ABSTRACT
        Four essays are presented on the subject of
bilingualism, with the specific purpose of providing information for
teachers about the ways in which they can help language minority
children sustain their first language while acquiring English. After
an introduction by G. Richard Tucker, the following papers are
presented: (1) "Bilingualism: Its Nature and Significance," by
Wallace E. Lambert; (2) "Bilingual Education and First Language
Acquisition," by Catherine E. Snow and Beverly A. Goldfield; (3)
"Learning English as a Second Language in a Bilingual Setting: A
Guide for Parents and Teachers," by Anna Uhl Chamot; and (4)
"Cognitive Styles and the Bilingual Educator," by Stephen R. Cahir.
(AMH)

PAPERS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Bilingual Education Series: 10

Faces and Facets of Bilingualism by Wallace E. Lambert, Catherine E. Snow & Beverly A. Goldfield, Anna Uhl Chamot, Stephen R. Cahir

NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION

CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

CONTENTS

Introduction

In the opening essay of this volume, Wallace Lambert presents us with some diverse social and psychological correlates of bilingualism. He asks us to consider bilingualism as an important world phenomenon that takes different forms and has different correlates and consequences in various places.

Two observations are particularly important as we attempt to understand bilingualism and to take a closer look at the implementation and efficacy of bilingual education as an educational alternative for children in the United States. First, when bilingualism is defined broadly, there are many more people in the world who are bilingual than are monolingual and there are many more individuals whose schooling is in a second language than those who are educated in their mother tongue. Furthermore, in large areas of the world, bilingualism is a way of life, a social and linguistic circumstance to be accepted, drawn on, nurtured, and cherished; it is not a problem, a difficulty, a deficit to be overcome.

It is within this spirit that we present this volume of essays prepared by a distinguished group of researcher-scholar-teachers on behalf of the Center for Applied Linguistics in collaboration with the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. These papers are intended to examine bilingualism and to provide explicit information for teachers about the ways in which they can help language minority children nurture and sustain their first language while acquiring a language of wider communication--English. The time must soon come in the United States when we cease to regard bilingual education as a form of compensatory education and instead look on it as a form of enrichment education.

G. Richard Tucker
Center for Applied Linguistics

Bilingualism:
Its Nature & Significance

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One of the wonders of the social world is the capacity humans have for
creating a variety of languages. Even more wonderful, in my thinking,
are the potential linkups we have between and among languages because of
people who are bilingual.

Suppose for a moment that we had no modern communication systems and
that an important message had to be circulated throughout the world by
person-to-person communication. Let's suppose that the message is a
socially significant one--for instance, "eating acorns protects one from
cancer"--and suppose that the discovery took place in the toe of Italy
and the news is to be relayed up to the Swiss, Yugoslav, and French bor-
ders and from there out around the world. Although the message would
certainly have a bumpy transmission through numerous dialect communities
in Italy itself (Hall, 1980), and through various language groups in
multilingual Yugoslavia, it would ultimately penetrate all language
barriers.

The most important elements in the relay, of course, would be
bidialectic or bilingual people, and they would be found in high con-
centrations at the borders of each linguistic community. They would
have developed their bidialectic or bilingual skills through communica-
tion experiences in the region of overlap of the two codes, or they
might be migrants from one region to another, meaning that they brought
their old-community code along with them. In either case, chances are
that they would be less versed in the written form of the other language
than in the spoken form.

Of course some bonafide residents of each community could also be
bilingual if they had the interest and inquisitiveness (like that of an
anthropologist) to get to know another community's language, literature,
and culture. This more educated subgroup would likely be better versed
in the written than the spoken form of the other language. As we shall
see, the ways people become bilingual make important differences.

At certain relay points, only a few people would be bilingual enough
to translate the message, whereas at other points many bilinguals would
be available. An English version of the message might pass without need
of translation among large numbers of educated Danes or Swedes, whereas
a Danish or Swedish version would stop abruptly at the ports of England
or France before a Danish-to-English or Swedish-to-French bilingual
could be found. Thus, certain languages at certain times in history end
up high on a hierarchy of language status or usefulness while others
have little usefulness outside a restricted community. Where one's
language falls in this hierarchy influences one's attitude toward
learning another language; those with a high-status language wonder why
they need to know any other language, whereas those with a low-status
language realize they must.

1

My aim here is to describe what it is to be one of these critical
message relayers and, more generally, what the social significance of
being bilingual is. First of all, bilinguals are people who, because of
ancestry, interest, or sheer place of residence, have social and emo-
tional connections with some "other" place and some "other" group. The
demarcation between "own" group and "other" group is emphasized more by
monolinguals than bilinguals, for it is the monolingual person who is
especially likely to wonder and ask questions about bilingualism,
questions such as: Can one really depend upon the allegiances of those
who are partly connected elsewhere? The monolingual, who is shut out of
the communication flow in a bilingual's other language, often becomes
suspicious (sometimes even paranoid) about what might be being communi-
cated in the unknown code.

It is just a short step, then, to where the monolingual would become
concerned about social policies that might encourage either societal or
individual forms of bilingualism. For a society, the argument goes, the
more bilinguals there are, the less integrated and cohesive (and thus
the less productive) the society must be; for individuals, the more
bilingual they become, the less integrated their personalities must be.
Of course, the argument continues, there will always be a need for
bilinguals to translate and relay messages from one ethnolinguistic
group to another and that chore can be done best by those who are in
transition--still bilingual but on the road to real integration in the
new group. In any case, translating and message relaying might best be
considered as mechanical, relatively low-status operations. There is no
sense in encouraging or aggrandizing bilingualism at any level. It is
quite a different matter, however, when the better educated within one's
own ethnolinguistic group learn other languages and learn about other
people's ways of life. Their bilinguality and their allegiances are not
questioned so long as they can prove that they have deep, unshakable
roots in the home society.

Only recently has this traditional view of bilingualism been chal-
lenged, and the challenge has come mainly from new research findings in
the behavioral sciences. Consequently, we now have a clearer picture
of what bilingualism is and how it works. Rather than being a person
divided between two linguistic and cultural groups, belonging to neither
one fully, the bilingual can be said to have the potential of belonging
comfortably to both ethnolinguistic groups and to be a well-integrated
person as a consequence. At the society level there is a growing appre-
ciation for the presence of bilinguals who, in the minds of some people
in both developed and developing nations, are beginning to be seen as a
precious national resource.

To arrive at this new perspective, researchers began by checking on
some widespread beliefs--for example, the belief that being bilingual
results in some type of mental confusion or retardation. Carefully con-
ducted surveys of the performance on intelligence and school achievement
tests found that bilinguals, instead of being handicapped, were actually
scoring higher than matched monolinguals on IQ tests and moving along as
swiftly if not more swiftly in school (see Lambert, 1978, and Cummings,
1979, for reviews of the pertinent research studies).

