

Bilingual Programs in America: Introduction and Analyses

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1. Introduction

The United States of America is often called “the melting pot” because many immigrants are gathered there. Seventy-four point seven percent of people in the US are Caucasian from Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and Latin America, and 12.1% of them are African-American. Asian peoples are 4.3% of the total and American Indians are 0.8%, others being 8%. Although English (80%) and Spanish (20%) are used as official languages, nearly 23 million people speak a language other than these at home. It is estimated that 25 languages are spoken by at least 100,000 persons each and 40 to 50 other languages are spoken by fewer than 100,000 people each. In the 1960s bilingual education officially began for immigrant children in America. This paper is going to discuss the brief historical background of bilingual education in America, and three main programs, transitional, dual, and immersion used for ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) instructions in bilingual education in America, describing what the three main programs are, their effects, and their successful examples. The goal of English education in Japan is not to help students become bilingual: however, it is interesting to examine whether the three programs will contribute to English education in Japan. Finally, this paper will examine if they are workable for the development of English education, especially in communication when applying these programs to the English class in Japan.

2. A Brief History of Bilingual Education in America

In the 18th and 19th Centuries linguistic diversity was generally accepted and the presence of different languages was encouraged. Language variety was accepted as the norm and encouraged through religion and newspapers in different languages (Baker & Hornberger, 1996). Many European languages were used in both private and public schools. For example, during the 19th Century either Spanish or English or both could be the language of a school's curriculum in New Mexico. German was spoken in schools in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska and Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish were used in Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, and Washington. Dutch was spoken in Michigan, and Polish and Italian were spoken in Wisconsin, with French being spoken in Louisiana. More than a dozen states passed laws providing for schooling in languages other than English (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

In the first two decades of the 20th Century, bilingual education was restricted in

America. Because the number of immigrants increased dramatically at that time, power struggles between the immigrants and Americans often occurred. This called for integration and assimilation of immigrants. In 1906 the National Act required them to speak English for harmonization. Education was focused on to solve this problem and schools were charged with the task of Americanizing all immigrants. In 1919, a resolution recommending that all private and public schools in all states be conducted in English was adopted by the Americanization Department of the United States Bureau of Education. When speaking a language other than English in the classroom, students were punished severely. Anti-German feeling among people in the US because of World War I in 1917 also encouraged English monolingualism and a melting pot policy (Baker & Hornberger, 1996). In the early 1920s, the U.S. Congress created a national-origins quota system and discriminated against eastern and southern Europeans and Asians. Fewer numbers of new immigrants had to stop using their native languages and bilingual instruction disappeared from US public schools almost for 40 years (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

During the second half of the 20th Century, two historical events occurred to reevaluate existing foreign language policies in the United States: 1) In 1957, the Soviet Union launched their satellite Sputnik into space which encouraged the US to strengthen math, science, and foreign language instruction. Since it occurred during the Cold War, foreign languages increased the need for America to keep its international status and power. In 1958, the National Defense Education Act was passed to promote foreign language learning, providing federal money for the expansion of foreign-language teaching. 2) The Civil Rights Act in 1964 banned discrimination on the basis of color, race, or national origin leading to the establishment of the Office of Civil Rights. This act contributed to respecting not only human rights but also foreign peoples' languages. In 1965, the national-origin quota system was abolished and a lot of immigrants were accepted again. It was an epoch-making event that Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed by Congress in 1968. This was the first legislation for bilingual education to authorize resources to support this program (Crawford, 2004).

3. Three main programs and their effects

There are three main programs in bilingual education in America. They are transitional, dual, and immersion programs. In the case of the transitional program, which is the most common type of ESL education in the United States now, the aim of this program is to help students' second language reach proficiency whereby only their native language is used until they can learn through their second language exclusively. This means assimilation of their first language (1L) into their second language (2L). Although a lot of transitional programs consider the importance of the student's own culture, the goal of the program is to facilitate students' transition or transfer into learning only in their 2L. Usually after they participate in the class for a few years, they are going to be transferred into an 'only 2L' program of instruction. After students reach a specified level of proficiency in their 2L, subject matter instruction is introduced in their 2L little by little. The aim is to increase use of their 2L in the classroom and to decrease use of their 1L in the classroom proportionately.

Effect of transitional program

In New York the findings indicate that the average attendance rate of students in high school ESL programs was 92 percent, compared to 72 percent for the city as a whole. What's more, the study found that the dropout rate for high school students in ESL classrooms was only 16 percent — compared with a citywide average of 42 percent (Crawford, 1986).

