

A SURVEY OF LITERATURE CONCERNING
THE ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES OF BILINGUAL LATINS
UPON ENTERING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS,
AND THEIR POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

by

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INTRODUCTION

Today Americans think of themselves as one nation, one government, one people, but this is true only to a certain degree. From the beginning of American colonization, the United States has been the home for people of all nations, of all political convictions, and of all languages. As the nation was built and English was accepted as the native language, the population seemed to become less diverse, seemed to blend into the "American" mold. The majority of the American population became the stereotyped middle class family—a family which sent its sons and daughters to college in order that they might advance further, both socially and economically, than had either of the parents.

However, a discerning glance around will be proof enough that the mainsteam of the American population is surrounded by many subdivisions made up of people who have come to this country in hopes of finding a better life and whose mother tongue is not English. As recently as 1960, approximately eleven per cent of the American population possessed a non-English mother tongue. At that same time, there were over 500 non-English periodic publications and 1600 non-English stations broadcasting, as well as over 1800 ethnic cultural organizations and 2000 ethnic group schools.¹

¹J. A. Fishman, "The Status and Prospects of Bilingualism in the United States," Modern Language Journal, 49:143-155, March, 1965, pp. 143-145.

Certainly the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic foundations upon which the United States was built were and continue to be diverse. This diversity should be encouraged as long as it is not detrimental to the union and does not hamper the non-English speaking portion of the population in acquiring first-class citizenship.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was (1) to examine the academic difficulties experienced by bilingual Latins, because of language handicaps, upon entering the public schools and (2) to suggest some possible solutions to these problems.

Importance of the study. As of 1960, there were 3,464,996 people of Spanish surname in the five southwestern states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and California.² Generally speaking, these people are at the bottom of the scale on everything ranging from health and wealth to education and welfare.³ This means that a large percentage of them are living in slums, both urban and rural.

One of the major problems among the Spanish-speaking is that of drop-outs; the drop-out rate among Latins is four times that found among the white population.⁴ The resulting lack of education

²J. Samora, "Educational Status of a Minority," Theory into Practice, 2:144-150, June, 1963, pp. 144-145.

³"Other Texans; Mexicanos," Look, 27:68-70, October 8, 1963, p. 68.

⁴M. Campos, "Preserving of a Noble Heritage," Texas Outlook, 48:8-9+, August, 1964, p. 29.

among the Latin population keeps them in low-paying jobs as manual laborers. This, in turn, often results in their living in a culturally deprived area, which usually means that they will become statistics in a long drop-out list. Thus a vicious circle is formed which drastically limits opportunities among the Spanish-speaking for upward social and economic mobility. Some of the reasons for their high drop-out rate are (1) inadequate school facilities, (2) forced segregation both in and out of school, (3) adverse cultural factors such as language handicaps and little value or emphasis placed on education in the home, (4) low socio-economic status, and (5) poor law enforcement by local officers regarding school attendance.⁵

Beyond the language problem lies one of socialization, philosophy, and values. Calitri stated, "We cannot present the child with a school world that is totally different from anything he knows and expect him to enter it in comfort."⁶ What these people need is help to accept our culture as well as their own; they should not be expected to exchange their culture for ours.⁷

Limitations of the study. The study will be limited to the review of information concerning one particular ethnic-linguistic group--the Spanish-speaking portion of the population now living

⁵Samora, op. cit., p. 146.

⁶C. J. Calitri, "Language and the Dignity of Youth," Saturday Review, 46:46-47+, July 20, 1963, p. 47.

⁷Calitri, ibid., p. 61.

permanently in one of the five southwestern states of the United States--Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and California as found in periodicals and books. Further, the study will be concerned only with pertinent literature available in the Kansas State University library between the years 1950-1965.

Definition of terms. Terms unique to this study and defined according to their useage are:

Bilingual--Bilingual children, in this study, are those children who use their own mother tongue at home and off the school grounds, but who in school must acquire and use English.

Mother tongue--The mother tongue is the first language understood and spoken by anyone.

Latins--This term refers to anyone of Latin American parentage who now makes a permanent home in one of the five southwestern states and whose mother tongue is Spanish.

Ethnic groups--Ethnic groups are determined by any one of the basic divisions of man distinguished by customs, physical characteristics, language, etc.

Anglos--This term refers to any white person residing permanently in the United States whose mother tongue is English.

Monolingual--This term refers to anyone speaking and understanding only one language.