Then researchers began to ask questions about the mind of the
bilingual. Does it function as well as the monolingual's mind? We now
have several reasons to argue that it may be something more and some-
thing better than the monolingual mind. For one thing, the fully

bilingual person manages to work effectively with two linguistic systems
and to keep the two functionally separated (see Lambert, 1969). For
example, the bilingual can listen to a long list of words read word by
word, half presented in one language and half in the other in a mixed
order, and remember not only as many as a monolingual can when the whole
list comes in one language, but also almost never make translation
errors in recall, i.e., saying grapefruit when pamplemousse was the word
actually presented. Furthermore, the two systems provide the bilingual
with a cross-language and cross-cultural comparative perspective that
the monolingual rarely experiences, e.g., a realization of the important
differences that exist in shades of meaning across languages, not only
in the meanings of words but also in the meanings of gestures, sounds,
and pitches.

This sensitivity to meaning that comes with bilingualism deepens
one's understanding of concepts. It becomes clear that concepts have
distinctive meanings in the context of each linguistic system, and this
realization broadens one's perspective on language and reality. Through
experience, bilinguals realize that words are only arbitrarily attached
to referents (e.g., the things we sit on are called chaises in one
system, Stuhls in another). This awareness protects bilinguals from the
traps of "reification" i.e., believing that because there is a name for
something, that something necessarily exists, or that names and refer-
ents are naturally linked and inseparable. As a consequence, bilinguals
are better able to think beyond the bounds of linguistic systems and to
play and create with words and concepts. It is as though bilingualism
provides persons with a mental stereoscope, enabling them to see con-
cepts in perspective, and this is perhaps what Wilder Penfield meant
when on several occasions he argued that "the bilingual brain is a bet-
ter brain."

A word of caution is called for, though, because not all bilinguals
are able to maintain functional equivalence in their two languages, nor
are all able to reap the advantages of bilinguality. Many are held up
in their progress toward full bilingualism because of personal and moti-
vational reasons (see Gardner and Lambert, 1972), and many, because of
society's insensitivities, are forced to abandon their bilinguality (see
Lambert, 1978).

As for the healthiness of the bilingual's personality, the few re-
search findings so far available reveal no signs of disturbance or
maladjustment that can be attributed to bilingualism. For example,
young people who become functionally bilingual through immersion pro-
grams benefit by increased self-esteem and confidence because of the
experience (see Lambert and Tucker, 1972), and those who were permitted
to become bilingual and bicultural through early family experiences
develop a deep appreciation for their parents and the roles parents
play, at the same time as they benefit from the cultural diversity rep-
resented by their parents (see Aellen and Lambert, 1969).

Recent research by sociolinguists has also forced a re-examination
of the effects of linguistic and cultural pluralism on the economic and
social development of societies. Stanley Lieberson and colleagues, for
example, in their cross-national comparisons of mother-tongue diversity
and national development find no substance to the belief that mother-
tongue diversity hampers the economic or social development of nations
(Lieberson and Hanson, 1974). This new research has direct implications
for developed nations like the United States and Canada which receive

large numbers of immigrants. There are signs that these nations are
experimenting with changes in their social and educational policies so
as to protect the languages and cultures of newcomers. Thus, there may
be the beginnings of an appreciation for languages and cultures as pre-
cious societal resources. There are of course serious and cogent
counter arguments to such changes, and much more research is called for
before we can expect fundamental modifications in national policies on
societal pluralism (see, for example, Rabushka and Shepsle, 1972).

It turns out then that many of the bilingual person's problems of
adjusting and coping are determined primarily by the attitudes and
reactions of amorphous collectivities of people in society. On a
person-to-person basis, things usually go more smoothly. But society is
harsh and often merciless because people in collectivities pick up on
the slightest sign of ethnicity--including the way a person uses
language--and read all sorts of things into it, often things that aren't
really there, except in the minds of the "reader." Take the accents bi-
linguals often have in their speech. Accents reveal in an instant the
whole experience of expatriation and migration that is sometimes a joy-
ous affair but often a spirit-wrenching one. For many listeners,
accents conjure up stereotypes about "foreigner" or "stranger in our
midst," with all the attendant suspicions about bilingual/bicultural
people with divided allegiances and the like. Society thus makes up its
collective mind about people on the basis of small things like accents
and language styles.

Of course the status hierarchy of languages works itself into these
judgments, and thus bilinguals with humble backgrounds are singled out
and hurt most. Research is now exploring this social judgment-making
process. For instance, tape recordings are made of a series of
speakers, each reading a standard passage. In the series some speakers
are bilingual or bidialectic so that they give two renditions, one with
and one without an accent or a foreign language. These readings are
presented to listeners who are asked to judge the personality makeup of
each speaker. The listeners are kept ignorant of the fact that the same
speakers appear at different places in the series.

What is astonishing in such studies is the fact that so many listen-
ers, from all walks of life, attribute biased, stereotyped traits to a
speaker according to the language or accent guise the speaker momentari-
ly adopts. Thus, the accent or the other language evokes in large pro-
portions of listeners an image of a less dependable, less socially
attractive, less likely to succeed person than is the case when the same
person drops his accent and "speaks white" (see Lambert, 1967; Giles and
Powesland, 1975).

There is, of course, no truth to these attributions, but true or
not, they are so crystalized and wide-spread in so many societies that
they constitute a formidable barrier to interpersonal communication and
understanding. Knowledge about this process paves the way for correc-
tives, and these are now being tried out. For example, innovative
approaches to learning about other languages and cultures are being
introduced to children in school settings, and these seem to have a cor-
rective effect (see Lambert and Tucker, 1972).

These studies of reactions to speech style indicate that society
puts great pressure on ethnolinguistic minority groups to shed the
traces of old cultures, languages included, and to embrace the new.
This pressure usually means that members of a less prestigious ethno-

linguistic community are expected to accommodate to some vague but
powerful norm about the expected and acceptable language of communica-
tion. They are induced to put aside their native or home language and
even the accented traces associated with it. They are expected, in
other words, to venture on a route toward bilingualism that essentially
subtracts the home language by shifting the focus to the new, usually
more prestigious, language of the host culture. We refer to this form
of bilingualism, where the language of the new country comes to substi-
tute for the original home language as "subtractive" bilingualism, imply-
ing that in the long run the bilingualism is more apparent than real
since one language is progressively put aside or subtracted.

Some now believe that this experience leaves ethnolinguistic minor-
ity group members--adults as well as children--in a psychological limbo
and that it contributes to the often noted incapacity they have with
both native and new-nation languages and the difficulties they have in
achieving in school or in occupations (see Lambert, 1978). By way of
contrast, "additive" bilingualism characterizes those who are at home
and well rooted in their own language and culture but who delve seri-
ously into the mastery of a second or foreign language. Additive bilin-
gualism provides opportunities for mainstreamers to "add" one or more
languages to their repertories and to enjoy a number of personal advan-
tages--in self-confidence, openness of mind, intellectual enrichment--
as a consequence of becoming bilingual (Lambert and Tucker, 1972;
Genesee and Lambert, 1980).

