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FIRST LANGUAGE IN
ENGLISH MEDIUM
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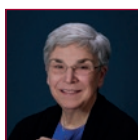
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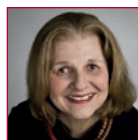
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

English Medium Instruction (EMI) is a model of education in which some or all curriculum content is taught in English to students who speak other languages in their homes and communities. The increasing popularity of EMI in primary and secondary schools, the area of focus for this paper, can be attributed to a desire to prepare students for EMI university courses, the high value put on English as a global language of business and popular culture, and the personal enrichment associated with being able to speak more than one language.
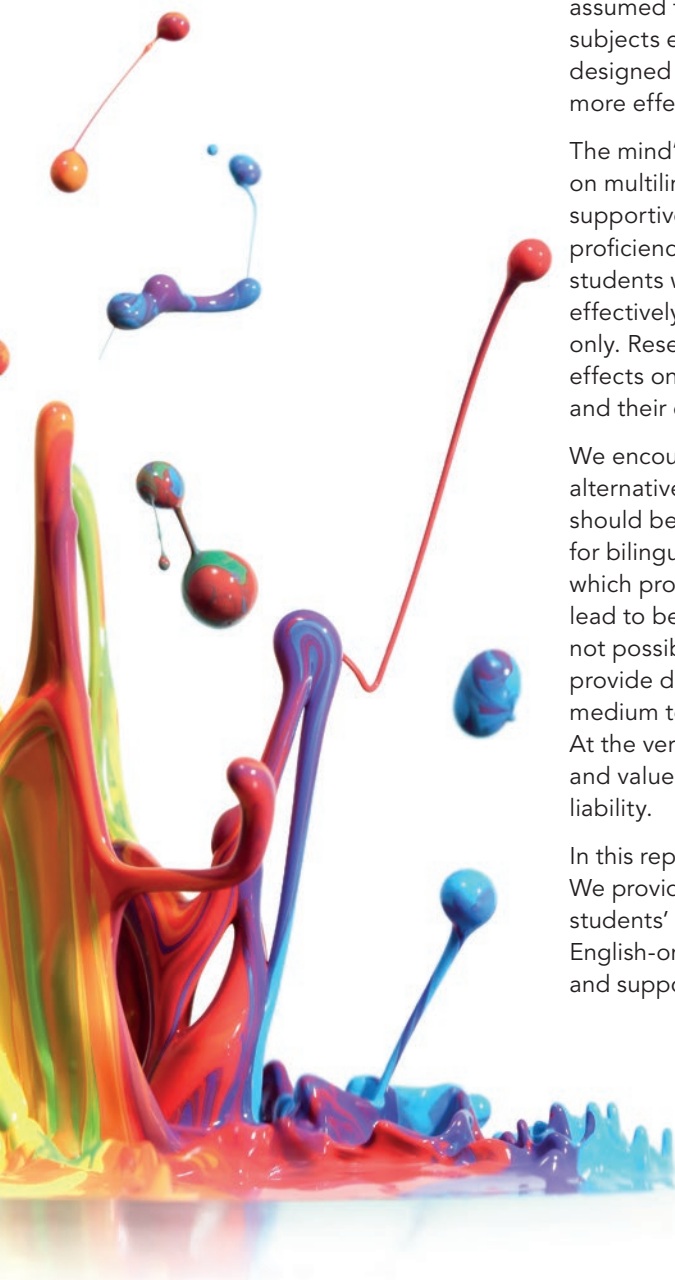
The way EMI schools operationalize their use of English varies from programme to programme. Some teach all curriculum subjects in English; others teach some subjects in English and other subjects in the students' first language. Some schools are experimenting with providing extended hours of English, linking the additional English instruction to the mainstream curriculum. Whatever the specific model, EMI programmes are designed to make use of curriculum subject matter study as a vehicle for developing English proficiency.

Stakeholders in EMI education—educators, policymakers, and parents—all aspire to provide the best possible educational environment in which to develop English language proficiency and maintain high standards of academic attainment. It is often assumed that the most effective way to meet this aspiration is to teach curriculum subjects exclusively in English. However, research indicates that programmes designed to maintain and develop students' first language (L1) alongside English are more effective in meeting the aims set out for EMI education.

The mind's capacity to accommodate multiple languages is enormous. Research on multilingualism shows that the languages known to an individual are mutually supportive, and there is extensive evidence of strong positive relationships between proficiency in the L1 and in a second or additional language. Research has shown that students who are educated in both their L1 and English tend to learn English more effectively and do better academically than their peers who are educated in English only. Research also indicates that an inclusive attitude to students' L1 has positive effects on their personal and cultural identities, their social and emotional well-being, and their engagement in the education system.

We encourage policymakers who are implementing EMI programmes to consider alternatives to the exclusive use of English. Where possible, bilingual programmes should be adopted in preference to English-only programmes. A number of models for bilingual education exist. Comparative studies have shown that programmes which provide evenly balanced instruction in both languages over sustained periods lead to better outcomes for students. In contexts where bilingual programmes are not possible, there are alternative ways to incorporate L1. For example, schools can provide daily L1 language arts lessons. There is also some evidence that using L1-medium teaching strategies, such as translating key vocabulary into L1, are helpful. At the very least, a welcoming and inclusive attitude toward students' L1 recognizes and values students for who they are, and positions their L1 as an asset rather than a liability.

In this report we summarize research evidence on the role of languages in instruction. We provide recommendations for policy and practice and discuss ways to incorporate students' L1 into EMI programmes. We conclude that there is rarely a strong case for English-only education, and urge policymakers to consider alternatives that recognize and support students' L1.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

English Medium Instruction (EMI) uses English to teach curriculum subjects to students who are speakers of other languages. EMI has become increasingly popular in recent years, expanding beyond the traditional bases of international schools and tertiary education. Increasingly, **primary** (including **early years**) and **secondary educational sectors**, both public and private, are adopting EMI approaches. The types of schools that are choosing to do this are extremely varied in character, student profile, context, and ethos. Nonetheless, all are motivated by the goal to improve English language **proficiency** while maintaining high academic standards.

In this paper we refer to students in EMI programmes as **multilingual learners**, recognizing the fact that they continue to learn their **first language (L1)** while they are learning English. Policymakers, educators, and parents (and other caregivers) all have many questions about whether and how multilingual learners' L1 should be incorporated into their education in EMI schools, and concerns have been raised about the effects of either welcoming the L1 into the EMI classroom or prohibiting it. The aim of this paper is to provide realistic guidance on policy and practice regarding the use of L1 in primary and secondary EMI programmes. This guidance, based on research with multilingual learners, is intended for educational sectors that have long histories of adopting EMI practice, such as international schools, more recent **content and language integrated learning (CLIL)** programmes, and schools that are planning or aspiring to adopt EMI approaches.

In Section 1 we characterize common models of education that fall under the umbrella term 'EMI' and outline their aims and objectives. We then outline what we mean by the terms 'multilingual learners' and 'L1'. We argue that multilingual learners' L1 is a vital contributor to their linguistic and academic success.

In Section 2 we examine theory and research that helps us to understand how the interrelationships between the languages known by multilingual learners contribute to their linguistic and academic development. This includes summaries of theories that explore connections between languages in the mind. It also reviews research that has examined the effects of using L1 alongside English on both linguistic and academic outcomes. Research that shows how multilingual learners use their L1 in effective ways is also presented. Finally, we explore the implications of L1 use on multilingual learners' sense of identity and culture, and on their engagement in education.

In Section 3 we describe how the research reviewed in this paper translates into policy and practice. We describe a variety of models for incorporating L1 into EMI programmes and highlight implications for policymakers, school leaders, and teachers. We make recommendations for school programme design, general classroom approaches, and for engaging with parents to help support their children's learning through L1 use at home.

We conclude with the recommendation that the most effective EMI programmes are those which robustly and systematically enable multilingual learners to maintain and develop their L1 alongside English.

01

EMI CONTEXTS AND MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

English Medium Instruction (EMI) comprises a great range of schools and programmes, which vary in their aims and objectives, as well as the aspirations and expectations of the students they serve. It is a commonly held notion that the best way to learn English is to use only English. However, this is unlikely to be the most effective way of meeting the aims of EMI schools and the aspirations of the students who attend them. A variety of research helps us to understand the positive role that multilingual learners' first language (L1) plays when they learn a new language.

WHAT IS 'ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION'?

The popularity of English Medium Instruction for students who speak other languages at home has increased dramatically across the globe in recent years. EMI programmes take a variety of different forms. Some are delivered in fully **bilingual programmes**, or **dual-language programmes**, teaching all or most of the subjects in their curriculum in both the national language of their students and in English. Other schools implement a **language-by-subject programme** in which some subjects within the curriculum are taught in English while the national language is used for teaching other subjects. One example of this is the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach. It is also worth noting that in many schools that teach mainstream subjects in the national language and teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL), there is increased interest in offering **extended hours of English**, drawing on an EMI approach. In these contexts, although the objectives of English instruction are still oriented more towards language learning, teachers begin to incorporate topics from content areas across the curriculum to enrich the learning of English.

EMI has traditionally been associated with higher education. Conscious of a global education market and motivated to attract students from overseas, universities worldwide are increasingly providing courses, modules, and entire degrees taught in English. However, the traditional base for EMI programmes is expanding, and EMI models of education are now more frequently offered in secondary schools, primary schools, and even in early years classes. Part of the driving force behind this expansion is top-down pressure from universities. Secondary schools recognize that EMI university courses are attractive to students and their parents, so they offer EMI instruction to help them prepare for those courses. This, in turn, exerts a similar influence on primary school policy. The popularity of these programmes among those who send their children to fee-paying schools has encouraged state sectors to follow suit and explore ways to provide EMI education for all those who want it.[1]

Another reason for the growing popularity of EMI is that parents are conscious of the importance of English in an increasingly globalized world. English is a key language in politics, business, science, technology, and popular culture. The ability to speak, read, and write English is generally considered a highly desirable and valuable skill. Parents want their children to enjoy the advantage of being able to use English well when they leave school and enter the workplace. For some, the prestige attached to being a proficient user of English is an end in itself, and parents and students see EMI education as an effective way of achieving this.

Whatever the motivating factors, EMI is growing rapidly. As it does, ministries of education and other educational decision-makers are seeking to understand how this model can be applied in their contexts and what the implications are for policy, practice, and the educational outcomes of their students.

The most valuable learning tool children have is the language they already know.

