

The Wider Context of Bilingual Education

Baker (2010) maintains that there are four basic perspectives to bilingual education, namely:

- language planning
- politics
- economics and cost efficiency
- pedagogy

stating that:

Bilingual education is not just about education. There are sociocultural, political and economic issues ever present in the debate over the provision of bilingual education, particularly politics. (Baker, 2017: 198)

This clearly indicates that it is impossible to separate any form of bilingual education from the social context in which it finds itself since its very existence is underpinned by various political aims which also have cultural, social and economic ramifications. The list of ten aims of bilingual education provided by Ferguson et al. (1977) (cited in Baker, 2017: 197) reflect these varying aspects.

Any political *aims*, however, which provide a basis or ‘raison d’être’ for the provision (or rejection) of bilingual education are, of course, a reflection of wider and deeper political *ideologies*. These are issues dealt with in Chapter 18 of Baker (2017: 388-389) with which students are advised to familiarise themselves. Bourhis (2001) adopts a typology of political *ideologies* in relation to the use of languages and places them on a continuum, referring to them as:

- pluralist
- civic
- assimilation
- ethnist

However, these, arguably, can also be partly coupled with a typology of language *policies* described by Wiley (2002) as being:

- *promotion-oriented* (corresponding to a pluralist ideology)
- *tolerance-oriented* (corresponding to a civic ideology)
- *repression-oriented* (corresponding to an ethnist ideology).

As will be noticed, Wiley (2002) does not include a language policy which corresponds to an assimilation ideology, which is surprising

considering that such a policy is so prevalent and widespread in countries which adopt major languages, such as the USA and the UK, as will be discussed later. However, in a later publication, Wiley (2015) suggests that assimilation is facilitated by what he refers to as *restricted-oriented* language policies.

In Chapter 10 of *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Baker (2017:197) makes a fundamental distinction between “(1) a classroom where formal instruction fosters bilingualism and (2) a classroom where bilingual children are present, but bilingualism is not promoted in the curriculum”; that is, the classroom may be bilingual but the educational *aim* of the teaching process is not *bilingual proficiency*. This could be a situation where minority language children who may have already achieved a certain level of bilingual competence are encouraged to only adopt the use of the dominant language of the majority. This rather glaring dichotomy between two linguistic and educational contexts clearly illustrates the fact that the languages used in classrooms (*deliberately or otherwise*) are often adopted with the aim of ensuring different linguistic, social and political outcomes. In other words, the language of the classroom may well reflect a wider educational and political philosophy or ideology. Baker (1993) states:

...bilingual education, whatever form it takes, cannot be properly understood unless it is connected to basic philosophies and politics in society... bilingual education is surrounded and underpinned by basic beliefs about minority languages, minority cultures, in-migrants, equal opportunity, the rights of individuals and the rights of language minority groups, assimilation and integration, desegregation and discrimination, pluralism and multiculturalism.'
(Baker, 1993: 247)

Bouhris' (2001) continuum of political ideologies may be said to reflect what are fundamentally two diametrically opposed attitudes towards or perceptions of languages in society; that is, languages as being either *problematic* or *advantageous*; after all, people either see a need for more than one language or they do not. Another way of expressing this is as having an *assimilationist* or a *pluralist* perspective (Baker, 2017: 389-392). Ferguson's (1977) ten aims of bilingual education may be categorised according to these basic criteria since languages intrinsically involve issues of power and authority, identity, as well as uncertainty and fear. Ruiz's (1984) three political dimensions of bilingualism, namely:

- Language as a right
- Language as a problem
- Language as a resource

which are discussed in Chapter 17 of Baker (2017) and in module ECDA-7011: Societal Bilingualism, also directly relate to Bourhis' (2001) continuum of ideologies. However, these categorisations again reflect languages being perceived as either problematic or advantageous, the first two (language as a right and as a problem) being diametrically opposed to each other and fitting the *socially problematic* category, whereas language as a resource reflects a perception of languages as being *socially advantageous*.

This, arguably, explains the ambivalent attitude to bilingualism which underpins bilingual education policy in the United States of America and, as Chapter 9 in Baker (2017) shows, has resulted in constant change, as summarised on pages 188-189.