The challenge for social planners and educators in this decade, then,
is to help transform instances of subtractive bilingualism into additive
ones. Some research on how such transformations take place are avail-
able (see Lambert, 1978; Lambert, Giles, and Picard, 1975), but much
more has to be done. These transformations involve radical changes in
collective thinking. Instead of being pressured to accommodate and to
put their home languages behind them, the ethnolinguistic minority group
is given an opportunity to develop fully the home language by being
schooled in the early years through that language so that it can be
written and read as well as spoken and understood. The "rooting" of the
home language in this fashion is coordinated with an independent program
of study conducted through the national language, enabling the "minor-
ity" group young person to be at home in both languages and cultures.

As I see it, our best chance to meet this challenge is to recognize
that there are two faces to bilingualism, a subtractive and an additive
face, and to provide opportunities for majority group members--the
mainstreamers in society--to embark on effective programs of language
learning and bilingualism. Mainstreamers are the ones who stand to pro-
fit so much from the addition of a new language. Society stands to pro-
fit even more because as soon as mainstreamers make the gesture to
develop real skill in other languages, they thereby demonstrate an
appreciation for minority groups and minority languages. This appre-
ciation then would be the impetus minority group members need to master
and be proud of the home languages and cultures they are so often pres-
sured to bypass and ignore.

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Bilingual Education & First Language Acquisition

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HOW CAN ELEMENTARY TEACHERS BENEFIT FROM KNOWING ABOUT FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION?

Knowing something about the way children have learned language during their first few years will help the classroom teacher to understand two things about their students: how best to facilitate further language growth in the classroom and why some children seem less able than others to deal with the language demands made in the classroom.

Elementary teachers use language for all the tasks they face each day in their classrooms--explaining, teaching, praising, disciplining, regulating, joking, and chatting with their students--and they generally assume that their students use and understand language as they themselves do. When something goes wrong in the completion of one of those daily tasks, teachers often fail to consider that it may be a language problem, not recalcitrance or a learning disability, that is causing the breakdown.

As adults, we are used to the idea that language has many different functions, and that it must be used differently in different settings. Children who arrive for the first day of school, however, may have experienced language in only a small number of settings and may literally not know how to talk in unfamiliar situations, even though their language is well developed and quite adequate in the familiar settings. For many children, school is their first encounter with language used to convey new and complex information, to display knowledge, to play language games, or to talk about language itself. In addition, some children may be facing the task of learning to do all these things in a new language--English.

Furthermore, children's own language skills are noticed and evaluated not just in terms of how effectively they communicate needs and ideas but as language. Classroom performance may be rated on the basis of how well a child understands verbal directions, asks and answers questions, and responds in classroom discussions. Some children may fail at these tasks, not because of low ability or poor language skills, but because the tasks are unfamiliar to them. They do not have the experience of using language as the classroom demands. The barriers to successful communication in the classroom are quite obvious for children learning English as a second language, since they must acquire a totally new set of language skills. It is important to remember, though, that even the children from English-speaking homes must learn new uses and styles of language, if they are to function effectively in the classroom.

7

WHAT DO CHILDREN WHO ARE STARTING SCHOOL KNOW ABOUT LANGUAGE?

Most children entering school can understand almost all of what adults say to them (in their first language)' and can use language for a wide variety of communicative purposes. They can demand (Give me a cookie), request politely (Won't you please give me a cookie?), report (Jennie wasn't at school today), inquire (Is this a dinosaur or an alligator?), deny (My name isn't sweetiepie!), promise (If you come to my house, I'll show you my bicycle), and threaten (If you don't give me back my bicycle, I'll tell my mommy!). These communicative functions are called <u>speech acts</u>--the act that one is trying to accomplish with one's speech. Research has shown that all children, whether from language-rich or language-poor backgrounds, are similar in their development of speech acts. All normally developing five-year-olds can produce a wide variety of speech acts--i.e., they can use language for a wide variety of communicative purposes.

The same speech act may be expressed in different grammatical forms. The speech act "request" can be expressed with a declarative sentence (I want a cookie), an imperative (Give me a cookie, please), or an interrogative (May I have a cookie? Could you give me a cookie?). By the time they are three or four years old, most children are skilled at using sophisticated, indirect speech acts (e.g., I sure am hungry or Those cookies look good) rather than direct speech acts (Gimme a cookie) to accomplish their purposes. Their use of indirect speech acts reveals a well-developed ability to calculate the effect of their utterances on the listener. In addition, of course, it means that they have mastered the complex grammatical rules governing the correct form of statements, questions, imperatives, and negatives. The complexity of those rules is revealed by the kinds of mistakes made in the process of learning them, both by three- and four-year-olds, who say things like "Why you are going to work?" "Where mummy's office is?" and "It don't can go", and by older second-language learners who say things like "How works this?" "Where goed you?" and "I no can go. No is late enough."

Perhaps the most significant feature of language is that it is a system which can be used to create an <u>infinite variety of</u> meanings, using a limited set of words and sentence patterns. In order to learn the language system, children must sort out regularities and patterns in the speech they hear. The mistakes children make suggest they are using a system of rules in their early language. The toddler who uses the word <u>ball</u> to refer to an orange or a tire is telling us that the most important feature of <u>ball</u> for him is "roundness." The child who says "goed", "eated", "seed", and "weared" is telling us that she has learned the English rule for forming past tenses; if she did not know the rule, she would never be able to produce these forms she had never heard.

Many of the mistakes made by children learning English as a second language are identical to these errors of first-language learners--the so-called "developmental errors." For second-language learners, as for first-language learners, these mistakes reveal that they are doing a good job of identifying regularities and forming rules about English, and that they are taking an active role in the language learning process. Second-language learners may also at times produce an English expression based on the native language. A native Spanish-language speaker, for example, may say "he has three years" instead of "he is three years old," giving a literal translation of the Spanish expression. This kind of confusion is called an "interference error," because

it reveals interference from the first language. Both interference and
developmental errors occur because children's thought processes are more
advanced than their language--they are trying to say things for which
their knowledge of the language is not yet adequate. The fact that
children make such errors means that they are striving to discover the
correct way to talk about all the complex things about which they are
thinking.

WHAT ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE DO CHILDREN ENTERING SCHOOL STILL NEED TO
ACQUIRE?

There are four areas in which elementary school children's language
will still show considerable development: vocabulary, some complex syn-
tactic constructions, metalinguistic awareness, and certain social uses
of language. Vocabulary is the area of development most familiar to
elementary teachers. A large part of the science and social science
curriculum in the elementary years consists of giving children new words
to use in thinking about the world. In addition, some old words which
children much younger than six are already using will come to acquire a
more complex meaning for them. Many four- and five-year-olds use come,
bring, and keep partially incorrectly (Come it to me instead of Bring it
to me; Bring it there instead of Take it there; You can keep these
home instead of You can take these home), suggesting that, though they
have a good idea of the meaning of such words, their definitions are not
yet completely developed.