Procedures. The procedures followed in this study were to (1) read, (2) analyze, and (3) organize the available material. The material was organized in the following manner:

1. The background of bilingual Latins and their usual academic fate.
2. The problems involved in mastering a second language.
3. The types of special programs available for Latins.

4. The objectives of special or preschool classes for Latins.
5. Effective classroom techniques to use with bilingual students.
6. The necessity for the preservation of different cultural and linguistic groups in the United States.
7. The results of special or preschool classes for Latins.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The background and usual academic fate of bilingual Latins.

Most of the Latin students come from homes of limited socio-economic resources.⁸ The majority of the parents (men and women) work at low-paying jobs usually as manual laborers. Large families combined with working parents usually mean that little emphasis is placed on a good education.⁹

In Texas alone, there are about 2,000,000 Latins, mainly of Mexican heritage. Although nearly seventy per cent of them are Texas-born, the majority do not speak English, and almost all of them speak Spanish better than they do English.¹⁰ These Texas Mexicans are at the bottom of the scale on everything—health, sanitation, wages, edu-

⁸I. Mulvaney, "Teaching Students from Bilingual or Non-English Speaking Homes," Audio-Visual Instructor, 10:34-35, January, 1965, p. 34.

⁹Samora, op. cit., p. 146.

¹⁰L. Alexander, "Texas Helps Her Little Latins," Saturday Evening Post, 243:30-31+, August 5, 1961, p. 31.

cation, welfare, equal rights, and opportunity for advancement.¹¹

If these Latins were given a separate school system where Spanish was the medium of instruction, their educational level might well be much higher than it now is. However, at present, most of these children learn to speak and understand Spanish in the home before they have to learn to speak and understand English in the schools. This means that when they reach the first grade at age six speaking only Spanish and are thrown into an English-speaking classroom, they are at a complete loss.

As if being monolingually Spanish in an English-speaking environment were not enough, many of them are also verbally destitute; or perhaps it is better to say that they are verbally destitute according to IQ and achievement tests used for all the Anglo students of the same area. However, Olsen suggested in his article that culturally deprived children have trouble with verbalization because the curriculum does not meet their standards of reality. He suggested that these children are not really linguistically destitute, but that their areas of development are not those the schools stress.¹²

Another factor contributing to the educational difficulties of the Latin population is that of mobility. Many of the parents are not only manual laborers, but they are migrant workers who follow the

¹¹Look, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

¹²J. Olsen, "The Verbal Ability of the Culturally Different," *Educational Forum*, 29:280-284, March, 1965, pp. 282-283.

harvests north and south wherever they can get work.¹³ Unfortunately for their children, most school systems have a regulation for transfer students which states that that child must have completed six weeks (or some set period of time) in a school at the beginning of the term before he can be accepted into the new school. All too often harvest is over, and these children move on with their families before they have had the chance to finish this set period of required attendance. This in turn means that the school of the town or district to which they move will not accept them into school during that year.¹⁴ And so, they fall a year farther behind in school. Even when the children of migrant workers manage to get into and stay in school for a whole year, they usually do not know enough English to keep up with the lessons, and with their frequent moves, such schooling does them little or no good.

Problems involved in mastering a second language. One of the major problems of learning a second language is the interference caused in the learning process by the first language. Infant babbling includes sounds from other languages, but as the child grows older, these sounds disappear, and are replaced by the sounds of his own language. This happens because the child is rewarded when he begins to make recognizable sounds. Therefore, he makes more of these sounds in order to be rewarded, and slowly the sounds from other

¹³L. Harnishfeger, "Desk for Ignacio," Ohio Schools, 43:30-33, April, 1965, p. 30.

¹⁴Harnishfeger, ibid., p. 31.

languages that he was once able to make disappear. This is unfortunate, because as he grows older, he may find it difficult even to reproduce or imitate these sounds while learning a foreign language. After these sounds have been lost, they must be relearned before they can be put to use in learning a second language.¹⁵

There are also other problems. For example, the degree to which the first language was mastered has a great effect on learning the second. The better the first language has been mastered, the harder the second is to learn because thought patterns have become rigidly fixed in the mind. Another factor to consider is the similarity of the situations in which the two languages are learned and used. The greater the similarity, the greater the difficulty. This can be compared to distinguishing between two very different stimuli which are gradually made very similar—for example a black and a white square which are gradually shaded into almost identical grays. As the two become more and more similar, the learner has more and more difficulty in distinguishing between them. Still another factor is the age of the learner; the older he is, the more rigid his personality and thought patterns have become, and the harder it is for him to grasp and learn fluently a second language. Finally, the socioeconomic class of the learner must be taken into consideration. Children of bilingual families of the middle or upper classes are much more likely to receive formal or informal training in both

