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THE EFFECTS OF SECOND-LANGUAGE EDUCATION ON FIRST/SECOND- LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

For Professor Jac L. Williams it was self-evident that pupils had the right to be educated through the medium of their own language, and throughout his working life he did everything in his power to turn this principle into reality as far as Wales was concerned.¹ Yet his vision was not only focused on Wales. Through correspondence and overseas visits he attempted to give hope to other language communities who were struggling to realize the same aims under conditions which in many cases were even more difficult than those found in his own homeland. The truth is that the principle of education through one's own language in multilingual countries has never been accepted universally, whether on account of linguistic prejudice, politics, economics or plain fear.

Professor Williams felt concerned about two main situations. On the one hand he obviously had in mind countries such as Wales and Brittany, where the language spoken by the original inhabitants is eroded by the immense force of a more powerful language, to the point of becoming a minority language on its own territory. As a consequence minority-language pupils find themselves in classrooms where the language used exclusively as a medium of instruction is *not* the language of the hearth. At times, the only speakers of the majority language are the teachers, who may not even know the language of their pupils. Even if they do, they, like their pupils, may be forbidden to use it. This situation was a familiar one in Wales for the vast majority of Welsh-speaking pupils from the start of compulsory, English-medium, education in the middle of the nineteenth century right up to the end of the Second World

War. On the other hand, Professor Williams also had in mind the situation found in countries with large influxes of political and economic refugees or invited workers (*Gastarbeiter*) and their families. Germany is a good example of this particular category. Before the civil wars in various parts of Africa and the former Yugoslavia set into motion successive waves of refugees, Germany already had several million, mainly Turkish, guestworkers and their families. Their children have had to attend German schools where the medium of instruction across the whole curriculum is German, despite the fact that they cannot speak a word of German at the outset. They are expected to pick up German as fast as possible so that they can participate in the various subject-lessons alongside their German classmates. As early as the 1960s, during informal discussions, Professor Williams constantly made the prophetic point that this type of education would ultimately lead to trouble. He related their plight to that of the majority of Welsh-speaking pupils who at that time still found themselves in a similar situation to that of the Turkish children from a linguistic point of view. (For further details on the teaching of German as a second language to immigrants in Germany, see Reich 1979 and Hoffmann 1991).

Immersion

The second-language (L2) immersion education in which both categories of pupils find themselves has three consequences: firstly, although the pupils achieve a good level of fluency, they are in danger of developing what could be called a fossilized interlanguage (FI), when errors, even basic grammatical errors, made by L2 learners during communicative L2 acquisition gradually become 'frozen' or fossilized and are almost impossible to eradicate once established. FI can be characterized as a simplified form of the target language where pupils' use of vocabulary is limited, redundant language features are ignored, and many grammatical devices such as gender, number, tense, mutations, articles, etc. are avoided, eliminated or used wrongly, whilst at the same time a great deal of transfer from pupils' mother tongue causes interference. Some of the main reasons for this fossilization are given later in this chapter. (For further information on fossilization of errors and interlanguage, see Selinker (1969, 1972), Schumann (1978, 367-80)) and Spolsky (1989, Ch. XI). FI is by now a well-known

phenomenon, although in countries where L2 (second-language) immersion education is found, the authorities have in the past tended to underplay its effects, while teachers themselves are often only too glad that their pupils are saying anything at all. I have observed this type of faulty use of language not only in International Schools where English is the sole medium of education for intakes of children who initially do not know any English and who speak a language other than English after school hours, but also in German state schools among even second-generation Turkish pupils whose parents went to German schools and who have lived in a German-speaking environment all their lives. (Also see Ferguson 1975, and James 1986.)

Secondly, although the pupils may find it relatively easy to understand the gist of what they hear from the teacher or from other more proficient pupils, since they can rely a great deal on non-verbal cues, this superficial understanding does not lead to the development of clear and unambiguous concepts and concept chains relating to the subject in question. Experiments conducted in Birmingham primary schools with ethnic minority children showed this quite clearly (Dodson, in preparation). For example, in a situation where Year 2 children with some knowledge of English were asked to retell in their own (English) words a story told them previously in simple English (with and without visual aids), they found this extremely difficult and most faltered after the first two or three sentences. When this same story was repeated in their mother tongue, they were able to retell the complete story in English without hesitation, although their speech contained grammatical errors. Not understanding some of the words or word clusters whilst listening to the story in English had caused interruptions in their attempt to process the successive concepts making up the story as a whole, thus making it more or less unintelligible for them. On further investigation it was found that some of the vocabulary not properly understood consisted of high-frequency items often spoken by the teacher in the classroom. However, in hindsight it was also realized that pupils had never used this high-frequency vocabulary themselves in their interactions with teachers. Similar experiments were made with topics relating to history, science and number work appropriate to their age level and background, and the same results were obtained (Dodson, in preparation). Rehbein (1987) made a similar story-retelling experiment in Germany with Turkish pupils