In transitional programs, students are allowed to use their native language only until such time as the students learn English. The more students use only English in school, the quicker they lose their native language because students are encouraged to abandon their native language and culture as quickly as possible in order to fit into an English-only environment. This is a great loss not only for the individuals involved but also for our society as a whole (Cummins, 1984).

Dual programs guide students to learn in two languages to maintain their proficiency in both. Educators who encourage pluralistic education and a pluralistic society prefer the dual program because they think of culture as a very important subject related to language and as an integral part of the dual curriculum. In the dual-language, the learners are taught subject matter in both their 1L and 2L, with equal time given to each. For example, they receive subject matter instruction in their native language in the mornings and those concepts reinforced in their 1L in his 2L in the afternoons.

Effect of dual program

This program is interesting because it encourages language development as well as cultural sensitivity on the part of all students (Nieto, 1990).

Most of the states are unwilling to make a commitment to this program because native language maintenance is not the task of the federal government and they don't want to spend money for the program (Epstein, 1997).

Immersion programs ensure that students are placed in an intensive 2L-only program, both to learn their 2L and to learn their subject matter in their 2L. This program is used for both EFL and ESL students. For instance, when native English speakers learn French, German, and so forth, they often learn their 2L from this approach. The goals of the immersion program are to develop a high level of proficiency in a foreign language, to develop positive attitudes toward those who speak the foreign language as well as toward their own culture, and to develop English language skills. In addition, ESL programs in colleges and universities in America usually adopt this program.

Effect of immersion program

A student in the ESL program at university discussed what she enjoys about the class and how much it helps her. She learns pure American sounds. Her communication skills such as listening and speaking have all developed because the classes are organized in English.

According to Nieto (1990), the high dropout rate of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans,

native Americans and others is certainly one indication of the educational failure spawned by this approach. Note: Recently, various types of models based on the three programs have been developed, and program models whose contents are similar are sometimes mentioned with different names. For example, the immersion program has a total immersion model and a partial immersion one. The total immersion model offers the class to students all in their 2L. The partial immersion model does so to students at a rate of 10% in their 1L and 90% in their 2L. In this case the contents of the partial immersion model are similar to those of the transitional program but their names are different. What's more, we can say the same thing about the relationship between the partial immersion model (50% in their 1L and 50% in their 2L) and the dual program.

4. Successful examples of the three programs

Here, the successful examples of the three programs will be described following a historical order. They are the oldest records listed for each program.

The United States first bilingual program in the 20th Century was started at Coral Way Elementary School in Miami, Florida in 1963. This dual language program (Spanish – English) was instituted for the large-scale immigration of Cubans who fled the successful 1959 Cuban Revolution. Because they planned for a temporary exile only, the educated, middle-class Cubans tried to maintain their mother tongue and culture by employing highly trained professional teachers. At first, approximately 50 percent of the students hailed from a Cuban Spanish-speaking background and the other half were English-speaking citizens living there.

Aims in 1963: 1. Children will obtain the same skills, abilities, and understanding about subjects in the bilingual school program as they would receive in a monolingual school and will have benefits that they can not have in a traditional school. 2. They will use their second language proficiency as they do their native language. For instance, if they are skilled readers in their 1L, they will be skilled readers in their 2L. If they can explain themselves clearly in their 1L, they will be able to do so in their 2L. 3. They will be able to operate in either culture easily and comfortably. 4. They will be able to achieve greater objectivity in their thinking processes after acquiring consciously or unconsciously an understanding of the symbolic nature of language. 5. They will more accept and understand foreign people and their culture resulting in a better life, extending their vocational potential so as to increase the range of their job opportunities.

Teachers: 1. They need to be perfectly bilingual and bicultural being committed to bilingual education. 2. They need to have high ability to teach their students in their native language. 3. They need to help students with kindness, patient, and understanding, demonstrating an unusual level of competence in working with team members. 4. They need to have a background in linguistics and language structures. 5. They need to assist students in studying their second language actively by being especially creative in designing and using a variety

of visual aids.

Curriculum: Grade levels were grouped with students sharing the same 1L and demonstrating similar abilities to read in their 1L in the mornings. They were also grouped within their particular grade level with students demonstrating comparable abilities to speak and understand their 2L in the afternoons. Students received instruction in both their 1L and 2L. For example (see table 1), students whose native language was English had an English class and some other subjects in English in the mornings from a native English teacher. They had a Spanish class in the afternoons with a native Spanish teacher aligned with the English morning subjects. Students whose native language was Spanish also had the same type of classes. In Coral Way Elementary School the students were provided with a comprehensive elementary school curriculum such as reading (2 languages), mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, and physical education. When taking art, music, gym (Phy. Ed.), and lunch, they were free to speak either language in order to hear and use both their 1L and 2L in casual living situations.

