in their native language as they are taught ESL. However, their transition to instruction in English is more gradual than in transitional bilingual education, and they continue to receive instruction in their native language throughout elementary school. For example, beginning in fourth grade, students usually receive 40 percent of their instruction in the native language and 60 percent in English. When students graduate from elementary school to middle school, they usually are placed in all-English classrooms and no longer receive bilingual education services. Dual language or two-way immersion is a third type of bilingual education program. In these programs, two types of students are enrolled in the same classroom or program: native English-speaking students and English-language learners. Instruction is presented in two languages: English and the native language of the English-language learners. The goal of the instruction is for both groups of students to become fluently bilingual. A certified bilingual education teacher or a pair of teachers—one fluent in English and with grade-level and ESL certification, and the other fluent in the native language and English with grade-level and bilingual education certification—teach the students, making sure to use second-language techniques to introduce content and literacy to the students not fluent in the specific language of instruction. Typically, students in first grade receive 80–90 percent of their instruction in the native language, and 10–20 percent of their instruction in the other language. By fourth grade, students receive instruction for half the school day in each language. In a few programs, starting with first grade, students receive instruction in both languages 50 percent of the time. Students stay in this type of program throughout elementary school. A fourth type of program is structured English immersion.

This program is only for English-language learners and does not involve any formal instruction in the native language. All of the students' instruction is in English. To help students understand the instruction, the teacher adapts her instruction by using ESL techniques. However, in some classrooms the teacher may speak the native language and allow the students to interact with each other in the native language. Students typically are in this program for one to three years. Once exited from the program, students no longer receive any second-language services. When students are not in one of the above bilingual education programs, they may participate in an ESL pullout program for part of the school day, or be placed in an all-English classroom without any second-language services. The latter is called submersion, or sink-and swim, because students either do not do well (sink) in school or do well in school (swim). In Canada, majority native-English speaking students may enroll in French immersion programs. These programs are similar to structured English immersion in terms of the teacher's qualifications and the use of second-language techniques to present instruction in a second language, in this case, French. However, beginning in first grade, a native language or English component often is included, making them more similar to transitional bilingual education or late exit/maintenance bilingual education. Also, these programs tend to serve middle- or upper-class students rather than students of immigrant families.

EVALUATIONS OF PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

One reason that bilingual education has continued to be controversial in the United States is that large-scale evaluations are difficult to conduct due to the lack of random assignment of students to instructional programs and the range of variables that need to be controlled, such as variation in program design, amount of native-language and English used for instruction, previous student experience in bilingual education, and differences in teacher qualifications and students' levels of English proficiency and socio-economic status. The conclusions of national evaluations that have reported non-significant or negative findings for bilingual education have been questioned due to serious flaws in their evaluation designs. Metaanalyses of bilingual education programs, which statistically control for many design problems noted above, have favored bilingual education programs. Critics of bilingual education usually cite two early evaluations of bilingual education programs. In 1977–1978 the American Institutes for Research (AIR) conducted a national evaluation of 38 bilingual programs. Crawford explains that the AIR evaluation compared the performance of Spanish-background students enrolled in bilingual education to that of Spanish-background students enrolled in all-English classrooms on pre- and post-measures in English in reading, oral comprehension, and mathematics, and in Spanish on reading and oral comprehension. AIR concluded that bilingual education had not had a positive impact because there were no differences in performance between the two groups in oral English comprehension and mathematics, and children in the all-English classrooms outperformed those in bilingual education on standardized measures of English reading. However, one of the major flaws with the AIR evaluation was that two-thirds of the Spanish-background students included in the all-English