and obtained the same results. It should be stressed that even if pupils clearly and accurately grasped the meanings of the sentences spoken by others, this would not by itself lead to accurate and fluent speech production. 'Comprehensible input', contrary to Krashen's view (1982), does not seem to be sufficient for effective second-language acquisition.

Thirdly, because of these pupils' inability to acquire the correct structures of their second language, they are loath to participate in spoken classroom interactions,² and as a consequence they tend to fall behind in the acquisition of curriculum knowledge and skills. It is a truism nowadays that successful education requires a great deal of active verbal interaction between teacher and pupils, and that a predominance of teacher talk in the classroom tends to slow down pupils' learning rate in all subject areas. If this is combined with mere gist understanding on the part of the L2 pupils, then their rate of understanding and processing subject knowledge will be even slower. Poor receptive and productive skills at the aural/oral level will be compounded at the written level, since inaccuracies which might pass unnoticed in speech become glaring, and worse still, virtually ineradicable when they appear in writing. Less easy to detect, and hence correct, is any inaccuracy in the pupils' reading comprehension; yet this will affect their ability to study across the whole curriculum (Dodson and Thomas 1984). It can be postulated that initially monoglot Welsh-speaking pupils taught entirely through the medium of English from the middle of the nineteenth century experienced the same linguistic insecurity in the use of English, causing them the same difficulties in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Three generations after the introduction of English in schools as a medium of instruction, a considerable number of individuals, depending on their exposure to English after leaving school, still failed to eliminate FI and to reach a reasonable level of native-like competence in that language (T. Williams 1989). Turkish and other ethnic minority-language pupils, in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, who have little or no initial knowledge of the target language used as a medium of instruction, are a further case in point.

It should be noted that nothing said above refers to the development of speech fluency. Even first-generation learners may acquire L2 fluency reasonably quickly, given enough language contacts, but they become fluent speakers of incorrect speech. Nor

are we referring here to the retention of the L1 accent which first-generation learners are unlikely to lose if they have not started to acquire the second language before the age of thirteen or so, depending on their capacity to mimic sounds. We are concerned here merely with the development and persistence of inaccurate syntax and vocabulary.

However, there is a further drawback if pupils experience monolingual L2 immersion education. Even before they leave school, they may find it increasingly difficult to communicate in their original first language, and if the L2 environment persists, some of them may lose their original language altogether by the end of their lifetime. Their children at least or their grandchildren are certain to lose that language, unless they receive original L1 reinforcement. This loss of language could be tragic; if immigrant parents are determined that their children learn the language of the new country, and have every intention of staying in that country, the damage done is perhaps not too great, as the language of their country of origin has not been lost to the world. The children, however, may find it very difficult when they are older to return to the old country without a feeling of being outsiders. Yet there are situations where the loss of an individual's L1 through L2 immersion education could have a much more devastating effect, for instance, in countries such as Wales where the language has no firm base elsewhere, and where its loss would consequently be final.

When Professor Williams advocated the introduction of Welsh-medium education for Welsh-speaking pupils, he was aware of the dangers of a monoglot educational system in a bilingual country, and always emphasized that pupils educated through the medium of Welsh should also be competent in English. He did not want Welsh first-language speakers to be at a disadvantage when it came to matters of employment and public life in Wales and throughout Britain. His aim was for schools to produce competent bilinguals and this, he believed, could only be achieved through bilingual education in one form or another. Professor Williams also held the view that the provision of Welsh-medium or bilingual education solely in Welsh-speaking areas, that is, where there was a sufficient concentration of pupils to allow the establishment of appropriate schools, would merely perpetuate the isolation of these pockets of Welsh, which would have difficulty in sustaining themselves in the long term. What he wanted to see in addition was a bilingual

education system intended for *non*-Welsh-speakers in the Anglicized areas of Wales, so that Welsh could eventually be used in all regions. The Gittins Report advocated such a system in 1967, and two years later the Gittins recommendations for bilingual education in primary schools were implemented in some seventy schools in anglicized areas in the form of a Schools Council Project, whilst a further Bilingual Education Project for Secondary Schools was started in 1974. Professor Williams was extremely glad that the evaluation of the bilingual primary schools project as well as the direction of the bilingual secondary schools project was in the hands of members of his department at Aberystwyth. He and the Schools Council teams were hoping that the experience gained from these two projects would enable local authorities to set up their own bilingual schools for Welsh learners.