Table 1

Students' groups		Mornings		Afternoons	
Native English speakers	English Language	Curriculum Content in English	Spanish as a second language	Curriculum Content in Spanish	
Native Spanish speakers	Spanish Language	Curriculum Content in Spanish	English as a second language	Curriculum Content in English	

(Macky, 1977)

In the 1960s, in addition to the dual program of Coral Way Elementary School in Florida, in 1965 an experimental immersion program commenced in St. Lambert, Montreal where half of the people spoke English and half of them French (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). Some disgruntled English speaking, middle-class parents persuaded school administration to set up a French experimental kindergarten class of 26 children.

Aims: Children become bilingual and bicultural without losing achievement. This means that they speak, read, and write in French, and that they appreciate the tradition and culture of not only English speaking Canadians but also French speaking Canadians.

Teachers: 1. They are almost bilingual in French and English. 2. They have classes almost all in French, understanding what children say in English. 3. They are important language models for the children, providing them with models of acceptable French pronunciations and styles, a variety of language experiences, and models of different language usages. 4. They are particularly committed to bilingual education, enthusiastic about bilingualism in society, acting as language missionaries (Backers & Hornberger, 1996).

Curriculum: Although children receive the same type of education as they would in the

regular English program, the medium of instruction is French. Because this program is based on the idea that a first language is acquired relatively unconsciously, it tries to replicate this process in the early years of schooling. They acquire their 2L in much the same manner as they do their 1L, by not focusing on learning their 2L but interacting with their teacher in communicative situations (Swain & Lapkin, 1999).

In the first stage, a teacher focuses on listening comprehension skills and children are not yet required to speak French with their teacher or with their peers. They are allowed to speak English to each other and to their teacher. In this immersion program they don't have to focus on using French until they are naturally willing to speak it. Insisting that they speak French may discourage them to develop good attitudes to the French language and to education generally. Most of all, during the first two years, the teacher concentrates on helping them understand French and begin to talk to her in the language. During these early stages, it is essential that she recognize their level of vocabulary and grammar. She needs to deliver French that they can understand and to help them improve their competence in French, offering messages which are both comprehensible and slightly ahead of the learners' current level of the language. Before a lesson topic is introduced, she may spend some time presenting new words and new concepts so that they are prepared. She needs to focus on their non-verbal feedback such as questioning looks, loss of concentration, and glazed attention. When they don't understand, she needs to encourage them to query her. In an effective classroom, there are negotiating of meanings and a common understanding between the students and teacher. Motivating them to learn in a positive way within the classroom is significant in language development through the curriculum as well as through negotiating meaning. Language errors need to be taken into account in such immersion classrooms. Because the errors are a significant part of the learning process, they are not a negative symptom. Not being permanent, they will be removed after practice. As constant error correction disrupts communication and content learning in the classroom, she may give them appropriate and positive intervention only when they constantly make the same mistakes (Backers & Hornberger, 1996).

In 1971, Massachusetts is the first state to mandate a Transitional Bilingual Education Law which supports the federal bilingual program (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1968). The law focuses on six linguistic minorities such as Spanish, French, Italian, Greek, and Chinese in elementary, middle, and high schools (Hailer, R., 1976). All school-age children, who have limited English speaking ability and are not enrolled in private schools, will take part in the program in transitional bilingual education. This full-time bilingual education program is provided by their cities, towns, or school districts. They reside in the program for 3 to 4 years or until they obtain designated English language skills. It means that they will perform successfully in classes where instruction is given only in English. Before they take part in the program, they are divided by their native language abilities as well as English. Group 1: A native language literate, zero English speaker; Group 2: A native language illiterate, zero English speaker; Group 3: A native language literate, severely limited English speaker; Group 4: A native language

illiterate, severely limited English speaker; Group 5: A native language literate, partially limited English speaker; and Group 6: A native language illiterate, partially limited English speaker (Massachusetts State Department of Education, 1976).

