An Analysis of Various Instructional Methodologies Used In Spanish-English Elementary Bilingual Programs

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Introduction

For the past two decades, one of the most prominent and perhaps most controversial topics facing education in the United States has been the introduction and implementation of Title VII, namely, bilingual education, into the American classroom. 1968 was the inaugural year in which federal money would be set aside to fund public educational programs to meet the needs of students who were considered to be LEP, or limited English proficient. A new era thus began in education which was immediately filled with insecurity and controversy. The debate as to whether or not bilingual education should have ever been established continues to the present day, with the pro and con camps interpreting studies related to bilingualism to their advantage.

Because the controversy has received an enormous amount of coverage, particularly within the past two three decades, numerous academics from many fields have provided their opinion as to whether or not bilingual education is the 'appropriate' method to best acquire English. Although media coverage has somewhat subsided, the topic remains a contested one and bilingual education continues to struggle for its very existence to this day. It seems as though every person, be they a teacher, linguist, politician, or truck driver, has an opinion, mostly due to portrayals by the media.

The field of linguistics was pulled into the debate from the start. Although educators would be the primary resources used to assess the success or failure of many bilingual programs, theoretical models of language representation within LEP children would attempt to explain if bilingual education was properly grounded in theory. In other words, had education at last found the right answer
to not only addressing the academic (as well as social) needs of the children of its immigration population? Were LEP children on par to catch up on norms with the mainstream population? Or had we stumbled upon a method which perhaps hindered the academic success of a population that needed it?

Because bilingual education is an incredibly broad field, this thesis will focus particularly on literacy within the classroom. Primarily drawing upon some of the applicable research and literature from the past two decades, I will list and compare various methodologies employed within the elementary bilingual classroom and provide a theoretical backdrop against which the model is used. From those evaluated, I will argue that the methodologies which are context dependent are better at providing a more meaningful learning environment for children. I will also argue in favor of Cummins (1981) suggestion that the use of L1 in the classroom does not prove to be a detriment to L2 acquisition. For the purpose of this thesis, literacy shall be defined in terms of both the oral and written aspects of reading. This includes some mention of the phonics' debate. I will first provide a general summary of some of the models that have been and are currently being used within the Spanish-English bilingual classroom. In addition, a brief history into bilingual education as a whole will be included, along with characteristics of childhood bilinguals and the effects of linguistic features such as syntax and semantics on the L2 acquisition process. This paper will end with a pedagogical approach to applying theory into the classroom.
History & Models

Bilingual education, legally known as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act of 1968, provided the legal means which would allow states and school boards to solicit the federal government for money to pay for the new programs for its LEP students. When the act was first passed, it merely stated that LEP children were not receiving equal access to educational resources and that money should be set aside for programs which would best meet their needs, specifically language. There was more of a rush to have the bilingual classroom up and running as soon as possible during the infancy years of the act, with little or insufficient planning in methodologies. Responsibility fell on school boards and state legislatures to decide how to go about spending this money. In addition, the act did not have an explicit goal.

Perhaps the intentions of the authors of the act were to have all the decisions made only at the local level. Because of its inherent vagueness, bilingual education got off to a rough start, so to speak, with many models being experimented on. What follows is a brief summary of models (as pertaining to language) used within the classroom, taken from Crawford (1991) and Ovando & Collier (1985).

Before 1968, the model that was used most widely was immersion, which simply placed all children, regardless of their level of English language proficiency, into a mainstream monolingual English classroom. This was perhaps more prominent during the earlier part of this century, when the tide of immigration brought in eastern (as opposed to western) Europeans, and with the general political climate requiring that a melting pot society be created as soon as
possible. Thus, ESL or any similar concepts were not even considered for fear that American society would be polarized should native language development be encouraged. All children were essentially taught to 'sink or swim,' with many left on the wayside. No resources from the first language were available.

After the passage of the act, one of the models to be adopted was *transitional bilingual education*, in which LEP children would receive some of their initial education in their first language. However, the eventual aim for the students would be placement in a monolingual mainstream classroom, and it was to hopefully occur as soon as possible. For example, a student placed in a kindergarten classroom would receive the majority of his instruction in L1, or the native language. As the child progresses through the grades, the amount of L1 instruction diminishes, so that by the fourth grade, the child is placed in a monolingual L2, or second language, classroom. An ESL component is present, usually during or after regular class instruction, but only if the child required it. In keeping with the pattern, the ESL component would also decrease. The eventual goal is to have full proficiency in L2, English, at the expense of L1 (also known as subtractive bilingualism).

*Maintenance bilingual education* was one alternate called for in response to the transitional model. Rather than disregarding the status of L1, the goal of the maintenance model is first and foremost to achieve full proficiency in both L1 and L2, with emphasis given to the latter.

Additional models exist, including *structured immersion* and *English as a foreign language*. Within the Spanish-English bilingual classroom, each of the aforementioned has been used. Literacy programs which are found in all such
models shall be evaluated based on research from linguists and developmental educators. The goal is to provide a comprehensive analysis of what issues are pertinent solely to Spanish and English and to provide a framework containing beneficial characteristics.

**Characteristics of Childhood Bilingualism**

This section will present theoretical explanations to account for the kinds of thinking bilingual children exhibit by virtue of being such.

Hakuta (1990) presents evidence in support of bilingualism and bilingual education. Several studies were done on elementary school children in New Haven, Ct. One attempted to determine, amongst other variables, to what extent transfer occurs between the child's native language and his developing one. More accurately stated, do concepts acquired in one language transfer lead to an easier acquisition of the corresponding concept in the second language? Hakuta had one group of students devote their time to studying spatial concepts (i.e. left, front, etc.) and had another group focus on temporal (first, etc.) concepts, selecting terms that were considered difficult. The terms were in Spanish. He predicted the following: The students who had studied temporal items would learn and better use English temporal terms better than the group which received training on spatial concepts. Likewise, the spatial group would perform better on English spatial items (p. 53). That is, *around* would be better understood if the child had a better understanding of *alrededor*, the Spanish equivalent. However, the same child would not be able to use *first* as well.

The results proved the contrary. There was very little evidence of specific
transfer of training from Spanish to English (Hakuta, 53), with the exception of tense cognates (present, past, future) which did reflect a better translation. The temporal group was able to use spatial terms in English as well as the spatial group, and vice versa. As Hakuta states, transfer at the specific level did not occur overall, and he uses this as evidence to argue for his notion that the goal of language teaching should be a holistic one, rather than task specific. In particular, he cites this study as evidence for a 'global view of transfer (p. 54).'

This study calls into question any sort of teaching methodologies which aim to translate specific concepts directly from L1 to L2 and do not take into consideration contextual factors.

Mercado (1990) expounds on one assumption about teaching a second language, namely, the notion that developing oral skills must take priority over all other aspects in literacy development, such as reading and writing. Her article notes research that, among other things, produces evidence against a 'developmental' sequence in literacy. For example, Hudelson (1987) revealed how monoliterate children acquired literacy skills of a second language on their own behalf, without formal school education, which, as Mercado states, lends itself to the notion that skills transfer from one language to the next under natural-like conditions. This can further be interpreted as conforming to Krashen's 'monitor' hypothesis, which states that optimal means of acquiring a language must be through natural, unforced methods. Mercado further mentions that such research should call into question any sort of 'bottom-up' reading approach that bilingual education methodologists employ in their classrooms (178). The goal of said approach is to first develop a child's oral skills to a level where some
satisfactory degree of proficiency is developed. Once attained, acquisition of literacy is postulated as occurring much easily since an oral base has been established. Mercado mentions that Wald (1987) determined that writing may be the primary means by which adolescent second language learners acquire a second language. Such means are perhaps more meaningful for older age learners, which contributes to the current literature on age-related tasks that this paper will not address due to its inherent enormity. This finding is especially relevant in considering appropriate models according to age. To summarize, Mercado challenges the notion of a sequence in the development of literacy. Such an approach may impede on a simultaneous development of all language aspects that LEP students may be acquiring. An imbalance or an overt emphasis on one may be damaging or at the very least delaying to the normal acquisition of the other aspects. The implications from her article suggest that children may perhaps have reading introduced at or around the same time they learn to speak, and need not wait for the latter to develop before the former.

García (1990) reviews more research on bilingualism with regards to LEP students. She notes that most studies focus on three particular areas:

1. the developmental nature of phonology, morphology & syntax
2. Piagetian & related cognitive attributes of bilingualism
3. the social/discourse characteristics of bilingual development (pp. 98-9)

Note that she has taken into consideration each of the factors talked about in the previous paragraph. As many factors as possible should be taken into consideration without necessarily being isolated.