In the mean time the demand for Welsh-medium education for Welsh-speakers grew beyond the wildest expectations, until a point was reached when there were no longer enough Welsh-speakers in the various local areas for authorities to make the establishment of further Welsh-medium schools viable. However, during the 1970s many parents who had lost their Welsh were determined to send their monoglot English-speaking children to Welsh-medium schools, with the result that by the end of the decade some of the newly established Welsh-medium schools, both primary and secondary, began to receive more monoglot English-speakers than Welsh-speakers, and the movement towards the establishment of bilingual schools on a larger national scale, as envisaged by Gittins, came to a halt.³ The pressure for total Welsh-medium, rather than bilingual, schools was fuelled by the apparent success of French-medium 'immersion' schools in Canada and the United States, where *all* the intakes consisted of monoglot English-speaking children. It was considered that if the French immersion programmes worked satisfactorily, then Welsh-medium schools with mixed intakes of both Welsh-speakers and originally monoglot English-speakers would be even better for Welsh-learners from a linguistic point of view. The development and fossilization of non-standard forms of Welsh among L2 speakers had not been envisaged at that stage.

Yet it should be pointed out that as early as the beginning of the 1970s researchers dealing with Canadian French immersion programmes were noting that pupils found it difficult in immersion

teaching to acquire native-like French structures in normal L2 interactions. Baetens Beardsmore (1986, 128-9) refers to two of these researchers who at the time found that as soon as the L2 pupil in an immersion class realizes that he can make himself understood in the second language with incorrect structures, he will continue to use these structures in subsequent interactions,

so that his strategy of communication becomes fossilized at the stage where he no longer needs to progress any further in the weaker language. Harley & Swain (1977, 75-6) show how this happens with English-Canadian children learning French. Their communicative needs in the classroom are orientated towards the conveyance of cognitive meaning and once the children have reached a point in their cognitive development where they can make themselves understood to the teacher and their classmates there is no strong social incentive to develop further towards native-speaker forms.

Cummins and Genesee (1985, 45), when analysing their observations of pupils made during the 1970s, state that 'although immersion students have developed a high level of communicative competence, certain types of grammatical errors persist in their speech and have proved extremely difficult to eradicate'. Carey (1984, 256), in a paper reflecting on a decade of French immersion, states that 'This study is consistent with other studies that have shown that immersion students speak a French that is highly discriminable from native French.' Hammerly (1989, 29), after years of research and observations, confirms in a review of French immersion education that

listeners to a second language interpret what they hear on the basis of the language or languages they know, eliminating what seems redundant, such as certain endings, little unstressed words like articles and prepositions, and so forth, even though they are important in the second language. Of course, the listener as *listener* cannot be corrected by anyone, so without saying a word faulty second language structures are internalised.

I think that by the time [French immersion] pupils start to speak French, at the end of Grade 1 or Grade 2, they have mentally stored so much incorrect and oversimplified material (mixed, in their minds, with English) that inevitably they will start speaking in a very faulty classroom 'pidgin'.

When comparing first- and second-language acquisition, Hammerly argues that

young children acquiring their mother tongue face a very different situation, so for them subvocal memory storage or incorrect language - which, in any case, turns out to be only temporary - is not a problem. For the older child or adult, however, classroom learning conditions are such that the subvocal memory storage of faulty language very easily becomes permanent. And by then it is too late; extensive exposure to the language and intensive correction will result in some improvement, but much long-term harm is already done.

It was stated previously that mere gist understanding does not lead to accurate language at the productive level. During listening, pupils are focusing primarily on the 'messages' being sent, rather than on the form of the utterances, especially when speech is directed at them personally. During normal interactions with L1 speakers there is just not sufficient reflection time available to them to focus on both, although their level of concentration is extremely high in such situations. As stated by Hammerly, many utterances or parts of utterances spoken by others are of necessity filtered out and discarded by L2 listeners, so as to enable them to grapple with the overall message of the interaction, that is, the gist, or to make themselves ready for focusing on the next utterance to be spoken by the interlocutor. As such enforced and often random selectivity prevents the listeners from focusing to any great extent on both the message *and* the form of the utterances heard, it is extremely difficult for utterances to be reproduced accurately in subsequent speech, especially if they are of what native speakers consider to be normal length.