Such ambivalence has been highlighted in some ironic aspects of policy-making in the USA as highlighted by Veltman (2000) who, on the one hand, points to a current perception of languages other than English as being economically advantageous, thus emphasising the need to promote the learning of additional languages amongst *monoglot* English speakers whilst, on the other, ignoring the wealth of a range of bilingual and multilingual skills which *already exists* amongst others. Ovando (1990: 354) describes the irony of the situation as follows:

On the one hand we encourage and promote the study of foreign languages for English monolinguals, at great cost and with great inefficiency. At the same time we destroy the linguistic gifts that children from non-English language backgrounds bring to our schools.

Ricento (2009) broadens the criticism to include the United Kingdom by referring to the irony of unsuccessfully attempting to teach the very languages which immigrant children are encouraged to forget.

The above discussion has served to highlight the importance of considering the relevance of the *political* context in which various forms of bilingual education exist, the political *ideologies* which underpin their aims and objectives as well as the political *dimensions* which can surround them. The next section will examine a range of models of 'bilingual' education with a view to investigate issues such as teaching *methodology*, but will again investigate aspects of political ideology when

considered crucial to gaining a better understanding of the educational model under consideration.

Models of Bilingual Education

Cazden & Snow (1990) describe bilingual education as ‘a simple label for a complex phenomenon’. As already mentioned, it is a term which is often used rather loosely and ambiguously when referring to any form of instruction involving the use of more than one language. Whilst covering a range of *methodologies* as well as *aims*, the term seems to have accrued such ambiguity due to the range of *purposes* for including more than one language within a classroom. Ironically therefore, so-called *bilingual* education does not always reflect the aim of achieving proficient bilingualism. To the contrary, in accordance with the political ideology of the context concerned, the aim can be to enforce *monolingualism* by a process of linguistic (and often cultural) assimilation with the dominant language of the majority; an example being the organisation formed in Wales in 1885 to promote the use of English and known as "The Society for the Utilisation of Welsh in Education (for the purpose of serving a better and more Intelligent Knowledge of English)" (Davies, 1993).

As mentioned earlier, Baker (2017: 197) refers to Ferguson’s (1977) classification of ten varying *aims* of bilingual education. These clearly reflect a wide range of political philosophies and ideologies, but they can also be categorised according to what we would consider their long-term outcomes to be *in terms of linguistic proficiency* and their orientation in promoting bilingualism and /or monolingualism. We can, therefore, similarly categorise various models of so-called ‘*bilingual*’ education according to the *purpose* of the educational instruction.

The educational scenario mentioned earlier where minority language children are encouraged to use the dominant language of the majority and to replace the mother tongue with their second language is called *transitional bilingual education*. This clearly reflects a political ideology which operates at least at an assimilationist (if not ethnist) level (Bourhis, 2001) and is underpinned by a process of *economic-structural* assimilation if not *cultural* assimilation (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977).

Bilingual education which aims to foster a child’s competence in his minority language is called *maintenance bilingual education*. This is a term, however, whose sociolinguistic contextual connotations are, arguably, often *implied* but never made *explicit*. The word ‘bilingual’ clearly states the use of two languages, whereas ‘maintenance’ raises sociolinguistic considerations and issues of ‘maintenance against what’?

Maintenance bilingual education is rather seen in terms of the ‘defence’ of the mother tongue in a bilingual or, particularly, diglossic context which results in ensuring a functional level of bilingual proficiency for linguistic minorities (or linguistically *minoritised* groups within a hegemonic political context). It is, therefore, a term usually used when referring to the teaching of lesser-used or minority languages which exist as ‘low’ languages in diglossic contexts (Fishman, 1972, 1980) and need to be maintained in the face of a possible language shift emanating from the threat of a ‘higher’ majority language (see module ECDA-7011: Societal Bilingualism).

Reflecting this sociolinguistic context and *maintenance* aspect of educational provision, Otheguy & Otto (1980) distinguish between *static-maintenance* and *enrichment or developmental maintenance*, the former only aiming at avoiding language loss and maintaining *current* levels of language skills and use, whilst the latter aims to develop language skills to their *potential* levels of proficiency. Enrichment bilingual education, however, also encompasses programmes which *aim* to enable majority language children to speak an additional language. This includes the teaching of major modern languages such as Spanish as well as lesser-used languages such as Frisian.

Transitional bilingual education may, therefore, reflect an ultimate aim of *monolingualism*, whereas maintenance bilingual education can aim at proficiency in an *additional* language or *bilingualism*. In terms of the trajectory of eventual *linguistic outcomes*, the continuum of possible aims and methods of instruction extend from two extreme *monolingual* points:

- (1) the use of *only* the mother tongue *without* the addition of a second;
- (2) the complete transition from one language to another (i.e. the ‘entire’ loss of the mother tongue and its replacement by the acquisition of proficiency in a second language).

