

SCHOOL SYSTEM PROVISIONS FOR CHILDREN WHOSE MOTHER TONGUE
IS NOT THE PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIUM

by

LINDA DARLENE GENTRY EL-DASH

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Major Professor

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INTRODUCTION

Many children in the world today find it necessary or desirable to learn to communicate in a language other than their mother tongue. These are the potential bilinguals of the world of tomorrow if they receive an adequate education as children today, but in many cases their education has been neglected. Numerous children are required to attend schools where the language spoken is not that of their home and family. Although this may be due to a decision of the parent or child as is the case in the English schools of Uruguay or the private foreign language schools of Egypt, some families exercise no choice in the matter. Even the Negroes who migrated from the South to the Northern ghetto speak a "substandard" dialect of English and must be classed as non-native speakers of English, at least as it is used in the schools. The problem is more intense for the Spanish-Americans of the Southwest and Florida, immigrant children, or the African children whose home vernaculars are so specific that a school utilizing each of them is absolutely impractical. For all of these children the school experience requires more than adjusting to the discipline of the school--it also means adjusting to a foreign language and culture.¹

In the case of many of these children, the socio-economic class of the parents inflicts the child with an even greater problem. Not only does he have a problem with language, but he has had few experiences in common with his peer group. Even mastering the vocabulary and structure of English does not allow the child to catch up with his classmates unless he

¹M. Urquides, "Tucson's Tale of Two Cultures," NEA Journal, LVI (February, 1967), 62.

has had adequate experiences to internalize meanings. The problem is also observed in some West African schools, but is less obvious since all the children have had similar experiences to build on, while a Mexican-American child from a low socio-economic level family has few experiences in common with his middle-class classmates.

The problem is not simple, nor is it easy to define. It is present in varying degrees around the world and varies in intensity from child to child. Although English may not have been the mother tongue, for instance, it may have been spoken enough for the child to be fluent in both English and his mother tongue before starting formal education; in other cases a child has had no prior exposure to the language of the schools. There exists a continuum from one extreme to the other. Programs which help one child attain fluency fail completely with others; moreover there is a great shortage of teachers trained to deal with such linguistically different learners.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was 1) to report the factors variously affecting school system practices to help alleviate the school problems of linguistically different learners as reported in the literature and 2) to examine such practices with regard to prevalence, advantages and disadvantages.

Definition of Terms

Linguistically different learner. This term is used according to the suggestion of Arnold¹ to refer to children whose language of home or

¹Richard D. Arnold, "Reliability of Test Scores for the Young Bilingual Disadvantaged," Reading Teacher, XXII (January, 1969), 341.

environment is linguistically different from that of the school. The term bilingual has frequently been used to refer to these individuals, but most are merely potential bilinguals.

Bi-lingual school. This term is used to refer to a school which uses two languages as media of instruction for all students, thus including a weaker language as the medium of instruction for all for at least part of the school day.

Limitations of the Study

The study is a survey of the literature as it reports school system practices intended to alleviate the problems encountered by linguistically different learners as they enter a school where the language spoken is not their mother tongue. It was limited to a survey of literature available in the Kansas State University library, primarily that published since 1960, although occasional reference was made to earlier important studies or articles.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAMS
FOR LINGUISTICALLY DIFFERENT LEARNERS

Interest in the phenomenon of bilingualism has arisen off and on for over half a century. Since that time much has been written, and many theories of how to deal with the difficulties presented by it have appeared, but even today no really conclusive results are available. Suggestions range from that of ignoring the problem and merely letting the linguistically different learner sit near and copy from his more advanced neighbor¹ to establishing completely separate classes or schools for such children.² Other proposals form a sort of continuum from one extreme to the other. Much of the earlier literature was of a descriptive nature indicating the existence of the phenomenon and to some extent its prevalence, but in recent years there has been more interest in alleviating the difficulties faced by these children. A comprehensive review of the literature published prior to 1960 was prepared by Jensen.³

The days when a teacher could ignore a child's inability to speak or understand the language used as the medium of instruction in the school and assume that a child who failed to absorb the language on his own was too stupid to learn anyway are gone forever. If educators compare the dismal failure rate of Mexican-American children in the Southwest in

¹Pearl W. Shoudel, "Color the Apple Red," Texas Outlook, XLVII (October, 1963), 32.

²Lloyd G. Cooper, "Awakening at Socorro," Texas Outlook, L (November, 1966), 34-35; see also Doris C. Ching, "Methods for the Bilingual Child," Elementary English, XLII (January, 1965), 27.

³J. Vernon Jensen, "Effects of Childhood Bilingualism," Elementary English, XXXIX (February; April, 1962), 132-143; 358-366.

general (80 percent repeat first grade¹) to the success of some programs aimed at alleviating the language barrier (80 percent do not need to repeat first grade²), they can see that neglect of the special problems of the non-native speaker of English in the United States predisposes him to a school career of one failure after another. Something must be done to help him. Although it can be safely said that ignoring the language problem of the linguistically different learner usually leads to failure, this is not always the case.³ Many do succeed, but it is not due to the school's influence. In many cases it even seems to be in spite of this influence. There appears to be no clear consensus as to what kind of programs are best to cope with and alleviate the problems of children who must undertake school instruction in a language that is not their mother tongue, so the type of program established is a result of decisions based on a variety of factors. Primary among these are the community itself and the individual children who confront the language barrier.