The grammatical constructions that first-graders have not yet fully
mastered include the passive (The horse was kicked by the cow might be
interpreted as The horse kicks the cow) and sentences with the verb ask,
which is interpreted as if it meant tell (Ask Cookie monster what he
likes to eat. You like cookies, Cookie Monster). Such constructions are
relatively rare in speech to preschoolers, so it is not surprising that
it will take them a few extra years to learn how to understand and pro-
duce them.

Metalinguistic ability refers to the ability to think and talk about
language. This ability is quite separate from, and develops much later
than, the ability to use language for communication. Preschool children
do not yet separate language from what language means, so they cannot
recognize that words are arbitrary symbols. The preschooler firmly be-
lieves that a rose by any other name would not only smell different but
be different! For example, if asked for a long word, most preschoolers
will say something like "hose" or "snake," whereas a short word is
"little finger." Clearly, the inability to recognize that the length of
a word depends on how it sounds, not on what it means, can be a great
hindrance in learning how to read. The child who expects the written
word chair to look like a chair might be able to learn to read picto-
graphs but will have trouble with an alphabetic writing system. Futher-
more, preschoolers, when asked for a word, will usually give either a
whole sentence or a phrase like "the big black dog." They might well
agree that most nouns and verbs are words but deny such status to
articles (a, the), prepositions (in, on), or auxiliary verbs (is, had).
There is some suggestion, though, that metalinguistic awareness is an
aspect of language development in which the bilingual child excels over
the monolingual child. The child who has learned that perro and dog
both mean the same thing, who has discovered that Spanish sentences can-
not be literally translated into English and still make sense, who finds

that many adults cannot understand what he or she is saying in one language but can understand it in another, has had considerable opportunity to reflect on and learn about the arbitrary nature of the relationship between sound and meaning.

The appropriate way to talk in various social situations is something many schoolchildren, even some adults, have not yet learned. How many of us feel fully confident that we know what to say at a funeral? At a retirement reception? At a job interview? Such skills are, of course, largely social skills, but they are also intrinsically linguistic. Having the right thing to say in such situations--knowing the language to use--is the key to correct social behavior. Knowing how to express condolences, tell a joke, or introduce oneself to strangers at a party means having learned what to say and when to say it. That learning depends on having experienced such situations, having had the opportunity to observe how others act in them. The teenager at his first party or the adult at her first funeral is faced with exactly the problem of the six-year-old on the first day of school: they all know perfectly well how to talk, but none know precisely what to say in this situation.

WHAT ARE THE OPTIMAL CONDITIONS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING?

Children learning to talk must discover the rules and regularities in the language they are learning, and they must map the speech they hear onto what they see going on around them. Children have a lot of help from caregivers with these tasks. The speech addressed to children tends to be slower, simpler, better enunciated, and more repetitive than speech addressed to adults; thus, children have less trouble figuring out what actually was said than older language learners would have. But, just being exposed to clear speech is of course, not enough to help anyone learn language. Imagine trying to learn a language by listening to it on the radio; no matter how slowly and carefully the announcer spoke, there would be little chance to learn anything useful from this speech because there would be no chance to figure out what he or she meant. The crucial feature of caregivers' language to children is that it is so closely tied to what the children are experiencing--what is going on around them, what they are seeing, and what they themselves are trying to say. The one-year-old turns to look out the window, and his mother says, "Airplane?" He drops his cup, and his father says, "All gone!" He raises his arms to be lifted into his highchair, and mother says, "Up you go." The child's own actions and focus of attention determine to a large extent what is said to him, and he thus has the chance to relate those simple, clear, repetitive adult utterances to what he is experiencing. The utterances are made interpretable.

Or consider the 18-month-old who says, "Mummy go." Her father answers "Yes, Mummy's gone to work. She'll be back after your nap this afternoon." The child's very simple utterance is expanded and put into correct, complete grammatical form. Thus children who are just starting to talk about past events get the chance to hear the past tense, even before they can produce it themselves. The children's utterances are extended--new information is given that is relevant to the topic introduced by the child. Evidence suggests that the best kind of parental speech during this early period of language acquisition stays pretty close to the topics introduced by the children. The greater richness and complexity of the parental utterances are more useful if those

utterances are related to topics the children have introduced. In addition to input about language, parents who talk to their children in this way are providing large amounts of information about the world and how it works.

By the time children are ready for school, their language is sufficiently developed for them to understand and learn from more complex speech about topics introduced by others and about events that cannot be directly experienced. Children themselves often initiate such complex and abstract discussions--"Why the sun is hot?" "Why Mommy doesn't have a beard?" "Why germs make you sick?". Children of this age are ready to learn about language through language--learning new vocabulary items by hearing definitions of words, playing games like "rhyming words," opposites, etc. However, bilingual children's proficiency in the second language may not be developed enough for the abstract discussions that these children are able to conduct in their first language. Nonetheless, the basic principle of language acquisition continues to hold--children learn the most from input that is responsive to their interests and focus of attention. The classroom is the first situation for many children in which they must attend to and act upon language that is not directed specifically to them. This may be why classroom routines--establishing predictable, recurrent activities--seem to work so well in the primary grades. Such routines may be especially important to bilingual children. The vocabulary and structure of a new language are acquired more easily when classroom activities are organized around daily routines that become a familiar context for language learning. Knowing what is going to happen next can simplify the task of organizing their own activities so that second-language learners can attend to and learn from the language the teacher is using.

DO ALL CHILDREN LEARN LANGUAGE THE SAME WAY?

Normally developing children progress through a similar sequence of stages in learning their first language. The single-word stage of pointing and naming is followed by meaningful combinations of two or more words. Later developments, such as the ability to form questions and express negation, also follow a predictable pattern in the language of most children.

However, there are also differences in language learners, which may reflect differences in the language children hear or differences in the strategies adopted by any particular child for solving communicative problems. For example, names of objects may dominate the early vocabulary of some children, who seem to spend several months wandering around the house labeling things just for the fun of it. Other children learn only a few labels but large numbers of social and expressive words--such as "bye-bye," "thank you," "mama," "want," and "naughty" during the earliest stage of language acquisition. Some children learn new words or forms by imitating them from adult speech, while other children rarely imitate. Some children try out new words or expressions as soon as they have heard them, whereas others prefer to figure out exactly what a word means or how a rule works before they will use it themselves.

Other differences in styles of language learning reflect differences in how language is used in the home or community of the child. Different cultures vary enormously in their expectations concerning language behavior. For example, among many Native American groups, children are expected to be silent in the presence of adults, whereas middle-class

white Americans generally encourage children to be talkative. These principles of language use that govern when to talk, how to address adults, and the like are brought to school by children who may be very surprised to discover that their teachers' expectations differ from their parents'. Although such behaviors and principles differ for different ethnic or social class groups, they are part of the language system and are learned just as the words and the structure of the language are learned. An understanding of how these cultural differences in language use operate can assist the teacher in supporting a child's successful transition from talk at home to talk at school.