With regards to purely linguistic matters, one controversial issue raised
about language representation regards whether a child represents each as a separate system or as a unified one. Such a question is especially relevant to extremely young children that are in an environment of multiple languages, within the home. The topic is a further source of debate when one takes into consideration the literature on code-switching, the phenomena of utterances which are not restricted solely to a single language (i.e. *Estoy hablando with the driver*). Although morphemic boundaries are not defined rigidly, some use the provided example that there is a sort of single system early on within children. This becomes of significance in terms of educational matters. If there is a theoretical concept of a unified language system, is it present during the ages of early elementary education, particularly in the first years? The point to be made from this is that children may

Summarized in a brief fashion, García concludes the following: (1) The acquisition of two languages can be parallel but need not be. That is, the qualitative character of one language may lag behind, surge ahead, or develop on par with the other language. (2) The acquisition of two languages may result in an interlanguage, incorporating the attributes of both languages. But... languages may develop independently. (3) The acquisition of two languages need not hamper structurally the acquisition of either language. From a linguistic perspective, these three conclusions provide evidence against the argument that the simultaneous acquisition of two languages is detrimental to both.

With regards to the kinds of errors one might expect a child to make as he/she is acquiring a second language, a study by Dulay & Burt (1974) determined that the errors being made by five to eight year olds acquiring English were either
interference errors, which were due to the first language, or developmental errors, which were errors made by native-speaking children of the same language. Contrary to what one might expect, they reported that only about 5% of the total number of errors committed were due to interference, while close to 85% were attributed to developmental errors. Both hypothesize a 'creative construction process' which accounts for second language acquisition (107).

Steven Krashen takes this notion one step further. His theory takes as its foundation this notion of an innate mechanism operating within the mind of the bilingual child which allows for a more proficient or more 'natural' way of acquiring a second language. His natural order hypothesis "indicates that the acquisition of grammatical structures by the second language learner proceeds in a predictable 'natural' order, independent of first language experiences and/or proficiency." (García, 107-8) As alluded to in a previous paragraph, the learner is not necessarily aware that a second language is being acquired. No specific attention is being paid to certain aspects of the learning process, such as tenses, morphology, syntax, etc. The child is simply learning, & as philosophers have stated, it is possible to acquire a language without formal study since children do this.

Accompanying his natural order hypothesis is his monitor hypothesis, which, to paraphrase, posits that second language learning can take place at a conscious level when some sort of base (although this is not specifically defined) which contains a significant knowledge of structural rules is present within the learner. In addition, the learner must have a sufficient amount of experience necessary to practice using these rules in a second language situation. To
summarize, a language can be acquired if the learner has a base of skills and has the time to apply them (108). Krashen himself states, however, that a grammatical & bookish approach to language learning is not the most effective of methods, since it involves a more conscious approach.

García also mentions evidence from Ervin-Tripp (1974) which posited that strategies used by young children to acquire a second language change and develop as they gain proficiency. They claimed that imitation plays an important role in language learning early on. As time passes, strategies that were used for the native language are then used for the second language.

Hakuta (1974) noticed that children acquired *prefabricated patterns* when employing rote memorization. As examples, he lists allomorphs of the copula, such as “do you” as employed in questions & “how to” as embedded in how questions (108). A key observation is that children may not necessarily understand them, but if the proper language situations arise, they will know how to use them. Thus, contextual cues play a vital role in determining language usage.

Another study lending support to this is the study of Chicano children acquiring English naturally by Wong Fillmore (1976). Context was an important factor in that the children “would figure out what was being said by observing the relationship between certain expressions & the situational context.” (ibid., 109) What she calls *formulaic expressions* were developed by the children upon figuring out the meaning of some words. These expressions were used as the building blocks to figure out how other aspects of the language worked, according to Wong Fillmore. In addition, she provides two examples of how native language
strategies are used: “(1) Children notice how parts of expressions used by others vary in accordance with changes in the speech situation in which they occur. (2) Children notice which parts of the formulaic expressions are like other utterances in the speech of others.” (García, 109)

Such statements place the majority of the learning process within the mind of the child, with the environment and contextual situations playing a crucial part in whether or not the process is initiated or stimulated. Children are in a sense constructing their own grammars based on formulaic expressions, determining when each should and should not be used. It should be noted that the process need not be a conscious one, in keeping with Krashen that perhaps optimal performance is being obtained.

Other commonalties in strategy use between first and second languages are noted by August & García (1988). Both make the argument that in order to acquire the latter, strategies from first language transfer are heavily drawn upon. However, as was previously mentioned, such strategies are depended upon less and less as time proceeds, with the acquisition of more L2. The shift in dependency is on those characteristic of L1, such as over-generalizations.

The general emphasis according to L2 acquisition is on rote memorization and imitation of L2 & transfer from L1. García makes a point that with regard to practicality, if there are fewer interactions with native speakers, there is more of a chance that transfer strategies from L1 will occur. However, to overemphasize a point, many of the strategies used to acquire L1 will be used to acquire L2.

Morphemic influences on L2 were studied by Hatch (1974). He noted that the frequency of morphemes in the input data appears to influence the sequential
acquisition of these morphemes (ibid., 110). If thought of in practical terms, this should come as not much of a surprise. The more one hears question words, the more this will develop in comparison to other forms of L2. However, she does note that frequency is by itself not enough to guarantee immediate acquisition. A relationship seems to exist between frequency and its semantic relevance. That is, although an imperative form may constitute the majority of the input data the child is surrounded with, it may not be acquired immediately. It shall be later on, when the form takes on more significance to the child, assuming it did not at the time the data was introduced (perhaps due to cultural influences).

"The correspondence between input & output suggests that interaction between speakers might be important in structuring language output." (ibid., 110) In his monitor theory, Krashen posited that effective L2 acquisition would need to parallel L1 acquisition, namely, that conditions must be as natural as possible. Interesting questions result from this observation. Would any planned, or conscious situations, mitigate the effectiveness of L2 acquisition for the child? If we try to create natural situations, are we by very nature going against this? He suggests that comprehensible input should be provided which is embedded within a natural context. Otherwise, L2 acquisition will falter in the aspiring bilingual or at least not develop as proficiently as one who is filled with a ‘richer’ environment.

After reviewing some of the studies mentioned, attention needs to be given to teaching methods which can be classified as basal. The expression is usually applied to any form of teaching, such as tests, worksheets, even the choice of reading books themselves used within the classroom, which essentially prepares
the child for rote memorization-like activities. A classic example involves the almost too common ten word per week spelling test experienced in the traditional classroom, where a list of phonetically or semantically related words is presented early in the week so that the children will have time to look them over and memorize their spelling. Later in the week, the teacher will ask the students to clear their desks, take a blank sheet of writing paper out, write their name on the top and recite each of the ten words that appeared in the list. The word will be repeated and perhaps a sentence will accompany the stated word. After the last word is mentioned, the sheets are collected from each student, graded and returned to each student to determine a grade. In most cases, the children ‘forget’ most of the words they were tested on by the end of the academic year.

Basal approaches in general test students in a mechanical fashion. From tasks which ask for student recall on vocabulary to isolated skill writing take, students are generally shortchanged in terms of being able to explore learning in a more natural fashion. Thinking modes including analysis or criticism are left by the wayside by such decontextualized approaches, which may contribute to feelings of boredom within a classroom. If such notions are present within regular mainstream classrooms, why should bilingual classrooms be any exception to this?

**General Approaches to Bilingual Education**

The following is a summary of some of the methodologies employed in second language instruction. Williams and Snipper (1990) outline the major instructional approaches used and provide the accompanying theoretical model
that each method is based upon.

The *grammar translation* approach is identified as being perhaps the most popular for centuries. Students are introduced to a language solely based on text translation. Little to no emphasis is paid to oral skills development. Progress is considered moving from simple to complex texts. Latin and Greek were (and are) the primary languages in which this method was applied. This method is sometimes referred to as the 'bookish' approach, due to its source of teaching.

The *audiolingual* method was used primarily after WWII in the United States after a paucity was seen in the foreign language skills of the majority of Americans. The method was in a sense the complete opposite of the grammar translation approach, in that the focus was almost exclusively on oral skill proficiency. Language labs were established in which students would be given the opportunity to listen to tapes which contained exercises and drills in L2. The aim was to have students develop such skills primarily through rote memorization and repetition of specific contextual situations (i.e., going to the movies, buying groceries, etc.). 'Substitution drills' were common. Students were given a particular phrasal construction, such as "I want a ___," and asked to substitute whatever words for the empty spots. From a theoretical viewpoint, structural linguistics was the backing for this method. This, combined with complaints of boredom and restrictive contexts, was enough to signal the demise of the method.

The *direct method* is currently used in secondary schools and universities for language teaching. No translation is allowed in this method (p. 92). Emphasis is placed on oral proficiency, which corresponds to vocabulary
development & proper pronunciation. Syntactic rules are inductively learned. The goal is learning through meaning and not so much through explicit present participle recognition (for example). For the student, a difficulty may present itself in that such explicit instruction may surprise the learner and lead to a habit of overgeneralizing the use of a form. Misinterpretation may be the norm that a student can become comfortable with. In addition, students who are considered linguistically adept are better suited for this approach than those who are not. Strict adherence to oral development ignores literacy aspects.