¹⁵D. T. Hakes, "The Psychological Aspects of Bilingualism," Modern Language Journal, 49:220-227, April, 1965, p. 220.

languages than are children from lower class families.¹⁶

In speaking about learning vocabulary in two languages where two responses must be attached to the same stimulus, Hakes said,

Attempting now to acquire a second response to the same stimulus provides what is referred to as a negative transfer situation. The previously learned response will interfere with learning the new response in the sense that the new learning will be more difficult than if there had been no previous learning... In addition, when the new response...begins to gain some strength, it, in turn, will interfere with the old response....¹⁷

Most people do not think of learning the mother tongue as particularly difficult. It seems to come naturally and effortlessly with age and maturation. A child learning his mother tongue is rewarded for his correct responses, and usually is not severely punished or ostracized for his mistakes because everyone assumes that he will out-grow this stage. However, for an older child or an adult to be faced with the task of learning a second language is a different problem completely. Because he is older and supposedly wiser as well as more mature, he is expected to learn the second language much more rapidly and without the babyish mistakes he was allowed while learning his mother tongue. Moreover, the child whose mother tongue is not the official language of the country in which he lives, and who is attempting to learn the official language, is often ostracized by his peers for his ignorance--an ignorance over which he has little control.¹⁸

¹⁶Hakes, ibid., p. 225.

¹⁷Hakes, ibid., p. 225.

¹⁸Hakes, ibid., p. 226.

Therefore, the problems involved in learning a second language must be considered as serious and even formidable ones for the Latin children in our society.

Types of special programs available for Latins. Although the general objectives for programs aiding Latin students have been fairly well agreed upon, there is still no set outline to follow, and there are many opinions concerning the type of program best suited to the needs of these students. A few of these different types of programs will be discussed below.

Meriam, Decker, Duke, Poulos, and Ching all indicated that before a child can learn to read effectively, he must have a firm foundation of vocabulary upon which to build. Since the Latin child starts school with a language handicap, these people believe that the best results can be obtained if at least kindergarten and the first grade are devoted to enlarging and advancing the child's experiences and vocabulary before reading is started in the second grade.¹⁹ In fact, Texas passed a bill which became effective in 1960, and which provided a preschool program of English for children of Mexican parentage. Moreover, there were many city and county school systems already providing such instruction before the 1960 bill.²⁰ These people feel that if the Latin students can learn a little English be-

¹⁹J. L. Meriam, Learning English Incidentally: A Study of Bilingual Children, (Bulletin 1937, No. 15. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Interior, Office of Education, 1938), p. 7.

²⁰W. T. Poulos, "They Learn Basic English Before School Starts," Texas Outlook, 43:15-16+, August, 1959, p. 15.

fore they get into school--either the summer before they start the first grade or in a kindergarten--they will have a chance to keep up with their classmates and would, in this way, avoid becoming drop-outs. Later, after the child has begun to read, these people feel that an extensive reading program on his level will be more effective in teaching him language than will be a strict concentration on the grammar of the language.²¹ Language must be tied into the experiences of every day if it is to be effective.²²

Another method is that of teaching one language--the mother tongue--until the child is eight or nine years old and then introducing English as a second language.²³ Gaarder, Anderson, and Rice indicated that it is unrealistic to expect Spanish-speaking children to learn to read and write in a foreign language before they have learned to read and write in their mother tongue.²⁴ To try to force them into this would, or certainly could, rob them of their sense of security; and it could also rob them of their pride in their own culture.²⁵ An international Committee of Experts convened by UNESCO in 1951, agreed that a child should start formal education in the

²¹Meriam, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²²Meriam, *ibid.*, p. 6.

²³J. P. Rice, "Education of Subcultural Groups," *School and Society*, 92:360-362, November 28, 1964, p. 362.

²⁴T. Anderson, "FLES and the Conservation of Our Language Resources," *Hispania*, 47:593-596, September, 1964, p. 594.