Community Influence

Majority or minority. The general language pattern of the community is one of the factors considered. The total number of children requiring specialized instruction in the medium of the school as a foreign

¹Instructor, "Escuela con dos Lenguas; J. T. Brackenridge School, San Antonio, Texas," LXXVIII (February, 1969), 56.

²T. Stevens, "Fairy Tale, Modern Twist; Mexican American Children Visit New York," Texas Outlook, LIII (April, 1969), 18.

³Herschel T. Manuel, "Recruiting and Training Teachers for Spanish-Speaking Children in the Southwest; address, October 30, 1966," School and Society, XCVI (March 30, 1968), 211.

language is important, but their location within the community also makes a difference. There may not be a great number in a particular school district, but they may all be concentrated in one little area, or numerous such children may be widely scattered throughout the district. In other cases all school children face the same language problem, as is the case for West African nations where only the native vernacular is spoken, but school instruction is in English.

When the linguistically different child is in the majority in his own neighborhood, he frequently has little chance or need to utilize his second language in the home environment. The sales clerks probably speak his mother tongue, and there may even be movies and similar entertainment available without recourse to the language of the schools. When, on the other hand, he is in the minority, such facilities in the native language are not as likely to be available, and a certain amount of incidental learning of the new language is inevitable.

Availability of funds and facilities. Community support of the schools in general and of bilingual instruction in particular has a tremendous influence on the kind of program initiated. The general socio-economic level of the school district influences the funds available. Some districts could afford to undertake an expensive new program with widely extended physical facilities and new, well-trained specialists to put it into effect, but most must utilize existing facilities and staff members and merely adapt them in some way to accomodate the new program, perhaps by gradual implementation. Few can afford a large initial outlay, but must spread the costs over long periods of time. If the community in general is hostile toward the linguistically different learners, the money

is just channelled into any one of a number of other areas which also require attention, and these children are left to fend for themselves. The public must not only see the problems of these children; it must act to alleviate them, even if it means sacrificing something else. Some schools have already taken the initiative, especially since federal funds have become available, but more must follow if all children are to receive equal opportunities.

The facilities available to the school can have an influence on the type of education available, but the latest in equipment is no assurance of a good program, nor is it a prerequisite. A well-stocked library of books in both languages is of no value if the child is not taught to read either of them adequately, and a language laboratory is only as good as the teacher's integration of it into a total program of instruction. Such items as overhead projectors and filmstrips can be used to advantage by the conscientious teacher to help instill vocabulary and grammatical patterns and pride in one's cultural heritage, but many feel the teacher's attitude and approach have an influence even greater than that of such devices.

Availability of teachers. The teacher is of prime importance, whatever the program. If children are to receive mother tongue instruction, it is obvious that the teacher must be proficient in using it. It is somewhat less obvious, although equally important, that a teacher teaching children English or another tongue as a second language should also be familiar with the home vernacular and the ways it contrasts in sound, intonation, and grammar with the new language. An understanding of the home culture can also be an asset. The teacher must, of course, be

dedicated to the individual child and not feel he is inferior just because his speech fails to measure up to the "standard". If the teacher fails to make a child feel comfortable at school, education for that child will also be a failure.¹ What is often the case with linguistically different learners in the United States is that there may be a concerted effort in the lower grades to get them to forget about their mother tongue, but when they reach junior or senior high they find it necessary to initiate formal study of their mother tongue as a foreign language. Such a child is frequently more fluent than his instructor, but the books geared to the supposed needs of the monolingual majority only confuse or bore him. The net result is that a native speaker of a language may come up with the lowest grade in the language course.²

There is enough of a problem finding bilingual teachers to staff the schools here, but monolingual speakers of English can fill in if they are given some basics of the students' native language. The problem is more intense in other parts of the world. Many of the underdeveloped nations use English or French as the medium of instruction because there is a shortage of texts in the mother tongue or too great a variety of vernaculars represented in the student body. There is a great shortage of qualified teachers, however, especially for the beginning grades.³ Since a teacher cannot teach through the medium of English unless he knows

¹Dorothy L. Boyd, "Bilingualism as an Educational Objective," Educational Forum, XXXII (March, 1968), 313.

²A. Bruce Gaarder, "Teaching the Bilingual Child: Research Development and Policy," Modern Language Journal, XLIX (March, 1965), 166.

³Times Educational Supplement, "English Medium," 2682 (October 14, 1966), 855.