PATSY LIGHTBOWN

THE AIMS OF EMI EDUCATION

The pedagogical goals of EMI education are to teach the English language and the mainstream curriculum (or parts of it) simultaneously. The rationale for this is based on theory and research showing that language teaching is most effective when it is contextualized and integrated with content that is meaningful and motivating for the learner.[2] Using the mainstream curriculum as a vehicle for teaching English provides a 'ready-made' context with immediate relevance to students. By combining English teaching with subject teaching, EMI schools aim to meet the dual objectives of developing English language proficiency *and* curriculum knowledge.

In many EMI programmes, explicit English language teaching is not a routine feature of the curriculum, and EMI teachers tend not to be trained in language teaching.[3] Lessons are often taught as if students are already competent users of English, with little or no specific language support. This approach is based on the belief that English will be 'picked up' during the course of study, a belief that is reinforced by the common assumption that the best way to learn English is to use *only* English. In models of education that adopt this approach, students who are not fully proficient in English can fall behind as they try to achieve the aims set out for them. As we will see, overlooking the specific needs of multilingual learners does not reflect best practice for developing linguistic proficiency or academic content knowledge.

Fortunately, although **English-only** approaches remain popular, it is increasingly common to find schools that adopt a more flexible position on the use of English. In these schools English is still the principal language of instruction, with the goal being the concurrent development of English and curriculum knowledge. In addition, however, they explicitly incorporate a focus on language learning within other subject lessons or provide a separate strand for English support across curriculum learning. Some schools that fall under the EMI umbrella also deliberately incorporate students' L1 as a medium of instruction. These include a variety of different bilingual programmes, in which systematic support is provided for both L1 and English language development.

The character and aims of individual EMI programmes vary from country to country and from school to school. The way schools organize their curricula, and how languages are used within them, will be informed by the opportunities and restrictions specific to each context. For example, the way some international schools are funded allows them to recruit English-proficient teachers, train teachers in a pedagogy that focuses on language within curriculum learning, and invest in English language teaching resources. Schools with more restricted budgets may have greater difficulty in providing the necessary resources to support EMI across the curriculum and might choose instead to teach only some subjects in English.

Broader societal aims and objectives for EMI education will also be shaped by the perspectives of policymakers in each region. The popularity of EMI schools in many parts of the world is linked to students' aspirations to follow EMI programmes at university or to work in an English-language environment when

they leave school. Government policy often supports these aspirations. For example, in Spain EMI education is perceived as 'a key component of internationalization and an asset in the labour market';[4] in the Czech Republic EMI education is seen to prepare students 'for potential [tertiary] study abroad';[5] and in Hungary one of the policy aims for EMI education is to 'enable students to study or work in a foreign language environment'.[6] Other circumstances produce different motivating viewpoints. In some contexts English is seen as a way to communicate and enhance the identity of the community, for a global audience. In Sri Lanka, for example, EMI education is seen as an effective tool for 'presenting Sri Lankan identity'.[7] In Hong Kong, EMI secondary and junior schools have been described as helping to 'enhance Hong Kong's status as an international city'.[8] In Argentina, **bilingual schools** are seen as part of a broader educational programme that aims to prepare students 'to take part in the decision-making stratum of a globalised world'.[9] In Europe, EMI programmes, as well as others that promote alternatives to English as the medium of instruction— for example, non-English CLIL approaches—demonstrate aspirations in the European Union to promote multilingualism across member states.[10] Finally, for some, the motivation is to acknowledge and value multilingualism for its own sake, recognizing inherent personal advantages of being able to speak more than one language.

TYPES OF EMI PROGRAMMES, LEARNERS, AND TEACHERS

Different circumstances and aims lead educators to design EMI programmes to accord with their specific profiles. Table 1 (see pages 10–11) gives five example profiles for the types of schools that we focus on in this paper. This includes international schools that deliver all of their teaching in English, as well as schools that follow bilingual programmes, where students are taught in both English and the local language. We hope that these profiles will help readers to see how their specific circumstances relate to our description of EMI, and to interpret the recommendations and observations that we make in that light.

Differences in school populations also affect decisions about EMI design. For example, the students in a bilingual programme might primarily be speakers of the local language, or they might be a combination of students who speak the local language and some whose main language is English. In schools like these, with quite narrow linguistic diversity, students' languages can be accommodated in relatively straightforward ways. On the other hand, in schools with broader linguistic diversity among students, educators must think differently about how and when different languages are acknowledged and incorporated into their educational programmes.

In addition to the factors outlined above, the availability of teachers who can teach their subjects effectively in the school's chosen languages of instruction will inform the way EMI programmes operate. Some schools employ teachers from English-speaking countries while others are staffed by local teachers.

SCHOOL A

Local context	English-medium school where the students are mainly nationals of the country. The national language has both a standard variety and a local variety.
Age range of students	3–18
Curriculum	National curriculum of the country.
Use of English in the curriculum	All subjects except the national language are taught in English.
Student languages profile	Most students speak the local variety of the national language at home. They are exposed to the standard variety in formal contexts, e.g. national television and formal events.
First language resources	Teaching materials in the national language are readily available. Teaching assistants speak the national language.
Aims	To produce students with fluent English who can go on to study on EMI programmes at top universities.

SCHOOL B

Local context	English-medium programme that exists within a larger national-language school. The student are mainly nationals of the country.
Age range of students	3–18
Curriculum	Combines local curriculum with international curricula.
Use of English in the curriculum	Science, technology, maths, and English are taught in English. All other subjects are taught in the national language.
Student languages profile	Most students use only the national language at home. Students see and hear English in popular culture. Opportunities to speak English outside school are minimal.
Typical teacher profiles	Teachers are recruited locally. English proficiency varies. All are proficient in the national language, which they share with all of the students.
First language resources	Teaching materials in the national language are readily available. All the school staff speak the national language.
Aims	To prepare students for a globalized world, while maintaining the characteristics of the local culture.

SCHOOL C

Local context	English-medium international school located in a regional hub for diplomatic and international business. The majority of the students are international students. Students usually stay one or two years before moving on.
Age range of students	11–18
Curriculum	An international curriculum.
Use of English in the curriculum	All instruction is in English.
Student languages profile	Extremely linguistically diverse.
Typical teacher profiles	Teachers are monolingual English speakers. School policy is to employ only 'native English speakers' for teaching roles.
First language resources	The school has an 'English-only' policy on site. Parental expectations are for an exclusively English-speaking environment.
Aims	To promote English as a valued commodity for business, diplomacy, and higher education.

SCHOOL D

Local context	Government-funded or private schools offering an English-medium CLIL programme. Students are mainly nationals of the country, but some are first-generation immigrants.
Age range of students	3–18
Curriculum	National curriculum of the country.
Use of English in the curriculum	Some subjects are taught in English and some in the national language. English language instruction in subject areas is sometimes supported by explicit language teaching.
Student languages profile	Most students use only the national language at home. Students see and hear English in popular culture. Opportunities to speak English outside school are minimal.
Typical teacher profiles	Teachers are recruited locally. English proficiency varies. All teachers are proficient in the national language, which they share with most of the students. Teaching assistants tend not to speak the national language.
First language resources	Teaching materials in the national language are readily available.
Aims	To prepare students for public exams in the national language while also developing high levels of English proficiency.

SCHOOL E

Local context	Private school, mainly attended by local students who are nationals of the country. There is a strong and growing interest from parents for their children to become proficient in English.
Age range of students	3–18
Curriculum	National curriculum of the country.
Use of English in the curriculum	School has recently introduced science in English. All other subjects (except for English language) are taught in the national language.
Student languages profile	Most students speak the national language at home. Opportunities to use English outside the classroom are minimal.
Typical teacher profiles	Teachers are local and speak the national language. English teachers are proficient in English. All subject specialists speak some English, but proficiency levels vary.
First language resources	Teaching materials in the national language are readily available and are linked to the curriculum. All the school staff speak the national language.
Aims	To prepare students for public exams in the national language while also developing good levels of English proficiency.

Table 1. Five example profiles for EMI schools and programmes

WHO IS A 'MULTILINGUAL' LEARNER?

Students who go to EMI schools are as diverse as the schools they attend. In some cases they are all speakers of the same, non-English language; in other cases they represent a number of different languages. Some students are complete beginners, while others have quite a lot of experience of learning English. In some contexts, students have experienced formal instruction in a language that they do not speak at home—for example, students who live in 'officially' multilingual communities such as Singapore or Switzerland. In other contexts, students' learning experiences are more informal—a product of growing up in diverse communities where official and unofficial languages coexist, such as many urban communities worldwide. Despite these differences, what all of these students share is that English, the principal language of instruction in their schools, is not the main language of their homes. Throughout this paper, we refer to all these students as 'multilingual learners'.

Different terms are used to describe multilingual learners of English in different contexts; for example, English as an Additional Language (EAL), English Language Learner (ELL), Limited English Proficient (LEP), **English as a Second Language (ESL)**, **English as a Foreign Language (EFL)**, and so on. While all of these terms can apply to the students we have in mind, we have chosen 'multilingual learners' to capture the diversity of students whose language development we are considering

" When my children started at the school, I stopped speaking in French with them because I thought it was not very good to have two languages, to have all the confusion in their heads. But when I talked to their teacher, she explained to me that it's very important to maintain the mother language… So I restarted talking in French with them all the time, and reading them French stories, and I saw it's better for them now also in English."

Carlotta, parent of multilingual school students

in this paper. Multilingual learners are those who use more than one language and who represent different language backgrounds. This includes students in the early stages of learning English, for whom an EMI programme is intended to initiate then develop their ability to use English. It also includes students who are already competent users of English as well as at least one other language, and for whom an EMI programme is intended to deepen their competence in English. It also includes all learners who fall somewhere in between these two ends of the spectrum. Finally, we use the term 'multilingual learners' because it reflects our expectation that EMI programmes will promote additive multilingualism—seeking to enrich students' existing linguistic repertoire by adding English to it. This is in contrast to programme types in which children's existing languages are replaced by English, often called subtractive bi/multilingualism.

Like the learners themselves, the languages they speak can be described in many different ways; for example, mother tongue, first language, home language, community language, and heritage language. For simplicity, we have chosen the term 'first language' (abbreviated to L1) to refer to the non-English language or languages used by multilingual learners in their homes and communities. It is important to recognize that this might not be just one language, and not necessarily the language learned first. It is just as important to recognize that students' L1s are not always the same as the official languages of the country or region that they live in, and also to acknowledge that some countries have standard and non-standard varieties that students may use with differing levels of proficiency. Having accurate information about the L1s used by students is crucial for effectively implementing the L1-inclusive EMI programmes that we recommend in this paper.