²⁵T. Anderson, "New Focus on the Bilingual Child," *Modern Language Journal*, 49:156-160, March, 1965, pp. 158-159.

mother tongue because "...strengthening and maintaining the mother tongue will contribute powerfully and directly to the development of the personality and intellect and in turn increase the student's ability to learn English and through English."²⁶ Later, these children would have at least one period a day in which they would be taught in their mother tongue and would follow a normal study of English at the same time. The teacher should be a vigorous, literate native speaker, and during the periods when the students were taught in the mother tongue, emphasis would be placed on subject matter, not language. During these periods, the mother tongue would be the exclusive means of communication; and only native speakers of the non-English language would be admitted to these classes. Exceptions to this rule might be outstanding high school students studying the language.²⁷

Still another program for high school students emphasizes changing the student's self-concept to increase his motivation and facility in English by (1) helping him take pride in and discover his dual heritage, (2) promoting self-awareness, self-analysis, self-respect, and self-direction in order to help him consider the future and establish goals, and (3) providing experiences beyond the textbooks to help him extend his concepts of the community.²⁸

²⁶A. B. Gaarder, "Teaching the Bilingual Child: Research, Development, and Policy," Modern Language Journal, 49:165-175, March, 1965, pp. 165-166.

²⁷Gaarder, ibid., pp. 166-167.

²⁸Mulvaney, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

This type of program was designed to replace or at least supplement the older grammar approach.

Finally, most people working in one of these programs agreed that parental support is essential. Not only do the parents want to know what is happening to their children, but often they could benefit from an adult literacy program. Many of them would be willing to join in such a program if the community would only take the time to recruit them and explain the advantages. Often too, bringing the parents, and even the community, into such a program could alleviate a great deal of prejudice and clear up many misconceptions.²⁹

There have even been some recommendations made for parents of bilingual children to follow in the home in order to help their children learn both languages as well as possible. Unfortunately, these recommendations would usually be applicable only to parents of middle or upper class homes--at any rate they would apply only in homes where two or more languages are spoken. These recommendations are that (1) parents should speak both languages as correctly as possible, (2) parents should stipulate certain times and places when a certain language would be used, (3) children should receive their two languages from separate sources if possible, and (4) the family should mingle as much as possible with people who speak the dominant language.³⁰

²⁹Anderson, op. cit., p. 159.

³⁰J. V. Jensen, "Effects of Childhood Bilingualism," Elementary English, 39:358-366, April, 1962, pp. 361-362.

Objectives of special or preschool classes for Latins.

Education, whether for American or foreign children, should fit these children for social efficiency.³¹ This, of course, is the general objective of all special classes for Latin students. They must be given extra help in order to achieve a working knowledge of the English language and of American culture; this in turn, will allow them to function as responsible citizens within the society in which they are living.

Although there is as yet no program for these Latin students which is coordinated and executed throughout the entire country, the objectives from state to state change very little, despite the variety of programs available. A list of objectives which are generally used to set up special educational programs for Latin students follows.

(1) Some of the immediate objectives which need to be met day by day and which are usually found in preschool classes are teaching these children a useful English vocabulary which will help them when they get to the first grade, teaching them to understand and follow simple instructions, teaching them to write their full names, teaching them to count to ten, teaching them to speak in complete sentences, helping them to adjust to the routine of school life, and finally, helping them to feel secure in their relationships with the teacher, with the other children, and with the school.³² These objectives cover areas of a child's life which are generally handled by the

³¹Meriam, op. cit., p. 7.

³²Poulos, op. cit., p. 16.

parents by the time the child reaches school age. However, since most of the parents of the Latin students speak no better English than their children, and are usually no better acculturated, it becomes necessary for the school to take over this area of instruction in most cases if it is going to be done at all in order to give the child a chance to succeed in school.

(2) After the children have passed the first stage of classroom adjustment and are able to do adequate work in their studies, the objectives shift somewhat to adjust to new points of emphasis. Now that the children are able to understand and be understood in the classroom, the fight has just begun. They will still need a great deal of outside help and special attention in order to keep up with the class. What is more, because of the lack of value and emphasis placed on education in many of their homes, they will need extra encouragement to stay in school long enough to finish high school; and certainly a great deal of encouragement will be necessary if they are to be persuaded to continue their education in a college or university. Finally, once these children have an adequate foundation in English, they should be urged to continue their study of Spanish. America needs bilingual citizens to work in the areas of teaching, diplomatic relations, and big business, and who could be better suited for these jobs than people who have grown up in a bilingual situation and who have been given a sound education in both languages.³³

³³B. A. Fox and M. Mermelstein, "The Sands Project," High Points, 47:5-10, March, 1965, p. 5.