The natural approach is advocated by Krashen and Terrell (1982). Both posit that second language acquisition occurs like L1 acquisition, more effectively occurring at the unconscious level (93). The learning environment is the key in leading to acquisition. Meaningful input, with consideration given to pragmatic contexts, gives much better results. The method seems better tailored to youngsters in their first year of L2 learning. With regards to practicality, considerable difficulty presents itself to the instructor. One must be conscious of what is being taught to the children, thereby contradicting any sort of notion of a natural environment. Monitoring and self-repair are essential building block constituents students should possess and/or develop. Critics have noted that language feedback is necessary to help determine the level of progress a student is achieving and to steer the student in an appropriate direction.

Three rather modern methodologies have been added to the previous list in recent years. TPR, or total physical response, aims at developing receptive language. Students are not expected to respond orally until they feel comfortable doing so (95). As the name suggests, teachers gear their students towards
reacting to the phrase or word in question. Imitation is expected on both physical & abstract forms. Williams and Snipper point out that such instruction need not be restricted to specifically allotted periods of time. Common school tasks such as lining up against the wall, playground recess, cafeteria notions, etc., provide more than enough of a practice ground for teachers. Problems noted include classroom specificity and over-emphasis of simple actions which would be acquired without prompting.

The silent way approach is similar to that of TPR, with the exception being that teachers remain silent after observing children's movements. Learning occurs from interactions with materials, not from teacher prompts. Deduction by the child is important and a key process. Learning does not come from habit, but from the cognitive process learners employ in their acquisition (93). Oral and written skills are used from the beginning. A unique aspect is the use of Cuisenaire rods, lego-like blocks which come in various unit sizes and colors (ex. One block of one unit, one block of six units, etc.). The authors mention how each color rod can represent a different vowel or consonant. This visual approach allows for transference to oral and written means.

Finally, suggestopedia attempts to bring down any cognitive blocks which prevent language acquisition from occurring, and this is done through physical means at first. Georgi Lozanov, the founder of this method, recommends some rather novel physical setups for the classroom: Lights should be dim, relaxing music should be playing in the background, children should be seated in couch-like (i.e. comfortable) chairs & breathing exercises should be conducted. The idea is that any sort of barriers, be they physical or cognitive, are relaxed, so that
learning may proceed at a less cognitive cost to the student. Once relaxation has been established, the primary language teaching method resembles that of the audio-lingual approach, with emphasis placed on oral skill development through rehearsal. Aside from resource availability, critics claim such an approach comes close to hypnosis, which may be partially effective in short-term simplistic tasks, such as memorization. Creating sentences or phrases on one's own is left by the wayside.

The above methods contribute to overall methods being employed when it comes to language learning. With regards to English, "sheltered English" is instruction only in English, perhaps due to a lack of student L1 speakers. As such, content area is taught in L2.

How do literacy and reading play roles in the above methods? The research presented thus far makes considerable mention of aspects which are inherently part of the bilingual education program overall. Generally speaking, a framework of what methodologies to employ on specific subjects has as of yet not been explored. However, for the remainder of this thesis, methodologies which specifically deal with literacy and reading shall be expounded upon and explored for their significance in the classroom. A goal is not necessarily to select one over another, but merely to critically evaluate various methods currently in existence.

**Different Approaches Towards Literacy**

What is the most efficient and fun way to develop literacy and reading skills in a child? Current educators and teachers will provide a number of responses to this debate, attempting to justify their answer in the most responsive of manners.
To severely simplify the debate, two views on the questions can be made. One side would contain the ‘traditional’ teachers, whose methodologies, in educational terms, consist of rote memorization activities, teacher centered classrooms, and a sponge-like belief in the way children acquire knowledge. Very little interaction goes on between students themselves. Questions posed by teachers are intended to insure that students have substantively acquired answers, a reinforcement approach to allow the teacher to ‘check’ that the answer is there. Much has been written about the ineffectiveness and out-of-date nature of this approach (Bruner, 1977; Dewey, 1938).

The second camp would espouse nearly the exact opposite of any of the traditional approaches. Rather than having the teacher represent the sole divinity within the classroom, multiple ‘teachers,’ namely the students themselves, have about an equal say to the teacher. Student interaction is the center of any curricular aspect, with constant teacher-student and student-student dialogues. Rather than only asked to provide the right answer, students are made to justify their answers, with the intention of delving into the process by which the student produced the answer. A rich, contextual environment is a necessity for the student to better grasp an understanding. Finally, prior learning experiences are taken into consideration. Various methods along these lines include whole language, invented spelling, and mathematics via writing.

How do both camps fit into the literacy debate? Chapman (1996) provides a concise summary by presenting the following question: Should first-grade children acquire phonemic awareness ‘naturally’ through interactions with print or should it be taught? “And if some teaching is necessary, should phonics be
taught as a separate subject or can it be informally taught as occasions crop up in context (Chapman, 31)? At the core is the notion that words are constructed from combinations of phonemes. An important observation is that whatever method is espoused upon may not necessarily be the best for all children. Because children bring many different backgrounds and ways of learning, Chapman mentions a point by Adams (1990) that 'low readiness' children (i.e. whose home environment may not provide as many opportunities to a literacy-rich environment) require direct, systematic and intensive instruction in phonemic awareness (p. 31). In her study of a first grade 'low readiness' boy, Chapman provides evidence in support of teaching phonemic awareness, as well as handwriting, punctuation and punctuation, in context rather than in isolated periods. She concludes among other things that oral and written language develop best through personal and functional use (p. 33).

The question cannot be fairly considered unless the teacher takes other factors into account which may help to promote or impede the development of literacy in children. For example, one factor Chapman found which made the transition into the world of print for children much easier was outside feedback from parents. That is, a parent which makes print accessible to the child in the home environment, by way of reading a book often or any similar activity, is better preparing the child for the kinds of reading experiences the child will encounter at school. This factor is relevant to both monolingual and bilingual classrooms.

Then there is the classic debate that has faced the field of education for quite sometime now, due in part to the search for alternatives to traditional approaches. Should phonics be taught, or should teachers employ a different
approach to developing the building blocks of literacy? Barrera (1983) provides some of the theoretical assumptions underlying the use of phonics in the classroom. The reasoning behind this is that reading is primarily a linear act in which letters are converted into sounds, sounds are then combined to form words and words are further grouped together to make up sentences (p. 166).

Two other assumptions also accompany this line of reasoning. One is that ‘the consistency or regularity in the relationship between the phonemes and graphemes of a language greatly facilitates the process of learning to read that language. (ibid.)’. The second claim is that languages which have varying degrees of phonemic-orthographic correspondence will differ in the very nature of their reading processes. English is considered to be a nightmare for a speller who bases his writing on sounds. Such a speller would be in big trouble, as many words in English are written differently than they sound. *Wensday* would seem to be a better representation than *Wednesday*, but English orthography is the way it is, and unless the Society to Preserve the English Language (if it even exists) imposes a radical shift for English, English speakers and those learning the language will have to deal with the way things are at the moment.

Thus, phonics is a proponent of a ‘bottom-up’ approach, with the acquisition of individual sounds considered fundamental steps towards language comprehension. The focus is the creation of a linguistic bank, so to speak, from which the speaker can draw to produce his or her utterances. A child exposed to a language early enough in her life will be able to produce as many possible phonemes found within the languages of the world, with an accent being introduced as the child progressively passes through adolescence and adulthood.
It should be noted that phonics has a parallel relationship with oral proficiency, not just written. It is usually assumed that a better pronunciation of sounds made by the child suggests a higher ability to comprehension, especially when children are asked to read stories aloud. This point shall be further elaborated on in a later section because of its relevance to Spanish-speaking children.

What are some alternate approaches to phonics? Pearce (1995) lists a variety of options teachers have used in their classrooms which incorporate phonics. All the options are extremely hands-on driven (it should be noted they have been used in monolingual classrooms) and have been used by current teachers as a way to avoid a separate teaching period. One teacher, for example, commences the school day with a ‘morning phrase’ which is read aloud to students. She points out the letters found in the phrase and encourages the sounding out of words (p. 56). The children are next asked to concoct their own sentences to add to the phrase and spell them out while doing so. On the chalkboard, words from one such message are separately underlined, leaving it up to the students themselves to determine where a word boundary is located.

A second alternative involves the use of a story that contains a large number of words with, say, the [ʃ] phoneme. A teacher may opt to point out or emphasize each [ʃ] sound found in the text while the story is being read. The teacher may ask the children to point out all the words with ‘sh’ at the beginning, at the end, or at any other locations. Then, using notepad paper, they can then write out a selected word on notepad paper and stick them to a wall chart which will be called the ‘sh’ chart. As a follow up activity, any time children encounter other words with the same sound, each can write out the discovered word and
'stick' that one to the chart (p. 57). Because [ʃ] is represented by more than one possible letter combination in English (ex. Sharp, champagne, mission, etc.), the children will be exposed to various ways that sounds can be represented, particularly in English (Spanish possesses a better orthographic-phonemic relationship, a point to be expounded upon further in this paper). This will caution the children that a [ʃ] phoneme is not always represented by sh. Note that this can be employed in both an English and Spanish classroom.