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Learning English as a Second Language in a Bilingual Setting: A Guide for Parents & Teachers

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A large number of children in the United States, from many different language backgrounds, are currently learning English as a second language. Some of their families have been living in the United States for several generations in areas where languages such as Spanish, French, or Chinese are spoken; some children's families have arrived recently from countries where languages such as Vietnamese or Arabic are spoken; the majority of these limited English speaking children have been born in the United States and are American citizens. Whatever their background, children who need to learn English as a second language share many similar experiences.

Many parents and teachers believe that it is important for children to maintain their first language even as they learn English as a second language. Others feel that children should concentrate only on English. Adults concerned with children learning English as a second language often have questions about the process that children go through in acquiring a second language and about ways to facilitate this process. Current research in second language acquisition has provided partial answers to some of the questions asked by parents and teachers. A discussion of these answers to frequently asked questions follows.

HOW DOES A CHILD LEARN A SECOND LANGUAGE?

A child learning a second language goes through a process that has fundamental similarities to that of a child learning a first language (Krashen, 1978; Cook, Long, and McDonough, 1979). A baby listens to language for many months before trying to use words for communication, and when young children begin to speak, they do not use complete sentences or perfect grammar. They omit many words or parts of words, and they make errors in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar (Brown, 1973).

When children learn a second language, they also start with just a few words and make many errors. Both first-and second-language learners have to listen to the language they hear around them and try to understand it; they are acquiring language as they are listening. Speech will emerge, sometimes after a silent period of several months (Krashen, 1981), as the language learners select the words and expressions that seem to be most important and use them to convey their own ideas to others. As they hear more of the new language, they begin to realize how it works and what its rules are, and they gradually make their own language output match the models they hear. Children's language learning fluctuates (Chamot, 1978); No one should expect or demand either immediate speech or error-free speech from early language learners.

13

Children learning a second language already have a good communication system in their first language, or in the case of many bilingual families, in a mixture of two languages. Children may try to use parts of their first communication system in the second language. Sometimes this borrowing helps the child, and sometimes it leads to errors in the second language (Saville-Troike, 1978). Whether errors in the new language are made because children are simplifying the language, making incorrect assumptions about how it works, or transferring portions of their first language inappropriately, these error-producing processes and strategies are part of the normal second language learning process.

WHICH CHARACTERISTICS ARE FOUND IN SUCCESSFUL SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNERS?

Although many people think that children find it easy to learn a second language, this is not necessarily true. Children, like older learners, experience difficulties in learning a new language, and some are more successful than others (Hatch, 1978). Children's attitudes and motivation are crucial to all learning, including second-language learning (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). Children who really want to learn the new language and who have sufficient exposure to it will probably be successful learners. For instance, a child learning English as a second language who has English speaking friends outside of school will probably feel more motivated to learn English than will the child who has no contact with English outside of school.

Children must be open and receptive to the new language in order to acquire it. Children who reject the new language and dislike the people who speak it maintain a psychological barrier that makes it difficult for the new language to enter their consciousness (Schumann, 1978; Krashen, 1978). This does not mean that children should abandon their first language or the people who speak it for a second language, and even a second culture can be added to the important foundation of the first language and culture without harming it. As children gain increasing skill in their first language, they tend to transfer their successful communication skills to their second language. If their first language is not sufficiently developed, positive transfer to the second language may be limited, and children may become "semilingual" in both languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1979).

Happy, interested, self-confident children who receive parental and teacher support and understanding make the best second-language learners. They need to be linguistic risk-takers who are willing to make guesses about how the new language works and try them out (Gonzales, 1981). Successful second-language learners can tolerate their own limited comprehension and expression skills without becoming frustrated. They are able to choose the most important features of the language to pay attention to, rather than feeling overwhelmed by all the words, sounds, and structures of the new language that they have not yet learned. Of course, successful second-language learners also must be willing to expend effort and active involvement in the process of acquisition (Omaggio, 1978).

WHAT KINDS OF PROBLEMS DO CHILDREN HAVE IN LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE?

Children are likely to become impatient and frustrated. Learning another language takes time, and not being able to communicate successfully with other children and teachers can be upsetting. A child may become quiet and withdrawn and may seem to be unwilling to learn the new

language. Or the child may become aggressive and fight with other children when verbal communication breaks down (Chamot, 1972). A child may learn just enough of the new language to engage in basic communication and may seem indifferent to making further progress. A child may become antagonistic toward the people who speak the second language and may ridicule them and their culture (Hatch, 1978).

All these reactions in a child's beginning contact with a second language and culture are normal, and all can be helped through sympathetic understanding and the provision of opportunities for successful communication in the second language. On the positive side, many children see the new language as a challenge, and they are enthusiastic and determined to be successful in acquiring it. They find learning a second language interesting and feel a great sense of satisfaction as they learn more and more of it.

WHERE DO CHILDREN LEARN SECOND LANGUAGE BEST?

Some children learn another language only at school and have little opportunity to use it outside the classroom. Others acquire the second language mainly through interacting with people in the community who speak it. This "real world" language learning contributes far more to children's ability to communicate in the second language than does the language learning that occurs only in the classroom (Krashen, 1978). However, classroom language development is also important because it teaches the kind of language that is needed for success in English school subjects. This classroom language differs in many ways from the language used in social situations (McLaughlin, 1981).

The amount of time children are in contact with the second language each day affects the rate of learning. For example, a child living and studying in an environment where a great deal of English is spoken will use the new language sooner and better than will the child who hears English for only a few hours a day in school.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WAY BOYS AND GIRLS LEARN A SECOND LANGUAGE?

Some research studies (Stern, 1976) have found no significant differences between boys and girls in second-language learning, whereas others have found that girls score higher on second-language achievement tests (Burstall, 1975) or that boys learn more quickly than girls (Saville-Troike, 1978). Many individual differences exist, and motivation is an important factor (Lambert, 1981). If children feel that it is important to learn the second language well, they will take advantage of all available resources to reach this goal. But if second-language learners do not feel the need for more than basic communication and little social pressure to improve second-language skills, then their second language acquisition will probably not progress far beyond this limited goal (Nida, 1971).

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE A CHILD TO LEARN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE?

This depends on the child's personality, attitude, age, and amount of exposure to English. An elementary school child who wants to learn English and who has many hours of daily contact with English both in and out of school will usually be able to manage basic communication with English speakers after about two years. It will probably take a minimum of five to seven years for a child to be able to do school work success-

fully in the new language (Cummins, 1981); teachers and parents should remember that an English-speaking child has five or six years of first language learning and experience before even attempting to do school work in it.

Children older than ten initially may make more rapid progress in learning a second language than younger children, but the younger ones usually catch up and may eventually surpass the older second-language learners (Krashen, Long, and Scarcella, 1979). However, there are many cases of older children, teen-agers, and even adults who do learn to use a second language extremely well, though they often retain some degree of accent from their first language. It is generally the case that a child learner of a second language will be more likely to achieve native-like competence in that language than will the adolescent or adult learner. For this reason, the age of a child upon arrival in the United States is a factor in that child's acquisition of English, but high levels of proficiency are possible no matter what age second-language acquisition begins.