(3) Finally, all these objectives must be coordinated in such a way that the extrinsic motivation within the children's environment is no longer necessary, but is replaced by intrinsic motivation—by their own desire to learn and to better themselves.³⁴

Effective classroom techniques for bilingual students. The techniques a teacher of bilingual students uses in the classroom depend to a great extent upon what he is trying to accomplish. For example, Calderon wrote about common speech errors made by Spanish-speaking pupils. His main concern was not to teach these children more English, but to be sure that the English they knew was correctly spoken. He considered this important because of the social stigma attached to the Latin accent in the Southwest. In accordance with this goal, he set up four basic steps for speech correction, and they were to (1) establish the sound, (2) visualize the sound, (3) distinguish between similar sounds, and (4) reproduce the sound correctly and clearly.³⁵

For example, Latin students have trouble distinguishing between the b and v sounds. The first step would be to establish these two sounds by using various words such as bat, vat, berry, very, bail, and veil, in which they are heard. After the students are able to hear these sounds accurately, they should be given a list of words using

³⁴Meriam, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-84.

³⁵C. I. Calderon, "Put the Accent on Speech Errors," Texas Outlook, 43:26-28, February, 1959, p. 27.

them in order to see how they are written and how they fit into English words. At this point, use might also be made of a chart showing the position of lips, tongue, and teeth when saying b or v. Then the students must be able to distinguish between these and other similar sounds such as d and p; for this, more charts and word lists are needed. Finally, after the students have learned the sounds and have learned to distinguish between them, they must practice saying words which use these sounds over and over until they can reproduce them clearly and correctly on demand.

Calderon suggested that there is no substitute for drill and practice, because children imitate what they hear. He described the use of mirrors for imitative drills to show lip, tongue, and teeth positions in pronunciation, board drills, tape recordings of the progressive efforts made by the children, and charts to illustrate the desired sounds as well as other similar ones.³⁶ Drills which could be charted or used orally are those using nonsense syllables such as aba ebe ibi obo ubu ava eve ivi ovo uvu abe abi abo abu. Such drills are good for helping the students learn to pronounce all the possible combinations of letters using the sounds in question.

In preschool classes for Latins, designed to teach them basic English before they reach the first grade, the techniques center around a play situation. In these classes teachers most often use action games accompanied by words such as "London Bridge Is Falling

³⁶Calderon, *ibid.*, p. 27.

Down," dramatizations of nursery rhymes such as "Humpty Dumpty" and "Little Miss Muffet," songs such as "The Woman and the Crocodile" and "I'm a Little Teapot," dances such as square and folk dancing, pictures and simple stories such as the various ones available for children in the Little Golden Book series. These techniques help the children fit words to what they see and do. English is used almost exclusively in these classes, and the children are made to understand simple instructions such as, "Shut the door," or "Bring me the ball," by means of gestures and pictures.³⁷ Poulos also suggested that it is not unusual for teachers to discover that Latin children need more affection from the teacher than do Anglo children because affection is more openly expressed in their environment.³⁸ In these classes, it is also good to introduce the children to chalk and pencils, teaching them how to hold each correctly.³⁹

In working with older children, Decker suggested that English be used as much as possible to teach them phonetics, phonemics, English structure, ear training, articulation, and vocabulary enlargement. He also suggested that the teacher know something of the culture, social conditions, and basic philosophies of his students, and that he should be sure to keep his English pure--not full of slang

³⁷Poulos, op. cit., p. 33.

³⁸Poulos, ibid., p. 16.

³⁹L. W. Duke, "School Began in June," Texas Outlook, 42:22-23, July, 1958, p. 23.

and off-the-cuff language.⁴⁰

An article in the California Education magazine suggested that older children could profit a great deal from the use of hand puppets. This helped the students overcome their timidity and also presented them with the necessity of developing their own dialogues to present informally to the class.⁴¹

Other techniques, described by Gaarder, were (1) intensive oral drill from recorded patterns during which the students repeated the patterns given to them by a voice on the tape or record, (2) extensive reading and listening to recorded literature during which the students read selected and edited literature or listened to similar selections which had been recorded, (3) extensive use of sound films on technical and other subjects in order to allow the students more practice in fitting words to what they see, (4) controlled composition during which the teacher assigned a topic and then checked carefully the use of grammar and idioms, and (5) emphasis on learning through the language rather than language learning as an end in itself.⁴² This final point means that instead of making the learning of a language an end in itself, the teacher must make the language live enough to encourage the children to learn facts about other subjects through it; thus, language becomes a means in education, not an end.

