DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN CANADA AND THE U.S.A.

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Keywords: dual language education, bilingual education, bilingualism, Canada, U.S.A.

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Dual language programs in public schools were developed in both Canada and the United States (U.S.) during the 1960s, a period of considerable social change in North America, and indeed worldwide. Dual language education in each country can be said to have been a reflection of more general worldwide concerns for issues of social inequality and institutional response, or lack of response, to inequality in a number of different spheres, including language and culture. At the same time, the specific histories of each country clearly shaped the forms and goals of dual language education that grew out of these very general concerns. For purposes of this review, we define "dual language education" (DLE) as schooling at the elementary and/or secondary levels in which English along with another language are used for at least 50% of academic instruction during at least one school year. This is a minimal definition that captures a wide range of alternatives. The rationale behind DLE is that students can learn a second language effectively if it is used for significant periods of time and for substantive communication in school – much like children learn their native language in the home (see Genesee, 1984, for a detailed description). Most DLE programs (except transitional bilingual programs in the U.S.) also embrace an additive bilingual conceptualization of language learning; namely, that addition of a second language to a child's language repertoire is a personal, social, cognitive, and economic advantage that does not need to take place at the expense of the child's first language competence. Thus, additive dual language programs aim for high levels of oral and written language proficiency in both the students' home language and a second language.

In Canada, these programs are usually referred to as "*immersion programs*" and in the U.S. they go by various names (which we explicate shortly), but most generally "*dual language education*" or "immersion education." We use the term dual language education (DLE) to

encompass both additive and non-additive program types in Canada and the U.S.A. in order to provide a comprehensive overview of DLE[1]. In this chapter, we briefly review the socio-political history of dual language education in each country. This is followed by descriptions of specific forms of DLE in each country and synopses of research undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. Finally, we describe the current status of DLE in each country and identify socio-political, pedagogical, and research issues that future researchers and education professionals face.

Early Developments

Immersion programs in English and French were created in the mid-1960s in Quebec in the context of social and linguistic inequities between the French- and English-speaking populations of Canada. French had until the mid-60s been the disadvantaged partner in Canadian confederation despite its historical importance during the early colonization and subsequent development of Canada, despite its contemporary status as an official national language, and despite its demographic significance as the native language of approximately 25% of the Canadian population. Evidence of the inferior status of French has been evident in legislation, which at times prohibited the use of French; patterns of language use, which favored the use of English in most bilingual contexts, even in Quebec; and in language attitudes (see Genesee & Holobow, 1989, for an example). Discontent over these linguistic and cultural inequities had been developing for some time among members of both the French- and English-speaking communities, especially in Quebec. The 1960s were marked by concerted political, social, and in some cases militant action in the French community of Quebec to redress the perceived imbalance in power between the English and French and to recognize the majority status of

[1] See the National Dual Language Consortium for a definition which includes only additive bilingual program models; www.duallanguagenm.org/ndlc.html

French in that province. This period in Quebec history is referred to as the “Quiet Revolution”. There was, as a result, an emerging awareness in the English-speaking community that French was becoming more important as a language of communication in most spheres of life and, concomitantly, that English alone would no longer assure social and economic success in the province. In response to their dissatisfaction with this state of affairs, a concerned group of English-speaking parents in the suburban community of St. Lambert, outside of Montreal, began to meet informally in the early 1960s to discuss strategies for change (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). These parents attributed the two solitudes that characterized their relationship with francophone Quebecers to their and their children’s linguistic incompetence in French. They were determined to improve the quality of second language instruction in English schools and “immersion” was the educational improvement they developed. The first immersion class was opened in September 1965. The primary goals of immersion programs were to provide the participating students with functional competence in both written and spoken aspects of French, normal levels of English-language development, and achievement in academic subjects commensurate with the students' ability and grade level. They also aimed to ensure an understanding and appreciation of French Canadian people, their language, and culture, without detracting in any way from the students' identity with and appreciation for English Canadian culture. It was also hoped that immersion programs would result in improved relationships between English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers and, more generally, Canadians who spoke English and French. Many parents across the country came to embrace these goals. Immersion programs in other languages besides French are also available in Canada; for example, Ukrainian, German, Polish, Cree, Hewbrew, and Mandarin. Some of these programs include students from minority ethnic group backgrounds who have learned English as a first language and, thus, are learning a

heritage language. Some of these programs also include students who are native speakers of the non-English language and, thus, wish to maintain that language and acquire the majority societal language, English. Some programs also include majority group Canadian students who are native-speakers of English and wish to learn the non-English language as a form of linguistic enrichment. All of these programs aim for additive bilingualism.