Arguably, the linguistic transition process from (1) to (2) *in an individual* reflects the *societal* language shift described by Dennison (see module ECDA-7011). Denison (1977: 21) illustrates language shift in the following formula:

$$1. A \rightarrow 2. AI / BII \rightarrow 3. BI / AII \rightarrow 4. B$$

A and B represent different languages and I indicates a higher language competence among speakers than II. As was mentioned in the previous module:

Despite appearing to be a rather simplistic model of the process of language shift considering the range and complicated interaction of factors involved, it does, however, provide a clear outline of the process in terms of its *incremental* stages ... The model does also seem to indicate the possible (some would say inevitable) role of the 'acquisition of bilingual proficiency' stages (stages 2 and 3) in the eventual death of a language. Depending on the status of a language in relation to another and the *subtractive* or *additive* context in which it exists, the acquisition of *bilingual* proficiency amongst speakers can signal its demise. (Denison, 1977: 21)

Whereas one cannot entirely divorce the educational experience of the classroom from the *societal* linguistic context in which it exists, yet, in terms of the linguistic process experienced on an *individual* level, it is arguable that the range of 'bilingual' instruction available and designed to achieve corresponding levels of linguistic proficiency relates to points on the continuum of transition described by Denison (1977). This is certainly true of transitional bilingual education in making a monolingual transformation (via a bilingual route) from A to B. To accommodate the possible linguistic proficiency of being a '*balanced*' bilingual however, the continuum needs to include an additional or new third stage, this being A1-B1 (which would also perfect the continuum).

Whereas such a continuum may also be said to reflect the 'continuum' of political ideologies described by Bourhis (2001), however, due to the limited number of ideologies which are described in terms of *discrete* categories (although hybrids may exist in practical, everyday political life), a much wider range of bilingual teaching *methodologies* makes it difficult to assert any degree of correspondence in any form greater than as a directional trend. For example, transitional bilingual education aiming at eventual monolingualism may be said to reflect an assimilationist political ideology whilst maintenance bilingual education seems to be consistent with both pluralist and civic ideology, reflecting both promotion-oriented and tolerance-oriented language policies respectively (Wiley, 2002). With regard to the educational and linguistic process experienced within a classroom, therefore, the dichotomy would suggest an inevitable wide continuum of teaching methodology in terms of *the balance in the use made of the two languages*. This explains

Mackey's (1970) description of ninety varieties which belies the over-simplicity of Baker's (2017) categorisation.

In Chapter 10 of *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Baker (2017) places eleven models of 'bilingual' education in three broad categories which he terms:

- Monolingual forms of education for bilinguals
- Weak forms of bilingual education for bilinguals
- Strong forms of bilingual education for bilingualism and biliteracy.

The essential point to remember, however, is that these are rather broad divisions which, as Baker (2017: 198) admits, fail to encompass a multitude of models: "...one of the intrinsic limitations of typologies is that not all real-life examples will fit easily into the classification". By referring to Mackey's (1970) ninety varieties of 'bilingual' education as well as hybrid models (such as the one adopted in Welsh primary schools where first language heritage education for native speakers of Welsh is combined with immersion education for second language learners), Baker (2017: 200) concedes that this reduced categorisation is over-simplified and lists eight limitations to such a classification of bilingual delivery:

- models tend to suggest systems which are static and do not reflect the fluidity and evolutionary aspect of the bilingual education process
- variations of the 'same' basic model are numerous
- models suggest educational inputs and outputs but do not pay sufficient attention to the *teaching and learning process* of the classroom, an aspect of educational research which he has referred to elsewhere as the "black box" model (Baker, 1988)
- models do not provide evidence of their relative success or failure
- models are 'reductionist' and fail to reflect the complex nature of the educational process and experience
- they cannot be adopted by or 'transported' to a different context without giving due consideration to possible changes in the political environment
- they are generally prototypes which are based on practices in countries in the northern hemisphere
- model terminology is not generally part of the common parlance of professionals involved in bilingual education.

Nevertheless, despite the over-simplification, such a classification is necessary for discussion and understanding as well as useful in enabling us to tease out various issues of *methodology* and *aims*.