English, prior knowledge is a prerequisite. The persons available to teach, however, are mostly native graduates of the same school system, many of whom graduated before English was the medium of instruction and who have had little or no specialized training in how to teach in the first place. This shortage has led to the reintroduction of vernacular instruction in the first two grades of the schools of Kenya.¹

Individual Influence

Age. The age and background of the individuals concerned is another important consideration in establishing a program. It is generally accepted that young children learn a second language with greater facility than older ones, although the exact explanation for this phenomenon is not completely understood.² Older children who have been allowed to fend for themselves in the foreign language and others who have recently immigrated with their parents present an especially difficult obstacle to educators. The former may require only remedial work or classes, but the latter may have had no prior exposure to the language of the schools. The age of the child also has a great influence on the type of approach and method used, as the young beginner has time to master the language and might be better helped by the incidental or experiential approach, but the older student is too near to the age of leaving school and entering the general society. He must be given the tools of language to cope with it.³

¹Ibid.

²Catherine Goldet, "Bonjour Line: an Audio-Visual Course in French for Foreign Children," Languages and the Young School Child, ed. H. H. Stern (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 142.

³Nicolas Hawkes, Immigrant Children in British Schools (London: Pall Mall Press, 1966), pp. 21-22.

It is also possible that he has suffered a general educational retardation, although some have had a good educational beginning in their mother tongue prior to immigration. Moreover, the simple learning materials suitable for teaching the young child are completely unsuitable for the older one.¹

Home background. The home background of the students is also important. Many come from the lower socio-economic levels and have to face this problem in addition to that of language. These children will probably require a dual approach if all their problems are to be solved so they can compete on an equal basis with the others. As has been said by many, the child who goes to school hungry just cannot learn efficiently.² In other cases, such as is observed in Israel, all children encounter a "foreign" language in the schools, but there is no ancillary problem of environmental deprivation. In the private foreign language schools such as are found in Egypt, the students come primarily from the upper classes or more privileged families, and the home attitude toward education in general and education in a non-native language in particular is quite favorable. This tends to instill an appreciation of and a desire for education in the student. Since student attitude influences his performance, this gives the student a distinct advantage. It also tends to increase motivation.³

In general, the results obtained in foreign schools with non-mother tongue instructional media are often better than those seen here in the

¹Ibid., pp. 23-25.

²A. M. Rodriguez, "Speak Up, Chicano," American Education, IV (May, 1968), 26.

³Gaarder, op. cit., p. 169.

United States. This is largely because most children in the United States forcibly learning a foreign language which is the medium of the school (English) are also encountering a foreign culture. It is not learning the second language as such, but adjusting to the second culture, that results in the malaise of anomie and the failure to identify fully with either culture.¹ In many of the foreign schools the children all come from the same kind of home background or environment, and a national language which serves as the medium of instruction is merely a vehicle used by teachers with the same cultural background as the students. When this is the case, the student is not confronted with conflicting social values, but merely with the intellectual task of mastering a new code. In others, however, the medium of instruction is English or French or some other prestigious world language, and the textbooks and teachers are representative of another culture and way of life. It was precisely this fact and the subconscious indoctrination inherent in this sort of arrangement that led to Egypt's nationalization of all of its foreign schools.² Now the language of the school may be English, French, or Italian, but the teachers and texts reflect the Egyptian ideals. In the United States, however, this acculturation is often considered an asset of the school system, but one often fails to recognize the difficulties it presents to the student.

Mother tongue similarity. The similarity of mother tongue to the language being learned also emerges as quite an influence on a child's mastery of a second language and hence the kind of program established.

¹James P. Soffiotti, "Bilingualism and Biculturism," Modern Language Journal, XLIV (October, 1960), 277.

²Peter Mansfield, Nasser's Egypt (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1965), pp. 121-122.

Those languages with similar phonemes or structures will present somewhat less severe difficulties than those where much interference is present. The problems are also less intense for younger learners whose habit patterns in the mother tongue are less firmly entrenched.¹ For those who have already learned to read and write another type of script, such as Arabic where writing is from right to left and the letters bear no resemblance to the Latin script of English, a transition to English will be much more difficult than for those whose mother tongue was one utilizing similar Latin letters.

¹John B. Carroll, "Psychological and Educational Research into Second Language Teaching to Young Children," Language and the Young School Child, ed. H. H. Stern (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 61-64.

TYPES OF PROGRAMS IN OPERATION

The special adaptations in a school's program for those children whose mother tongue is not the principal medium of instruction vary from country to country and school to school, but two general patterns seem to be indicated; a third alternative lies somewhere in between. Pre-school programs are felt essential unless instruction is to be initiated in the mother tongue until the non-mother tongue can be mastered and a transition to it as the instructional medium effected. The third alternative is bi-lingual education utilizing two languages as media of instruction.

Pre-School Instruction

More and more communities are attempting to help the child acquire a working knowledge of the instructional medium prior to the commencement of formal schooling in first grade. In many cases this serves a dual purpose--the children encounter a variety of new experiences as well as attaining at least a minimum of vocabulary and structure for the second language. Just as many of the ghetto children of the industrialized metropolitan areas have probably profited from Head Start and an introduction to new experiences prior to entering school, so, too, can the Mexican-American children profit from similar broadening experiences. At the same time the extra year or two gives the child a chance to become familiar with the pronunciation and patterns of the second language before being thrown into a situation where a lack of command of it forces him into serious difficulties. Andersson also points out that this exposure to a second language at an early age (preferably three, four, or five years of age) is taking advantage of the young child's natural ability to master another tongue.

