BILINGUAL SCHOOLING: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE  
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The conventional monolingual/monocultural approach of American schools has contributed to the language minorities population’s educational predicament. Past educational practices maintained an attitude of "Americanizing" the child of the non-English speaking residents and immigrants. This practice continues into the present, though often less harsh in tone. Children who are linguistically and culturally different have been expected to acquire a new language system and master the scope and sequence of the typical school curriculum at the same pace and with the same ease as the native speakers of English. This unrealistic expectation has led to frustration, confusion, and trauma for many language minority students and parents. Often students are left to "sink or swim" in the unknown waters of an alien school environment (Valverde, 1978).

As a result of this, parents and leaders in the language minority communities began and continue to press for bilingual education as a means of obtaining a better educational opportunity for their children. However, this attempt to revise traditional educational approaches to address the needs of language minority students has aroused opposition. Bilingual schooling, for many, contradicts American notions about language and patriotism. As a nation, the United States has relatively limited experience with bilingualism. Yet strongly held myths about it abound. It is a topic on which most Americans have developed a strong emotional opinion. On the issue of language, many people are willing to take on the experts. Lay persons who would feel unqualified to speak on other pedagogical topics are eager to express their views about bilingual education.

There is probably not a nation in the world without some bilingual population. Bilingual schooling has been widespread as well. But the origin and status of bilingualism in different countries, as well as the national policies underlying bilingual education, have varied so widely that care must be taken in interpreting the results. It is clear that we cannot assume that practices which have succeeded abroad under entirely different circumstances will have the same results in the United States (Fishman, 1978). They may, or they may not. On the other hand, we must not ignore the experience of others in other settings. Without any attempt at complete coverage, I have therefore selected a few examples to lend perspective and to give a brief orientation. Let us begin with a review of the situation in the United States.

Bilingual Schooling in the United States

The history of bilingual schooling in North America divides itself into four time periods (Andersson & Boyer, 1970):

1550 to 1815: Bilingual education for religious instruction and conversion.

1816 to 1887: Bilingual education for public school instruction and preservation of native languages.

1880 to 1960: Abatement of bilingual education for religious and public school instruction.

1960 to present: Revival of bilingual education for public school instruction.
During the first period, 1550 to 1815, bilingual education was utilized in what today is the southwest United States. In the late 1550's Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries used the dialects of the Native American tribes to teach Christianity to southwestern Native-Americans. In the East, Native-American schools were bilingual as well. Administered by Protestant missionaries, the schools introduced Native-Americans to "the habits and art of civilization", in other words, the Christian religion, Anglo culture and the English language (Hansen, 1961). In New England, bilingual education was introduced by the German Lutherans to teach High German. The Lutherans established bilingual seminaries to teach in both German and English. By 1775, more than 118 bilingual schools were established for the religious education of Lutheran children. By 1800 more than twenty-five Lutheran bilingual schools were established. In 1815, a conference convened by the Evangelical Lutheran Teachers in Virginia endorsed a resolution calling for bilingual (German/English) instruction for Lutheran students. The resolution suggested that if teachers could not teach biligually, then the local congregations were to procure a bilingual minister who would teach biligually for three months each year in the Lutheran schools. Sometimes bilingual and sometimes not, German-language schooling prevailed until the early 20th century, notwithstanding external pressures to phase it out in favor of English instruction (Kloss, 1978). This impatience with German language loyalty was, however, a minority view among the nation's founders. Not only was bilingualism an accepted fact of life, but the Continental Congress accommodated politically significant groups of non-English speakers. For example, it published many official documents in German and French, including the Articles of Confederation (Heath, 1976). Like England, the United States has not adopted an official language. Evidence suggests that the framers of the U.S. Constitution believed that a democracy should leave language choices up to the individual. They had no interest in promoting diversity. According to Shirley Brice Heath, a Stanford University linguist, our early leaders placed a higher premium on political liberty than on cultural homogeneity (Heath, 1976).