⁴⁰M. E. Decker, "From Si to Yes," Elementary English, 42:35-37, January, 1965, p. 36.

⁴¹"Puppets Help Teach English to the Foreign Born," California Education, 1:19, February, 1964, p. 19.

⁴²Gaarder, op. cit., pp. 174-175.

Most of the previously mentioned techniques were designed principally or completely for use in special classes comprised of bilingual students. However, Shoudel made some recommendations pertinent to the English-speaking classroom with only one or two bilingual students. She pointed out that these students are very apt to be silent observers for longer or shorter periods of time before they start participating in the activities of the class.

Her suggestions, which dealt mainly with how to lead these children out of their silent world into one of classroom participation are the following:

1. Give him much time to adjust to hearing the new language daily. If he has heard it very little before, suddenly having it thrust upon him for several hours a day will be quite a shock as well as a tiring experience. Be patient with him.
2. Watch him in non-verbal situations before assuming that he is a slow learner. His verbal and non-verbal performances could and are likely to be quite different, and until he has a firm grasp of the language, it is not fair to judge him extensively on verbal material as are the other children.
3. Speak in his presence as if he can understand fully, not as if he were deaf. A lack of ability to understand does not signify a lack of feelings, and a person who cannot understand what is going on in his surroundings often jumps to

the conclusion that people are laughing at him or talking about him.

4. Put him next to a prize pupil and let him copy so that he will understand what the directions meant. Certainly he needs to begin to work on his own as soon as possible, but this technique often saves time and usually saves pride.
5. Give him special encouragement without embarrassing him. Let him know that you care, that you understand his problems, but do not cut him off from the other children by so doing.
6. Find an interpreter who can help you and him if necessary, but use his language only in case of emergency.
7. Give speech therapy unobtrusively in all lessons. This can be done by repeating an answer he has made but repeating it in correct English.⁴³

The necessity for the preservation of different cultural and linguistic groups in the United States. Bilingual children begin by being monolingual, and the problem begins when the larger society imposes its language and culture on them. To children born into any language and culture, that language and culture represent their own existence as human beings, and to take that away is to destroy them and make of them a different kind of being.⁴⁴ When we, as Americans, try to take away the language and culture of these Spanish-speaking

⁴³P. W. Shoudal, "Color the Apple Red," Texas Outlook, 47:32-33+, October, 1963, pp. 32,33, and 53.

⁴⁴C. Christian, "The Acculturation of the Bilingual Child," Modern Language Journal, 49:160-165, March, 1965, p. 160.

youngsters and supplant it with our own, we tell them, so to speak, that we do not accept them as they are but rather want to make them over to be like us--because we are better.⁴⁵ The first six years of a child's life imprint themselves on personality and personal development more than any other time. A child may learn to love what he has learned and become during these first six years, or he may learn to despise it; but either way, it will remain with him.⁴⁶ To try to strip him of these early roots is dangerous. Too often he is stripped of dignity, of individuality, and of self.⁴⁷ Children who reject the parental tongue, in effect, reject the parents which is not only a personal, but also a social tragedy. However, these first early cultural roots can be supplemented by American culture.⁴⁸

"You can take my burro and perhaps my hacienda, you can take my tortillas and perhaps my sombrero, but por Dios, amigos, what little Spanish I have learned por favor leave alone."⁴⁹ The writer of this report thought that this statement accurately mirrored the feelings of many Mexican Americans, especially parents who see their children being stripped of and made ashamed of the beautiful and noble heritage from which they came. The heritage of Mexican-Americans embraces

⁴⁵Calitri, op. cit., p. 47.

⁴⁶Christian, op. cit., pp. 160-161.

⁴⁷Calitri, op. cit., p. 46.

⁴⁸Christian, op. cit., p. 161.

⁴⁹T. Campos, "Preserving of a Noble Heritage," Texas Outlook, 48:8-9+, August, 1964, p. 9.

not only that of the United States, but also those of Spain, the Mayas and the Aztecs. They should be helped and encouraged to remain proud of it.