A gradual introduction to the language at that time will prepare the child to learn to read and write it later.¹ He shares the feeling of others that one to two years of exposure to English are necessary before a child can hope to learn to read and write it, and if this exposure can take place prior to first grade the child will be on a more equal footing with his classmates.² Texas has taken steps in this direction, and an initial exposure to English along with instruction in Spanish in the summer prior to the beginning of school is the rule for Spanish-speaking children today.³ Rodriguez feels this single summer of Head Start inadequate,⁴ and many foreign language schools overseas require up to three years of such training.⁵

These pre-school classes provide an excellent arrangement for incidental learning of a language and painless acquisition of vocabulary and structural patterns.⁶ They can also contribute to a feeling of

¹Theodore Andersson, "New Focus on the Bilingual Child," Modern Language Journal, XLIX (March, 1965), p. 157.

²Boyd, op. cit., pp. 309-310; see also N. Manyas, "School to Promote Understanding among Nations; International Education in West Berlin," Childhood Education, XLIII (November, 1966), p. 158 and Ruth W. Metraux, "Study of Bilingualism among Children of U.S.-French Parents," French Review, XXXVIII (April, 1965), p. 622.

³Tony Campos, "Preserving a Noble Heritage," Texas Outlook, XLVIII (August, 1964), p. 91.

⁴Rodriguez, loc. cit.

⁵H. H. Stern (ed.), Foreign Languages in Primary Education: The Teaching of Foreign or Second Languages to Younger Children (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 73; see also Manyas, loc. cit. and Metraux, loc. cit.

⁶Doris C. Ching, "Methods for the Bilingual Child," Elementary English, XLII (January, 1965), p. 26.

success and less failure in first grade.¹ Good results from such programs are reported by Herr in vocabulary development and in auditory and visual perceptions.² The International School of West Berlin has an approach that is quite specialized. Rather than using one language exclusively as a medium, every word or phrase is spoken first in one language, then in the other. After several months the translation is sentence by sentence.³ The foreign language schools of Egypt have a kindergarten associated with them where only the language of the school is permitted. Here the age of induction is three years.

Even if no formal instruction in the school language is to be given prior to the beginning of school, help in mastering the mother tongue can be reflected in good results later. In fact, Cohen advocates that in such schools as those in Israel where the language of instruction for all children will be strange and other than their mother tongue the children should master their own mother tongue prior to initiating formal instruction.⁴

Eventual Transition

Where pre-school programs have not been established, whether because of a lack of funds, difficulty in getting student attendance, or

¹Ibid., p. 22.

²Selma E. Herr, "The Effect of Pre-First Grade Training upon Reading Readiness and Reading Achievement among Spanish American Children," Journal of Educational Psychology, XXXVII (February, 1946), pp. 100-102.

³Manyas, loc. cit.

⁴Gerda L. Cohen, "Life and Language by Osmosis," Times Educational Supplement, 2758 (March 29, 1968), p. 1051.

another reason, much can still be done to ease the transition from use of native language to use of another. Some children are channeled into special classes for a time to adapt gradually to the use of a new tongue; others enroll in regular classes, but are withdrawn from the group for special instruction of one sort or another to assist them in learning to cope with the strange language environment. Another approach is the establishment of schools with truly bi-lingual instruction where those students whose native language is English learn Spanish (or another foreign language) while the native speakers of the other are learning English.

When all of the children in a class face the same problem of learning a second language (e.g. because of the isolation of Spanish-speaking children in a Texas school, the necessity of all Israeli children to study in Hebrew with previous experience in speaking any one of a number of other languages in their home country, or the desire of an Egyptian parent for his child to attend a foreign language school) special techniques and methods can be used.

Some foreign countries regularly start instruction in either English or another world status language while others make a complete switch from the native vernacular to it at some stage of the educational process. In Sierra Leone the switch is made in third grade after the child has had a chance to learn the fundamentals of English.¹ In regions where there are too many variations of vernacular represented in a school, however, initial instruction may be in English. In Kenya a change is

¹O. M. Ferron, "Linguistic Factor in the Test Intelligence of West African Children," Educational Research, IX (February, 1967), 113.

being made from the former practice of initiating instruction through the medium of English in the first grade to that of a switch to English after one or two years of instruction in vernacular. Prior to the use of English as the sole medium in the school, a drastic change from the native language to English took place in the fifth grade, and this usually cost students a full year of learning.¹ Hill reports that in switching from Swahili to English in West Africa the transition is more gradual, occurring over a period of two years. English is first introduced as a subject in second or third grade. In about sixth grade English is introduced as the medium of instruction in certain courses such as physical education where demonstration proves helpful to comprehension and there is little need for oral student communication. He reported that arithmetic proved to be a poor subject for this initial change. After seventh grade all courses are taught in English.² They found it better to avoid the introduction of difficult and complicated concepts during the year of transition. Transition at an earlier age may have contributed to student motivation in learning English, but it also tended to lead to children parroting meaningless verbalism without genuine comprehension.³ A similar lack of comprehension was reported by Sarach in the Turkish Kolej, where some students never master the fundamentals of mathematics or science.⁴

¹Times Educational Supplement, "English Medium," p. 855.