EMI programmes can incorporate first language instruction too, integrating both languages with curriculum content.

VICTORIA MURPHY

THE PLACE OF A LEARNER'S FIRST LANGUAGE (L1) IN EMI EDUCATION

Many people strongly believe that an effective EMI programme requires teachers and students to use only English, teaching resources to be available only in English, and assessments of students' academic content knowledge to be conducted only in English. This often stems from a concern that allowing students to use their L1 while learning English will confuse them, causing them to mix up their languages and slowing down their progress in English. This has led some schools to adopt strict English-only policies that prohibit students and teachers from using the L1. Such school policies are sometimes reflected in language 'policies' adopted by families in their homes. If parents believe that they must take every available opportunity for their children to use English, they may insist that English is spoken at home, regardless of the family's language history or proficiency in English. A key purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that insisting on English-only environments in the school and in the home is unlikely to be the most helpful approach to meeting the aims of EMI schools or the aspirations and expectations of students and their parents—both for proficiency in English and for achievement in other academic subjects.

Students' L1 has long been recognized as an essential part of learning a new language. Based on research into **second language (L2)** learning, we know that, far from being a distraction, students' L1 is strongly related to their proficiency in an additional language. Applied linguist Wolfgang Butzkamm observed:

> Using the mother tongue, we have (1) learnt to think, (2) learnt to communicate and (3) acquired an intuitive understanding of grammar. The mother tongue is therefore the greatest asset people bring to the task of foreign language learning.[11]

One of the largest and most consistent bodies of research that supports the use of L1 in EMI education has been carried out in bilingual schools.[12] Numerous studies have shown that children who go to bilingual schools, and who are taught the mainstream curriculum through both their L1 and English, tend to do better than similar children who go to schools where all teaching is conducted in English. These better outcomes are seen not just in their English proficiency but in their academic knowledge in other subject areas as well. Furthermore, students in bilingual schools continue to develop as skilled users of their L1, whereas their peers who go to English-only schools fail to develop advanced academic language in their L1 and may even lose some of the skills they had at the beginning of their schooling.[13]

Using English and the first language creates multiple channels for learning.

DAVID MARSH

SUMMARY

EMI in secondary and primary schools is growing in popularity across the world. The motivation for this includes preparing students to go to EMI universities, valuing English as a language of business and popular culture, and the personal enrichment associated with the ability to speak more than one language.

EMI schools aim to develop English proficiency by using English to teach the content and skills of mainstream curriculum subjects.

EMI schools take many forms, with the share of English language instruction varying, for example, by amount of time across the curriculum or by subject area.

We refer to students who attend EMI schools as 'multilingual learners'. This recognizes their knowledge of other languages as well as their developing knowledge of English.

We refer to the language that multilingual learners use in their homes and communities as their 'first language' (L1). This may or may not be the same as the official language of the place where they are living, and students may have more than one L1.

People often assume that students should use only English in order to learn the language. Research shows that this is unlikely to be the most effective approach.

Multilingual learners' L1 is an important tool in the learning of English. Different types of research show that this is the case.

02

THE CENTRAL ROLE OF FIRST LANGUAGES IN EMI

The first language (L1) and second language (L2) coexist and interact in the multilingual learner's mind, and this has important implications for the development of students' language proficiency and academic attainment. Research shows that education programmes which use both L1 and L2 are associated with better language development and better academic development than English-only education. Research also reveals how multilingual learners can effectively use their L1 when they participate in learning activities in non-bilingual programmes. Additional research has explored the effects of L1 use in education on students' sense of identity and engagement in learning. Overall, strategic use of multilingual learners' L1, rather than exclusive use of English, is more likely to meet the aims of EMI programmes.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH AND A MULTILINGUAL LEARNER'S L1

Policies that exclude L1 from the English classroom are often based on intuitions about how languages are learned. Not unreasonably, people often assume that the best way to become fluent in an additional language is to replicate the experience of young children learning L1; that is, without comparisons with another language. Sometimes people worry that the L1 will interfere with the new language, causing learners to get confused and mix up the known and new languages.

The persistence of these beliefs is due in part to their apparent logic. It is also related to prevailing attitudes to second language teaching and learning during the 20th century that reinforced the notion that learning an additional language should be done in isolation from the L1.[14] However, as researchers delved more deeply into how languages are learned, especially in educational settings, an alternative view about the language learning process and the relationships between the L1 and L2 emerged. There is now agreement among researchers that, far from interfering with each other, the L1 and L2 are mutually supportive.[15]

An enduring and influential explanation of how different languages are mutually supportive was elaborated in the 1970s and 1980s by Jim Cummins.[16] His **linguistic interdependence hypothesis** states that if the underlying language skills needed to succeed at school are well developed in the L1, they will transfer to the learner's L2 once they reach a certain threshold of proficiency in the L2 (in our case, English). The process by which skills from one language become available for use in the other is called 'cross-linguistic transfer'. It is important to note here that transfer does not imply that the skills move from one language to the other, rather that the skills can be accessed for use in both the L1 and L2. If prohibition of L1 use means L1 skills are not well developed or their development is stopped, they will not be available to support the development of English and academic subjects learned through English. As a result, both their English language development and their curriculum understanding are likely to be poorer.

Cummins distinguished between the surface features of language (for example, words and grammar) and the underlying linguistic proficiency that allows us to use these features effectively. He illustrated this using an iceberg metaphor. The peak of the iceberg represents the surface features of language. The part of the iceberg that is underwater represents the proficiency upon which those surface features are built. For multilingual learners, a second peak represents the vocabulary and grammar of the L2. The knowledge that is under the surface, however, is a single entity and is not divided by language. Cummins calls this hidden part of the iceberg **common underlying proficiency**. He explains that when children learn their L1, they are learning more than just words and ways of putting those words together; they are learning concepts and intellectual skills at the same time. These concepts and skills that were acquired during L1 learning are already in place when children begin to learn an L2. Cummins gives the following illustration:

> Pupils who know how to tell the time in their mother tongue understand the concept of telling time. In order to tell time in the second language […] they do not need to re-learn the concept of telling time; they simply need to acquire new labels or 'surface structures' for an intellectual skill they have already learned.[17]

Cummins also distinguished between two types of language proficiency referred to as **BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills)** and **CALP (cognitive/academic language proficiency)**. BICS is the kind of language that we use in day-to-day interactions. For students, it is the language of the lunch hall, the playground, and the home. BICS requires a relatively small vocabulary and often occurs in familiar situations that involve a great deal of repetitive language. CALP refers to the knowledge and skills needed to manipulate language and make meaning in academic tasks that often include unfamiliar vocabulary and decontextualized language. We use CALP when we hypothesize, justify, classify, synthesize, evaluate, and infer.

Using my language at school helps me understand things. And if I understand things, I can communicate better and get good grades.

GUILLERMO, MULTILINGUAL SCHOOL STUDENT

These are all important cross-disciplinary skills that students need in order to understand the relatively abstract concepts they encounter in school. Given the right opportunities and motivation, BICS appears to develop relatively easily in both L1 and L2. CALP takes longer to develop, and research suggests that some aspects of CALP will be difficult or even impossible to acquire unless they are taught explicitly. For students whose L1 is stronger than their English, as is the case for many learners when they begin EMI schooling, it is more efficient to teach the more abstract CALP skills in the L1, knowing that these skills will be available in English when the surface features of English have had time to develop.

Cross-linguistic transfer can often be seen in students' literacy skills. For example, students with good reading comprehension in their L1 also tend to have good reading comprehension in their L2.[18] Students who read fluently in their L1 are also more likely to become fluent readers in their L2.[19] Extensive, long-term research on multilingual learners in the USA has revealed strong relationships between their L1 proficiency when they start school and their English proficiency at the end of secondary school.[20] These positive cross-linguistic relationships have been found between L1s and L2s that are similar (for example, Spanish and English) and for those that are quite different. For example, a large Taiwanese study found a strong relationship between students' reading proficiency in Mandarin Chinese (which uses pictograms) and their reading proficiency in English (which uses a phonetic script).[21]

HOW USING L1 AFFECTS SECOND LANGUAGE (L2) DEVELOPMENT

Some of the strongest evidence to support the use of learners' L1 and L2 in their education comes from numerous studies of bilingual education. In addition, there is a growing body of research that assesses the effects of using L1-medium strategies in lessons that are otherwise L2-only.

Bilingual programmes

It might be surprising to learn that the model for many EMI programmes is based on what has been called 'French **immersion**' in Canada. Contrary to what the label might suggest, this approach to teaching students a new language is actually a form of bilingual education in which students' L1 always has an important place in the school and the community. One of the first evaluations of French immersion schooling found it to be very successful in promoting language learning in both L1 and L2. In kindergarten, the students whose L1 was English received half-day instruction in French for all curriculum

areas. In grade 1, their instruction continued to be in French, including their first reading instruction. Starting in grade 2, students had daily English **language arts** lessons. Over successive years, the proportion of English was increased until, by Grade 5, instruction was shared equally between the two languages. It is important to note that the language students heard at home and outside their classroom was most often English, and that students' success in their L1 was an essential goal of these bilingual programmes. When the students' proficiency in French and English was compared with that of similar children at English schools where French was taught as a subject, they were found to have not only far better French language proficiency but also, after a short period of catch-up, equivalent or better English proficiency. Their rapid progress in English was attributed to a transfer of skills from their initial literacy training in French.[22]

Following the success of the first French immersion programmes in Canada, many similar programmes were developed in Canada, the US, Australia, as well as in Europe, where the L2 was often English. A variety of programme models evolved over time, but what they all shared was a commitment to both L1 and L2 development. This provided fertile ground for research into the effects of these types of bilingual education. Several major reviews have now combined the findings of this research to provide an overall picture of the positive effects of systematically teaching students in both their L1 and L2.[23]

Bilingual schools can be classified into two main types: those following **maintenance bilingual programmes** and those following **transitional bilingual programmes**. In maintenance programmes, both languages are used for curriculum instruction in all age groups. Transitional programmes use L1 exclusively to begin with, then English instruction gradually replaces L1 instruction until all teaching is done in English. As the names suggest, the aims of these programmes differ in that maintenance programmes seek to maintain L1 as English is added to it, while transitional programmes aim to eventually provide all instruction in English only. Research into bilingual models of education provides convincing evidence that EMI schools will be most effective if they adopt a policy of L1 inclusion over an extended period of time.