Prior to the second period, bilingual education was used primarily for religious instruction in church schools. While the private schools continued to operate, during the second period, 1816 to 1887, free, public schools using a bilingual format were developed. In 1834 a free school law passed in Pennsylvania allowing instruction in both German and English for students who did not speak English as their primary language. In 1839 Ohio required German and English bilingual instruction for German-American students in elementary schools (Kloss, 1977).

During this period eleven states enacted laws allowing bilingual instruction in schools. They were: Pennsylvania (1834), Ohio (1839), Territory of New Mexico-Arizona and New Mexico (1850), Wisconsin (1854), Illinois (1857), Iowa (1861), Kentucky and Minnesota (1867), Indiana (1869), Oregon (1872), Colorado (1887), and Nebraska (1913). Throughout most of the second period, city school districts such as Cincinnati, Dayton, Indianapolis, and Baltimore maintained bilingual public schools. In the Territory of New Mexico, provisions were also made for bilingual (Spanish and English) instruction in public schools (Kloss, 1977).

In the third period, 1887 to 1960, both public and private/religious bilingual schools decreased in number. Ironically this era saw the largest influx of non-English speaking immigrants. Between 1887 and 1920 more than twenty distinguishable European languages, other than English, were spoken by U.S. citizens. Also during this period numerous Asian languages were brought into the United States. In addition, the tribes of Native-Americans spoke more than forty-five distinct dialects (Kloss, 1977).

Throughout this period of enormous growth, legislation dealing with language was the most restrictive in the history of bilingual education. "English-only" statutes, enforced in most states, prohibited using any language except English as a medium of instruction in the public schools and several prohibited non-English instruction in both public and private schools. In seven states, the statutes provided for revoking certification if a teacher was caught in the "criminal act" of using any language except English to teach in the public schools. Students who violated the English only rules of
their schools were subjected to various indignities, among them small fines or detention. Some teachers in the 1950's and early 1960's dared to teach in Spanish in New Mexico. Because these teachers were geographically isolated, they did not lose certification, but that risk was ever present (Leibowitz, 1974). In the late 1800's language legislation was discovered to be a convenient weapon against Catholic parochial schools, which in the Midwest were often conducted in German. Mandates requiring English as the language of instruction were enacted in Illinois, Wisconsin, and other states during this time. Religious bigotry was often behind the new language laws. Even though the English-instruction laws were soon repealed in Illinois and Wisconsin, around the same time a number of cities dismantled their public bilingual education programs. St. Louis did so after German voting strength was reduced by gerrymandering and the Irish gained control of the local school board. St. Paul, Minnesota and Louisville, Kentucky districts reduced German to the status of a foreign language offered only in the upper grades. In the early 1900's, as Italians, Slavs and Jews began to outnumber other ethnic groups, new levels of fear and hatred directed at immigrants multiplied. As "Americanization" took a coercive turn, proficiency in English was increasingly linked with political loyalty. For the first time language was equated with being a "good" American. American educational objectives were to replace primary languages and cultures with those of the United States. After the Spanish-American War, the U.S. government imposed English as the medium of instruction in its new colonies of Puerto Rico and the Philippines (Cafferty & Rivera-Martinez, 1981). "The need to consolidate the nation's territorial gains and solidify its political processes seems to have played an important role in this drive toward cultural and linguistic homogeneity," writes Josue Gonzalez, former director of the United States Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (Gonzalez, 1975).

The abatement of bilingual schools and the growth of English-only statutes or laws can be attributed to the strong nationalist and isolationist sentiments that permeated the United States. Anti-German feeling created a huge backlash of language restrictionism after the United States entered the War in 1917. This movement for conformity manifested itself into hostility toward all minority tongues. In the year following the war, fifteen states legislated English as the basic language of instruction. Several followed with prohibition of any foreign-language study in the elementary grades. The most restrictive of these laws was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in the Meyer v. Nebraska case, which involved a parochial school teacher charged with the crime of reading a Bible story in German to a ten-year-old child. American attitudes toward language had changed. Learning through languages other than English seemed non-patriotic. The pressure on immigrants was tremendous to assimilate (Wittke, 1936).

After the court handed down this ruling in 1923, the Americanization movement began to subside. Attempts to legislate loyalty to English were on the decline. Big city school systems were beginning to lift bans on German studies.