²P. Hill, "Some Problems in the Change-Over from Swahili to English as the Medium of Instruction," English Language Teaching, XX (October, 1965), 49-54.

³Ibid.

⁴Alfred Sarach, "Teaching in Turkey," High Points, XLVII (March, 1965), 52.

Preparatory grade. A special preparatory grade has been added to some schools around the world. Some Soviet schools have added such a class between kindergarten and first grade to teach Russian to those for whom it is not the mother tongue and at the same time improve their mastery of their mother tongue.¹ A similar preparatory grade is found in the Turkish Kolej, but here it comes after five years of elementary school and prior to entrance to junior high where the total instructional program will be in English.² No credit is given for these preparatory grades; they are merely prerequisites for continuation of education.

Remedial. Remedial work concentrating on using the methods of teaching English as a second language have brought results. Morrison dealt with first, fourth, and seventh grade children in half-hour remedial classes;³ Ching developed a successful six-month program of twenty minutes per day for third graders.⁴ Ott and Streiff⁵ and Vetter⁶ emphasized the importance of the oral-aural aspects of English and used Spanish to

¹Abraham Kreusler, "Bilingualism in Soviet Non-Russian Schools," Elementary School Journal, LXII (November, 1961), 98.

²Sarach, op. cit., p. 51.

³J. Cayce Morrison (director), The Puerto Rican Study, 1953-1957 (New York City: Board of Education, 1958), cited by Ching, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

⁴Doris C. Ching, "Effects of a Six-Month Remedial English Program on Oral, Writing and Reading Skills of Third Grade Hawaiian Bilingual Children," Journal of Experimental Education, XXXII, 2 (Winter, 1963), 133-145.

⁵Frank Ott and Marjorie C. Streiff, "Innovations in Bilingual Teaching I: The Wakefield Project," Arizona Teacher, LI (January, 1963), 17.

⁶Carol Vetter, "Trouble Spot for Bilingual Students," Texas Outlook, LIII (January, 1968), 31, 52.

illustrate contrasts, comparisons, and concepts for native speakers of Spanish. For newly immigrated students, however, these remedial programs are not enough. Moreover, they must always be adapted to the special needs of the individuals who are learning English as a second language, not to the defects in English children's learnings as is occasionally done.¹ Andersson suggested a continuing remedial program in addition to a regular program of withdrawal for special instruction,² while Hittinger pointed out the advantages of using the Mexican-American children from the upper grades to help work with the ones in the lower grades. Such work enhances the self confidence of the older ones while simultaneously increasing their competence, and the younger children can also benefit.³

Withdrawal. Withdrawal of one kind or another for special instruction in the language of the school seems to be the most frequently practiced policy.⁴ Hawkes feels this may be influenced by a limitation of staff members as well as an intrinsic dislike of the separate treatment inherent in special classes. Withdrawal is more likely to be considered as individualized instruction.⁵ The obvious difficulty of withdrawal classes is the question of what the children are to do while in the regular class. They cannot be expected to follow a history lesson, for example, although they can derive many benefits from participation in

¹Hawkes, op. cit., p. 50.

²Theodore Andersson, "FLES and the Conservation of our Language Resources," Hispania, XLVII (September, 1964), 594-595.

³Martha S. Hittinger, "Bilingualism and Self-Identity," Educational Leadership, XXVII (December, 1969), 248.

⁴Hawkes, op. cit., p. 37.

⁵Ibid.

group games or activities and learn much English incidentally. They should thus be withdrawn at times when the regular class is involved in activities in which it is difficult for the linguistically different learners to participate.

Withdrawal can be either by a peripatetic teacher in the child's own school or the transportation of all children requiring special help to a special center. Instruction varies from one to two periods a week to a few minutes a day up to half a day every day spent in concentrated study of the school language. The schools of Huddersfield, England, first attempted to integrate new immigrants by withdrawing small groups of them from the normal class for a certain time each week; this was found adequate until the percentage of non-English speakers rose above half. After this a special English class for these children was organized and they had no contact with native speakers of English except for activities outside the formal classroom. The disadvantage, though, was that there was no longer much chance for incidental learning of the language from classmates. All their classmates were also attempting to learn English. When these groups were composed of children with a variety of mother tongues, however, this disadvantage was lessened because the children still had to learn English to communicate with their classmates.¹

Another type of withdrawal is frequently discussed. The time spent by the linguistically different learners in learning English is to be used by the rest of the class to learn Spanish or French or another foreign language in a Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES)

¹Ibid, pp. 28-29.

program of one sort or another.¹ The native speaker of each language then provides a valuable asset for the other students² while developing a feeling of acceptance of himself, his language, and his culture as well as an understanding of his classmates and their language and culture.³ Many feel the linguistically different learners should be separated for enough time to have a chance to learn to read and write their mother tongue while learning English incidentally with their classmates in music, art and recreation.⁴ They feel that school should be a bridge to a different culture, not a sudden leap into a totally foreign set of values and practices; moreover, if the child is forced to postpone all formal learning until he has mastered English he will be three to six years behind his age group as a teenager.⁵ If the child is encouraged to take advantage of his mother tongue and use it to learn content matter while learning English, he should be able to catch up with his contemporaries by sixth grade.⁶

The younger and brighter students would as least theoretically benefit more from the policy of withdrawal, while the older and duller

¹ Andersson, "FLES," loc. cit.; see also Juliette McClendon and C. L. Ainsworth, "Spanish for Spanish Speakers," Texas Outlook, XLIX (March, 1965), 25, 40.

