
FOREWORD / PRÓLOGO

BILINGUALISM AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION: NEW APPROACHES AND CHALLENGES

BILINGÜISMO Y EDUCACIÓN BILINGÜE: NUEVOS ENFOQUES Y RETOS

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Bilingualism is undoubtedly a concept which has come to play a leading part in educational programmes around the world. To be more specific, bilingualism has been spreading like wildfire, and even in traditionally monolingual societies, it now enjoys growing interest. As a matter of fact, there was a time when most members of the academic community expressed some amount of reluctance with regard to the implementation of bilingual teaching approaches, and such reluctance was backed by various assumptions, such as the fact that bilingual education could affect children's proficiency in their native language or confuse them, thus slowing down their learning process. Nevertheless, recent research has debunked the aforementioned claims and emphasized the need to foster bilingual education in all settings in order to make students face the linguistic challenges of today's society which is characterised by the rapid spread of information and closer ties between individuals whom geography and language separate. The logical consequence of the so-called information society or digital age has been the use of English as the world

lingua franca, which has made the language become the target of most bilingual programmes around the world.

This special issue comes as a result of a ground-breaking international conference held at UNED, Madrid, in November 2018. In fact, the conference was motivated by the need to know the state of bilingual research around the world, enable researchers to present the findings of their attempts at adding knowledge to scholarship, and elicit debates that would definitely enrich all participants and push forward the bilingual agenda. More specifically, the conference dealt with various issues related to bilingual education, bilingual language planning and multiculturalism, and was characterised by outstanding contributions from all continents. It is therefore in an attempt to share some of these contributions with a wider audience that we decided to come up with this issue, which will undoubtedly be of great help to researchers interested in the challenges involved in bilingual education. This special issue also presents on the one hand the limits and hurdles stakeholders may face when trying to tap into the bilingual and multicultural experience in order to foster learning, as well as the way forward in bilingual teaching and learning, be it in formal academic settings or out of them. By and large, it is intended to guide teachers, learners and parents or government authorities, when making decisions relating to bilingualism and its implementation.

This special issue tackles various topics that all fall under bilingualism and multiculturalism. The first three articles deal with (new) challenges that the rush for bilingual education may raise. More specifically, Anthony Liddicoat's "Critical perspectives in intercultural language learning" discusses the need to move beyond form to teach pragmatic knowledge, as languages are not just sets of words but also the locus of beliefs and practices which learners must be aware of. Then, Pádraig Ó Duibhir's "Bilingual education in minority language contexts: when a high level of linguistic competence is not enough" addresses minority language education and the difficulty that preserving minority languages may pose when the latter are being overshadowed by a world leading language. Finally, Raymond Echitchi's "Official bilingualism and indigenous language loss: the case of Cameroon" discusses the extent to which English-French bilingual education has contributed to weakening Cameroon's indigenous languages, thus causing the gradual loss of elements of culture embedded in those languages. Echitchi concludes his

article with a call for the intensive teaching of indigenous languages in Cameroon in order to preserve the country's cultural heritage.

The second thematic section goes deep into bilingual education itself by including three articles dealing with empirical research on foreign language teaching and learning. Lorena Colombo López's "When bilingualism goes beyond one's expectations: the learning of cognates amongst adult EFL students" deals with the teaching of cognates in EFL classrooms, and Colombo López's research confirms the idea that resorting to the learners' first language and backing classroom teaching with online resources may contribute to fostering the learning of English words in Spanish-speaking contexts. Then, "Does CLIL exposure affect the acquisition of reference in narratives? A Corpus-based study of L2 English", by Teresa Quesada, sets out to study the impact of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) on university students' ability to make use of reference words in their writing. This article's findings point to the fact that, overall, CLIL may contribute to improving the students' ability to use reference. The last article in this section, i.e. Maite Amondarain Garrido's "L1 attrition's stance within multicompetence: translingual and trans-semiotic flows in educational contexts", suggests ways in which bilingual education based on translanguaging can contribute to combatting the effects of L1 loss, which is also known as language attrition.