The socio-political history of DLE in the U.S. has been complex, with bilingual education tolerated in German, French, and Scandinavian languages in the 18th and 19th centuries in some states while instruction through any non-English language was outlawed in other states. In the 20th century, the late 50s and early 60s brought about important changes to language education. With the launching of Sputnik by the Soviet Union, the U.S. embarked on an effort to improve education in general and to include foreign language competence in particular as an important educational goal. At the same time, the Cuban revolution sent waves of Cuban refugees to the U.S., resulting in the first official bilingual program in the U.S. -- at Coral Way School in Miami, Florida. This program was created to allow Spanish-speaking children of Cuban refugees to retain competence in their native language and to acquire competence in English. Subsequent political events pushed bilingual education onto the agenda of the national education community. Instigated by a federal lawsuit (Brown v. Board of Education in 1954) on the constitutionality of segregated education, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 declared that no person could be excluded from or discriminated against in any program funded by the U.S. federal government on the basis of race or national origin, thereby raising concerns about the sole use of English to educate minority language students in public schools. Subsequently, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1969 provided assistance to local educational authorities to establish bilingual programs for Spanish-speaking children across the nation.

The scope of bilingual education was expanded considerably in 1970, when the Office of Civil Rights issued an official memorandum that directed school districts to take affirmative action to ensure that students of "national-origin" (including children who did not speak English) were provided equal educational opportunity, as outlined by Civil Rights Act of 1964. Education through minority language students' native language along with English became the preferred mode of compliance with the OCR memorandum following the Supreme Court decision in Lau vs. Nichols in 1974, a class action suit filed on behalf of the Chinese community in San Francisco who contended that their children were denied "equal education opportunity" in English-only schools since they were compelled to attend schools in which instruction was provided in a language they did not understand. The same year, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Education Act for the first time provided a definition of bilingual education – "It is instruction given in, and study of, English and (to the extent necessary to allow a child to progress effectively through the education system) the native language of the children of limited English-speaking ability…" Thus, federally funded education programs were to include native language instruction (and cultural enrichment); ESL instruction alone was not perceived as sufficient to provide equal educational opportunity to students who came to school with no or limited proficiency in English.

DLE became an option for majority English-speaking students in the U.S. when, in 1971, a Canadian-style Spanish-English immersion program was instituted in Culver City, California (see Cohen, 1974). In the 1970s and 1980s, Canadian-style immersion and bilingual education were extended to include both minority and majority language students in the same classrooms (see Lindholm-Leary, 2001); these are often referred to as ***two-way immersion, two-way bilingual,*** *or* ***dual language*** programs. This has become the most prevalent form of DLE for

majority language students in the U.S. with over 338 programs in 2006 (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2006).

Program Models

There are a variety of forms of immersion in Canada (Genesee, 2004). They differ with respect to the grade/age level when the second language is used for intensive academic instruction, the number of years when academic subjects are taught in the second language, and the amount of instructional time during the school year provided through the second and native languages. One can distinguish ***early immersion*** (beginning in kindergarten or grade 1) from ***middle immersion*** (beginning in grade 4 or 5) and ***late immersion*** (beginning in grade 7, or the initial grades of secondary school). Programs that provide a delayed or late start provide core second language instruction to students in the grades that precede the beginning of immersion; e.g., from kindergarten to grade 6 in the case of a grade 7 late immersion program. Programs also differ with respect to the extent of instruction through the second language – in ***early partial immersion*** programs, 50% of instruction in a given year is presented in the second language and 50% in the native language of the students. In ***total immersion programs***, all instruction for one or more years is presented through the medium of the second language. Notwithstanding such programmatic variation, all Canadian immersion programs aim for (a) advanced levels of functional proficiency in written and oral forms of the second language, (b) normal levels of first language competence, and (c) grade-appropriate levels of achievement in academic school subjects. An additional, and sometimes only implicit, goal is to promote awareness, understanding, and tolerance of the culture of the second language group.

There are more varied models of DLE in the U.S. (see Genesee, 1999; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006, for more details). Canadian-style immersion programs,

as well as two-way immersion programs (to be described shortly), are available to majority language students in a number of different languages, with Spanish being the most common. U.S. immersion programs for native English speakers, which are included in 7% of public elementary schools, take the form of early immersion and share essentially the same goals as their Canadian counterparts (Rhodes & Branaman, 1999).