Curriculum: When students gradually acquire and develop English language skills as a medium of instruction, students' 1L have to be used as a medium of instruction to develop concepts, skills and attitudes. They have to acquire aural-oral skills before the acquisition of reading and writing skills because 2L learning is progressive acquisition of the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. After acquiring oral skills in their 2L, they start or continue the development of their reading and writing skills in their native language. At the primary level they have to develop basic reading and writing skills in their 1L in which only comprehension and oral skills in English are being acquired. Once they master basic reading skills in their dominant language, specifically, designed instruction enables them to transfer these skills into their 2L (English). The functionally illiterate children above the primary level have to develop basic reading and writing skills in their native language first during the process of acquiring aural-oral skills in English.

Students learn subjects required by state law as well as by their school committee and they are given classes in their native languages and English. At elementary schools, mandated courses such as health and safety, social sciences including the history and culture of the United States, geography, mathematics, and the natural sciences have to be offered in the native language of children whenever the use of English impedes the effective progress of the children in the acquisition of said subject matter. At secondary schools, the principles are basically the same as those of elementary schools. Elective courses such as algebra, general science, world history, business law, and typing need to make use of the first language as a medium to ensure equal access for learners to said courses and the efficient acquisition of subject matter (Massachusetts State Department of Education, 1976).

5. Whether the three programs will contribute to English communication education in Japan

Because there are some differences between the goals of teaching ESL in America and teaching English in Japan, the transitional program is difficult to apply to English education in this country. Basically, the program of teaching ESL in America is for foreign students who immigrated into America. Since they need to master English immediately to achieve socioeconomic success in America, the goal of these programs pays attention to improving only English and ignores the students' native language and culture. For instance, the goal of the transitional program is to transfer the students into 2L English classes for a few years and the students' native language is used just as a bridge to lead them into 2L learning. This means that success is measured not by English skills or how well they develop their skills in other content areas or even how well they learn English, but rather how quickly they leave their native language. The goal of teaching English in Japan is to bring up students who speak both the English and Japanese languages, and understand both cultures and background to develop enhanced international communication and understanding.

One purpose of this is to facilitate smooth business relations and absorb advanced foreign linguistic information, after recognizing the many differences between countries. English is therefore not meant to replace the Japanese language and culture, but to add another dimension to the students' ability to communicate and to make it possible for them to become active participants when they come into contact with English speakers. Because of this reason, this paper suggests that the transitional program does not cover the needs of teaching English in Japan.

The immersion program will be workable not for beginners but for advanced students who learn English in Japan. These programs organize intensive English-only classes and do not have curriculum which take into consideration students' native languages. Now Japanese students in the 7th grade have to begin learning English in their middle schools. At this level, they know very little English even if they do know A, B, C,----- and some English words. They are beginners. This means that when Japanese students have English classes in this model, they don't comprehend much of what is said. In short, this program doesn't develop students' communication skills. Even if a teacher explains something in English, it seems certain that the students won't understand because they don't know what the teacher said. Consequently, the students can't respond. This means that they will not obtain their communication skills in English. Even if they should achieve some proficiency in English later, students, especially those at the middle level who don't have enough experiences in normal cognitive or academic development in English, probably do not have cognitive processes developed well enough to assimilate the complex communication entirely in English.

In the case of the student at the ESL program at university which this paper mentioned above, she succeeded in this program because she already had an English foundation. Her English level achieved was satisfactory enough to study in English even if it was not as perfect in the same sense as Americans. Since she had already developed cognitive and academic skills in almost all of her subjects, the immersion program in the ESL at university was useful for her. However, when we apply this model to English education for the beginners' level in Japan, the immersion program is not workable. The immersion program should not be given to students whose native language is not English until they attain sufficient levels of basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive or academic language proficiency to benefit from such instructional contexts.

However, when we focus on advanced learners such as in the highest grade of high schools, colleges and universities, this program will be workable. After five or six years of learning English, they have acquired basic knowledge in English and in their cognitive or academic skills, which they will need to understand complicated communication in English. There will be many opportunities for those advanced learners to communicate with other people in English on their own and to brush up on their listening, speaking, and conversation skills as well as obtaining a lot more information of value to them.

Concerning the problem about the loss of native language, since these senior graders of high schools, colleges and universities have already obtained enough Japanese language

knowledge and skills (they being 18-22 years old), they will not lose their Japanese skills even if they have English-only classes. Therefore, applying the immersion program to the advanced learners in Japan is workable to develop their communication skills in English.