Holland stated that by the fifth or sixth grade most of these children know enough English to be able to compete with their Anglo peers, but by that time they are usually too far behind to catch up. As a result, they too often have no sense of complete belonging to either culture.⁵⁰

When speaking of people living in the United States whose mother tongue is not English, Anderson stated, "It is a matter of national as well as professional interest for us to preserve these languages and to provide their speakers with an education which takes them properly into account."⁵¹ He said this because he had been firmly convinced that American foreign language teaching has seven deadly sins which bilinguals can help overcome if they are properly trained. These seven deadly sins are (1) the fact that in many places two years of high school language training are termed adequate, (2) the late start in language training, (3) the non-existence of kindergartens and nursery schools in many communities where language could be taught, (4) the misconception of language in terms of reading, writing, and grammar, (5) the preference of American teachers

⁵⁰W. R. Holland, "Language Barrier as an Educational Problem of Spanish-Speaking Children," Exceptional Child, 27:42-50, September, 1960, p. 47.

⁵¹Anderson, op. cit., p. 151.

over native speakers, (6) the inflexible credit-counting education of teachers, and (7) the failure to encourage these bilingual people to be proud of their heritage.⁵²

Results of special or preschool classes for Latins. The effect of preschool and special classes for Latins to help them with English and acculturation all point to the success of such programs and to a desire for their continuation.

A preschool program in Odessa, Texas, which enrolled 193 Mexican-American children during an eight-week summer session in 1957, resulted in one hundred per cent of these children being placed in regular first grade instead of preschool. And there were hopes that ninety per cent of them would be ready for second grade on time.⁵³

Ching concluded, after eight years of observation of a program in San Jose, New Mexico, for children in kindergarten through grade eight, that Spanish-American children who have preschool and other special training have a definite advantage over those who do not.⁵⁴

The UNESCO committee convened in 1951, decided that if children are equally well educated in both languages, they are superior both verbally and non-verbally in intelligence to monolinguals and also appear to have greater mental flexibility, a superiority in

⁵²Anderson, ibid., pp. 157-158.

⁵³Poulos, op. cit., pp. 15, 16, and 34.

⁵⁴D. C. Ching, "Methods for the Bilingual Child," Elementary English, 42:22-27, January, 1965, pp. 22-24.

concept formation, and a more diversified set of mental abilities. The UNESCO committee also decided that bilingualism acquired by natural means facilitates the learning of a third language.⁵⁵

In short, there were no articles which thought such classes useless and suggested their discontinuation. However, the majority of the articles reviewed for this report had no statement of statistical results, good or bad. The author, therefore, assumed that the mere fact that these articles were written was an endorsement of such programs and a subtle suggestion for their continuation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to (1) examine the academic difficulties experienced by bilingual Latins, because of language handicaps, upon entering the public schools, and (2) suggest some possible solutions to these problems.

The procedures followed were to (1) read, (2) analyze, and (3) organize the available material according to the pertinent literature available in the Kansas State University Library between the years 1950-1965.

The difficulties experienced by bilingual students upon entering school were not all caused by low intelligence. Rather, behind the academic problem lay a social one, and like all social problems, the difficulties facing these children were complex.

⁵⁵Gardner, op. cit., pp. 173-174.

As has been stated previously, Mexican-Americans drop out of school four times as often as their Anglo counterparts, but this is not always the result of inability. Most of these children do not learn to read and write properly, and as a result, the jobs they are prepared to take are usually limited to those of manual laborers. Limited salary, large families disrupted by both parents working long hours, lack of educational emphasis in the home, as well as the social and political injustices given a minority, all contribute to the problem.

These children fail in school because in the beginning they do not have enough foundation to build on, and by the time they have acquired the foundation, they are too far behind to catch up—they have been on the bottom for so long, have suffered so many defeats that school really does not matter any more. All these children want is an escape from school and an opportunity to try something different. At this point these Latin students feel that nothing could possibly be worse than the frustration they are suffering in the public schools. So they enter the labor market unskilled, uneducated, and at the mercy of management. They marry, have a family, and the cycle starts again.

Some of the solutions suggested earlier in this report were (1) preschool programs designed to teach the Latin child a basic English vocabulary before he enters school, (2) teaching Latin students first to read and write in English, (3) continuous instruction in both the mother tongue and English for as long as these children remain in the public schools, (4) teaching them first to read and write in

their mother tongue before teaching them to read and write in English, (5) helping these Latin students take pride in and discover their dual heritage, (6) promoting self-awareness, self-analysis, self-respect, and self-direction in order to help them consider the future and establish goals, (7) providing experiences beyond the textbooks to help them extend their concepts of the community, and (8) obtaining parental support as well as parental help in establishing such programs. Some of these solutions are in complete opposition to each other, and others, although seemingly so, could be combined into a single program which would perhaps be better than any one program alone.