In maintenance programmes the division of L1 and L2 instruction varies from programme to programme. For example, in some the L1 is used as the medium of instruction for some parts of the day and L2 is used for the other parts of the day. In others, L1 and L2 instruction is divided by subject area. In a small number of cases lessons are team-taught by two teachers, one proficient in the L1 and the other proficient in English. The **European Schools** model is a special case of maintenance bilingual education in which multiple bilingual 'streams' coexist under one roof. For example, a European School in Germany might have a German/English stream, a German/French stream, and a German/Italian stream. Students representing these language communities are taught in their respective L1s in early years and lower primary, alongside daily lessons in the L2. In later year groups their chosen L2 is introduced as a medium of instruction for some subjects. By Grade 8, curriculum time is divided equally between L1 and L2[24] and is used on a

language-by-subject basis where half of a student's subjects are taught in L1 and half in L2. What these models all have in common is that teaching in the L1 is maintained throughout.

A recent study of bilingual programmes conducted in the USA[25] is important for a number of reasons. First, it was a large study involving 1,625 students who were randomly allocated to maintenance bilingual or English-only programmes. This unbiased way of deciding who went to which school means we have a better idea of whether the results are due to the programme type, rather than to the characteristics of the children within them. Unlike many earlier studies, it also evaluated programmes for students from a variety of different language backgrounds (Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, and Spanish). The study found that multilingual learners in maintenance bilingual programmes did significantly better than their peers in English-only programmes on tests of English reading—as though they had had up to nine months of additional teaching.

A minority of studies have found that maintenance bilingual programmes are not more effective for English language development than English-only programmes.[26] However, these studies did not find an advantage for English-only programmes either. Instead, they found that English language proficiency was equally well developed in both. Importantly, students in maintenance bilingual programmes were far more likely to have maintained and developed their L1, as L1 instruction had continued in step with English. Their peers in English-only programmes had not been given this opportunity.

When comparing maintenance and transitional bilingual programmes, we see that over time the outcomes on English language proficiency are quite similar. For example, in a seven-year comparison of maintenance and transitional programmes,[27] researchers found that students in maintenance programmes had better scores on tests of basic English skills in the early grades. Over time this difference lessened so that at Grade 7 the two groups of students had similar levels of English proficiency. Here again, it is important to recognize that while English attainment reached comparable levels in both maintenance and transitional programmes, only students in maintenance programmes developed academic language proficiency in their L1.

Of course, maintenance or even transitional bilingual programmes are not available in all educational contexts in the world. Thus, it is important to consider other options for

Maintaining and developing L1 is a strong predictor of success for acquiring proficiency in L2.

PATSY LIGHTBOWN

incorporating multilingual practices in EMI schools. Below we discuss some strategies that teachers can implement to make use of multilingual learners' L1 in lessons that are normally taught in English. Although there is still relatively little research investigating these practices, what little there is can help us to understand the basis for using the L1 to help students learn both English and other curriculum content.

Teaching strategies that use L1 in L2 classrooms

Translanguaging[28] is one recent approach to bilingual instruction that encourages multilingual learners to use all of their languages in response to each learning context. Sometimes the use of more than one language is deliberately planned. For example, a teacher might read a story to young students in English and set up the role play corner to encourage them to act it out using their L1. Older students might be given reading material in one language and asked to discuss its content in another. Sometimes the use of more than one language is allowed to occur organically. For example, a student might choose to make notes on a lecture using both English and L1. Researchers have argued that by using both languages in this way, multilingual learners' language development is improved.[29] Encouraging students to compare and contrast their languages is thought to develop what is known as 'metalinguistic awareness': understanding how languages work. Relatively little research has been conducted to evaluate the effects of translanguaging strategies on language development. Nonetheless, some studies of strategies for developing metalinguistic awareness help us to understand the kinds of language outcomes a translanguaging approach might deliver.

In a study conducted in Cyprus, primary school students were taught to compare the sounds, words, and grammar rules of their L1 (Cypriot Greek Dialect) with the equivalents in their L2 (Standard Modern Greek).[30] At the end of the three-month intervention, the students showed dramatic reductions in errors in their L2. In a similar study Polish secondary school students were taught to systematically analyse, compare, and contrast Polish grammar with English grammar.[31] On subsequent tests of English grammar, students who had been taught using this method significantly outperformed those who had learned English grammar using traditional 'drill and practice' methods.

Another example of successful use of L1 to develop English language proficiency is in vocabulary teaching. Two studies, one in primary school EFL classes in South Korea[32] and the other in pre-schools for Spanish-dominant children in the United States,[33] used students' L1 to support English vocabulary learning. In these studies bilingual teachers read English language books with their students. When they came to words that the students did not understand, the teachers used the students' L1 to explain what the words meant. The students' vocabulary learning was compared to that of students whose teachers gave the explanations in English. In both studies, students who were given L1 explanations of words were more likely to understand and remember them. In an evaluation of a slightly different approach, Taiwanese students read English texts that included short L1 definitions written next to key words.[34] The students'

ability to remember the meaning of these words was compared with that of students who had read the same texts without the L1 definitions. Students with L1 definitions were significantly better at remembering the meaning of the English words.

HOW USING L1 AFFECTS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

English language proficiency is often the outcome that gets the most attention in studies of EMI programmes. However, English proficiency and academic attainment are in many ways two sides of the same coin, and some of the studies reported above have also assessed the effects of bilingual approaches on outcomes in other curriculum areas. For example, in studies of learners' progress in science, mathematics, civics, and general educational development, students in bilingual programmes tended to do at least as well as, and sometimes better than, their peers in English-only programmes.[35]

Using the L1 to teach thinking and learning skills such as inferring, summarizing, predicting, and synthesizing has also been shown to support academic development for multilingual learners. Based on the theories of common underlying proficiency and linguistic interdependence discussed earlier in this section (see page 16), taking the opportunity to develop multilingual learners' CALP using their L1 can be beneficial if they have not yet developed the surface language features needed to do so in English. For example, L1 Mandarin Chinese students in a school in New Zealand took part in 'reciprocal reading' lessons conducted either in Mandarin Chinese or in English.[36] Reciprocal reading lessons aimed to help children develop their metacognitive (or 'thinking about thinking') skills by demonstrating and using them in discussions around a text they had read in English. The researchers noticed that discussions in Mandarin Chinese were far more fluid than those in English, and they suggest that this allowed the children to internalize the skills they were being taught more readily, in turn making them available to the reading process in English.

"I've encouraged teachers to let students use their first language while developing their English language ability… Even during group work in class, we allow them to choose L1 or English. They have to produce the project or report in English, but they can use whatever language they find most comfortable to express themselves and discuss their work. This enables them to have more sophisticated conversations about their work, and it helps them to gain confidence as learners and feel part of the learning community."

Danling, teacher educator
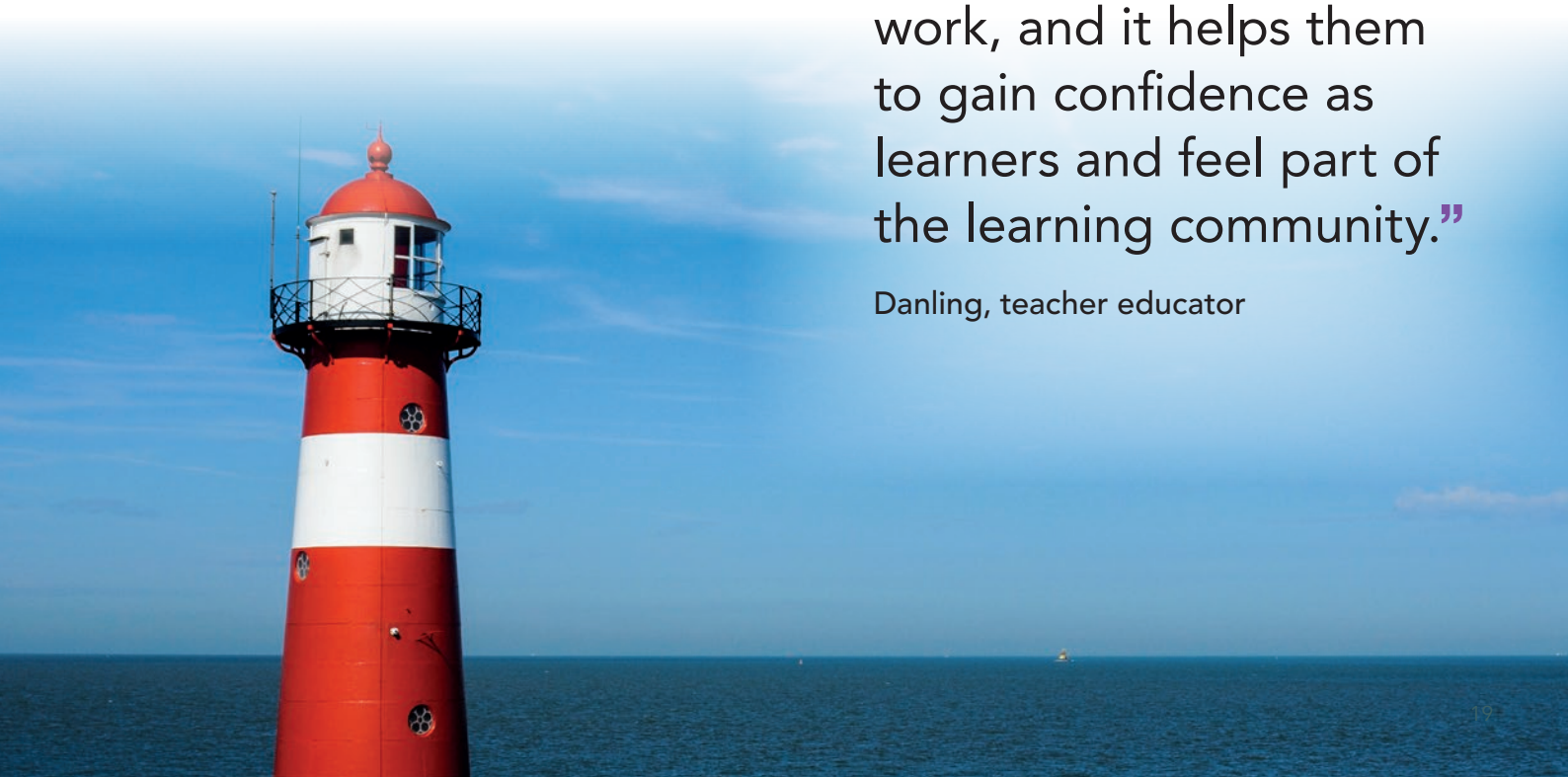
In a study that assessed the effects of using L1 to teach learning skills, Iranian students were taught techniques such as making inferences, identifying topics, guessing, and note-taking using Persian, their L1. A comparison group was taught using traditional listening drills in English only. Students taught in Persian showed significant improvement in scores on English listening tests compared with those who had been instructed only in English.[37]

In European Schools the most visible measure of academic development is the success of students on final examinations leading to the European baccalaureate. Students take these exams in the language in which they studied each subject, whether L1 or L2. For example, a student might take a geography exam in French (L1) and a history exam in English (L2). The exceptionally high pass rate in these exams[38] is seen as evidence for the strong positive effect of using both the L1 and L2 to promote academic achievement.