MOST CHILDREN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE AT SCHOOL SPEAK ANOTHER LANGUAGE AT HOME. WON'T THEY BECOME CONFUSED BY HEARING TWO DIFFERENT LANGUAGES EVERY DAY? SHOULD CHILDREN GIVE UP THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE WHEN THEY ARE LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE?

The answer to both question is no. Everyone needs to maintain the personal and cultural ties that are expressed in one's first language. Learning English as a second language can be compared to learning a useful skill such as reading or multiplication. It is not necessary to give up one's first language and culture to learn English well. It is possible to be bilingual, that is, to use two languages easily, and even bicultural, that is, to feel comfortable in two cultures.

The experience of hearing and using two different languages every day is a common one for many children, not only in the United States but also throughout the world. A number of studies have been made of these bilingual children that indicate that while children may experience some initial confusion when acquiring two language systems at once, this disappears as soon as children mature and become more proficient in their languages (Leopold, 1978; Burling, 1978; McLaughlin, 1981). Bilingual children also will switch from one language to the other, even in the middle of a sentence, and this, too, is a normal habit for bilinguals of any age when conversing with other bilinguals (Saville-Troike, 1976). Recent studies show that bilingual students not only have linguistic advantages over their monolingual counterparts, but they are also superior cognitively (Lambert, 1981).

In speaking one language at home and the other language at school, children will probably have no difficulty in keeping the two apart, because the topics talked about at home tend to be different from the ones discussed at school (Saville-Troike, 1976). Most children find it easier to keep two languages separate when each is used for certain situations and people exclusively. In fact, most bilinguals prefer one language over the other in certain situations. For instance, the first language may be preferred for family life, whereas the second language may be useful mainly in school and job situations. Teachers and parents can explain to children that while it is important to know English to use at school and with English speakers, it is equally important to know the first language to use at home and with other speakers of it.

WON'T CHILDREN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN THE UNITED
STATES JUST PICK IT UP? OR SHOULD THEY HAVE SPECIAL ENGLISH INSTRUCTION
AT SCHOOL?

Children will probably pick up enough English from other children
for their social needs, but if they are to work successfully in English
in school subjects, English as a second language (ESL) instruction can
be very helpful. This special instruction can provide extra practice in
some of the features of English that are particularly difficult, and it
can introduce the new language gradually and review it consistently so
that children feel successful as they learn.

One approach to teaching ESL is to make language a part of the in-
struction in the other school subjects. ESL teachers can help children
individually with their special needs and can interpret a child's prog-
ress to other teachers who are not specialists in second-language
learning and teaching. Regardless of the approach, a crucial ingredient
for the acquisition of a second language is that the language heard by
and used with the children be comprehensible to these children. The
type of language input should be slightly beyond the children's profi-
ciency in the language at that point, facilitating the acquisition of
more and more complex language. Once children understand the meaning of
what they hear in the new language, speech will emerge when they feel
ready to talk (Krashen, 1981).

Of course, many children have learned and still learn a second lan-
guage through being exposed to it in their daily life and with no spe-
cial instruction. However, this type of natural language acquisition
may build communication skills primarily for social situations, which
may not be sufficient for successful study of school subjects in the
second language. Recent research indicates that there are different
dimensions to language proficiency. One dimension has to do with the
type of language proficiency required for social interaction, whereas
another is related to an individual's general cognitive and academic
language proficiency (Cummins, 1980). This latter type of language pro-
ficiency perhaps can be developed most easily in a school setting; when
sufficiently developed in the first language, this cognitive academic
language proficiency transfers successfully to the second language.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP A CHILD LEARN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE?

First of all, provide many opportunities for the child to experience
the new language in as many different settings as possible. The child
needs to be able to understand at least part of what is being listened
to, even though complete comprehension develops gradually. Second-
language learners at the beginning stages probably need to hear the same
kind of speech that is used by parents when they talk to very young
children learning their first language. Observe a mother talking to her
two-year-old. She uses short, simple sentences and gestures, and she
responds with understanding and interest even though the child's lan-
guage is far from proficient. Communication takes place between
mother and child because they talk about things that are happening at
the moment and about things that are meaningful and important to them.
Probably this same type of interaction in a second language provides
language experiences that aid communication of meaning (McLaughlin,
1980). Second-language learners seem to learn best when the emphasis is
on understanding and communicating an idea, rather than on correct gram-
matical forms (Krashen, 1978).

Children often learn second languages from other children who are native speakers of that language. Research has found that children who make social contacts with children who are native speakers of the new language and join in play groups with them become successful second-language learners (Wong Fillmore, 1976). One reason may be that when children are playing together, they use simple language, they talk about what interests them and about what is happening at the moment, and they care more about communication than about correct form.

Teachers can capitalize on the linguistic abilities of English-speaking children by using them as peer tutors for limited English-speaking children in both formal classroom situations and in games and play activities (Gonzales, 1981). In addition, children learning English can benefit from participation in community activities such as Scouting or church groups where they can be in contact with English-speaking peers.

Children can also be encouraged to practice English with adults in the community. For example, a child can buy something in a store, pay for movie tickets, or make a telephone call. Each contact in the second-language will increase the child's ability to communicate in it (Chamot, 1979). Movies and television programs that are designed for children and have plenty of action and uncomplicated stories are good second-language experiences for children. Games such as Scrabble and crossword puzzles can help develop a child's English vocabulary and spelling, and any game that requires the use of English will help a child's ability to use the language.

WHAT CAN I SAY TO HELP A CHILD LEARN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE?

What you say reflects how you feel about the second language and the culture it represents. Your positive attitude toward the new language and culture will increase a child's motivation to learn it. Try not to make critical remarks about the second language or the people who speak it; the child might interpret such a criticism to mean that you do not feel it is worthwhile to learn the language.

Explain to the child that knowing another language means being able to get acquainted with interesting people who speak that language. When the child feels anxious about not understanding everything in English right away, provide reassurance by explaining that it is impossible to understand everything at the beginning and that everyone has moments of anxiety when learning a new language (Schumann, 1978).

Praise the child for using English spontaneously. Show your interest in the child's second-language acquisition by talking about what is being learned. If you are just beginning to learn English yourself, let the child teach you. In fact, if you try to learn a second language (whether it is English or the child's first language), you will not only set a good example for the child but also understand much better both the process and the problems experienced by the child.