One approach which ties in very closely with the total physical response, one previously stated method employed within the bilingual classroom, involves children acting out phonemes. Pearce provides another example in which a teacher focused on the [m] phoneme by having the children produce a continuous mmmmm and rub their bellies simultaneously. The hope is that the children, upon seeing or discovering the letter m, will have an easier time reading and writing it out because they will recall their acting it out. According to social learning theory, this information will be better encoded within the child, resulting in the easier recall.

Finally, a fourth alternative Pearce mentions involves a contextual introduction to morphology in English. Again, rather than having a separate fifteen minute period discussing the -ing or -ed endings, a teacher can use a favorite story of the children. After reading it out loud, he may ask his students to point out as many verbs that were in the story as possible. Those verbs can then be classified according to their endings (-ing, -ed, etc.) and the teacher can ask relevant questions to emphasize the semantic change each morpheme causes in a verb form. As a follow up activity, "the children can role-play scenes in which
each child is given a character and a situation from the story and has to decided how to act out a verb, such as *frowning* (p. 58).

These four possible alternatives are but a sampling of the innumerable quantity of approaches educators can employ in the young elementary classroom to incorporate phonics in a more contextualized format rather than in an isolated period, as is used commonly in traditional classrooms. Notice how none of the sample methods require the teacher to introduce a phoneme in a bland manner and nor is there any obligation to refer to an isolated phonics worksheet. Because reading development is a primary focus in the early grades, the teacher will more than likely have most of his class time devoted to reading and literacy exercises involving writing and spelling, instructors will not be hard pressed to scramble for time to practice using such methods. They can be incorporated into math, as odd as that sounds. When, for example, discussing numbers, an instructor can ask to have 5 written out and make note that it contains phonemes articulated at the same oral location, differing only in that one is voiced (/v/) and the other voiceless (/f/).

From a theoretical stance, context-based approaches can be said to adhere to an ‘top-down’ mode of thinking, in contrast to the ‘bottom-up’ approach isolated phonics espouses. These models continue to be sources of debates, with no definitive answer outrightly favoring one over the other. Various theorists hold opposing viewpoints on the debate. The infamous Piaget would claim that a ‘top-down’ approach would be in direct violation of his stage theory of cognitive development, namely, that building blocks, in this case phonological cues, must first be established in a clear manner in order for the child to proceed to a higher
stage of cognitive thinking. In other words, the child must first possess a knowledge base which contains the elementary blocks of knowledge. This would then allow for progression and comprehension of more complex knowledge by using the already established base to arrive at the stage. This is essentially a 'bottom-up' approach. The inverse, however, is in direct opposition to Piaget. He would claim that the thinking progress of a child is jeopardized. The child will simply not grasp an answer to a problem due to a lack of a higher order process.

The 'top-down' approach has theoretical backing from the likes of Vygotsky and other contextualists. Material that is presented at a slightly higher level than the ability of the child is not a hindrance, as long as the teacher guides the student through his appropriate zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). The zone is defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)" That is, it is the distance between what a child can accomplish by herself and what she has the potential of accomplishing, with the latter being determined by the kinds of problems solved with help. The key to this theory is the notion of context, albeit through a more sociological perspective. In terms of educational pedagogy, the instructor is left to the task of determining the potential ability of each student and has the dubious task of selecting the right material that will hopefully tap into this ability.

Thus, this unresolved debate facing education seems to be at a standstill, with phonics and other literacy aspects in question as a result of the fallout from this query. However, this paper is not concerned with ultimately resolving the
debate, but rather presenting it as a relevant auspice of a reading component within.

**Syntax and Literacy**

In another literacy study with a more linguistic perspective, Pearson (1975) conducted three experiments to, in his words, “provide an assessment of linguistic variables which affect the way children process verbal data when they read (Pearson, 155).” One experiment consisted of wh-type (i.e. who, what, etc.) questions to determine the effects of syntactic complexity on children’s comprehension of causal relations and of modifying relations (p. 157). He presents three theoretical possibilities underlying his results. One is the readability hypothesis, in which sentence length and complexity make the comprehension process for a child more difficult. A second is the deep structure model, which claims that as surface structure input more closely resembles its deep structure counterpart, comprehension will much more easily occur due to a smaller number of syntactic transformations occurring from surface to deep structures. The third line of thinking is known as the chunk model and in some ways stands in complete contrast to the deep structure model. The claim underlying this third theory is that comprehension consists of synthesizing atomistic propositions into larger semantic units rather than analyzing complex units into atomistic propositions (p. 158). To clarify somewhat, if there is already a high degree of synthesis in the surface form of the input, comprehension becomes easier. If the surface structure is broken down somewhat (i.e. more closely resembles deep structure), then the exact opposite occurs. In considering
all three theories, Pearson reiterates that the goal of his research was to employ a methodology that held the semantic content of a statement constant while there simultaneously existed syntactic variation. Those variants which stood out as being more efficient in communicating a given idea lend themselves to individuals who prepare materials for children (p. 167). In other words, Pearson suggests children's authors and book designers should have this in the back of their mind when producing works.

The first experiment tested comprehension of causal and adjectival relations. The results from the sixty-four third and fourth grade children tested on this task show that more cohesive forms of input yield better and more stable comprehension (ibid, 180), a finding which the chunk model better accounts. But the experiment overall produced ambiguous findings, necessitating the second and third experiments. The second tested children's preferences for various syntactic representations of a common idea. The data were better accommodated for than by the chunk model. The third experiment examined recall of causal relations, with results indicating that a causal relation is cognitively stored in a unified, subordinated chunk (ibid, 187). Doing so otherwise lends itself to a higher rate of non-recollection. Thus the chunk model emerges the most unscathed based on the findings.

Pearson's most general conclusion states that "any model attempting to explain the way in which verbal data are processed must begin with a semantic representation of the total relations involved rather than the syntactic description of the units which make up the relations (ibid, 189)." With regard to practical applications, these studies do not suggest that the difficulty of written discourse

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can be reduced by cutting down on sentence length or eliminating subordinating constructions. Furthermore, if “the semantic relation is held constant and when the test question is relevant to the relation whose form is varied, comprehension is equally efficient across forms or else the more subordinated and longer sentence forms elicit better comprehension (ibid, 189).”

At first, one may be taken aback by the conclusion reached by Pearson. One would imagine that a complex sentence would produce more work for whatever cognitive system the mind employs to decode input, yet the very opposite is concluded. Caution should be exercised in overgeneralizing this conclusion. It would be unwise for the teacher, having finished reading the Pearson study, to assign ‘Malcolm X’ to his third grade classroom. No such interpretation can be reached. What does come across somewhat clearly is the notion that ‘baggage,’ or context, can accompany the input being taught by the teacher or acquired by the student, which will not impede the learning process. Oversimplifying may work against the intentions of the teacher.

What are the ramifications within the English-Spanish bilingual classroom? First, both literacy authors mentioned thus far base their thinking on data in English. For the purposes of this thesis, how does Spanish fair? Rather than write a separate thesis on the numerous syntactic differences between Spanish and English, some of the more prominent disparities will be briefly mentioned. First, Spanish, as is typical of many of the Romance languages, is a pro-drop language. That is, it allows for what are known as empty subjects to predominate in an utterance. Consider the following:

(I) Yo comí el plato de maíz chulpi.
As can be noted, the first person pronoun is omitted in the second sentence. However, both are perfectly acceptable to the fluent speaker and are identical in understanding (disregarding pragmatic principles). Does English react in the same manner?

(3) I went to the store.
(4) *Went to the store.

(In linguistic terminology, a * symbol indicates an ungrammatical utterance.) An empty subject is not permitted in English, in contrast. Thus, Spanish is considered a pro-drop language, permitting sentences such as (2). Because of its rich verbal morphology, one is able to deduce simply by the verb in the sentence which person is being referred to, thus not necessitating an explicit subject. If context and semantics are more important factors, such syntactic differences should not present problems to literacy acquisition. Yet this interpretation should be representative of all the programs currently being undertaken within bilingual schools.

Cohen (1994) illustrates the interesting relationship between syntax and reading assessment. A point early on in his work states that “research over the last several decades has given evidence that somewhat downplays the role of syntax in reading comprehension (p. 219).” One way used to determine a potential source of errors has been through comparing and contrasting syntactic patterns found in L2 text material with that found in similar L1 material. Cohen states
that this may allow the instructor to expect certain kinds of errors and to respond in an appropriate manner. As he mentions, students will initially depend on their L1 syntactic structures to produce L2 utterances.

With regards to Spanish and English, a common example comes from the following:

(5) ¿ Habla español?
    speak Spanish
    2 per. sing.
    Present
    "Do you speak Spanish?"

The typical example produced by very early learners of English is

(6) *Speak Spanish?

Though an English speaker will understand what sentence (6) is asking for, he will immediately realize the bearer of the question is not a fluent speaker. One explanation is the speaker's transference of Spanish syntax into English, which, had the process been correct, should make (6) grammatical. What the speaker of (6) did not realize is that English syntax currently requires an auxiliary verb to precede the main verb of the sentence to produce a question. Spanish syntax does not. Spanish-English bilingual teachers need not be specifically trained in syntax from both languages, but at the very least should This kind of error should be expected in the developing bilingual child as well.