There are three basic models of DLE for minority language students in the U.S. In ***transitional bilingual education (TBE),*** the students' home language is used only during the first two or three grades of primary schooling to teach academic and initial literacy skills while students acquire English as a second language. Students transition to all-English instruction usually in grade 3, or at such time as they are deemed to be capable of benefiting from English-only instruction. In contrast, ***developmental bilingual programs*** and ***two-way immersion programs*** aim for full competence in oral and written forms of the students' home language and English, their second language. These goals are accomplished by teaching academic and literacy skills in both languages, although the same subjects are not taught simultaneously in both languages. The portion of the school day that is taught through each language differs – the most common patterns being 90% native language and 10% English or 50% native language and 50% English – so-called *90/10* and *50/50* models, respectively. In 90/10 programs, students learn to read first in the target language (e.g., Spanish), and then add reading instruction through English in third grade. In 50/50 programs, students learn to read first in their primary language and then add the second language in grade 2 or 3, or they learn to read simultaneously through both languages.

Developmental programs differ from two-way programs in that all students in the former come from language minority backgrounds, usually Hispanic, whereas a third to a half of the

students in two-way programs are members of the majority English language group. Both are additive forms of DLE, as are the Canadian immersion programs, since they aim to maintain the students' native language at the same time as they promote competence in the other language along with high standards in academic subjects. There is one critical difference between DLE for minority students in the U.S. and DLE education for majority language students in the U.S. and Canada, namely, minority language students in DLE programs are expected to acquire levels of proficiency in both oral and written English that are at grade level or in accordance with district and state expectations for typically developing native English speakers. This obviously arises from the fact that the second language for minority students in the U.S. is English, the dominant societal language, whereas in DLE programs for majority language students in both countries, the students' second language is considered a minority language relative to the importance of English; this is true even in Quebec, where French is the dominant language. In contrast, DLE programs for majority English-speaking students in Canada and the U.S. are deemed to be successful if students achieve advanced levels of functional proficiency in their second language even if their proficiency is not on par with native speakers of the target language.

Major Contributions

There has been extensive research on the language and academic development of English-speaking students in Canadian DLE programs, and most notably French immersion (Genesee, 2004). The findings from these evaluations have been replicated, for the most part, in evaluations of DLE programs with different second languages and in other regions of the world, including the U.S., where similar programs with majority language students have been implemented (Christian & Genesee, 2001; Johnson & Swain, 1997). In brief, research has

consistently shown that English-speaking Canadian students in all forms of French immersion acquire significantly more advanced levels of functional proficiency in French than students who receive conventional second language instruction – that is, instruction that focuses primarily on language learning and is restricted to separate, limited periods of time. Proficiency has been assessed with respect to speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Many researchers have reported that immersion students' comprehension skills (reading and listening) in French are less advanced than their production skills (speaking and writing) and that immersion students seldom attain native-like grammatical accuracy or idiomatic usage and they often have a limited range of vocabulary and pragmatic competence in French even after 10 to 12 years participation in immersion (see Genesee, 2004, for more details).

At the same time, French immersion students develop the same levels of proficiency in all aspects of English as comparable students in English-only programs. There can be a lag in the development of English literacy skills (reading, writing, and spelling) among students in the initial years of early total immersion when all academic instruction is in French. Parity with control students who have been instructed entirely in English is usually achieved by early total immersion students after one year of English instruction. The English language development of students who begin immersion beyond the primary grades -- in the middle elementary or initial secondary school grades, usually shows that these students exhibit age-appropriate English skills at all grade levels. Research has also shown that immersion students generally achieve the same levels of achievement in academic domains (e.g., science and mathematics) as comparable students in English-only programs. Parity with control students is often exhibited even when immersion students receive all academic instruction through French, provided the assessment is

conducted in French and modifications are made to take into account that full competence in the second language has not been acquired.

Research has also shown that English-speaking immersion students who are at-risk for academic and language learning difficulties due to socio-economic, cognitive, or first language disadvantages generally achieve the same levels of competence in English and academic domains as comparable at-risk students in English-only programs. At-risk students in immersion generally perform less well than students in the same program who are not at-risk, but their progress is not differentially impeded in comparison to comparable students in English programs. At the same time, at-risk students benefit from DLE by acquiring advanced levels of functional proficiency in the second language. Other research that has examined differences in second language achievement as a function of starting grade level (i.e., early versus late immersion) and amount of exposure to the second language (total versus partial) has revealed that early immersion students often achieve higher levels of proficiency in French than late immersion students, but not always, and that total immersion generally yields higher levels of second language proficiency than partial immersion (Genesee, 2004).