² Harold Howe, "Cowboys, Indians and American Education," Texas Outlook, LII (June, 1968), 13.

³ Ibid.; see also Serafina E. Krear, "Role of the Mother Tongue at Home and at School in the Development of Bilingualism," English Language Teaching, XXIV (October, 1969), 4.

⁴ Andersson, "FLES," p. 595; see also Adalberto Guerro, "Innovations in Bilingual Teaching III: The Pueblo High Project," Arizona Teacher, LI (January, 1963), 20; Howe, loc. cit.; and Ott and Streiff, loc. cit.

⁵ Howe, loc. cit.

⁶ Andersson, "FLES," p. 595.

ones are "lost" in the regular classroom environment and can benefit more from separate classes.¹ Hawkes advocated more intensive instruction over a shorter period of time in a special (thus necessarily somewhat isolated) class for those students who did not understand the medium of instruction. He proposed half a year in a reception class and a full year of part time or withdrawal.² Other suggestions included special language classes after school or in the evening.³ Manuel also suggested the possibility of a longer school day to provide time for mother tongue instruction for Mexican-Americans.⁴

Special full-time classes. Many school systems have organized full-time reception classes. Their main disadvantages seem to be less social mixing and consequently less incidental language learning,⁵ but being in a more homogeneous group seems to evoke less self-consciousness.⁶ As mentioned above, the child who must postpone all serious learning until he has mastered English or another foreign language well enough to use it as the sole medium of instruction will be several years behind at the high school level. Separate classes for the linguistically different learners not only allow these students a chance to advance scholastically but also simplify the scheduling of their time because it is no longer

¹Hawkes, op. cit., p. 41.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., pp. 42-43.

⁴Manuel, op. cit., p. 213.

⁵Hawkes, op. cit., p. 36.

⁶Vetter, op. cit., p. 52.

necessary to coordinate their schedules so closely with those of the regular students.

Special schools have been established for Japanese-American children in Seattle, Washington, and the children adjusted after one and one half to two years of concentrated English so they could rejoin their regular classes.¹ Masella's orientation program for newly-arrived Puerto Ricans provides a special orientation homeroom with a teacher who can understand Spanish, even though English is used as a medium. There are also special English classes and Spanish classes for two years, although many subjects are scheduled with the regular students.² Cooper³ and Stevens⁴ discussed initial content instruction in the mother tongue to prevent educational retardation and reinforce the mother tongue and family culture while learning the second language. The program discussed is a three-year sequence of special classes leading up to eventual transition to regular classes.

One question which is frequently raised is whether such special classes should use the mother tongue, the new language, or some sort of combination as the medium of instruction. As has been mentioned above, the foreign language kindergartens of Egypt enforce the use of the language of the school only, but there is some incidental learning through common experiences even though all the children speak the same mother

¹Ching, "Methods," p. 27.

²Aristide B. Masella, "Help for Newly-Arrived Spanish-Speaking Students," High Points, XLVIII (December, 1966), 64-67.

³Cooper, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

⁴Stevens, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

tongue. More frequently, however, such special classes are taught at least partially in the vernacular of the students. Cohen advocates play groups to master the mother tongue before undertaking education in another language;¹ the International School of West Berlin is an example of a combined medium of instruction.²

The UNESCO conference in Hamburg (1962) compiled the opinions of professionals around the world and concluded that children learn best in their mother tongue.³ This may be the ideal arrangement, but in many places a beginning in the mother tongue merely means the postponement of the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction. Providing a complete education for Mexican-Americans in Spanish through the university level has never been suggested (as has been implemented for Welsh students⁴), so it is obvious that at some time in his life such a child will have to switch to English for education and communication. The question then becomes one of deciding when the switch should occur. Should it be at the initial school entrance in a saturated environment, after two or three years of mastering the mother tongue to develop concepts and experiences, after elementary school, or upon entrance to the university? Whenever the switch is made the child will be confronted with tremendous difficulties, and no one has yet formulated a definite answer backed by sufficient research to support his opinion.

¹Cohen, op. cit., p. 1051.

²Manyas, op. cit., p. 158.

³Stern, Foreign Languages in Primary Education, p. 31.

⁴Times Educational Supplement, "Prifysgol Cymru; Teaching through Welsh," 2669 (July 15, 1966), p. 160.

Initial instruction in the mother tongue eases the transition to school, but the traumatic switch must occur later, often at the expense of a year's learning.¹ If, on the other hand, English is the formal medium from the beginning the children can make more use of the experiential or activity method of incidental learning and also see a real purpose in learning the language as a means rather than an end in itself.