Miscues based on semantics should also be noted. A sentence this author has heard too often by nonfluent English speakers is below.

(7) *I have hungry.

The equivalent expression in Spanish is sentence (8).

(8) Tengo hambre.
    have hunger
The corrected version of (7) should be *I am hungry*. However, early learners will more likely than not translate directly from L1 to produce utterances in L2, assuming that L2 will possess as many similar syntactic and semantic patterns as in L1. Sentence (7) is a literal translation of (8), suggesting the previous statement. With regards to semantics, the subcategorization frame for *have* requires a noun to follow the verb, save for various idiomatic expressions. Adjectives do not work. A teacher may, for example, review the properties of the most commonly used words in English, such as *have*, but do so in a contextual manner rather than in isolation.

Cohen provides research on syntactic influence in L2 literacy acquisition. Ulijn and Kempen (1976) attempted to determine the effects of syntactic parallelism between L1 and L2 on reading. Based on several of their experiments, they concluded that success at reading in L2 was not necessarily affected by the presence of L2 syntactic structures different from those in L1. They did identify a scenario whereby parallelism may significantly pose a problem to L2 reading, namely, when and inadequate base of conceptual and referential knowledge is present. Under such a condition, the language learner will tend to rely more heavily on the syntax from each individual sentence to construct their own interpretation. Consequently, if the grammars are significantly different, the claim is that the learner will experience more difficulty in comprehension due to the exclusive reliance. Furthermore, in a study conducted on Dutch speakers asked to translate a French passage into Dutch, the subjects relied more on a
syntactic strategy to decipher information. As Cohen states, the point from the stated research is to uncover the source of difficulties and errors produced during L2 reading (p. 221). With regards to Ulijn and Kemper, a lack of parallelism between L1 and L2 combined with a syntactic strategy approach to interpreting text will result in difficulties.

Blau's (1982) study is also cited by Cohen. Blau also sought to determine the effect of syntax on reading, but focused on ‘simple’ versus ‘complex’ sentences. The former is characterized as having clues to underlying relationships (p. 221), whereas the latter lacks them. Eighty-five Puerto Rican students in an EFL classroom (note, not ESL) were tested, with results showing that the ‘simple’ sentences actually presented more problems for comprehension purposes. The conclusion Blau reached was that the absence of a myriad of clues intertwined within the ‘complex’ sentences resulted from an oversimplification of sentences. Cohen also mentions Berman (1984), who postulates that a complex sentence will impede the acquisition of specific details, whereas syntactic comprehension was sufficient enough to acquire a gist (p. 221). Berman further makes note of heavy noun phrases as more than likely potential problematic sources to comprehension for early learners. For elementary children, such phrases (ex. [Going to the market]NP is my favorite part of the day.) are usually not taught to children.

Sentences are kept more or less simple. However, these researchers make the point that a syntactic strategy toward reading comprehension develops inherently. Cohen does state that this focus has somewhat dissipated within the past couple of years, with semantic and individual word analyses becoming more
prominent within the developing bilingual.

What are the ramifications of the above in a Spanish-English bilingual classroom? First, because context is one factor children take into consideration, it would seem somewhat out of place to have English language lessons based specifically on syntax or morphology in complete isolation. For example, teaching the children the present tense conjugation by itself would result in some level of disinterest within the children. It would not be negative to have a lesson based on a story that was read. Second, teachers can then expect certain kinds of errors to be made and can have methods in the waiting to remedy any incorrect utterances. At the same time, however, children should be given the opportunity to correct themselves, with the responsibility falling on the teacher to balance both options. Third, an easier sentence does not necessarily lead to better comprehension. Bilingual teachers should attempt to provide as much context so that children can decipher the meaning of a sentence, statement, or paragraph by themselves.

Reading Misconceptions Within the Bilingual Classroom

The perspectives of three authors' studies into Spanish-English bilingual classrooms shall be investigated in this section. Misconceptions and further elaborations on more effective methodologies will be explored and an overall evaluation of the trends literacy programs are undergoing will be the primary focuses.

In a study by Barrera (1983), she begins by pointing out that "in many school bilingual programs in the SW United States, the teaching of reading is dominated by instructional beliefs and practices that may well be counterproductive to
children's reading-language development various misconceptions teachers have of their bilingual students. (p. 164)" Many of these include a supposed lack of reading comprehension due to little command of phonemes and graphemes, low scores on exams measuring English reading proficiency, and regressive distancing strategies due to a lack of proper pronunciation of written words. These assumptions go vis-a-vis other inherent assumptions with regards to Spanish-English literacy:

(1) Phonics is the best approach for teaching initial reading in Spanish.
(2) First language reading and second language reading are disparate processes.
(3) Second language reading development is entirely dependent on oral language development.
(4) Language proficiency scores can predict "readiness" for second language reading.
(5) Language-based differences in second language reading are reading problems to be eradicated.
(6) The language arts are separate and mutually exclusive categories of instruction. (pp. 165-6)

In the previous section, one piece of evidence was presented to indicate some of the methodological shortcomings inherent to the debate as to whether phonics should be taught as an isolated topic or if it should be blended in with the instruction of another topic or story (i.e. while the teacher is reading the story of the week, he covers phonics, punctuation, spelling, etc., in the question he asks of the children). The more meaning-based approach worked well with the child who was deemed as lacking in ability to read. Without first starting with the assumption that all bilingual children will begin the reading process 'lacking in background,' many of the conceptions facing monolingual literacy also affect the multilingual classroom. Although the second language complicates matters somewhat, many of the same contextually-based approaches can be employed,
since similarities exist between both.

What are some of these similarities? The existence of ‘basal’ workbooks, filled mostly with mechanical, rote-memorization assignments, predominate many of the shelves of classrooms considered to be traditional. One could compare such books to those which exist for elementary mathematics, in which problems merely ask one to fill in the blank, so to speak, and not delve very much into the process by which one obtained the answer. For bilingual classrooms, such textbooks and workbooks are also in use, coming close to spelling exam-type formats. With regards to Spanish-English exercises, such questions include stating the equivalent word in another language, as in a fill in the blank type of scenario, and if lucky, asking the student to construct a sentence utilizing the newly-acquired word. Many texts present a listing of, say, verb conjugations in English, similar to the way a foreign language is taught at the high school and university level. In addition, tests are set-up specifically to test recall of such tenses. This is not to say that tenses should not be covered in the classroom for evaluation by the children. However, based on the examples provided, such tasks are given in an isolated, decontextualized manner.

Barrera notes that a phonics approach to Spanish reading is the most commonly used approach to introduce the child to the phonemic-orthographic relationship. In fact, she emphasizes that use of an alternative approach is considered heretic within the field. Phonics thus seems to be the norm in terms of approaches, at least within a monolingual Spanish classroom. One gets the impression that Spanish seems to be the ideal language for a phonics lesson. Why? In a previous section on the phonics debate, one assumption stated was that
a language with a better letter-sound correspondence would make literacy a comprehensively more graspable process. Barrera points to various researchers who claim Spanish literacy is much easier to acquire due to its relatively high phoneme-grapheme relation, even going so far as to say that learning difficulties do not present themselves (Andersson & Boyer, 1970).

In striking down such assumptions, one aspect pointed out by Barrera is that some theorists define orthography as a major constituent of Spanish literacy and disregard other fundamental aspects associated with reading, such as developing critical thinking skills and development of semantic comprehension. In addition, children are usually exposed to print before stepping foot into the classroom, either by having been read bedtime stories or inquiring about the symbols of a ‘stop’ sign. These exposures are contextually centered and not introduced in isolated or controlled time slots. Thus, children already possess preconceived notions of what print represents, ideas which for the most part go ignored or are not tapped into. Lastly, a strong leaning towards Spanish phonics may tune out universals found in the reading process (p. 167).

Various studies are mentioned by Barrera lending support away from an exclusively Spanish phonics approach. In one study conducted on Mexican children of kindergarten age, Ferreiro (1978) concluded that children undergo different modes of interpreting text before settling with a final mode which is compatible with the orthographic structure, regardless of the high degree of letter-sound correspondence in Spanish. This disproves a theoretical stance that readers of Spanish depend more heavily on orthography, which would suggest that, say, the reading process of readers of Chinese is radically different than
those in Spanish. Other mentioned studies on early grade Spanish-speaking children reveal that strategies are applied which do not mostly focus on creating spoken representations of print (p. 167).

Finally, researchers who have shown a Spanish phonics approach to be beneficial have noted that the population in their studies were children whose background exposed them to a high number of literacy skills before stepping into the classroom (they include Roser & Jensen, 1978). What implications does this hold for those at the opposite end of the spectrum, namely, those who received a negligible amount of pre-classroom literacy skills? Phonics may perhaps still be the best solution, but a rather isolated, phoneme by phoneme approach as an introduction to literacy may be one of the underlying reasons why some children abhorrently dislike the reading process, particularly those receiving such meaningless, decontextualized lessons. Teachers need to take all of the developmental levels found within the classroom into consideration and should select the most appropriate method which addresses the needs of the students. Depending on the background of the children prior to entering kindergarten, children may not have a well established base, albeit some letter recognition through signs in the environment.