Some researchers have observed that translanguaging approaches promote academic development beyond what would be possible in a monolingual classroom. Students bring with them an understanding of the world built through the language practices of their homes. Encouraging the use of students' home language practices in the classroom, it is argued, allows them 'to appropriate content and knowledge, as well as practice the language of school for academic purposes'.[39] This is in keeping with the theories of common underlying proficiency and linguistic interdependence.

Using the first language in school stimulates cognitive and academic growth.

EITHNE GALLAGHER

HOW MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS USE L1 TO SUPPORT THEIR LEARNING

Some research has been designed to help us understand the purposes that are served by the L1 when multilingual learners participate in classroom activities in English. For example, when they are working independently on a task such as writing an essay, multilingual learners are asked to say out loud what they are thinking as they work and to do this in the languages in which their thoughts occur. When multilingual learners are working collaboratively, their conversations are recorded, and researchers can analyse each exchange in terms of the languages used and the purposes they serve. As a result of this

I speak Spanish, English, and Italian. By speaking all these three languages, I feel happy… By using Spanish in school, it helps me remember my language and to understand more words.

TERESA, MULTILINGUAL SCHOOL STUDENT

research, we know, for example, that multilingual learners use the L1 to help them generate ideas and plan writing, to search for words and phrases, and to compare ways of saying things in each language.[40]

On individual tasks, students use their L1 to explore and rehearse ideas before committing to them in English, creating a kind of mental first draft in the L1.[41] As tasks near completion, L1 is also used to reflect on the process and edit work.[42] Studies of multilingual learners working together on English language tasks report the use of L1 for similar purposes; and because of the interpersonal nature of collaborative tasks, the L1 is also used for other reasons. For example, L1 is used to move tasks along, focus attention, and for interpersonal interaction.[43] Students' interactions are more fluid, collaborative, and balanced when they use their L1s. By contrast, when students are told that they are not allowed to use their L1, group discussions are fragmented, non-collaborative, and do not address the task effectively.[44]

In some contexts researchers have found that allowing the use of L1 in task-oriented discussions scaffolds understanding, improves information-sharing, helps with finding appropriate vocabulary, scaffolds peer support, facilitates higher-order mental processing, and builds knowledge.[45] Moreover, allowing L1 to be used in this way is thought to free up cognitive resources that can be used to concentrate more fully on the English language elements of the task, leading some researchers to conclude that 'the L1 provide[s] essential cognitive support for focusing attention and understanding meaning'.[46] In EMI schools, where there is a dual focus on language and content learning, allowing the L1 to be used in these ways may well improve both.

A common concern among teachers is that students will go 'off task' if permitted to use their L1 in collaborative activities. While off-task discussion has been observed in groups of students using their L1, it tends to occupy a very small proportion of total task time,[47] and is arguably no different to what might be expected in any classroom, multilingual or 'English only'. Indeed, the potential gains facilitated

My first language is Danish. My ideas come in my own language first… When we have to write something, we plan it in our own language first and this helps me.

SEBASTIAN, MULTILINGUAL SCHOOL STUDENT

by allowing L1 use in these circumstances seem likely to outweigh any losses caused by off-task chat, particularly when compared to the lack of direction seen when students are told to use only English. Importantly, the authors of the studies summarized here tend to stress that use of the L1 should not happen in an unplanned manner. Instead, teachers should find ways to incorporate L1 into collaborative tasks that judiciously support learning in the L2. As for independent tasks, it seems likely that teachers can do nothing to prohibit multilingual learners from using their L1 even if they wanted to. A wealth of research in cognitive psychology indicates that all of the languages known to a multilingual person are active all of the time.[48] Making strategic use of those languages contributes to positive educational outcomes.

HOW L1 USE IN SCHOOL IMPACTS IDENTITY AND ENGAGEMENT

As well as being associated with better academic performance and higher proficiency in both L1 and L2, opportunities for L1 use can have an impact on other important aspects of a student's development. One of these is their sense of identity. Ofelia García, whose research focuses on Latino communities in the USA,[49] argues that the language practices of individuals are inseparable from their communities and histories.

> When I'm reading an English text, I think in Montenegrin and then I know in English. I think it's really good for children like me to use our own language because that makes us feel good.

OGNIEN, MULTILINGUAL SCHOOL STUDENT

Translanguaging approaches, of which García is a strong supporter, are designed at least as much to support multilingual learners' identities as they are to promote their linguistic and academic development. The language we use reflects who we are, where we come from, and the shared histories that we have as members of our communities. From this perspective, language is much more than a tool for communication. Multilingual learners' L1s are associated with their cultural norms and traditions, reflecting the ways their cultures look at the world. One of the gravest concerns voiced by García and others is that if students are encouraged to see their L1 as at best irrelevant and at worst damaging to their wider education, the education system risks tacitly encouraging them to view their culture and themselves in that same negative light.

An extreme consequence of encouraging multilingual learners to see their L1 as irrelevant is that students risk losing their ability to use it at all. Language loss, or language attrition,[50] happens when people stop using one language because another language becomes dominant in their lives. Older learners, whose L1 is well established, tend to lose words rather than the structural aspects of language such as grammar and syntax, though these can also be negatively affected. The effect of language loss on younger learners, particularly students whose early years education is conducted exclusively in their L2, can be much more dramatic. In exceptional cases children can completely lose the ability to use their L1.

The role that education policy has to play in either preventing or hastening language loss is important. The way schools communicate their view of the students' L1 to parents is important. For example, parents with children in English-medium schools sometimes choose to mirror the language policies in school and make their home 'English only' as well. Part of a responsible school language policy, therefore, is to

Valuing learners' first language knowledge is essential to reinforce learners' cultural and personal identities.

NINA SPADA

ensure that students and parents understand the importance of their L1, not just as an educational tool but for identity, culture, and social cohesion as well.

The United Nations has made clear on numerous occasions that students have the right to be educated using their L1.[51] The underpinning premise for this right is that children learn best in their L1, especially in the early stages of education.[52] Recently published research on EMI education in low- and middle-income countries has found that exclusive use of English limits students' opportunities for communication, which in turn can limit their educational attainment.[53]

The report also found that exclusive use of English can be a barrier to good pedagogy, as classroom practice tends to be dominated by textbook approaches, especially where the teacher's proficiency in English is limited. In response to these findings, the British Council has stated that in such low- and middle-income contexts the students' L2 'should only be used as a medium of instruction after learners have developed academic reading and writing competency in the language they are familiar with'.[54]

Providing opportunities to learn in L1 means that students are more engaged at school and develop a more positive self-image than those who must learn only in a new language. Research on language of instruction in minority groups has found that making L1 education available is associated with more children starting school, better motivation once they are there, and improved community empowerment.[55] Research on the school experiences of girls from linguistic minorities has shown that bilingual programmes are associated with reduced inequality in attainment between boys and girls, with more girls going to school, and girls staying in school for longer.[56]

AN ENGLISH–ONLY APPROACH IS NOT NECESSARILY BEST IN EMI EDUCATION

In order for students to succeed in learning English, they need substantial exposure to English at school, especially if opportunities to use English outside of school are limited. However, the research we have summarized in this section makes it clear that this does not mean students' L1 should be banished from the classroom in favour of an exclusively English environment. Drawing on L1 proficiency and maintaining its development through bilingual programmes is associated with better outcomes in language (both L1 and English) and academic attainment than those attained through English-only approaches.

"I think their mother tongue is very important for them because in life it is important to have a point of reference… In the school I have noticed they have been learning without stress. The teacher has encouraged them to use their language… At the beginning I didn't realize the importance of supporting their Spanish at home… This is the most important thing: reading with them, telling stories, writing…"

Magdalena, parent of multilingual school students

When children are allowed to use their language as a cognitive tool, they learn better.

EITHNE GALLAGHER

Where bilingual programmes are not possible, there is some evidence that employing teaching approaches that strategically use L1, for example to support vocabulary learning or develop awareness of similarities and differences between L1 and English, is helpful to the learner. In addition, students who are allowed to use their L1 when working collaboratively often use it to better understand the learning task and to keep themselves on task. We have also seen that welcoming each student's L1 can have an important impact on students' sense of identity and cultural belonging. Using L1 allows students to express who they are, and facilitates the involvement of parents and the wider community in education. At a minimum, L1 provision recognizes 'the importance of giving that most rudimentary element of an education: literacy in the language they speak at home'.[57]

SUMMARY

The capacity for the human mind to accommodate different languages is enormous.

Languages are mutually supportive. The underlying cognitive skills developed through one language are accessible for use in another language.

There are strong relationships between languages. For example, students who read well in their L1 are likely to also read well in English.

The mutually supportive relationship between languages is best when development in both languages is maintained for long periods.

Bilingual programmes are associated with better outcomes in English and other curriculum subjects than English-only programmes.

Use of the L1 can improve results in English in non-bilingual EMI programmes. This includes using L1 to explain the meanings of new words, to compare and contrast features of L1 with English, and to teach 'thinking' skills.

Multilingual learners use their L1s in ways that support their learning in English. For example, they organize their thinking, plan and review their work, and manage tasks more fluidly and productively when they collaborate with other students who share the same L1.

Providing opportunities to learn in the L1 helps preserve students' personal and cultural identities.

Where possible, the L1 should be used to support learning in EMI programmes.

"On the pre-primary programmes where I work, we meet with the parents of our young students to talk about multilingualism as a resource for their children. We encourage parents to engage them in using rich home language for multiple purposes as consistently as possible. Examples include daily activities such as speaking during family meals and socializing in the community, as well as reading and writing. We also welcome the children's home languages into our classrooms. We collect and use key vocabulary in multiple languages in daily classroom activities. We send home 'talking homework' that includes games and storybooks that parents can use in their home language. This builds the children's familiarity and background knowledge of vocabulary, concepts, and story events prior to hearing the story in English in the classroom. Parents have expressed surprise and delight in having use of their languages encouraged. It affirms their desire for their children to keep their languages and cultural identities."