It may be concluded from the review of the literature that a program for bilingual Latin children entering the public schools should have the following points:

1. Bilingual children with potential academic handicaps should be enrolled in a nursery school not later than age four. This nursery school training should begin preparing them for school by teaching them English, but only in the oral form.
2. Since many of these children come from culturally deprived homes, nursery school should also provide them with broadening experiences such as field trips, an introduction to children's literature, and music. By age six, these children should be ready to start school, and because of preschool training, they should have a good chance to keep up with their Anglo classmates.

3. These children should begin at once to learn to read and write in English. If they first learned reading and writing in their mother tongue, Spanish would interfere in their English more than otherwise.
4. By the time they are in the third grade, they should be ready to begin learning to read and write in Spanish; and by the time they reach the sixth grade, their study of Spanish should consist of one or two hours a day of Spanish instruction in an academic field.
5. During this hour or more of academic instruction in Spanish, emphasis should be placed on subject matter, not language.
6. These children should also have some instruction, all the way through school, which will help them to be proud of and appreciate their dual heritage.
7. The field trips and other extra activities begun in nursery school should be continued throughout their schooling in order to prepare them to be responsible citizens.
8. These students should be given extra help and care during vocational counseling; they should learn to be realistic in their aspirations, and they should learn to plan for the future.
9. The techniques used at various stages in the program should fit the needs of the pupils at that particular time; teaching aids such as films, charts, puppets, pictures, and recordings should definitely be used if possible.

10. Finally, the parents should be made aware of the program in which their children are participating. They, too, should be counseled and consulted in the hope that they will then see the advantages of such a program and give it their undivided support.

By combining the best points of all the programs, the educational standards of these Latin students will be raised. This is not only to their advantage, but also to the advantage of the whole United States, for their weakness affects the strength of the whole.

Of course, even with hard work, their problems will not be solved immediately; it will take at least two or three generations. But if a reasonable program is started immediately, it can be done.

However, all of the answers are not yet available, and more research will be necessary to provide the best program and check its results.

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A SURVEY OF LITERATURE CONCERNING
THE ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES OF BILINGUAL LATINIS
UPON ENTERING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS,
AND THEIR POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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The purpose of this study was to (1) examine the academic difficulties experienced by bilingual Latins, because of language handicaps, upon entering the public schools, and (2) suggest some possible solutions to these problems.

The study was limited to a review of information concerning one ethnic-linguistic group--the Spanish-speaking portion of the population now living permanently in one of the five southwestern states of the United States--Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and California as found in periodicals and books. Further, the study was concerned only with pertinent literature available in the Kansas State University library between the years 1950-1965.

The procedures followed were to (1) read, (2) analyze, and (3) organize the available material.

The difficulties experienced by bilingual students upon entering school are not all caused by low intelligence. Rather, behind the academic problem lies a social one, and like all social problems, the difficulties facing these children are complex.

Mexican-Americans drop out of school four times as often as their Anglo counterparts, but this is not always the result of inability. Most of these children do not learn to read and write properly, and as a result, the jobs they are prepared to take are usually limited to those of manual laborers. Limited salary, large families disrupted by both parents working, lack of educational emphasis in the home, as well as the social and political injustices given a minority, all contribute to the problem.

Some of the solutions suggested by the review of literature were (1) preschool programs designed to teach the Latin child a basic English vocabulary before he enters school, (2) teaching Latin students first to read and write in the mother tongue before teaching them to read and write in English, (3) continuous instruction in both the mother tongue and English for as long as these children remain in the public schools, (4) helping these Latin students take pride in and discover their dual heritage, (5) promoting self-awareness, self-analysis, self-respect, and self-direction in order to help them consider the future and establish goals, (6) providing experiences beyond the textbooks to help them extend their concepts of the community, and (7) obtaining parental support as well as parental help in establishing these programs.

The findings of this report were not complete; there needed to be much research done on the subject. However, it was generally agreed that in order to help bilingual students overcome their linguistic handicaps and in order to raise their educational standards, they should attend a preschool where they could learn basic English; And they should continue to receive instruction in both languages to help them appreciate their dual heritage.