One of the more prominent problems facing Spanish-English reading instruction exists in a misguided belief that the literacy process in Spanish is a completely different one that the process in English. As such, different approaches must be used in teaching introductory reading skills, with some teachers assuming that the Spanish-speaking child confronts a completely new process once English reading is taught. This assumption fails to take into
account, as previously mentioned by Barrera, that possible universals exist within reading comprehension, regardless of the language. In other words, reading is reading, no matter what orthography one uses. This statement does not disavow that languages may possess unique aspects, notably perceptual differences, which Gibsonian psychologists may comment on.

Based on the previous situation, teachers may be extremely hesitant to simultaneously teach Spanish and English reading instruction to the same students (assuming the curriculum allows for a gradual introduction of L2 in the early grade curriculum). Underlying this hesitancy is interference, one of the more controversial theoretical notions inherent to the bilingual debate. To briefly mention, one fear associated with the movement is the notion that having a second language introduced to youngsters will somehow regress the development of L1. With regards to literacy, interference from having two languages being focused on is claimed to prevent developing a native-like control of either. If Chomsky's language acquisition device (Chomsky, 1986) is still present within the mind of the child by the early grades, interference as an argument has no merit, as the LAD is able to accommodate both languages by merely tuning on specific elements from the LAD that each language taps into. Some concrete evidence seems to verify the Chomskyan claim. Teachers remain skeptical about simultaneous literacy instructing.

The fallout from this debate, pedagogically speaking, is assessment. The criteria of various schools require that a child first possess a more or less solid base of literacy knowledge in L1, Spanish in this case. If he does, the child is then permitted to have English (L2) literacy instruction, since the interference factor
would not be as strong in affecting the L1 base. However, as previously mentioned, schools use oral ability as an indicator of literacy. This in turn increases the chances that a child may be advanced before he is ready. The child may demonstrate a good command of what Cummins calls *basic interpersonal communicative skills* (Crawford, 1991), which is a rudimentary command of a language. A better indicator would be *cognitive academic language proficiency*, also known as academic or bookish language, which takes four to six years to fully develop. The danger is thus in placing kids who are just not ready to tackle English literacy and may subsequently suffer long term negative consequences.

Based on her own study and observations, Barrera makes the following three conclusions. One is that children do not approach Spanish and English literacy from distinctive banks. Secondly, literacy skills (decoding, semantic processing, etc.) which developed in Spanish would transfer over to English. In other words, the strategies the child acquired in Spanish reading would be used in English reading. Third, there is no need to 'wait' for one language to develop and have the other pause until the former is completed.

**Dependency on Oral Language**

Another assumption associated with assessment practices involves oral language assessment. Some teachers believe in the aforementioned as being an efficient indicator of whether or not a Spanish-speaking child is ready to have English introduced to her. Barrera notes numerous researchers which in their studies indicated that literacy comprehension is more than just proficient oral ability. In fact, the two are in a sense very different. A more reliable factor in
predicting written proficiency, as various researchers have noted (Applebee, 1979; McCormick, 1977), is the bank of 'book English' within the child. A child who is more familiar with bookish language will stand a better chance at more effective reading comprehension, and Barrera notes that teachers should make a point to assess this within their students more so than oral ability.

Dependency on oral ability as an assessment marker presents specific problems for Spanish-speaking children. Although there are close to 400 million Spanish speakers worldwide, a number of phonological and prosodic varieties exist, dependent on the country of origin or descendance of the child. For example, although a [j], the /y/sound, is pronounced as is by highland Ecuadorians, Argentineans and numerous others, Spanish-speaking Caribbeans and in general coastal Spanish speakers from Central and South America will pronounce [h] as an English [dz] (Canfield, 1990). If assessment is determined by a clear, English pronunciation, Puerto Ricans and other groups mentioned in the previous sentence will more than likely be determined as 'slow' when asked to read English words containing a [j] diphthong. Other Latino groups mentioned will not experience this. Although the pronunciation of [j] varies by country, one phoneme in Spanish which is regularly consistent is the voiceless alveolar fricative, [s]. In Spanish, there are no words which begin with [s] and are followed by another consonant, or a consonant cluster. English of course does, with words like start, smart, etc. Thus, how would a Spanish speaker pronounce, say, sprite (as in the drink)? Since this word is non-existent, the Spanish speaker would use Spanish phonology and pronounce it like esprite. Teachers who base their assessment on oral proficiency at the very least should be instructed to
expect Spanish speaking children to make errors of the like explicated in this section.

Silva (1983) points to other misconceptions associated with the Spanish reading process. Among them include a belief that “children learn to read by acquiring many different, separate skills. Good readers don’t miss words, and when they do, it is because they: (a) don’t know the word, because of a lack of word-recognition skills or vocabulary; (b) don’t know phonics; or (c) are not being careful - for example, they are reading too fast or not paying attention (p. 185).” In addition to Barrera’s point that oral proficiency is equated hand in hand with literacy development, Dávila de Silva also adds that approaches which present skills in an isolated manner are seen more favorably by bilingual teachers. In the case of reading, it is believed that children will better understand vocabulary if it is presented before being used in context. For example, worksheets containing words to be memorized may first be used before children have heard the same words in a story, thus acquiring words in a decontextualized manner. A final assumption deals with the scare of regression. In order to have Spanish speaking children on par with their English speaking counterparts in English, children should be placed according to the expected age norms in English so as to not lose time. This previous misconception does not take into account the English reading ability of children.

A study by Hudelson-Lopez (1975) examined the reading behavior of early grade Chicano students from the southwest. Each child was asked to read isolated Spanish words on a list. The child then read passages in Spanish in which every seventh word was covered, a process known as clozure. The results
showed that words which were missed on the isolated list were actually caught in the passages and read correctly. Hudelson-Lopez interprets these findings as support for Goodman's notion (1965) that miscues in reading reveal the kinds of strategies children use in interpreting text and thus do not bear negative connotations (Hudelson-Lopez, p. 187). When coming across the empty spots in the text, children substituted a similar semantic word or guessed the right word about half of the time.

In Eaton's (1979) study, Chicano first graders were asked to read Spanish and English passages and then retell what they had read. One group of subjects had received Spanish instruction in reading with some exposure to phonics approaches in English. English reading was then taught starting at the midterm point. The other group had received English instruction for the entire grade, with Spanish reading instruction rarely taught. In addition, each child was labeled as field dependent, field independent, or a combination of both. The first refers to those whose perceptions contain more of a holistic interpretation, with difficulty in recognizing the parts as separate units. Field independent children are the opposite; they can recognize separate units but not see things as a combination of said units. The third is a combination of both (p. 189). Her results from analyzing miscues produced during the passage recall indicate that field independent and dependent children had a better recall of the Spanish text, thus concluding that all were better in their native Spanish, even though one group of subjects primarily received English reading instruction. Dávila de Silva interprets this finding as evidence for the existence of a sole reading process.

Flores (1982) tested second, fourth and sixth grade bilingual Chicano
children with regard to the habit formation hypothesis, which states that interference in the acquisition of a second language will occur from 'points of differences' between two languages. In Spanish and English, the -ed & -s morphemes and the sh/ch phonemes have been identified as being two of the more prominent phonological, syntactic and morphological difficulties a Spanish speaker will incur when learning English. She concluded that interference is not always a result in the construction of meaning (p. 190). Pedagogically, some teachers believe that these difficulties should be expected and that these aspects should be the starting point for introducing English in the bilingual classroom. Flores' results call this practice into question.

Silva (1979) conducted an oral reading study on thirty Chicano Spanish speaking children to determine miscues from selected Spanish-only reading materials. Each miscue was coded to a category based on three different reading levels: primer, preprimer, and first reader level. The first part of the study focused on each individual miscue that was produced and compared it across reading levels. As an example, graphic similarity as a miscue was used to compare the primer and preprimer level. Her second part attempted to determine if one miscue was produced quantitatively more, implying a possible dependence with regards to strategy use in interpreting text. How would the preprimer children, for example, compare with the primer group? In terms of categorical miscues, they included graphic and phonemic similarity and syntactic and semantic acceptability. The study hoped to address some of the following questions: To what extent did the first grade subjects use graphic, phonemic, syntactic and semantic information (p.191)? The reading material selected in this
study was intentionally more difficult than the level where each subject was determined to be, for the purposes of eliciting children's strategies when encountering such material. It should be noted that none of the children had received any instruction in English. Finally, how the children went about correcting any errors they had committed was also recorded.

The results revealed that syntactic and semantic acceptability of miscues did not differ significantly between each of the three reading levels. Graphic and phonemic similarity was a different story. Significant increases in mean degree were noted between the preprimer and primer levels, as well as between the primer and first grade levels. At the preprimer level, graphic and phonemic similarity of miscues were not significant and were lower in degree compared to syntactic and semantic categories. The primer level revealed no significant difference between graphic and phonemic similarities. In addition, no significant difference was noted between phonemic and semantic acceptabilities. For the first grade level, syntactic acceptability was greater than graphic and semantic categories (p. 192).