Bi-Lingual Instruction

Even though some people such as Otto Jespersen² feel a child cannot master two languages as well as one, recent evidence regarding the intelligence of bilinguals seems to refute this claim.³ In fact, many authorities now advocate teaching both the majority language to the minority and vice versa. As in any experimental program, however, those involved must be on guard for side effects.⁴ Various investigators have unearthed no adverse effects in achievement in other school subjects which have been shortened somewhat to allow time for initial foreign language instruction,⁵ and once the second language has been mastered it, too, can

¹Times Educational Supplement, "English Medium," p. 855.

²L. H. Lunn, "Bilingual Children," Childhood Education, XXXIX (March, 1963), 332.

³Gaarder, op. cit., p. 173; see also W. T. Furniss, "Exploiting Hawaii's Foreign Language Resources," Modern Language Journal, XLIX (December, 1965), 476 and Uriel Weinreich, Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems (New York: Linguistic Circle of New York, 1953), p. 117.

⁴Boyd, op. cit., pp. 311-312.

⁵Maurice Kaufman, "Will Instruction in Reading Spanish Affect Ability in Reading English?" Journal of Reading XI (April, 1968), 521-527; see also Walter B. Leino and Lois A. Haak, The Teaching of Spanish in the Elementary Schools and the Effects on Achievement in other Selected Areas, (St. Paul, Minnesota: St. Paul Public Schools, 1963) and Charles Macleod, "Weaning the Gael," Times Educational Supplement, 2788 (October, 1968), 903.

be used as a vehicle to put content across.¹ Its use can even add additional pertinence to a lesson. In history, for example, a lesson about Spanish explorers in Florida might be taught in Spanish while one dealing with modern political history might utilize English.² A New York City experiment showed children receiving even a minimum of bilingual instruction evidenced more effort and reliability than control students receiving no such instruction.³

Of course, merely teaching a foreign language as an end in itself is of little value because this seldom results in mastery. This fact has led many to suggest the use of a foreign language as a medium of instruction to teach factual content of one sort or another. In many cases, however, this suggested procedure is of little pertinence since the existing medium of instruction is a foreign language for all the students. A lack of texts in the mother tongue, the use of a minority language as the medium of instruction as in Israel or some Welsh schools, or the confrontation of first or even second generation immigrant children with the language of their new homeland may necessitate the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction. Recent interest, however, has centered on the possible use of a foreign language as an instructional medium as a

¹ John Macnamara, "The Effects of Instruction in a Weaker Language," Journal of Social Issues, XXIII, 2 (1967), 121; see also H. H. Stern (ed.), Languages and the Young School Child (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) p. 5.

² Paul W. Bell, "Bilingual Education in an American Elementary School," Languages and the Young School Child, ed. H. H. Stern, p. 118.

³ Claude M. Ury, "Bilingual Education Act; Bridge to Understanding," Catholic School Journal, LXVIII (September, 1968), 37.

teaching device to teach any second language. Williams reports that the Welsh experience of more than twenty-five years has proved that unless a second language is used as a medium of instruction, children fail to master it thoroughly and that Soviet methodologists reported similarly in 1961.¹ Carroll reported seven hundred schools in the USSR using a foreign language as the medium of instruction in various subjects.² Gaarder, too, proposed the use of two languages concurrently as media of instruction.³

All of these proposals have a bearing when considering the instruction of linguistically different learners because they provide cases parallel in many ways to that of the children learning English as a necessity because it is the medium of the school. The possible advantages of universal bilingualism and the disadvantages of slower progression using a weaker language have been looked at and studied by many, but the whole idea as a teaching method is too new to have revealed concrete results one way or the other.⁴ The big difference between this kind of arrangement and that of Mexican-Americans learning English is that the use of a foreign language as a medium only as a teaching device is somewhat contrived or artificial, while the Mexican-American faces a whole society of English-speakers and feeling of personal inferiority and anomie.

¹J. L. Williams, "Bilingual Wales; Lessons for the Language Teacher," Times Educational Supplement, 2491 (February 15, 1963), p. 299.

²W. F. Mackey, "Trends and Research in Methods and Materials," Languages and the Young School Child, ed. H. H. Stern, pp. 82-83.

³A. Bruce Gaarder, "Organization of the Bilingual School," Journal of Social Issues, XXIII, 2 (1967), 110-111.

⁴Macnamara, op. cit., pp. 122-134.

The use of a foreign language as a medium of instruction raises the question of which subjects can be taught with greatest economy and success. It is quite certain that the student will learn any technical terms in the language of instruction only, so decisions must be made according to which language will prove the most useful in a certain field. Another possibility is to follow the pattern of the Coral Way Elementary School in Miami, Florida. Here instruction in all fields occurs in both media. As mentioned above, mathematics was found rather unsatisfactory while physical education and science have been used with greater success. The Foreign Language Innovative Curricula Study Group (FLICS) Project at the University of Michigan is planning a three-year program to teach subject matter in a foreign language.¹

The aforementioned Coral Way Elementary School was the first successful completely bi-lingual school in the United States. It has adapted its program to teach all children the same subject matter in two languages. Initially native speakers of English were placed in groups apart from the native speakers of Spanish. Each group received instruction in English for half the day; the other half was spent in Spanish instruction with another teacher. After three years of segregation according to mother tongue, the classes were organized without regard to native language; the language of instruction was then selected to enhance the lesson itself. Plans are under way to extend this program to more schools in Dade County.² A similar program has been organized in the J. T. Brackenridge School of

¹School and Society, "Bilingualism and Language Learning," XCV (Summer, 1967), 95.