During this period, the country was engaged in two world wars, two police actions, the Spanish-American War and Korean War, as well as other minor military involvements. The use of any language other than English was viewed as un-American or un-patriotic. Non-English speakers were viewed with suspicion, so they tended to stop speaking their native language and to discourage their children from learning it. Nonetheless, by 1959 U.S. citizens spoke more than twenty-five European languages alone. The ten languages with the greatest number of speakers, at that time, were: 1) Spanish; 2) Italian; 3) German; 4) Polish; 5) French; 6) Yiddish; 7) Russian; 8) Swedish; 9) Hungarian; 10) Norwegian (Kloss, 1977).

Some bilingual schools were established during the third period, notably those for Chinese, French, Greek, and Japanese-American students. The Chinese and Japanese-American schools were criticized strongly before World War II. Most of the schools were discontinued during the war, and only a few survived after the war. There were a considerable number of non-public Franco-American schools in New England between the two World Wars. These included both elementary and secondary schools as well as colleges. The Chinese, and a considerably larger number of Japanese had afternoon
schools in Hawaii and on the West Coast. Most of these schools were established with the intent of preserving their heritage, languages and culture (Fishman, 1978).

Rebirth of Bilingual Schooling

In the fourth period, 1960 to 1975, there was a revival of bilingual schools. In an effort to meet the educational needs of the children of the Cubans fleeing Cuba who poured into Miami at the rate of some 3,000 a month, the Dade County, Florida, schools undertook in 1963 a plenary bilingual program in grades one, two, and three of the Coral Way School, Miami, with plans to add an additional subsequent grade each year. At first, participation was made voluntary and a few parents chose to have their children follow the all-English program. By the end of the first year, however, the bilingual program had gained unanimous parental support and it was no longer necessary to offer the monolingual option (Hakuta, 1986).

One year later, in 1964, two prominent programs were initiated in Texas, one in the Nye School of the United consolidated Independent School District in Webb County, outside of Laredo, and the other in the San Antonio Independent School District (Andersson & Boyer, 1970).

Other Bilingual Programs in the United States

Bilingual programs began in Pecos, New Mexico, and in Edinbur, Texas, in 1965. In 1966, similar programs started in the Harlandale Independent School District of San Antonio; in Del Rio, Texas; in Zapata, Texas; in Calexico, California; Marysville, California; and Rough Rock, Arizona (Texas Education Agency, 1967). The following programs began in 1967: Las Cruces, New Mexico; Hoboken, New Jersey; Corpus Christi, Texas; Del Valle, Texas; and St. Croix, Virgin Islands (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1975).

This list, consisting almost exclusively of public elementary schools, is merely suggestive. With the exception of Navajo, taught along with English at the rough Rock Demonstration School, the two languages concerned are Spanish and English (Eder & Reyhner, 1986). Approximately ninety percent of bilingual Education Assistance proposals submitted in 1968-1969, and of the projects funded, involved these two languages. In recent years these percentages have been altered to include numerous other languages. Currently exemplary programs exist nation-wide. New York City bilingual-education programs have shown substantial gains for their students (Crawford, 1986). The Eastman Curriculum Design Project in Los Angeles, California has received world-wide attention for language-minority student progress. Also the Carpinteria Preschool Program in Carpinteria, California has shown superior progress in intellectual development and English language acquisition for its pre-school students receiving school readiness skills in their native language and "English language time" for a brief portion of the day (Krashen & Biber, 1988).

Bilingual Education Legislation and Judicial Decisions in the United States

In the 1960's there was a growing recognition that language minority children needed some manner of special assistance if they were to have an opportunity to succeed in school. Federal and State legislators as well as the nation's courts recognized this (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1975).

In 1968 Public Law 90-247, Title VII of ESEA (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act) "The Bilingual Education Act" provided funds to support a few bilingual programs which were to use native language and culture for instruction while the students were learning English. This act declared,
"The policy of the United States (is) to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies to develop and carry out new and imaginative elementary and secondary school programs designed to meet the special education needs of children who come from environments where the dominant language is other than English." The act stipulated that it would be U.S. government policy to financially assist in developing and implementing bilingual education programs in public schools in the United States. In 1973, the name of the act was changed to the "Comprehensive Bilingual Education Amendment Act of 1973." This extended, improved and expanded the program (Leibowitz, 1974).