Theresa, teacher educator

03

INCORPORATING FIRST LANGUAGES INTO EMI PROGRAMMES

EMI programmes which draw on and continue to develop the first language (L1) proficiency of multilingual learners are more likely to meet their linguistic and academic aims than EMI programmes that use only English. The research reviewed in this paper can inform language policy and practice in EMI programmes. Policymakers, school leaders, and teachers can all adopt approaches in which students' L1 is supported and developed.

Because EMI programmes include a variety of different school types and local contexts, some research is more relevant to particular contexts than others. However, recommendations can be made within two broad categories: schools in which all students speak the same L1, and schools in which students speak a variety of different L1s. In addition, there are positive ways in which schools can engage with parents to support their children's learning through their L1.

Using their first language in school helps children to be motivated and engaged in learning.

EITHNE GALLAGHER

SUPPORTING L1 IN EMI PROGRAMMES WHERE STUDENTS SHARE THE SAME L1

Maintenance bilingual programmes in English and L1

Overview

Schools in which students share the same L1 provide an excellent opportunity to develop EMI programmes with robust and comprehensive L1 components. The availability of teachers who share the students' L1, the availability of L1 teaching resources, and ample opportunities to use the L1 in the home and community make developing L1-inclusive EMI programmes in these contexts relatively straightforward. Maintenance bilingual programmes in which both languages are used throughout a student's education are associated with the best outcomes for multilingual learners.

Implications for policymakers

In contexts where students and teachers share the same L1, policymakers should consider offering bilingual programmes instead of English-only EMI programmes. Maintenance bilingual programmes, are most effective in developing English proficiency, L1 proficiency, and curriculum understanding. Some schools choose to do this by splitting the day into L1 and English portions, or by splitting the week into an L1 half and an English half. Schools that adopt this model employ local teachers to teach the L1 portion of the day or week and English-proficient local or overseas teachers to teach the English language portion.

An alternative model for bilingual programmes, assuming there are ample opportunities to develop and use L1 outside the immediate second language (L2) classroom, is the Canadian French immersion model. A typical approach starts by teaching nearly all subjects in the L2 in the early years, supported by daily L1 language arts lessons. The proportion of teaching in L1 then increases each year until instruction is split equally between L1 and L2. The European Schools model reverses this process by teaching nearly all subjects in L1 in the early years, with daily L2 language lessons included in the curriculum. The proportion of instruction in L2 increases each year until there is a balance between L1 and L2. These two models appear to be equally effective in promoting linguistic and academic success.[58]

Using L1 allows children to engage with academic content from the moment they start school.

PATSY LIGHTBOWN

Implications for school leaders and teachers

The success of bilingual programmes relies to a great extent on careful curriculum planning and ongoing collaboration between teachers in different language streams. The English teacher and L1 teacher need to work together to ensure that learning objectives are addressed in both languages over the course of a topic. This allows for CALP (cognitive/academic language proficiency) to develop in the students' strongest language, to be reinforced and extended in the other language. Students can draw on what they have learned in either or both languages, compare and contrast topic-specific vocabulary and linguistic features, and thus develop metalinguistic awareness (understanding how languages work), which facilitates efficient transfer of understanding between languages.

In the L1 classroom and the English classroom, students work on similar learning objectives. Sometimes these objectives are covered concurrently in both languages, and sometimes they are interleaved to provide spaced coverage. For example, in the first week of a science topic on the human body, L1 and English strands review what students already know about the topic. In the second week, they learn about the functions of the major organs in L1, and learn about keeping healthy in English. In the third week, the objectives from the previous week are reversed: students learn about the functions of internal organs in English and about keeping healthy in L1. In the fourth week, students write about what they have learned in both languages. Understanding developed in one language strand is thus recycled, reinforced, and extended in the other.

An alternative to dividing curriculum time by language is to work towards complete integration of teaching and learning in both languages. Classes in schools adopting this approach are led either by a bilingual teacher, or by a teacher with a bilingual teaching assistant. The teacher plans lessons to take account of the students' L1 and provides equal coverage of languages over the course of a topic, much like the two-classroom approach described above. When a bilingual teaching assistant is available, lessons can be team-taught. Each language is associated with one of the teachers so that when one is leading the lesson, the language of instruction is the L1; and when the other is leading, the language is English.

Having both languages available at all times allows for switching between languages to address misunderstandings, expand on key points, and explain language features. For example, we saw in Section 2 (see page 18) that switching to L1 to explain key vocabulary can be a more effective way to teach the meaning of English words than using only English.[59] Bilingual teaching or team-teaching also allow for efficient development of thinking skills through use of the L1.[60] For example, one teacher can lead a session in the L1 designed to develop skills of summarizing the findings of science experiments and using that information to make predictions about future experiments. The other teacher can then review and develop the concepts and skills of summarizing and predicting in a later session using English. Availability of instruction in both languages at all times allows students to be supported 'in the moment', in ways that are immediately relevant to the learning taking place.

"A teacher in one of my courses taught writing skills in English to multilingual secondary school students. She decided to invite students to use their home language in preparing their work, with the understanding that their final paper had to be in English. She was excited to find that the papers were much better than any she had received in the past. The students all said that being able to talk and plan in their home languages before writing in English made them feel smart and like real students. It turned out they had also discussed their papers with their classmates and families outside of class. This project had been on their minds and made them think about school more. The teacher was amazed that inviting her students' home languages into the classroom had so many social and emotional, academic, and linguistic benefits for her students."

Cristina, teacher educator

Bilingual programmes which transition from L1 to English

Overview

An alternative to maintenance bilingual programmes are transitional bilingual programmes in which, over a period of several years, students transition from being taught primarily or entirely in L1 to being taught entirely in English. While this model is less strongly associated with the gains we usually see in maintenance bilingual programmes, it is nonetheless more effective than English-only programmes.

Implications for policymakers

Transitional bilingual programmes use the L1 as a foundation for students to build transferable literacy skills and to acquire knowledge in different subject areas at a time when their ability to learn through English is still limited. This approach helps prepare multilingual students for an English-only learning environment. It is important to recall that the transition from being a student who is 'new to English' to one with well-developed English CALP (see Section 2, page 17) takes much longer than the one to three years often allotted to so-called 'early-exit' transitional programmes. 'Late-exit' programmes that make the transition from L1 to English over five to seven years are more effective than early-exit programmes at developing students' linguistic proficiency and their academic knowledge and skills in both English and L1.[61]

Policymakers should take into account their schools' likely points of pupil intake when considering the different options. A transitional programme that provides bilingual instruction only in the earliest grades will not help students who join the school in later grades. For those students, L1 teaching assistants and other kinds of extra support will be needed to bring them up to the level of their classmates.

Implications for school leaders and teachers

The success of transitional bilingual programmes relies to a great extent on careful curriculum planning. A transitional programme typically uses the students' L1 almost exclusively in the earliest years. This may be augmented by regular English language lessons. In the middle years, a gradual introduction of English as a medium of instruction builds on the foundation provided by the L1. The curriculum should reflect what students have already learned in L1 in the earlier phase and use this knowledge and understanding to help develop similar competences in English. Some schools introduce English as a medium of instruction first for subjects where language is more immediately contextualized and are therefore less cognitively demanding from a linguistic point of view. These subjects include physical education, music, and art. Later, English is used as a medium of instruction for more abstract, decontextualized subjects that are more demanding, such as social studies, maths, and the sciences.

The approaches to curriculum planning and delivery we described for maintenance bilingual programmes above are also appropriate ways to plan and organize teaching and learning across languages in the middle phase of transitional bilingual programmes. In the final phase of these programmes the medium of instruction becomes exclusively English. Once the transition is made, teachers take into account the foundation of linguistic proficiency and curriculum knowledge developed in both the L1 and English, and plan and deliver lessons accordingly. It is important that a focus on language is integrated with curriculum instruction, to ensure that students are supported as they continue to develop the linguistic proficiency in English they need to do well at school.

Language-by-subject EMI programmes

Overview

Another option for schools where students share the same L1 are **language-by-subject programmes**. Some schools take a CLIL (content and language integrated learning) approach to teaching subjects through English. In CLIL, the medium of instruction is English, but the goals of classroom pedagogy include a focus on the development of English as well as the growth of academic knowledge. However, language-by-subject approaches do not always include this important language focus in their delivery. In some language-by-subject programmes, multilingual learners are taught in English as if they are already competent users of English, with little or no modification to take account of the fact that they are not.

Implications for policymakers

Language-by-subject programmes often use English to teach a small number of subjects in the curriculum. For example, STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and maths) may be taught in English in preparation for EMI university programmes in these fields while humanities and arts subjects are taught in the L1. These programmes do not offer the direct reinforcement of curriculum learning and academic language that is possible when all subjects are studied in both languages. For example, students in bilingual programmes can draw on their understanding of scientific principles developed in the L1 to inform their understanding of scientific principles in English. Nonetheless, language-by-subject approaches can be effective because, even though academic content differs from subject to subject, different disciplines often share genres—ways of using language. For example, both geography (typically an L1 subject) and science (typically an EMI subject) use recount and explanation genres.

If instruction is carefully managed, understanding of how different genres 'work' can be shared across subjects, building the underlying proficiency associated with CALP. When considering language-by-subject programmes, policymakers should be aware that this approach is most suited to students with well-developed CALP in both L1 and English; and even if students have advanced CALP skills, they will continue to benefit from instruction that draws attention to similarities in language use across subjects.

I think Japanese helps me because I am good at thinking in Japanese. It helps me understand better and learn English.

SOTARO, MULTILINGUAL SCHOOL STUDENT

Implications for school leaders and teachers

Recognizing that the development of CALP in one subject contributes to a common foundation for cognitive and linguistic resources in other subjects (see Section 2, page 17), teachers can map curriculum themes and text genres across subject areas. They can also plan to deliver topics in a way that facilitates recycling, reinforcing, and extending understanding across languages. For example, general academic words are unusual in social language but relatively frequent in academic language across subjects (for example, 'analyse', 'evaluate', 'procedure', 'hypothesis', 'conclusion'). General academic words often require explicit instruction because they represent concepts that are difficult to define and require abstracted understanding. This is hard enough in the L1, and in a multilingual learner's L2 it can be much harder. Therefore, because the concepts described by general academic words are shared across subjects and languages, understanding the concept of, say, 'analysing data' in L1 geography can be capitalized on when another subject, such as science, is taught in English.