However, parents should use the language they feel most comfortable with in speaking with their children on a daily basis, while encouraging them to use the other language in appropriate situations. Parental attitudes play an important part in children's learning of a second language (Stern, 1967). Teachers need to be aware that the attitudes of other children can also affect a child's second-language learning. Peer pressure to avoid using the new language or to refrain from using it correctly can have a negative effect on a child's proficiency (Gardner,

1968; Stevick, 1976). Both parents and teachers need to remember that
it takes many years to learn a language well, whether it is a first or
second language. They should not express impatience with a child's prog-
ress in acquiring English.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN CHILDREN MAKE ERRORS IN THE NEW LANGUAGE?
    Constant correction of errors makes many chidren feel that they are
not succeeding in learning the new language, and so they withdraw from
active participation in the learning process. Explain to children that
everyone makes mistakes when learning a language, whether it is a first,
second, or third language. Most mistakes are corrected by children on
their own as they hear correct models and try to match them, but this
happens gradually. Be understanding and supportive of children as they
learn English.
    As a parent, remember that most mistakes made by young children
learning their first language go uncorrected by adults, and that this
same acceptance of a child's intended meaning rather than constant cor-
rection can help build the self-confidence and communicative skills of
second-language learners as well (Saville-Troike, 1976). As a teacher,
explain the language-learning process to the English-speaking children
in the class and encourage them to be sensitive to the problems faced by
their limited-English-speaking classmates. The purpose of language is
meaningful communication. If limited-English-proficient children are
involved in saying something meaningful to their more proficient peers,
they should not be interrupted for correction of errors, because this
can inhibit their language development.

SHOULD PARENTS BE ENCOURAGED TO ENROLL THEIR CHILDREN IN BILINGUAL
EDUCATION PROGRAMS OR IN ESL PROGRAMS?
    If parents are fortunate enough to live in a school district offer-
ing bilingual education in English and their home language, they should
consider seriously the many advantages that this type of education
offers. In bilingual programs, children receive instruction in both ESL
and their first language, so that they can make progress in subject
matter in the language they know best while they are learning English.
    Bilingual programs fall into two principal categories: maintenance
programs and transition programs. In the first type, children are
taught basic concepts and initial reading, writing, and math skills in
their first or stronger language. At the same time, they have intensive
work in English so that eventually they will be able to use either or
both languages for any school subject. The first language is maintained
throughout the child's school years by having many subjects taught in
it. The second type of bilingual program is one in which children begin
their schooling in their stronger or first language but make the tran-
sition to all English instruction in the middle grades. They may retain
conversational fluency and some reading and writing ability in the other
language, particularly if it is spoken at home, but languages, like mu-
sical instruments or sports, need to be practiced regularly if they are
to be truly maintained.
    Some schools offer only ESL instruction because not enough non-
English-speaking children of the same first-language background are en-
rolled to make bilingual instruction practicable. Children in this
situation cannot make much progress in their school subjects until they
have learned enough English to undertake their academic activities in

English, and therefore they usually fall behind in their school work and
grade level. Although some children are able to catch up eventually,
many never do, and most children find that switching languages abruptly
is not only difficult but also emotionally upsetting (Chamot, 1972).

In properly implemented bilingual education programs, on the other
hand, children can feel the satisfaction of progressing in their school
subjects in their first language while they are learning English. They
find that what they have learned in one language can be transferred
easily to the second language, and they have more opportunities for
being successful in their school work. Research indicates that a high
level of development in a first language leads to increased achievement
in a second language (Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa, 1976; Cummins,
1980).

The long term effects of either ESL only or bilingual education
(which includes ESL) have yet to be conclusively researched, because
both successes and failures have been recorded for each approach. The
variables of individual, situational, and linguistic factors interact
and influence each child and school setting in many different ways.

School districts exist to serve the educational needs of the local
community, and when one of these needs is bilingual education, parents
should take an active role in asking that it be provided for their chil-
dren. Parents have an important voice in their community, and their
children's educational needs should be brought to the attention of the
school district. When bilingual education is needed and wanted, parents
should express this need to school principals, members of the school
board, the school superintendent, and others working for the school in
their community.

TERMS USED IN ESL AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Bilingualism
: This refers to the ability to use two lan-
guages for communication. A balanced bilin-
gual is a person who can use both languages
equally well. Most bilinguals prefer one lan-
guage or the other in certain situations.

Code Switching
: This term describes what occurs when a bilin-
gual changes from one language to the other
during a conversation with other bilinguals. A
bilingual is thus often able to choose the best
language for a certain topic or situation.

English Abbreviations
: The following acronyms refer to the teaching of
English as a new language.
EFL - English as a Foreign Language, or English
taught as a school subject only, usually in a
non-English-speaking country.
ESL - English as a Second Language, or English
taught in an English speaking country to
non-English speakers who need to study or work
in English.
ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages,
or special English instruction for non-English
speakers.

ESEA Title VII   The seventh major section of the Elementary and
                          Secondary Education Act, often called the
                          Bilingual Education Act, passed in 1968, is a
                          law that enables bilingual education to be of-
                          fered to non-English-speaking children when
                          there are enough children of the same language
                          background attending the same school.

Language Dominance   This means the language that a person knows
                          best and is most comfortable with. In the case
                          of bilinguals, language dominance can often be
                          discovered through special tests. It is not
                          unusual to have one language dominant for cer-
                          tain situations and the other language dominant
                          for others.

Proficiency   This is used to describe a person's level of
                          ability in a language. The following acronyms
                          are often used in school programs to describe
                          the English level of non-native speaking stu-
                          dents.
                          LEP - Limited English Proficiency
                          LES - Limited English Speaker
                          LESA - Limited English-Speaking Ability
                          NEP - No English Proficiency
                          NES - Non-English Speaker

Second Language Reading   Reading in a second language is usually taught
                          after a child has learned to read in the first
                          language for two reasons: reading is easier in
                          the dominant language because the child already
                          understands nearly all the words and sentences
                          to be read at the beginning level, and reading
                          skills and confidence acquired in first lan-
                          guage reading can be useful in learning to read
                          in the second language.

Second Language Writing   Writing in a second language is an extremely
                          difficult task that can be made easier when the
                          child has already learned to express written
                          ideas in the first language. Children learning
                          English as a second language need to master
                          reading and writing skills so that they can be
                          used in every subject area.

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Cognitive Styles & the Bilingual Educator

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"Cognitive styles" have been a topic of psychological inquiry for quite some time, but only in recent years has the term surfaced in education. This interest stems in part from the need to understand why some children, particularly language minority children, do not benefit equally from instruction in today's classrooms. Clearly, one source of this disparity is language--children who do not adequately speak or understand English will undoubtedly have problems in English-only situations. In addition to this language difference, some researchers have investigated other possible reasons for low academic achievement among specific ethnic, cultural, or linguistic minorities. Cognitive styles have been proposed as one such reason.

WHAT ARE COGNITIVE STYLES?

Although psychologists offer a variety of definitions for cognitive style, all employ the term to refer to aspects of individual differences in processing information. For example, one cognitive style dimension frequently discussed is field-independence/field-dependence, most simply illustrated by the cliche about "the forest and the trees." The field-independent person can be described as one more aware of or sensitive to the individual trees that make up the forest than to the forest as a whole. Alternatively, the field-dependent person attends more to the forest. Note that the information perceived is essentially the same: the forest is a group of trees, and many trees together constitute a forest. The stress of this field-independent/field-dependent cognitive style, as with all cognitive style dimensions, is placed on how the individual processes the information and not what is processed. A second cognitive style dimension involves the verbal/visual modes. Some individuals prefer and respond more readily to verbal presentation of information, while others gravitate toward visual presentation of the same information. Through whichever means, however, all have access to the same content.