The next set of articles provide an insight into attitudes towards bilingual education as well as curriculum design. The two articles we are referring to discuss teachers' views on bilingual education in Murcia, Spain. "Bilingual education in the Region of Murcia: a qualitative study on teachers' views" is the outcome of a qualitative study carried out by Imelda Brady and Arancha García, who sought to identify teachers' opinions on bilingual educational policies. The next article, "The implementation of bilingual programs in primary education: teaching and evaluation strategies" deals with a topic similar to Brady and García's article. More specifically, María José Bolarín, Mónica Porto Currás and María Lova Mellado present primary teachers' thoughts on the issues they face when it comes to the implementation of bilingualism as well as ways to sort out these issues. Bolarín, Porto and Lova's article differs from Brady and Pinar's in that it deals specifically with primary education while the former encompasses both primary and secondary education. Furthermore, Brady and Pinar's research are centred around the cities of Murcia and Cartagena,

whereas Bolarín, Porto and Lova's research covers the whole region. Beyond their peculiarities both articles present respondents' suggestions which may guide decision-makers and contribute to polishing bilingual programmes in Murcia and Spain as a whole.

Furthermore, this special issue takes bilingualism beyond the classroom or other institutional contexts to discuss its implementation at the family level. The first article here is authored by Laura Lozano-Martínez and discusses Spanish parents' attitudes towards bilingual upbringing. In fact "Myths and Challenges on Raising Bilingual Children in English by Non-native Parents in Spain" is an attempt to understand the challenges that parents might face when trying to raise their children bilingually, as well as their reactions to various assumptions related to family bilingualism in non-native contexts. The following articles can be considered to be illustrations of Lozano's subject matter. In fact, Ovidio García Armayor's "The Possibilities of Elective Bilingualism" is a scientific report on a Spanish couple's conscious decision to raise their daughter bilingually, though neither of them is a native speaker of English. Then, Arancha Ruiz Martín's "Family Bilingualism: an English-Spanish case study in Madrid (Spain)" discusses the outcomes of the One Parent – One Language (OPOL) strategy in a predominantly Spanish-speaking context. This article differs from García's in that one parent in Ruiz's article is a native English speaker. Despite the aforementioned difference both articles point to the advantages of using two languages within families but end with the claim that children raised bilingually in English and Spanish develop a better mastery of the main language spoken outside the family setting (i.e. Spanish, in both articles) and would need some reinforcement (like trips to English-speaking countries) in order to maintain a certain mastery of English.

The last article in this special issue, i.e., Joan Aleixandre Agulló and Enrique Cerezo Herrero's "Bilingual Education Research: A bibliometric study", is an analysis of scientific publications related to bilingualism through the use of bibliometric indicators. To be specific, the authors carried out an analysis of close to two thousand articles published over a 50-year period, and give readers a deep understanding of the countries where most works on bilingualism were published as well as some topics that cut-across those publications. Aleixandre Agulló and Cerezo Herrero's findings may guide researchers looking for specific publications, and could

also contribute to uncovering areas that have not received much attention from researchers.

What is unique about this special issue is first of all the fact that it encompasses different approaches to research on bilingualism and bilingual education. The first articles in the issue already make one understand that when dealing with bilingualism and bilingual education, it is necessary to go beyond language and understand that other factors such as culture and context may contribute to the success or failure of educational programmes and may also explain individual's struggles towards achieving the command of two languages. In addition, though the volume provides readers with studies that fall within established approaches to bilingual education, research aimed at deconstructing commonly accepted assumptions is also presented. In other words, this issue addresses bilingualism from perspectives that may seem to be opposing at times, but which all contribute to the rise of new ideas that will certainly enrich the academic community and society as a whole.

To sum up, this special issue is not only meant for a learned audience as it includes research works which may be of interest to all strata of society. In fact, bilingualism and multiculturalism are not just addressed from theoretical or academic perspectives, but are also presented in ways that might be of interest to parents, politicians, and other stakeholders.

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