Evaluations of DLE for majority language students in the U.S. have yielded results that are comparable to those found in Canada with respect to general program goals; that is, with respect to first language development, academic achievement, and second language proficiency (Howard, Sugarman & Christian, 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Majority language students in immersion and two-way programs often score below comparison students in English language and literacy in the initial two or three grades of elementary school, but are at par with or exceed the performance of comparable students in all-English programs by the end of elementary school. As found in immersion education in Canada, students in two-way programs from a

variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, and even special needs students, achieve at levels commensurate with or higher than their monolingual peers in English-only classes.

Evaluations of DLE for minority language students in the U.S. have revealed that students in two-way immersion and developmental bilingual programs achieve outcomes in English oral language and literacy and academic domains that are comparable to, or higher in some cases than, comparison students (i.e., Hispanic students) in all-English programs, while also demonstrating higher levels of Spanish language competence (Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Parity in English with comparison students in all-English programs is not always evident during the initial grades of DLE, but is evident by the end of elementary school. Comparisons between the standardized test results of minority language students in DLE programs and district/state or national test norms have found that students in developmental bilingual and two-way immersion programs usually score at norm, or higher. Minority language students in TBE programs generally score better on language, literacy, and academic achievement tests than similar students in all-English programs that provide no special accommodations, but not as high as minority language students in two-way and developmental programs. Long-term studies of the outcomes of minority language students in such programs indicate that there is a positive correlation between length of participation in the program and academic (including) literacy outcomes and between level of bilingual competence and achievement in academic subjects such as mathematics. Lindholm-Leary and Borsato (2006) present a more detailed summary of studies on DLE for minority language students, including results pertaining to other programmatic and instructional issues.

There are significant points of convergence in the findings of evaluations of additive DLE for majority and minority language students, despite the differential status that their first languages

and cultures enjoy: (1) achievement levels of students in additive DLE, including levels of proficiency in the target languages, are most evident the longer students are in the program and, usually, after 5 or 6 years; (2) in a related vein, parity with native speakers of the majority language is often not evidenced in the primary grades but is apparent by the end of elementary school; (3) there is no consistent relationship between amount of exposure to the majority language and proficiency in that language, at least by the end of elementary school; (b) in contrast, more exposure to the minority language (Spanish in the U.S. and French in Canada) is usually associated with higher levels of proficiency in that language; (5) instruction through a second language does not impair students' achievement in academic subject matter; and (6) higher levels of bilingual proficiency are associated with higher levels of academic and cognitive development (see Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders & Christian, 2006).

Future Directions

DLE emerged in the 1960s in Canada and the U.S.A. as responses to national issues of equity and diversity. Since that time, globalization has become evident in economic, communication, and other spheres of people's lives and the dual language competence as well as familiarity with other cultures that DLE affords are increasingly being viewed as assets in this global context. Immersion programs continue to thrive in Canada, primarily in French, but also in other languages (Genesee, 2004). Similarly, DLE programs for majority language students in the U.S. continue to grow, particularly in the form of two-way immersion programs. At the same time, there have been constraints imposed on the growth of DLE programs for minority language students in the U.S. as a result of legislative changes concerning English-only instruction imposed in some states. It remains to be seen how profound and for how long these restrictions will be, especially in light of the increased pressure on U.S. educators and parents to take

account of globalization. While there is considerable and reassuring research on alternative forms of DLE in both Canada and the U.S., there are a number of outstanding questions of a pedagogical nature that need research attention if program models are to evolve and become more effective. Among these issues are the following:

1. What pedagogical approaches are most effective in promoting language acquisition since, as noted earlier, DLE students often exhibit inadequacies in their language skills even after extended participation in DLE programs? In particular, are there specific instructional strategies that enhance students' mastery of grammatical features of the L2 while maintaining students' communicative fluency? What forms of corrective feedback produce significant, long-term gains in linguistic competence?
2. Are there students for whom DLE is not effective? In particular, are bilingual programs suitable for students with severe cognitive, perceptuo-motor, or affective disorders? In a related vein, do at-risk students in DLE programs exhibit the same challenges and to the same extent as comparable students in monolingual programs and what intervention strategies are effective for students with such learning challenges? Should services for students with special needs be provided in the native or the second language?
3. Are there specific instructional strategies that are particularly effective for teaching typologically distinct languages? To date, most programs and research have examined linguistically similar languages (i.e., English and French or Spanish). Similarly, how can literacy best be taught in languages with orthographically distinct writing systems? Is simultaneous or successive introduction of literacy instruction in two languages with different typologies and/or orthographies preferable?
4. What kinds of skills and professional development are required of teachers so that they can

work effectively in DLE programs.

The reader is referred to the following for extended reviews of research on DLE in Canada and the U.S.: Genesee (2004), Genesee & Gandara (1999), Howard, Sugarman & Christian (2003), and Lindholm-Leary (2001, Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006).

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