In 1970 the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) issued its "May 25th Memorandum". The memorandum states in part that "where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national-origin minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to the students". The memorandum required federally funded school districts to provide assistance for language minority children. The memorandum stated that failure to provide such assistance, where needed, would be considered a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Fernandez, 1985).

The landmark 1974 Supreme Court decision of Lau vs. Nichols has been the cornerstone of the bilingual programs throughout the United States. This case required the establishment of special educational programs for students whose primary language is other than English. The court action was brought by thirteen non-English speaking Chinese origin students on behalf of approximately three thousand Chinese speaking students in the San Francisco Unified School District. They alleged that the students were being effectively denied an education because they could not comprehend the language in which they were being taught. The case argued that the "failure" to teach these students bilingually should be prohibited on two legal grounds: first, that not to do so was a violation of their Constitutional right to "equal protection under the law," and second, that it was a violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The unanimous Supreme Court decision stated that, "there is not equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education." Thus, the Court reiterated that "there is nothing less equal than the equal treatments of unequals" (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1975).

Both HEW and the Supreme Court declined to prescribe for school districts the type of assistance program which would provide language minority children with equal benefits in the attainment of an education, leaving the ultimate decision to the local states or districts themselves. While the Supreme Court did not specify or dictate that bilingual education be the vehicle by which a meaningful education be provided to the non-English speaking students, subsequent lower court cases have indicated it should be.

The Supreme Court decision was handed over to the U.S. Office of Civil rights, which developed a document known as the "LAU Remedies". The LAU Remedies described the obligation of school districts to take affirmative steps to provide appropriate instructional programs to non-English dominant students. It was dictated by the LAU Remedies that bilingual education be a vehicle to correct past practices, those found to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

Other important court decisions deserve recognition. Serna vs. Portales Municipal Schools (1974) was the first court to specify bilingual education as a remedy for the LAU decision. The court stated that, "a student who does not understand English and is not provided with bilingual instruction is therefore precluded from any meaningful education". This was the first time that a court expressly required bilingual education as a remedy. Aspina of New York, Inc. vs. Board of Education, City of New York (1974) was the first to decide who should receive bilingual instruction. the court ruled that all Hispanic students should be given a test to determine their proficiency in manipulating the English language. Those with low scores were to receive bilingual instruction. Keys vs. School District No. 1,
Denver, Colorado (1983) was a desegregation case that said bilingual education should be used. The Court praised and approved the bilingual program as a desegregation option where students who were non-English speakers must receive instruction in academic areas in their native language (in this case, Spanish) until they could compete effectively in English (Cardenas, 1975). Gomez vs. Illinois State Board of Education (7th Cir. 1987) stated that a district’s program must have teachers who are competent in bilingual skills and such competency must be objectively determined by the district. Castaneda vs. Pickard (5th Cir. 1981) may be the most definitive of all the decisions in describing program requirements for language minority students. This four prong analysis states that a program must be pedagogically sound for each LEP student, including assurance of content area progress, not just English acquisition. In addition, resources to carry out the program must be provided. A system to assess that the program is working (the measure of success is that the child is able to compete effectively with English speaking peers) must be in place. Finally, if assessment shows lack of success, the district must show the ability to deal with the problems assessed.

In 1976 the California State Legislature passed AB 1329 which mandated bilingual education for limited English proficient children throughout the state. In 1977 the California State Department of Education issued regulations to implement the Bill. In 1980, AB 507, The Bilingual Education Improvement and Reform Act replaced AB 1329. The 1980 California law prescribed programs for pupils of limited English proficiency. The act addressed all aspects of bilingual-bicultural education, including, but not limited to: the assessment process, program options, parental notification and involvement, re-classification requirements, and teacher certification requirements, making it the most comprehensive program in the U.S. (Van De Kamp, 1988).