CONSEQUENCES IN THE BILINGUAL CLASSROOM

These were basic ideas behind the cognitive style concept when it was first introduced. More recently, some researchers have extended cognitive style discussions to include group characteristics. This resulted from comparing scores on various test measures of cognitive styles collected for ethnic and linguistic groups. In the case of field-independence/field-dependence, for instance, scores indicated Mexican Americans and Blacks to be more field-dependent than their Anglo American counterparts. (It must be stated here, however, that questions have been raised about the validity of these findings, particularly in light

24

of the fact that language differences may affect test performance on
cognitive style measures.) Extending the notion of cognitive style into
classrooms with bilingual students, some researchers have asserted that
school and school tasks are geared toward field-independent, verbally
oriented students. In these circumstances, then, students from ethnic
or linguistic minorities characterized as field-dependent, or visually
oriented are incompatible with the mainstream cognitive style prefer-
ences. As with language differences, alternative cognitive styles are
thus seen as impediments to successful educational participation for
certain bilingual students.

WHAT COGNITIVE STYLES ARE NOT
     With that brief overview of cognitive styles and their relationship
to bilingual education, it is necessary to dispel any confusion about
the relationship between cognitive style and cognitive ability or gen-
eral intelligence. There is absolutely no reservation here: a differ-
ence in the style or mode of functioning has no effect whatsoever on the
capacity for functioning. Different cognitive styles are simply that--
they are different, not better or worse. This point is emphasized since
the dangers of stereotyping an individual or group are obvious, particu-
larly if one cognitive style is perceived to be inherently better than
the other. Equally important is to realize that labels like field-
independent and field-dependent are not intended to indicate two cate-
gories of people. Individuals or groups are described using these
labels in "more or less" terms and not as "either-or" categories.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE, LANGUAGE, AND COGNITIVE STYLE?
     Explanations for the existence of some cognitive styles are fre-
quently linked to descriptions of varying child rearing practices. It
is a widely accepted fact that all parents do not raise their children
in the same way. Children are "taught"--both formally and through
example--the expectations and values of their parents. Cultural experi-
ence plays an important role in forming these expectations and values;
common language and action communicate them across generations.
     Researchers have examined a variation in cognitive style that many
teachers have noticed for a long time. As mentioned earlier, children
from certain cultural groups--among them some Native Americans, for
example--seem to be more responsive to information presented visually
rather than verbally. This may be related in part to a cultural pre-
ference for learning in the home through observation and listening.
Conversely, the process of learning in most schools emphasizes active
participation and speaking. This contrast between home learning and
school learning is apparent and has educational consequences.
     The cultural differences in the preferred cognitive styles of home
and school are heightened by differences between home and school lan-
guages. School life can be characterized in two steps: teacher's verbal
presentations of information and students' verbal indications of having
learned that information. If the culture and cognitive style of school
place different values on language use from those of home, imagine the
compounded difficulties of the student trying to learn a second language
as well.

WHAT DO DIFFERENT COGNITIVE STYLES LOOK LIKE IN THE CLASSROOM?
     Before considering a few examples of different cognitive styles in

bilingual classrooms, one distinction must be drawn. Up to this point, cognitive styles have been discussed in terms of test measurements of preferences. Relating personality and social traits to cognitive styles must be done with caution. For example, a person whose psychological test performance labels him or her as field-dependent may well actually behave in many cases as more field independent than the test might indicate. Therefore, to link behavior characteristics to a certain style is at best a broad generalization open to many exceptions.

Student behaviors associated with field-dependence include a greater ability to learn social facts and remember people's faces. Field-dependent students may be influenced by social reinforcement and criticism more than field-independent students. In contrast, students in this latter group may perform better on analytic tasks and appear to be more task oriented in test situations than field-dependent ones, who spend more time looking at the examiner and are more attentive to the social aspects of testing.

Teachers may also manifest their positions on the field-independent field-dependent scale through contrasting teaching methods. Field-dependent teachers, for instance, might prefer discussions to lectures or group responsibility for learning as opposed to taking more responsibility for the teaching themselves. Additionally, field-dependent teaching might emphasize the social aspects of the curriculum rather than the strictly academic content. Finally, teachers and students who share similar cognitive styles regard each other more favorably. As stated previously, these generalizations are only valid as any generalization about group behavior can be.

THE MESSAGE FOR TEACHERS

(1) "Cognitive style" refers to the way in which a student tends to process information, not his or her ability to do so.

(2) No cognitive style preference is better or worse than any other, just as no language is better or worse than another. It is more a question of appropriateness--what the particular situation calls for or requires.

(3) Cognitive styles refer to a psychological concept that resulted from analyses of individuals by their performance in testing situations. The actual behaviors that are related to a specific cognitive style are assumed to be related to that cognitive style assessment.

(4) Because cognitive styles are individual tendencies not necessarily applicable to categories of students, stereotypic classifications of students or their behavior should be avoided.

(5) Specific cognitive styles may be correlated with particular cultural groups or specific child rearing practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Since there is evidence that some children may be more responsive to visual presentation and others to verbal, the most effective and all-inclusive educational approach would make use of both. In bilingual classrooms with students of varying English language ability, a combination of visual and verbal approaches is particularly appropriate.

The amount and quality of a student's classroom participation are extremely important indicators of a child's learning. For the bilingual student, participation takes on added importance as actual practice with language. Thus, educational approaches that stimulate verbal partici-

pation are desirable. Students who tend to prefer the social aspects of
curriculum are more likely to respond verbally to learning situations
that encourage personal contact and interaction among classroom members.
This increases language practice, language learning, and learning in
general.

Changes initiated to increase student participation must focus on
classroom practices and on the staff responsible, for executing those
practices. Children are not silent because they do not want to cooper-
ate and learn. Something else is happening. Teachers should try al-
ternative ways for students to demonstrate what they have learned--for
example, offer an alternative to questioning a "silent" student in front
of his or her peers in order to lessen the competitive atmosphere of the
classroom.

Because cognitive styles appear to be related in part to cultural
differences in socialization, every effort should be made to discuss
with parents and community members their views on child rearing and the
education of children. Beyond discussion, these people must be involved
as much as possible in classroom activities and on the school staff.
The more teachers can become actively involved with the outside-of-
school experiences of their students, the more effectively they can
teach.

Finally, teachers should take some time to think about the following
aspects of their teaching: How do you indicate acceptance of your stu-.
dents? Do you use both words and actions to do so? How do you indicate
your feelings, preferences, personal opinions in your role as a teacher-
and as an adult? How do you encourage cooperation, helpfulness, con-
sideration, and respect among all your students? How do you communicate
with your students about their families and their community? How·do you
demonstrate understanding of the individual student's preferences and
style? How do you provide a model for your students' different academic
and social needs? These are clearly aspects of all teaching; the best
information available indicates that these questions highlight areas of
teaching that· may be directly related to cognitive styles. The answer
to each could begin with: "It depends on the circumstances and on the
child ...."

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