Baker's (2017) categorisation, however, marks a modification from that adopted in some earlier editions of the same publication where models were *dichotomously* described as either "weak" or "strong". Dividing the models further into three groups rather than two is evidently an attempt to reflect a wider *continuum* of outcomes in linguistic proficiency rather than a 'black and white' dichotomy, thus encompassing:

- monolingualism
- relative / limited bilingualism
- bilingualism and biliteracy

However, despite the danger of over-simplifying their linguistic *outcomes* in terms of eventual everyday *functional* use and application, one is nevertheless pragmatically tempted to continue defining these models of bilingual teaching dichotomously as:

- those which succeed in producing *functional* bilingual proficiency in individuals (strong models) and
- those which do not (weak models).

One should emphasise perhaps that, even in relation to those classified as 'weak' forms of instruction, the validity of such a categorisation would be questioned by many educational policy-makers who regard their programmes as genuinely aiming to achieve bilingual proficiency. However, those aims never become a reality in some bilingual education models. Therefore, we must be careful not to confuse what are overtly (and genuinely) positive *aims* with *effective teaching methodology* and assume that the two are synonymous or go hand in hand. Whilst bilingual education policy documents can often exude positive aims, as when emphasising the benefits of studying modern foreign languages for example, yet, even after many years of instruction, linguistic outcomes in terms of *proficiency* in a second or third language can often be poor. It is for this reason that we need to differentiate between *aims* and *outcomes*. Aims found in policy documents can even be *overtly* positive at times whilst deliberately being *covertly* negative. Stubbs (1991) in Reading 2, *Educational Language Planning in England and Wales: Multicultural rhetoric and assimilationist assumptions*, exposes the difference between *overt* rhetoric and *covert* expectations. Similarly, Fishman (2005) refers to "the soft smile and the iron fist".

Such ‘aims’, arguably, often reflect a *political equilibrium* model of bilingual education provision (Paulston, 1980, 1992) as opposed to a truly *educational* model. In general terms, the latter may be defined as genuinely aiming to produce proficient bilingual speakers whilst the former is provided as a form of political tokenism which allows education authorities to be seen as being politically correct, supportive and liberal, thus reflecting tolerance-oriented rather than promotion-oriented language policies (Wiley, 2002).

Baker (2017: 199) sub-divides the three broad categorises of bilingual education into eleven models as follows:

A. Monolingual forms of education for bilinguals

1. Mainstreaming / Submersion
2. Mainstreaming / Submersion with Pull-out Majority Language Instruction Support
3. Sheltered (Structured) Immersion
4. Segregationist

B. Weak forms of bilingual education for bilinguals

5. Transitional
6. Mainstream with foreign language teaching
7. Separatist

C. Strong forms of bilingual education for bilingualism and biliteracy

8. Immersion
9. Maintenance / Heritage Language
10. Two Way Dual Language
11. Mainstream Bilingual

With regard to what is indicated as their *societal and educational outcomes* however (p.199), an examination of these eleven models of ‘bilingual’ instruction clearly shows how they could be individually placed on different points of the above-mentioned continuum, reflecting polarised perspectives of being socially and politically problematic or advantageous, as well as Bourhis’ (2001) four political ideologies. Baker (2017), *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, a reference book accompanying this course, provides a detailed description and discussion of each of these models which makes it unnecessary to repeat what has already been clearly explained. Any further additional material which appears below under corresponding headings, therefore, will either be included to highlight salient points and issues or to enhance the discussion when necessary by providing further commentaries on

respective models. **Students should now read the broad classifications of models of bilingual teaching which are provided in Baker (2017).**

The seven which fall into the first two categories and which are not considered as aiming to produce proficient bilingualism are discussed on pages 201-210 in Chapter 10, namely:

- Monolingual forms of education for bilinguals
- Weak forms of bilingual education for bilinguals

The other four in the third category (Strong forms of bilingual education for bilingualism and biliteracy) are discussed in Chapter 11. As a conclusion, Baker (2017: 239-40) refers to various benefits which students as *individuals* are alleged to gain from receiving a bilingual education, as well as to *societal* advantages. For the sake of consistency, the terminology adopted for various models in this Guidance Booklet is the same as that adopted in the reference book (Baker, 2017).

Furthermore, the characteristics of each model as described on page 199 are also included here as an *aide-mémoire*.

At this point, the direct connection between this module and previous modules becomes very clear; for example, the need to ensure an effective model of bilingual teaching methodology which can produce the necessary levels of balanced bilingual proficiency in order to gain cognitive benefits claimed by the Threshold Theory (Cummins, 1976) as well as other advantages discussed in module ECDA-7004: Cognitive Aspects of Bilingualism.