The ultimate goal of the federal requirements is the same as expressed by legislative action, obtaining results indicating that the language barriers confronting the students are actually being overcome (Grant, no date).

Bilingualism and Bilingual Schooling in Other Parts of the World

In reviewing bilingualism in other parts of the world I shall first appraise Switzerland, the only officially plurilingual country I know of, then take up some other noteworthy multi-lingual nations without attempting complete coverage.

Official Bilingualism and Multilingualism. Most countries in the world, however many languages may be spoken within their borders, have only one official language. A few are officially bilingual. Switzerland occupies a unique position with three official languages, French, German, and Italian, and one additional nationally recognized language, Romansch (Andersson & Boyer, 1970).

Switzerland. Of Switzerland's three official languages, German is spoken by seventy-four percent of the population, French by twenty percent, and Italian by four percent. Romansch, which also enjoys national recognition, is spoken by one percent of the population. In addition, German-speaking Swiss have a language or dialect for intimate use in the home or among close friends, known as Swiss-German or Schwyzerdtutsch. The contact of these various languages does not cause any notable friction. Switzerland's language policy is based on the "territorial principle", that is, in a given section the language of the majority is official and speakers of other languages are expected to learn and use it. But a "personality principle" is used at the federal level, according to which any individual may be attended to in his own language, no matter where he lives. Individual Swiss citizens are not notably more bilingual or more plurilingual than other Europeans. Their elementary schooling takes place in their respective mother tongues, and a second language is learned at the beginning of the secondary school. Cases of teaching in and through more than one language is the Swiss elementary school have not been reported.
The Former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The European nation with the greatest variety of experiences in bilingual schooling was the former USSR. The Soviets were from the beginning committed to allow the ethnic minority groups considerable freedom in their educational planning. With some 200 distinct languages, spoken by about forty-five percent of the population, the USSR became the scene of extensive language development. The principal languages were standardized, writing systems were developed for unwritten languages, and well over sixty languages began to be used in primary schools and in some instances past this level.

In the 1930's a new policy was initiated, which emphasized the role of Russian in the Soviet communication network and limited the use of the minority tongues. The more important minority languages, however, continued to be used as mediums of instruction in primary and to a lesser extent in secondary schools. It is reported that some 700 schools make some use of foreign languages like English, French, German, and Chinese as languages of instruction in various subjects. There are more than forty Pedagogical Institutes for Foreign Language Teaching and at least four times this number of Special Language Schools in which, from the first grade, a foreign language is used almost exclusively as modern history and economic geography of the foreign country are taught in the foreign language.

China. In China, despite the presence of sometimes mutually incomprehensible languages or dialects, what may comprehensively be called Chinese is spoken by ninety-five percent of the population and ninety-five percent of all speakers of Chinese, some of whom are to be found in almost any part of the world, from Singapore to New York, live in China. The national language of China is Mandarin, which is also one of the five official languages of the United nations.

There are eight subgroups of non-Chinese languages spoken by the ethnic minorities in China including Taiwan. Many of the languages never had any fully developed scripts until, interestingly, the advent of the People's Republic of China, whose policy approximated that of the USSR with regard to minority languages. The general thrust generated by Peking was to help the minority people either to perfect or to create written forms for their languages. The theory was that these people must first be helped to become literate in their own way to facilitate their education, and then along with improved education would come the incentive to join in the mainstream of Chinese society, to the extent of wanting to learn the national Chinese language in addition to their own.

Canada. Canada's two official tongues, English and French, are both international languages of prestige, but English speakers outnumber French speakers about two to one and have a great economic advantage. In addition, Canada's commonwealth status and proximity to the United States tend to favor the English Canadians. For this reason, the pressure is greater on the French speakers to learn English than on the English speakers to learn French. Until recently, French speaking Canadians were treated legally as a minority.

A multi-lingual country like Canada should be fertile ground for bilingual education, and indeed there are extensive efforts by language groups to maintain their languages and cultures in private schools. The two official languages are of course taught extensively in public schools, where the common pattern is to use the majority language of the particular province as the medium of instruction and to teach the other official language as a subject.