sample had previously been enrolled in bilingual education. In 1983 Keith Baker and Adriana de Kanter published their evaluation of bilingual education. They used 28 of 300 program evaluations, excluding most of the program evaluations because they deemed them methodologically unsound. They included the AIR evaluation and evaluations of Canadian French immersion programs. To determine effectiveness, Baker and de Kanter counted the number of program evaluations that reported higher test scores for students in transitional bilingual education classrooms compared to students in other types of classrooms (all-English, structured English immersion, Canadian French immersion, pull-out ESL). Baker and de Kanter concluded that the results were ambiguous because students in bilingual education did not outperform students who were not in bilingual education. Crawford reports that Baker later stated that one in three studies favored bilingual education, while one in four favored all-English. This evaluation was criticized because Baker and de Kanter did not control for a number of teaching and student variables; considered the Canadian French Immersion studies to be similar to structured English immersion; and in their narrative tally did not take into account the different numbers of students who participated in the individual program evaluations (e.g., an evaluation with 50 students was considered equal to an evaluation with 200 students). In 1996, Christine Rossell and Keith Baker published another narrative comparison of bilingual education programs and non-bilingual education programs, which again included the Canadian French Immersion programs along with other types of Canadian programs. This time they included 72 out of 300 evaluation studies. On English reading measures, they reported that 45 percent of the findings were inconclusive, while 22 percent of the transitional bilingual education programs outperformed structured immersion, and 33 percent of the structured immersion programs (primarily the Canadian French Immersion programs) outperformed transitional bilingual education programs. According to Crawford, Canadian researchers warned that many of the Canadian programs were not equivalent to the program types in the United States. In some program evaluations, students received native language instruction in both the control and experimental groups, invalidating the comparison. Other researchers complained that they could not find all the studies in the Rossell and Baker evaluation. Three meta-analyses of bilingual education programs conducted between 1985 and 2008 have reported favorable findings for bilingual education. In 1985, Ann Willig used meta-analysis to reanalyze 23 of the 28 studies originally included in the Baker and de Kanter evaluation, excluding the Canadian French Immersion studies and secondary studies. On English measures of language, mathematics, overall achievement, and reading (and on similar measures in Spanish, plus listening comprehension, writing, social studies, attitudes about school and self), she found small-to-moderate differences in favor of bilingual education. When random assignment had been used in the evaluations, the effect size was even greater for bilingual education. Crawford explains that in 1999, Jay Greene also used meta-analysis to re-analyze the methodologically sound studies that could be located from the Rossell and Baker evaluation, purposefully excluding the Canadian studies. He found 11 studies. To avoid the confounding of program type, he ignored the program labels and based his comparison on the use or non-use of the native-language for the instruction of English language learners. His results were similar to Willig's meta-analysis: He found small to moderate differences

favoring bilingual education on the same types of measures. Diane August and her colleagues (2008) chose to conduct a meta-analysis that only focused on studies with experimental designs and in which students had been taught for at least six months. They limited their comparison to the English reading test performance of students in bilingual programs and students in programs that only used English. Sixteen programs from the United States and four from Canada were included in the meta-analysis. August and her colleagues concluded that “bilingual education has a positive effect on English reading outcomes that is small to moderate in size” (p.139). Further, they reported: “children in the bilingual programs . . . also developed literacy skills in their native language. Thus, they achieved the advantage of being bilingual and biliterate” (p. 140).

RELATIONS AMONG LANGUAGE STATUS, AFFECTIVE FACTORS, AND LEARNING

According to Walter Lambert, subtractive bilingualism occurs when students lose proficiency in one language as they develop proficiency in the other language. Several experts have warned that participation in all-English classrooms, structured English immersion, or transitional bilingual education may contribute to subtractive bilingualism. When language-minority students are not fully accepted by native speakers of the societal language because of their accented speech or racial/ethnic appearance the loss of proficiency or lack of further development in their native language can result in low self-esteem and negative self-image. Lilly Wong Fillmore described the psychological problems that occurred when young English-language learners, enrolled in all-English classrooms, lost their ability to communicate with family members in their native language. Additive bilingualism is viewed as contributing to students’ self-esteem. According to Lambert, additive bilingualism occurs when students add proficiency and competency in a second language to the native language without loss or retardation of the native language. The latter is likely to occur for language majority students who are acquiring a minority language, such as in Canada. Participation in maintenance, developmental, or late-exit bilingual education and dual language or two-way immersion programs also can promote additive bilingualism. The length and design of these programs usually provide English-language learners with the opportunity to acquire academic language proficiency in English as students continue to use and further their native-language development. Participation in these programs also may aid students in making effective use of cross-linguistic transfer when instruction across the two languages is coordinated, so that students learn new and difficult concepts in the language they know best, while being taught the vocabulary and discourse to access this knowledge in English. In a comparison of the performance of Spanish-speakers in transitional bilingual education, structured English immersion, and late-exit bilingual education, David Ramirez found that students in the latter programs had the highest growth curve in English learning as measured on standardized tests, indicating that with additional time in school they would be at a grade level.

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