What does the above state? With regards to graphic and phonemic similarity, she concludes that “the students appeared to learn to use the graphophonic system by being exposed to contextual reading without a separate module of phonics instruction (p. 193).” The syntactic and semantic acceptabilities reveal a somewhat strong relationship between both. Because of the larger degree of miscues, the first grade readers (in this study, the highest ones) may be increasing their knowledge of syntax and semantics and improving their strategies in figuring out meaning from the text (p. 193).
One may ask the relevancy of this study for monolingual Spanish developing readers. The results found here are extremely similar to the findings reported in Goodman's studies on miscues by English readers, in the following manner: (1) Learners are aware of syntax and semantics. (2) At the preprimer level, there is no significant difference between syntactic and semantic acceptabilities. (3) At the primer and first grade levels, syntactic acceptability was greater than semantic. Thus, the process seems to be similar in both languages, providing further support to the notion that teachers need not start from base one when teaching beginning literacy. Spanish and English share similar processes.

What implications do her findings pose? With regards to the subjects, the children were well aware of the syntax and semantics in the Spanish language and delved into this knowledge to aid in deciphering unfamiliar text, she notes. In addition, and more relevantly, she concludes that “the absence of graphophonic instruction will not disable beginning Spanish readers (p. 195).” Based on her study, a separate graphophonic approach is not needed and the lack of one will not impede the literacy acquisition process of the Spanish speaking child. The approach concurrently takes place as the child proceeds through the context-rich reading process. Furthermore, a Spanish reading program should contain some of the following characteristics: (1) Reading instruction should occur under the richest contextual environments to provide a more comprehensive understanding and development of reading universals and phonics information. (2) Teaching graphophonic recognition is not a prerequisite for teaching reading skills. Note that this observation does not altogether ban any sort of phonics instruction. What it does say is that it need not be mandated. (3)
Three linguistic aspects are at work during the reading process: graphophonic, syntactic and semantic. Based on her findings, each linguistic system also does not need to be taught in isolation.

Relevant conclusions can also be drawn from the kinds of miscues Spanish-speaking children committed during the Spanish reading process. Although not specifically mentioned in the above paragraphs, one suggestion is that children need not be immediately corrected when a 'mistake' is produced while reading. Using contextual background, studies already mentioned reveal that children will either come up with, say, the missing word or at the very least provide a semantically-equivalent word. One noteworthy aspect which has not been mentioned but merits some discussion relates to the Spanish-speaking minorities in this country. As mentioned in a previous section, phonological differences exist between most of the Spanish-speaking nationalities within the US. In addition, dialectical differences, though somewhat subtle, exist. Valadez (1981, as reported in Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 1992) notes an example in Spanish which most of the Latin population adheres to.

(9) ¿Adónde vas tú?
(10) ¿Tú adónde vas?
(11) ¿Adónde vas?
(12) ¿Adónde te vas?
"Where are you going to?"

It is not uncommon, however, to hear the following in Puerto Rico and perhaps other Spanish-speaking Caribbean nations.

(13) ¿Adónde tú vas?

The claim is that sentence (13) is not a typical utterance by other nationalities. This author can at least vouch for highland Ecuadorians. Other perhaps
syntactic (and semantic) differences may exist at an extremely subtle level, particularly for those communities which have been exposed to English for a long duration (such as the prevalent use of /broder/ by Puerto Ricans and Dominicans). The point to be made is that the bilingual teacher should expect dialectical differences amongst the student population he will be working with. Further studies on dialectical influences with the Spanish community may shed more light on this issue.

How do dialectical variations affect literacy? According to the results, Silva noted that her Chicano subjects "transformed print into their own dialect. Readers usually would not correct miscues that shifted language into their own dialect because they made sense to them. ... This indicates that beginning readers are ready for and can benefit from exposure to materials in different language styles (p. 196)." What this suggests is that a Puerto Rican child need not be restricted only to Puerto Rican literature or any form of writing which would best agree with, say, Puerto Rican syntax. Doing so may present pedagogical difficulties in classrooms where a diverse population of students exists. The differences briefly mentioned are minimal and do not present a problem. The children will adapt the written style in the manner most appropriate to result in maximum comprehension.

Based on the evidence presented in Silva, the most relevant conclusion she makes is that the Spanish and English reading processes are the same. After a child is exposed to literacy in Spanish, the teacher need not start from scratch, so to speak, when introducing English reading. This claim points to the universality of reading comprehension and, to add a further claim, would allow the bilingual
child to use his base of literacy skills and apply it to other languages, regardless of whether or not the languages have a strong phonemic-orthographic relation. Note that this claim supports notions of transference of skills, in this case reading strategies. The exact mechanism, as in an information processing approach, has yet to determine the exact nature of the process. Finally, “neither Spanish nor English reading is a precise process wherein every element is identified. Reading in both languages is a meaning-gathering (personal emphasis) process... (p. 199)” As a final conclusion, although Spanish may indeed possess a higher degree of letter-sound correspondence, educators should not be deceived into thinking that the Spanish literacy process draws primarily from orthography.

The authors mentioned thus far emphasize context as the most prevalent and significant factor in terms of providing children with a more effective learning opportunity. The next section discusses specific methods used in teaching reading.

**Teaching Methods Towards Oral and Written Reading**

Ovando and Collier (1985) mention several approaches to be employed with reading. Although their descriptions extend to postliterate readers in the older grades, this thesis concentrates more on early elementary age children who bring a minimal level of experience to the classroom. However, before investigating these methods, the first question they mention is whether learning L1 literacy is necessary before proceeding to L2. From research mentioned in previous sections, not teaching L1 reading was an option not considered, since no negative consequences were observed from the sources cited. Although cumulative
research evaluations (Engle, 1975) have not yielded a definitive answer, Ovando and Collier do point out a somewhat consistency of results from majority and minority-group language learners. Those in the former tend to show a positive correlation in terms of L2 acquisition. Those in the latter showed an inverse relationship when L1 is not the language of instruction in reading. This pattern reveals that the answer is indeed somewhat clear cut, with theorists such as Cummins positing sociological factors for the divergence in results. Spanish-speaking Latinos fall under the second group, with their non-native language being the dominant one. In addition, both authors mention that as a general practice, L1 literacy development is stressed, with L2 introduced within the third or fourth grades. They also mention that students who show great confidence in L1 succeed rather well when L2 literacy is introduced before L1.

Of the numerous teaching methods employed in the bilingual classroom, Thonis (1981, as reported in Ovando & Collier, 1985) developed three categories which most fall under: synthetic, analytic and eclectic. The synthetic method involves a decomposition of the whole reading process into the parts and working with the latter. That is, it consists of the following submethods:

- **onomatopoeic** - everyday sounds are associated with visual symbols
- **alphabetic** - sounds not taught
- **phonics** - graphemic-orthographic correspondence
- **syllabic** - syllables rather than sounds are the basis of instruction
- **linguistic** - pattern recognition in words

(p. 95)

The analytic approach is somewhat of the opposite of the synthetic approach, namely, that overall comprehension and the whole word are stressed. It takes a 'up-bottom' theoretical stance. Three submethods found include:

- **global** - look-say memorization of whole words and phrases
The eclectic approach combines aspects from both. Each side need not be in
different camps and elements of one can be found within the other. Eclecticism
does not necessarily favor one approach over the other. It does, however, force the
teacher to consider the kinds of environments in which to use combinations.
Thonis provides an example in which the language experience approach is tied in
with phonics instruction based on words each child can produce and recognize,
with this being an effective model for a transitional bilingual classroom. In the
personal program set-up, this author will adopt an eclectic approach as the
underlying basis for a reading model to be constructed for Spanish speaking
children.

When teaching literacy skills, the instructor must consider reading
strategy development as an essential component, since, as previously stated in the
Silva miscue study, Spanish children employ numerous strategies to make
meaning out of a text. Concurring with Krashen's notion that effective language
acquisition occurs under the most 'natural' conditions, Ovando and Collier
recommend that the materials to be used in the classroom be as relevant as
possible to their backgrounds or contain relevant facts.

Williams and Snipper (1990) also provide criteria and definitions of the
kinds of models which exist in literacy models. They include the already stated
language experience, core literature and the reading-while-listening
approaches. The authors posit these as effective (when properly planned and
done) and contextually-rich opportunities for children to better acquire meaning
Although briefly defined, the language experience approach is based on theoretical grounds that "children remember best what is most meaningful to them and what they themselves have generated (p. 109)." The key theory underlying the previous statement is constructivism, a recently postulated educational notion which resembles Chomsky's claim about the constructing rather than behaviorist notion of language. Under constructivism, the child is actively constructing his knowledge base rather than merely absorbing it, as structuralists and strict behaviorists would postulate. The child by her very nature cannot possibly be a passive learner, a sponge so to speak. A common notion associated with constructivism is the idea that children will have a better command of knowledge if they are able to 'teach' whatever it is they have learned. That is, they themselves must assume the role of teachers. Thus, the first key ingredient of the language experience approach encourages the child to be more involved in the literacy process by drawing on personal experiences.

