THE BENEFITS OF BILINGUALISM

and

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

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PERILS OF BILINGUALISM

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

edited by Dorothy Bishop & Kay Mogford
IS BILINGUAL ACQUISITION EXCEPTIONAL?

Bishop & Mogford
1989

Chapters:
- Children with Autism
- Children with Down’s Syndrome
- Children with William’s Syndrome
- Hearing-Impaired Children
- Children with Visual Impairment
- Hearing children of deaf parents
THE GLOBAL VILLAGE
It's auld lang syne for the world's English speakers

The glory days when anglos ruled the world have long since passed.
COGNITIVE ADVANTAGES

BIALYSTOK (2004/2007)

- selective attention (executive functions of the brain)
- focus on relevant task information, screen out irrelevant information
- a result of managing 2 languages
- persists into adulthood
Oh, no! He's in trouble!

Oh, no! I don't know how to operate the can opener!
MYTHS ABOUT EARLY DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

1) myth of the monolingual brain

2) myth about bilingual code-mixing

3) myth of time-on-task
1) MYTH OF THE MONOLINGUAL BRAIN
EVIDENCE:
MONOLINGUAL MILESTONES

Word segmentation (7 mths)  babbling (10-12 m)  first words (12mths)  vocabulary spurt (18mths)  word comb. (24mths)  grammar/communicat’n (beyond)

bilingual milestones are the same
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SIMULTANEOUS BILINGUALS AND MONOLINGUALS

- Vocabulary: smaller in each language than monolinguals, but total conceptual vocabulary same as monolinguals; differences are due to:
  - relative language exposure
  - limited memory in early childhood
  - differences in vocabulary in each language may persist into adulthood & probably reflect need and context of learning –
  - differences in vocabulary are not signs of impairment
2) **MYTH ABOUT BILINGUAL CODE-MIXING**

- Mixing words from two languages in the same sentence is a sign of confusion.

- Children who code-mix are not learning language properly.

- Parents should stick to one language in order to minimize chances of children becoming confused – *"the one parent/one language strategy"*
BILINGUAL CODE-MIXING

“I VAS TAXI” (Jason: 2;0)

“JE VEUX ALLER MANGER TOMATO” (Olivier: 2;6)

“I L EST BAD BUY” (William: 3;0)

“AND HE TOMBE WITH THE BICYCLE” (Mathieu: 3;6)

⇒ mixing is not a sign of confusion or problems
Bilingual children code-mix to fill gaps

- **Wayne**
  - Translation Equivalent: 100%
  - No Translation Equivalent: 90%

- **Felix**
  - Translation Equivalent: 80%
  - No Translation Equivalent: 70%
Bilingual children code-mix because it is “cool”
SHOULD PARENTS STICK TO ONE LANGUAGE?

- unlikely that parental mixing will result in confusion
- one parent/one language strategy is useful to ensure exposure to each language is adequate
- if one of the languages is not widely used outside the home, then parents may want to use only that language at home to reinforce competence
3) MYTH OF TIME-ON-TASK

The Evidence Speaks Well of Bilingualism's Effect on Kids

Kids who grow up in bilingual homes may be slower to speak than other kids, but once they've learned both languages they appear to have a number of intellectual advantages.

People who speak two languages early in life quickly learn that names of objects are arbitrary, said Suzanne Flynn, a professor of linguistics and second-language acquisition at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "So they deal with a level of abstraction very early."

Also, bilingual kids become exceptionally good at learning to ignore "misleading information," said Ellen Bialystok, professor of psychology at York University in Toronto.
Simultaneous bilinguals have \( \frac{1}{2} \) exposure to each language as monolinguals; but,

- grammatical development of simultaneous bilinguals = monolinguai children

- simultaneous bilinguals acquire 2 grammars at the same rate as monolingual children acquire one grammar

- amount of input matters; more later…. 
In Immersion programs, teachers use one (or more) second languages for all routine social interactions with students and for at least 50% of their academic instruction for at least two years.

- L2 is used to teach academic subjects
- 50% of the time
- 2 or more years
- Social use of language
PROGRAM MODELS: EARLY TOTAL IMMERSION
IMMERSION:
immersion students have reduced exposure to and instruction in English, but:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing

Immersion Students = Non-immersion students

• Students in enriched immersion score better than students in all-English programs on English language tests
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

mathematics, science, other school subjects

Immersion students are taught academic subjects in L1 and L2, but...

**Immersion Students** = **Non-immersion students**

Time does not correlate with English (L1) development or with academic achievement

WHY?
COMMON UNDERLYING PROFICIENCY
(from Cummins, 2000)
TIME & FRENCH

French- L2 Proficiency

**Comprehension Skills (Listening & Reading):**

Immersion = Native speakers > Non-immersion

**Production Skills (Speaking & Writing):**

Immersion < Native speakers > Non-immersion
more on French-L2 proficiency …

- children learning French as an L2 in school may not acquire native-like competence in French – may be non-idiomatic and may lack range of skills that native speakers have

- it is very useful to provide opportunities for French-L2 learners to use French with native speakers of the same age outside school to reinforce their “colloquial” or “everyday” French language skills
TIME & FRENCH-L1 PROFICIENCY

- time is important -- the more exposure the better

- more French in school, the better (for both French-L1 and French-L2 learners)

- more time outside school, the better
THE ROLE OF PARENTS: TLC

T - Thoughtful
L - Long-term commitment
C - Create additive learning environment
Thoughtful

* take control and plan your child’s language learning experiences to ensure adequate exposure to both (all) languages

* family bilingualism: decisions about who uses what language and when – one-parent/one-language

* be diligent: provide continuous & regular exposure to both languages

* search out resources (books, websites, magazines)

* schools cannot do it all
Long-term commitment

bilingual development is a long term affair

✶ be prepared to stick with it

✶ make long term arrangements that will ensure your child has continuous exposure to both languages

✶ do not change strategies or schools without serious thought

✶ school bilingualism: consider long term impact on home
Create additive learning environment

- be confident you are doing the right thing
- highlight positive aspects of being bilingual
- advocate for your child’s bilingualism
- enrich your child’s language experiences (oral and written)
- seek out and create opportunities to expand language learning – play groups; family holidays
to learn more about bilingualism

Dual Language Development & Disorders
A Handbook on Bilingualism & Second Language Learning

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Thank You