Different subjects may also use similar text genres. For example, history uses 'recount' genres to describe past events and 'procedural' genres to describe how historical information was gathered. Recount and procedural genres are also commonly used in science to review research findings and describe how experiments are conducted. In geography, explanation genres are used to explain how volcanoes work or why tsunamis happen. In maths we use the same genres to explain how problems are solved or to describe mathematical phenomena.

Facilitating this kind of cross-language/cross-curricular work requires that school leaders set aside time for collaboration between teachers and across departments. Training and continuing professional development may be required to help mainstream teachers become comfortable with teaching the language as well as the content of their subject. One way of achieving this is to give a language specialist responsibility for mapping out the whole school curriculum and identifying areas where subjects might be mutually reinforcing. That specialist can then work with all subject teachers to help them incorporate teaching strategies that explicitly reinforce these areas.

EMI programmes with an L1 strand

Overview

Even when students share the same L1, it is not always possible to provide a comprehensive bilingual programme. In such cases, schools can recognize the importance of their students' L1 and contribute to its continued development by including L1 lessons as a strand in the curriculum and encouraging parents to continue using L1 with their children at home.

Implications for policymakers

Where a school has committed to teaching all subjects in only English, providing a dedicated L1 language arts lesson every day is one way of helping to maintain and develop L1 proficiency and acknowledging the importance of the L1. These L1 lessons comprise what is sometimes called a 'mother tongue

programme'. The approach within the programme should focus on the development of L1 literacy and cultural knowledge, and where possible address similar themes and skills to those being studied in the English-medium curriculum.

Implications for school leaders and teachers

Daily L1 language arts lessons acknowledge the importance of maintaining and developing multilingual students' L1 literacy and cultural knowledge. They can follow a national curriculum for L1 literacy, and they can be linked to the themes and skills being studied in the EMI classroom. For example, when EMI science lessons focus on writing lab reports, L1 language arts lessons can focus on non-fiction texts as well. Where schools take topic-based approaches, such as *The Weather*, *Animals and their Habitats*, or *Celebrations and Traditions*, as is common in the early years and primary sectors, the L1 strand can operate within that framework as well. The small amount of time allotted to L1 lessons relative to the time spent learning in English means that cross-strand themes must be judiciously chosen and concisely delivered.

SUPPORTING L1 IN EMI PROGRAMMES WHERE STUDENTS HAVE MULTIPLE L1S

Overview

In schools where students represent many different L1s, it is more complicated to maintain and develop these L1s than in schools where students share the same L1. In such contexts, schools cannot offer fully bilingual programmes. Moreover, less research has been conducted on the role of L1 in linguistically diverse situations, making it difficult to have the same degree

Institutions can show their appreciation of the cultural and linguistic knowledge that children bring to school.

PATSY LIGHTBOWN

of confidence about recommendations for practice compared with bilingual programmes. Nonetheless, there is much that policymakers, school leaders, and teachers can do to take advantage of the positive role that L1 can play for multilingual learners, not least in terms of its contribution to their identities.

Implications for policymakers

The extent to which it is possible to support students in maintaining and developing their L1 relies to some degree on the nature of language diversity in the school. In many international schools, for example, students represent dozens of different L1s, with no single language dominating. In some EMI schools a majority of students share one L1, while a minority speak many different L1s. In other schools there may be a small number of L1s, each spoken by roughly equal proportions of the school community. The nature of the linguistic composition of a school will inform the approach to L1 support.

In EMI schools with an extremely diverse linguistic profile, English will necessarily be the *lingua franca* of the community. In these contexts, policy should demonstrate institutional commitment to supporting multilingualism and acknowledging the importance of students' L1 for personal growth and development, even if direct pedagogical support is not possible. EMI programmes should be established with this commitment in mind, and reflected in expectations that school leaders and teachers will develop an L1-inclusive ethos in the school and capitalize on L1 proficiency where possible.

In contexts where language diversity is more manageable, policy should support EMI schools that include programmes for all (or as many as possible) of the L1s represented. Where a smaller number of L1s are represented, and where sufficiently large numbers of students speaking each of them makes it viable, it may be possible to build multi-stream bilingual schools on the European Schools model (see Section 2, page 17).

Implications for school leaders and teachers

Many of the principles and mechanisms for incorporating students' L1s in linguistically diverse contexts are similar to those we have outlined for schools where students share the same L1, though the diversity will necessitate some adaptations.

In schools where there is no single dominant L1, translanguaging approaches offer the opportunity to recognize students' L1 proficiency. The key principle of translanguaging is that students use their languages dynamically to make

meaning. For example, they can engage in exploratory play, naming features of their environment in any of their languages. They can use one language to read about a topic and another to write about what they have learned. They can draft an essay in their L1, then write it up in English. They may read a text in English and annotate the page in their L1. For example, we have seen that L1 translations of English words (either through translation by teachers[62] or using L1 glossaries in English texts[63]) are helpful for multilingual learners. Encouraging students to use bilingual dictionaries or machine translators is a way to provide similar support in linguistically diverse classes.

Teachers do not have to be proficient in the L1s of all of their students to provide them with opportunities to use these languages in the classroom. Moreover, providing structured opportunities for multilingual students to use their L1, even when teachers are not themselves able to understand them, positions the L1 as an asset on which to capitalize rather than a distraction to be avoided. As research in this field develops, we will have a better idea of the extent to which these approaches support linguistic and academic attainment in school.

Another approach to L1 support in linguistically diverse schools is to provide L1 programmes for the non-English languages represented among students. Above we explored the nature of an L1 strand in schools where students share the same L1. In schools where a range of L1s are spoken, the L1 programmes follow the same principles, there are just more of them. To aid in the logistics of running these programmes, children from different age groups can be combined to create larger classes. In international schools, L1 English students can use the time to attend non-English L2 language lessons. This would provide a clear statement of a school's commitment to multilingualism.

The European Schools approach has been shown to be an effective model. These schools have multiple bilingual streams under the same roof. Teachers in each bilingual stream work together in the same way that we have outlined for maintenance bilingual programmes (see page 26). Curriculum time is divided into two, with the relevant L1 used in one half and English in the other half. Teachers plan together to ensure that topics, themes, and learning objectives are similar and therefore mutually supportive across languages.

Schools can create an inclusive language policy which is visible and, most importantly, active.

DAVID MARSH

" At school, my youngest son didn't know any words in English and he cried every day and I cried with him! But we were so happy when his teacher made a place and time for my son to relax with the mother language… We started reading a lot every night in the mother language, different kinds of books, some stories, geography books, books about different nationalities and peoples, biology, history, everything… After that he could manage everything in English at school. It started being easy for my son. So I realized I don't need to learn English with my son, because first my English is terrible, and second I'm not a teacher at home, I'm a mother. And I don't want my son to forget his mother language."

Snezana, parent of multilingual school students

ENGAGING WITH PARENTS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN THEIR LEARNING THROUGH L1 USE

The success of EMI programmes that use L1 relies to a great extent on parental attitudes to their children's L1. In some environments, parents have been convinced that the best way to learn English is to use only English, and schools can face challenges in helping parents to understand that this may not be best practice. Engaging with parents to discuss the importance of L1 will help them understand why the school has adopted an L1-inclusive approach. Involving parents from all language backgrounds is important for promoting an L1-inclusive ethos at school and in the home.

In communicating with parents and the wider school community, schools should be clear about their commitment to both developing the English proficiency of their students and promoting multilingualism, emphasizing that these two commitments are mutually reinforcing. Demonstrating a commitment to multilingualism can be achieved through policies that make the school's multilingualism visible and routine. Alongside L1-inclusive teaching, this might be achieved with multilingual signage, bilingual communication with parents (for example, school prospectuses, newsletters, and websites), bilingual and L1 books in the library, multilingual wall displays, celebrations of languages in assemblies and performances, and so on. When an L1 stream cannot be offered in the school itself, parents can be encouraged to enrol their children in community programmes that teach L1 literacy and culture.

Sometimes parents make their homes 'English only' in the belief that this is helpful to their child's English development. Every home is different, and home language policies should reflect the natural language practices of the family, whether that is L1 only, 'one parent one language', or other bilingual practices. Schools should caution against attempts to impose an artificial English-only environment at home. For some students home is the only place where they are exposed to their L1. In these circumstances it is imperative that parents take the opportunity to strengthen this resource, for example by speaking L1 with their children, reading L1 texts with them, and engaging with L1 media such as films, music, and video games. In all circumstances, providing a rich linguistic environment in the home helps students to do well at school.

The key messages to parents must be that maintaining and developing L1 is beneficial to their children's English language development and curriculum learning, and that multilingualism contributes to their children's intellectual and social development.

Educators can help parents understand how using the L1 is an important component of success in EMI classrooms.

NINA SPADA

SUMMARY

EMI schools should find ways to systematically support students in the maintenance and development of their L1s.

Where possible, bilingual programmes of education should be adopted in preference to English-only models. This is most easily achieved when all students share the same L1, but there are ways for EMI schools with diverse language groups to achieve this as well.

The longer bilingual programmes can be maintained, the better. Maintenance bilingual programmes that use both languages over five years or more are more effective than transitional bilingual programmes that move to English-only instruction more quickly. However, both types of bilingual programme are more effective than English-only instruction.

Where resources are not available for fully bilingual programmes, daily L1 language arts lessons support continued development in L1. Schools should endeavour to offer these lessons in as many languages as are represented in the school.

In linguistically diverse contexts, schools should explicitly value the L1s of the students and find opportunities to use and celebrate them.

Parents should be encouraged to support and nurture their children's L1 development in the home rather than assuming that speaking only English is the best way to help their children achieve their long-term linguistic, academic, and personal goals.

CONCLUSIONS

The growing popularity of EMI programmes worldwide provides a unique opportunity for policymakers and school leaders to lead the way in emphasizing the importance of supporting the development of students' L1 alongside English. Ensuring that the L1 is well developed as students engage in English medium instruction is associated with better acquisition of English and improved outcomes in other academic areas.

We have seen from research in bilingual schools that concurrent education in both L1 and English is more effective than English-only education in almost all cases. Research has also shown that students who are educated in the early years in their L1, and then have English gradually introduced, quickly catch up with their peers who have had English-only education, and often overtake them.