Numerous ideas are provided by the authors involving the method, though two shall be briefly mentioned. If the bilingual class embarks on a trip to, say, the local zoo, the instructor may ask the children to devise their own story based on their experience at the zoo, individually or collectively. Students who have yet to command writing may dictate their ideas to the teacher, who in turn will transcribe as many utterances as possible and produce a book. Children can then read from their personally created book, with the belief that they will be more aware of the text, having come from their own minds. This introduction to literacy is intended to provide a smoother transition into regular library books. A
second suggestion also involves transcription of children's statements, whereby big books with illustrations can be produced. Children can then color in these illustrations. Afterwards, the concocted story can be shared amongst a large group, where the child are given the opportunity to read aloud (p. 110).

The core literature approach has many similar aims as that of the previous one, with a major difference coming from what that literacy is based on. Rather than utilizing children's own words to create stories, reading materials are already selected by the teacher by way of books. The idea behind this is initial exposure to the style of professional writing will be a better first model of literacy that the children can adopt and build upon. This method endorses the incorporation of phonics instruction and sight vocabulary within the context of the story, but does not advocate having either introduced before the method. The choice of literature should again be relevant and interesting to the needs of the students, with basals not necessarily responding to this need. A large range of authors, content, and styles are encouraged to be covered to provide as comprehensive a picture of reading as possible: Stories, fairy tales, ethnic literature, etc. Mention is also made of selecting research which contains problems that will have children transcend from functional to cultural and critical literacy. In other words, the reading process will not exclusively develop. Williams and Snipper further add that the task of the teacher is to come across literature which will efficiently develop literacy skills (vocabulary, syntax, strategy building, etc.) and should thus be filled with many representational words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs). In addition, research suggests that children will grasp vocabulary if it repeated often, implying that books which
contain the same vocabulary more or less will prove more beneficial (Rashotte and Torgessen, 1985, as reported in Williams and Snipper, 1990).

Reading-While-Listening is exactly that. The proponent, Carol Chomsky (1976), suggests a more enriching literacy development should include both oral and written language components. To this end, she hypothesizes that comprehension skills can be increased if children read texts as well as listen to the accompanying audio recordings of the same text. The benefits, especially for early L2 learners, is a sense of what the text sounds like when read by a fluent reader. A text is read several times, with a sort of memorization task being promoted due to repeated exposure. In several of her studies, Chomsky reviewed vocabulary and main topics with the children and noted significant increases in word recognition, comprehension, reading rate and motivation to read (p. 112). She includes other authors who reported similar results (Carbo, 1978). Williams and Snipper add that this method could be more effective for children if they are also asked to repeat along with the tapes as they read through the book rather than just follow along.

The method aims to lessen the initial tensions produced by reading in L2. Rather than being intimidated by difficulties such as initial slow and laborious reading, the accompanying tapes are intended to guide the L2 learner through a more comfortable process by providing a model the student can imitate, an oral one notably. What is of concern to Williams and Snipper for L2 learners is the development of possible negative attitudes towards English and reading as an overall process, which is a significant concern, especially for language-minority speakers such as Latinos.
The three methods elaborated upon in the previous paragraphs provide an adequate sense of the kinds of methods prospective and already established bilingual teachers should take into consideration. Note that Williams and Snippers do not overtly emphasize the need for context to be present in the process of L2 literacy development but mention it as one characteristic that each method should fall back on. What is of more concern to the authors, from a theoretical viewpoint, is the development of a core of literacy skills by using whatever the teachers deem appropriate for their population.

In the case of Latinos, the point of disinterest in English is an extremely relevant one, especially in terms of long range outcomes. Sadly, the Latino community has a horrendous high school dropout ratio, one of (if not) the highest of all minority groups within the U.S. Although numerous complex and intertwined factors contribute to this abysmal statistic and no one factor can be labeled as being the most prominent, some attention must nonetheless be drawn to potential dissatisfaction in L2. The disinterest in acquiring English cannot be ignored in the mind of the bilingual educator, and although he may not completely remove the stigmatization of English within the Latino community, he can take steps to address early signs in children. Acquiring English cannot always be dynamic, but some attention must be given to students to make sure the dissatisfaction does not spread to learning in general. This is one line of thinking for why Spanish should be maintained and developed within the Latino child.

**Theory Into Practice**

Having elaborated on some of the theories and methods which relate to
Spanish-English biliteracy programs, the next step for any teacher is to apply them to the classroom. Pérez and Torres-Guzmán (1992) provide a framework which teachers can use to devise lessons for their early grade children. In a previous section, the notion of literacy being a sequential developmental process, where oral proficiency must first be achieved before proceeding to reading and writing, was dismissed.

The first activity Pérez and Torres-Guzmán stress is having a teacher read aloud to the students on a regular basis, in Spanish or English, exposing the children to print and establishing the motivation in the children to read. A teacher need not read a selected story in its entirety without pausing. He can stop at a strategic point where he can ask the children to perhaps foreshadow the ending, thus involving his students in the text. It is important, however, to avoid overkilling a selected book, as children may grow tired of learning from the same material. For example, it would seem fine for a teacher to base perhaps two or three spelling lessons on the book selected. If he goes into ten or twelve, he must be sure that the children are still at an enthusiastic about the material in the story. Activities based on books include “designing a mural, creating a diploma, writing and illustrating alternate endings, or writing and dramatizing the group’s favorite section of the text (p. 71).”

Having children create their own stories and basing lessons on the content within the story is another possibility. The students can dictate to the teacher, who can then transcribe the stories onto the blackboard or perhaps around the room. It is extremely advantageous for two reasons: First, the teacher would be drawing content directly from the child, thus making it more meaningful for
him. Second, dictation is an excellent link between oral and written language (p. 71).

The authors note that only recently has a connection been noted between reading and writing (p. 72). Teachers would treat each subject as two different topics. They recommend that students be given as much practice as possible to write, encouraging invented spelling. The teacher should try her best to provide a sense of the interdependency between both and maintaining this relation for the year. Note that kindergartners can participate in writing as well, albeit in a very early stage.

Children should also be encouraged to share their writing with their classmates or perhaps work together on something. Writing notes, drawing up lists, composing stories, and writing letters are some activities teachers can assign, depending on what is appropriate (p. 72). The more they become involved in the process, the better the chances that children will be exposed to numerous writing styles and opportunities to practice.

Another suggestion made by Pérez and Torres-Guzmán includes developing a self- and class-composed book. The teacher can collect all the dictated stories and produce an official class journal containing all of the children's stories. Perhaps she may suggest a common theme related to a recently-read story which the children can base their writing on and have these stories collected into a book.

One observation the authors make deserves attention. With regards to writing, children will use different spelling strategies for different languages. For example, they note that at the beginning of the writing process in Spanish,
children will use more vowels than consonants with a tendency to write in
syllables. In English, early spellers and writers will usually omit vowels (p. 75).
Teachers are encouraged to first note what strategies children are using to spell
words and guide the children through them.

How can one integrate English and Spanish? “As children develop sound
literacy skills in their first language (Spanish), these skills will lay the
groundwork for their acquisition and perfection of the second language
(English).” (p. 85) Pérez and Torrea-Guzmán recommend that English be
introduced in the very first day, with time devoted for speaking and participating.
However, the amount of exposure to English literacy should depend on the child’s
Spanish literacy proficiency. It should be noted that their suggestion does not
discourage the development of Spanish. What it does suggest is having English
introduced to the point where it will level off with Spanish, but this does depend on
the underlying maintenance model of the school.

Conclusion

One should not interpret this paper as showing unconditional support for
whole language. A relevant question arises from such a view: Is the whole
language curriculum a better model for maximizing the rewards of a bilingual
curriculum? Such a methodology would provide the contextual clues necessary for
children to perhaps acquire a better understanding of, say, vocabulary. Although a
holistic approach to education is not the final or only answer, perhaps further
research can be dedicated to determine what works best with whole language. Basal
readers should not necessarily be thrown out the window as one can make use of them if they can be used appropriately and meaningfully. Nonetheless, it would be interesting to see under what circumstances their combination works best.

This paper has attempted to provide a comprehensive picture of some of the factors to be taken into consideration when teaching within an elementary Spanish-English bilingual classroom. Information was presented on the kinds of models a teacher may use in the classroom, with the conclusion being that providing a rich environment with context is no detriment to the learning process of a child and in some cases leads to children grasping material better and being more involved. The influence of syntax, semantics and morphology should give teachers a sense of what kinds of errors to expect from a child. One should not think of English and Spanish as being completely different languages and therefore lead one to start the reading learning process all over again. The goal should not only be to develop English literacy proficiency, but also to provide the children with the opportunity to become more involved with the material. Developing Spanish proficiency has not proven to be a setback to the developmental process and can serve to further empower the students, with the inclusion of context also being a means to this end. It is the hope that an effective bilingual programs in the early years will tear away at the disturbing graduation statistics facing Latinos and make the educational process much more meaningful for future generations.
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