Kato Gakuen founded in 1962 in Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan offers an immersion program in English to students from kindergarten to high school level. Kato Gakuen's middle and high school is called Gyoshu Junior & Senior High School and it has a six-year program. There are three courses in this school: core course, alpha course, and bilingual program. The core course and the alpha Course follow the Japanese national curriculum guidelines by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). They are taught in Japanese. The bilingual program integrates the Japanese national curriculum and the international Baccalaureate Program (Middle Years Program and Diploma Program), using Japanese and English as the languages of instruction. It is identified as a partial immersion program. Upon graduation students can obtain both Japanese and IB diplomas. This school brings up a lot of successful students and sends them to prestigious colleges both in Japan and abroad.

The dual program considers the importance of students' 1L, 2L, and their culture. The students' native language and culture deserve not only to be used as a bridge but also to be preserved, nurtured, and valued. It emphasizes pluralistic education and society. The student will be able to acquire both languages and culture equally, and to communicate well with other people through both languages. The dual program covers some goals of teaching English in Japan although Japanese English education doesn't aim for perfect bilingualism. Moreover, the development of cognitive or academic skills will not be retarded because they have classes whose contents are the same in both 1L and 2L. For example, even if students don't understand what their teacher said in English, they should understand the missing points explained or reviewed in Japanese in another class. This program is especially suitable to the beginner and the intermediate learners such as middle school students and the first and second grade of high school students in Japan.

In addition, this program is possible to apply to the advanced learner. In this case, although they don't have to worry about retardation of their cognitive or academic skills and loss of Japanese, it is more convenient if they have such classes in both languages. For example, there are big differences between English and Japanese. Sometimes it is difficult for the Japanese to put an English word into an exact Japanese context or translate a Japanese idea into English. A student who is learning at a college in America mentions that sometimes she needs to take a little time to find adequate Japanese words when she explains in Japanese what she learned in English. As well, sometimes the Japanese words she finds sound strange even though the people she talks to understand what she wants to say. While this is not as big a problem as having communication troubles, if she had the same class in both languages, she would have a better sense of communication without this kind of inconvenience.

According to Epstein (1977), there existed a financial problem as well hiring teachers who taught students their native languages. In America, more than 50 languages besides English are used now (Sokolik, 1999). This means that government will have to spend a lot

of money hiring teachers to develop students' native language. Fortunately, the Japanese situation is very different from that of the American. As compared to America, we can say that Japan is a homogeneous country in spite of having some immigrants. Therefore, we don't need special teachers who speak other languages. In Japan, there is no financial problem where we have to outlay monies to hire the special teachers. The dual program is sufficient for Japanese students to improve their communication skills.

6. Conclusion

From the 1960s, ever since Cuban exiles established a dual language bilingual school, a dual bilingual program was begun and continues to this day in the United States. Following Florida's example, other states began to experiment with some bilingual instruction. Owing to a Transitional Bilingual Education Law in Massachusetts in 1971, the transitional bilingual program became a main model and is still the main one now for bilingual schooling implemented in America.

In the case of Japan, Kato Gakuen is the first school to adopt an English immersion program. This program is for students whose first language is Japanese and more than 90% of its students are Japanese. Most of the students in the bilingual program in Gyosho Junior & Senior High School start at the kindergarten and elementary level or have just returned from living abroad. This program has been successful with advanced students. Since the curriculum of MEXT doesn't include English education at the kindergarten level, this paper doesn't discuss the immersion program at kindergartens in Japan. It mentions only Japanese 7th graders as beginners. However, adopting the immersion program in the kindergarten level could be feasible due to the example in St. Lambert, Montreal. There are a lot of international schools in Japan. Although some international schools accept Japanese students, offering all classes in English, their target students are foreigners. Their programs are designed for foreign students. Moreover, some international schools are not approved by MEXT and students graduating from those schools can not receive their Japanese diplomas. This prevents them from being able to go to college in Japan. Because of these reasons, this paper doesn't talk about the examples of international schools (American schools) in Japan. When it comes to the transitional program and the dual one, it seems that no bilingual schools in Japan have adopted them yet. Owing to this, there are no actual examples of them in Japan. They are programs we will discuss in the future.

Within the transitional, dual, and immersion models, there exists much variation. However, it is difficult to decide on one approach that is best for improving students' English communication skills in Japan because no one approach could possibly fill all the needs and styles of all students. Issues such as individual aptitude, learning style, motivation, amount of time spent on learning a language, availability of funds, teachers' and parents' involvement etc., have an important role to play on how much language is absorbed. We need especially to consider the big differences between the English language and the background related to it and the Japanese one and all that are associated with it. When adopting these programs, we probably would need to modify them to adjust to the Japanese situation. All factors need to be paid attention to in all planning for the future.

Further development and research in this area should be steadily pursued to improve the Japanese students' smooth communication with people in the English language.

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