Worthy of note is the unusual case of Welland, a city of 40,000 located in southern Ontario, a few miles west of Niagara Falls. The 8,000 Franco-Ontarians living in Welland were completely isolated from the French-speaking communities living in the northern and eastern parts of the province. Nevertheless, thanks to the fact that the Welland public schools provide education for the French-Canadian children in their mother tongue, both French and English speakers of this small city have been able to preserve their own language and culture in an educated form.

Another significant experiment is taking place in the middle-class English speaking community of St. Lambert, located just across the St. Lawrence River from Montreal, in the province of Quebec. The parents of the English-speaking children of a Protestant elementary school, having read about the results of recent research in early elementary school learning, contacted several staff members of
McGill University. They discussed the possibility of an experiment in their school. The efforts of the group succeeded finally with the school district agreeing to set up an experimental kindergarten immersion class in September, 1965. In 1966-1967 one first-grade class was taught exclusively in French with the attendant testing and research supervised by Wallace Lambert, noted authority on bilingualism. The results were so satisfactory that it was decided to continue the experimentation for three years. In 1967-1968 the pilot experimental class was followed through grade 2, which remained all-French except for fifty minutes of instruction each day by a teacher of English. At the same time different experimental and control classes were started in the first grade. And in 1968-1969 the project was expanded into the third grade and replicated in grades 1 and 2. The program received such support from the community and the results were of such a positive nature that the program continues today (Swain & Lapin, 1982).

Lambert and his colleagues concluded that: "After five years we are satisfied that the experimental program has resulted in no native language or subject matter (i.e. arithmetic) deficit or retardation of any sort, nor is there any cognitive retardation attributable to participation in the program, in fact, the experimental pupils appear to be able to read write, speak, understand, and use English as competently as youngsters instructed in the conventional manner via French. During the same period of time and with no apparent personal or academic costs, the children have developed a competence in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding French that English pupils following a traditional French as a Second Language program for the same number of years could not match" (Genesee, 1987).

Lambert warns however when asked about the validity of comparing the St. Lambert Experiment student with language minority students in the United States: "The contrast... between Spanish American children who are coming into a school system in the United States and learning English is not a valid parallel. For the minority group in the United States, giving up the home language and entering an American school is like kissing his home language good-bye. In the case we are dealing with, (St. Lambert) however, English is clearly the most powerful language, so much that these parents can be sure to have English skilled children who can afford to learn some French. The contrast is a strong one (Lambert, 1972).

For example, in the classrooms the children are not expected to compete with native speakers of French in an environment which both expects and blames them for their failures, and never provides an opportunity for them to excel in their own language. Their teachers do not have low expectations for their achievements. This approach was designed for a very different population, with specific socio-cultural characteristics and with specific philosophies and goals. It is not reasonable to attempt to transplant this model for language minorities in the United States. The authors also caution against distortion of their program where so-called immersion programs are little more than examples of the discredited submersion (sink or swim) approach, together with novel instructional techniques and superficial recognition of linguistic and cultural differences.

**Summary**

This historical perspective of bilingual education in the United States reveals major shifts in its purposes. During the first period, bilingual education was used mainly to foster the development of various religious denominations. The second and third periods used it to preserve native languages and cultures except for Native-Americans. The contemporary period uses bilingual education to provide an equal educational opportunity for linguistic minority students and through recent research findings expedite their acquisition of English. Teaching a second language monolingual English speakers has recently begun to appear in program designs as well.
The overview and appraisal of select bilingual or plurilingual communities is intended to be more than provocative. An American educator will perhaps detect among these foreign settings an occasional feature that matches the situation in his/her own bilingual community. He/she will probably have more questions than answers. Is bilingualism a good thing for a community or a nation? Should it be restricted to the home and to use among intimate friends and family? Or should it be supported through instruction in the schools? Does the authoritativeness and influence of the majority or dominant group imply special responsibility toward the language-minority groups? How much do language problems and inter-group tensions result from ignorance of the nature of language; the process of language learning; the interrelationship of language, culture, and society, etc.? It is the author's intent to stimulate the reader's interest in pursuing the answers to these questions.
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