²Bell, op. cit., pp. 112-118.

San Antonio, Texas. The children were able to complete about three-fourths of a normal first grade year's work in the first year; they caught up at the end of the primary grades, and have fluent control of two languages as well.¹ The American school in Guatemala also has an arrangement similar to these programs.² The program in Wales has been in effect much longer. Here some subjects are taught in Welsh, some in English, but there seems to be none of the dual instruction of a single subject in two languages.

¹Instructor, op. cit., p. 58.

²Alva W. Graham, "School in Guatemala," Elementary School Journal, LXVII (May, 1967), 412-416.

SUMMARY

This review of literature reports various school system adaptations to help alleviate the school problems of linguistically different learners and discusses the various factors affecting the establishment of such programs. Only sources available in the Kansas State University library, and primarily those published since 1960, were utilized.

Children are faced with many different kinds of programs for learning a second language in the school setting. Some, of course, are carefully chosen by the parents to help the child obtain some sort of advantage in the future, but it is enforced on many who have had no choice in the matter. This is the case with the Mexican-Americans of the Southwest United States, the Welsh of Wales, immigrant children, and children whose home language is a substandard dialect. The problem is that in some cases the difficulty is not even recognized, much less approached systematically.

In the past few years, educators have been awakening to the difficulties faced by these children whose mother tongue is not the accepted standard of instruction in the schools, and many programs have been proposed and investigated. The literature is full of references to various studies undertaken and discussions of the optimum time and method for initiation of bilingual instruction, but no single pattern prevails. The type of program established depends on the availability of funds, facilities, and teachers in the community involved, as well as the concentration of these linguistically different learners within it. It is also influenced by the age, home background, and mother tongue of the individuals who need the special help.

The suggestions range from completely ignoring the language handicap of the child who understands no single word of English when entering school (because he will learn it anyway) to that of establishing a special system of education enabling the minority Welsh-speaking child to study through the university level in Welsh instead of the more popular English. The programs in operation fall into two general categories of 1) pre-school instruction in the non-mother tongue and 2) initial content instruction in the mother tongue until the non-mother tongue has been mastered adequately to allow transition to non-mother tongue instruction. There has, however, been recent investigation into the use of two languages simultaneously as media of instruction.

There are, of course, numerous problems inherent in all these programs, but time and careful consideration, combined with carefully carried out research studies, can do much to bring difficulties to light for formulation of a remedy or creation of another, more practical plan.

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SCHOOL SYSTEM PROVISIONS FOR CHILDREN WHOSE MOTHER TONGUE
IS NOT THE PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIUM

by

LINDA DARLENE GENTRY EL-DASH

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This study is a review of literature reporting various school system adaptations to help alleviate the school problems of linguistically different learners and discussing the various factors affecting the establishment of such programs. Only sources available in the Kansas State University library, and primarily those published since 1960, were utilized.

Children are faced with many different kinds of programs for learning a second language in the school setting. Some, of course, are carefully chosen by the parents to help the child obtain some sort of advantage in the future, but it is enforced on many who have had no choice in the matter, as is the case with the Mexican-Americans of the Southwest United States, the Welsh of Wales, immigrant children, and children whose home language is a substandard dialect such as many of the Negroes in the ghettos. The problem is that in some cases the difficulty is not even recognized, much less approached systematically.

In the past few years, educators have been awakening to the difficulties faced by these children whose mother tongue is not the accepted standard of instruction in the schools, and many programs have been proposed and investigated. The literature is full of references to various studies undertaken and discussions of the optimum time and method for initiation of bilingual instruction, but no single pattern prevails. The type of program established depends on the availability of funds, facilities, and teachers in the community involved, as well as the concentration of these linguistically different learners within it. It is also influenced by the age, home background, and mother tongue of the individuals who need the special help.

A variety of suggestions for coping with linguistically different learners have been made by people varying in viewpoint from those who feel one can completely ignore the language handicap of the child who understands no single word of English when entering school because he will learn it anyway to those who advocate the establishment of a special system of education enabling the minority Welsh-speaking child to study through the university level in Welsh instead of the more popular English. The programs in operation fall into two general categories of 1) pre-school instruction in the non-mother tongue and 2) initial content instruction in the mother tongue until the non-mother tongue has been mastered adequately to allow transition to non-mother tongue instruction. There has, however, been recent investigation into the use of two languages simultaneously as media of instruction.

There are, of course, numerous problems inherent in all these programs, but time and careful consideration, combined with carefully carried out research studies, can do much to bring the difficulties to light for formulation of a remedy or creation of another, more practical plan.