We have seen that early and sustained provision of L1 education is associated with improved engagement in education. Students in bilingual programmes also develop proficiency in their L1, a valuable achievement that children are unable to attain in English-only programmes. We have also seen that when fully bilingual programmes are not possible, systematic use of L1 as a teaching tool can support development in English and other academic subjects. This can be achieved through dedicated L1 language arts lessons and by using strategies that bring students' L1 into the EMI classroom, such as using L1 to support vocabulary acquisition, or using L1 as a point of reference for understanding how English works.

Finally, we have seen that, regardless of the programme type, schools that demonstrate a welcoming and inclusive approach with respect to multilingualism support the social and emotional well-being of their multilingual students. Being given opportunities to use L1 reinforces and nurtures students' personal identities. It connects them to their community, their history, and their culture, and it values them for the skills that they bring with them to the classroom.

Access to the first language enriches engagement, nurtures well-being, and strengthens identity.

DAVID MARSH

We strongly encourage policymakers, school leaders, and teachers to consider the information presented in this report when making decisions about how to implement EMI education in their local contexts. We acknowledge that different contexts will require different interpretations of how the principles outlined in this paper will be put into practice. However, in all cases, education of multilingual learners is enhanced when close attention is paid to the L1 and the role it plays in promoting linguistic and academic success in school.

KEY MESSAGES

- Ensuring that students' L1 is maintained and developed alongside English medium instruction is associated with
  - better acquisition of English
  - beneficial outcomes in other academic areas
  - higher proficiency in L1.
- Bilingual programmes are most strongly associated with success for multilingual learners.
- Structured use of L1 as a teaching tool can support linguistic and academic development when bilingual programmes are not viable.
- Early and sustained provision of L1 support improves student engagement and motivation in education.
- Programmes that value students' L1 reinforce their identities, support their social and emotional well-being, and empower them for the future.

GLOSSARY

BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills)
The communicative skills used in everyday, highly contextualized, social language. BICS are acquired relatively rapidly in L1, and also in L2 given appropriate opportunities and motivation in an L2-speaking environment.

bilingual programme
An educational programme in which curriculum content is taught in two languages and systematic support is provided for both L1 and L2. Many different models of bilingual programme exist. See also *immersion*, *language-by-subject programme*, *maintenance bilingual programme*, and *transitional bilingual programme*.

bilingual school
A school where most of the subjects in the curriculum are taught in both the national language of the students and in an L2, for example English. See also *European Schools.*

CALP (cognitive/academic language proficiency)
The ability to engage with the decontextualized, abstract language of the classroom and academic content. This type of language skill takes years to develop and often needs to be taught explicitly.

CLIL (content and language integrated learning)
Programmes in which some curriculum subjects are taught to multilingual learners through their L2. Teaching focuses explicitly on language use as well as academic content and the relationships between them.

common underlying proficiency
The linguistic proficiency that underlies performance in any language.

dual-language programme
See *bilingual programme*.

early years
The period before compulsory primary education begins. Early years education is sometimes provided within the primary sector, and sometimes by other child carers such as nurseries.

EFL (English as a foreign language)
English language study by speakers of other languages in a non-English-speaking environment. Compare to *ESL*.

EMI (English medium instruction)
Educational programmes that use English to teach curriculum subjects to students who are speakers of other languages.

English-only
The teaching of multilingual learners solely through the medium of English.

ESL (English as a second language)
English language study by speakers of other languages in an English-speaking environment. Compare to *EFL*.

European Schools
A type of bilingual school in which several bilingual language streams coexist. Each stream pairs the national language (usually the L1 of the students) with another language. Instruction in the earliest grades is conducted primarily in L1, with daily L2 language lessons. The proportion of L2 instruction is increased each year so that by secondary school it is split equally between L1 and L2.

extended hours of English
English language programmes where the hours of provision are increased and teachers incorporate topics from curriculum content areas to enrich English learning.

immersion
A type of bilingual programme in which at least half the curricular content is taught in the L2. At a minimum, L1 language arts is provided as a discrete subject in the earliest grades; and by Grade 5, curriculum instruction is usually split equally between L1 and L2.

L1 (first language)
The language spoken at home or in the community. Sometimes called 'mother tongue'. Multilinguals may have more than one 'first language'.

L2 (second language)
The non-L1 language learned and used by a multilingual learner. May refer to additional languages learned after the 'second language'.

language arts
A curriculum area that focuses on developing skills in written and oral language, such as reading, spelling, literature, and composition.

language-by-subject programme
An educational programme in which some curriculum subjects are taught in English and others are taught in the national language.

linguistic interdependence hypothesis
The hypothesis that the languages known to a multilingual individual are mutually supportive. Development in one language contributes to development in another when appropriate opportunities to develop both are present.

maintenance bilingual programme
Educational programmes that teach curriculum content in both L1 and L2 in all grades.

multilingual learner
A learner who is either already proficient in more than one language or who is learning one or more languages in addition to their first language. We include 'bilingual' individuals who use two languages in our definition of multilingual learners.

primary educational sector
Primary schools, elementary schools, and pre-schools. Education for students aged typically between 4 and 11 years.

proficiency
A measure of an individual's ability to use a language in particular contexts.

secondary educational sector
Secondary schools and high schools. Education for students typically aged between 11 and 18 years.

transitional bilingual programme
Educational programmes that teach curriculum content in the L1 to begin with, then gradually replace it with the L2.

translanguaging
A pedagogical approach to multilingualism which fosters opportunities for the integrated use of the learners' languages in multilingual classrooms.

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

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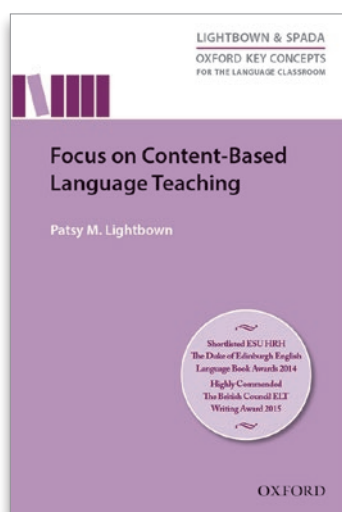CLIL Cascade Network: www.ccn-clil.eu

Colorín Colorado bilingual site for educators and families of English language learners: www.colorincolorado.org

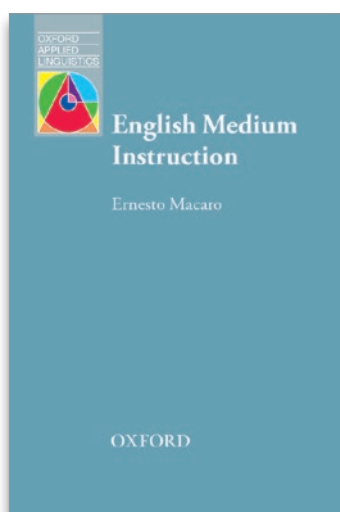FACTWorld Forum for Across the Curriculum Teaching: www.factworld.info

Oxford Education Blog: https://educationblog.oup.com

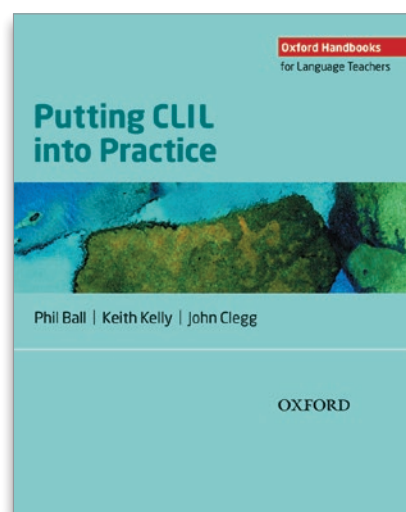Oxford English Language Teaching Global Blog: https://oupeltglobalblog.com

National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum: www.naldic.org.uk

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ENDNOTES

01 EMI CONTEXTS AND MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

1 Macaro (2018)

2 Lightbown (2014)

3 Madhavan & McDonald (2014)

4 Lasagabaster (2017)

5–8 Dearden (2014)

9 Banfi & Day (2004)

10 Eurydice (2006)

11 Butzkamm (2003)

12 E.g. Steele et al. (2017)

13 Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass (2005); Slavin & Cheung (2005)

02 THE CENTRAL ROLE OF FIRST LANGUAGES IN EMI

14 Krashen (1981)

15 Cook (2001)

16 Cummins (1979, 1980)

17 Cummins (2001)

18 van Gelderen et al. (2007)

19 Gebauer, Zaunbauer, & Möller (2013)

20 Collier & Thomas (2017)

21 Chuang, Joshi & Dixon (2012)

22 Lambert & Tucker (1972)

23 See Krashen & McField (2005); Reljić, Ferring, & Martin (2015)

24 Housen (2002)

25 Steele et al. (2017)

26 Cohen (1975); Maldano (1977); Alvarez (1975)

27 Gersten & Woodward (1995)

28 García (2009)

29 García (2014)

30 Yiakoumetti (2007)

31 Paradowski (2007)

32 Lee & Macaro (2013)

33 Lugo-Neris et al. (2010)

34 Cheng & Good (2009)

35 Goldenburg (2008); Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian (2006)

36 Fung, Wilkinson, & Moore (2003)

37 Bozorgian & Pillay (2013)

38 DCFS (2009)

39 García (2014)

40 van Weijen et al. (2009)

41 Roca de Larios et al. (1998)

42 Wang & Wen (2002)

43 Swain & Lapkin (2000)

44 Scott & de la Fuente (2008)

45 Swain & Lapkin (1998)

46 Storch & Wigglesworth (2003)

47 Swain & Lapkin (2000)

48 Altarriba & Mathis (1997); Sunderman & Kroll (2006); Blumenfield & Marian (2013); Kroll & Bialystok (2013)

49 García (2017)

50 Ahlsén (2013)

51 UNESCO (1960); UN (1989a, 1989b, 1990, 1992, 2007)

52 Singh (2017)

53 Erling, Adinolfi, & Hultgren (2017)

54 Simpson (2017)

55 Kosonen (2005); Dutcher (2004)

56 Hovens (2002); Benson (2005)

57 Boyer (1965)

03 INCORPORATING FIRST LANGUAGES INTO EMI PROGRAMMES

58 Housen (2002)

59 Lugo-Neris et al. (2010); Lee & Macaro (2013)

60 Fung, Wilkinson, & Moore (2003); Bozorgian & Pillay (2013)

61 Collier & Thomas (2017)

62 Lugo-Neris et al. (2009); Lee & Macaro (2013)

63 Cheng & Good (2009)

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