One of the difficulties L2 listeners have is that they cannot recognize what is the end of one word and the beginning of another. In an investigation into the problem of accurate L2 meaning acquisition using audio-visual courses, carried out in Aberystwyth in 1963 with pupils who did not know any French, it was found that a large percentage of them assumed that for the utterance 'il est sept heures', 'il est' meant 'seven' and 'sept heures' meant 'o'clock' (Dodson, 1974). Likewise, in experiments focusing on the same problem with ethnic-minority children learning English as a second language in a Birmingham school, one of the children assumed that 'very hot' meant the single concept 'hot' (Dodson, in preparation). Although superficially this might be considered a small error, it can nevertheless cause linguistic nonsense as soon as

the pupil attempts to apply this meaning-set to subsequent utterances. A London inner-city teacher reports⁴ that one L2 pupil assumed that 'hit me' meant 'hit', after having heard the utterance 'He hit me'. When this pupil approached the teacher to complain that someone had hit another pupil, she said, 'He hit-me him'. Another example showed that a pupil took 'go home' to mean 'go'. These are merely a few examples taken from a large number of similar instances concerning pupils' faulty meaning acquisition. Although the majority of these meaning errors are dependent on an individual child's specific language environment, his/her linguistic pre-perceptions and the type of mother tongue, some errors seem to be universal.

However, in all these cases pupils find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to substitute and/or extend utterance elements correctly, so as to create utterances with new and functionally appropriate meanings. The problem is compounded by the fact that many of the learners are not able to recognize the underlying structural grammar of the second language from the mere speech of others around them. On most occasions they will make do with 'what they have' by producing utterances which approximate normal L2 speech, and which they can retrieve from their internal store of imperfectly heard and remembered L2 utterances. The alternative is for them to say nothing at all and bring any interaction to an abrupt halt. As a matter of fact, developing bilinguals often find themselves in situations where they have to postpone the satisfaction of their personal needs of the moment, perhaps for many months, because they lack the linguistic tools (Dodson, in preparation). To make the task of acquiring a second language easier, some pupils will resort to bilingual help from other more proficient L2 learners, from bilingual dictionaries and phrasebooks or from parents and friends outside school. However, this help is not always available. Where the philosophy of the classroom actually dictates total avoidance of the pupils' mother tongue, many pupils will perhaps conscientiously avoid such bilingual activities – or make them surreptitiously and no doubt develop a sense of guilt in the process.

Given the above problems relating to ESL ethnic-minority learners or those found in French immersion programmes it would have been surprising had the same problems not arisen in Wales, and in fact it did not take long before L2 pupils began to use an L2 FI in

Welsh-medium schools. At the same time teachers reported⁴ that the speech of their L2 learners even affected the way their first-language Welsh-speakers began to express themselves not only to their L2 peers but also among themselves. This is, perhaps, only a temporary phenomenon for a child with rich language contacts outside school or after leaving school. Potentially more damaging for these first-language Welsh pupils is the situation where teachers themselves simplify their language, or even (as reported by one Head of Department⁴) use FI Welsh to speed up and clarify their L2 pupils' understanding, thus depriving their L1 pupils of access to a sophisticated and structurally sound model of their own language. The same has been noted in inner-city schools in England where there is a high proportion of ethnic-minority pupils. In London and Birmingham schools, for example, first-language English-speaking teachers and L1 pupils alike have been heard to take on aspects of their L2 pupils' speech by wrongly omitting definite articles or at times by applying peculiar non-English substitutions or using an odd word order. Yet, it is important to note that no matter how correct the speech of teachers and L1 pupils, this is not sufficient by itself to help L2 learners avoid FI.

Assuming the second language is *actively* taught, which is not always the case in immersion programmes, the development of FI in L2 immersion education is ultimately due to the fact that the mother tongue of the pupils is avoided in the teaching of the second language as a help in L2 meaning acquisition. This methodology is based on the pedagogical principle that the learning of a second language should imitate as closely as possible the learning of one's first. This principle is a convenient one when teachers have little or no knowledge of their pupils' language. In other circumstances it is convenient for political or social reasons. However, the principle has proved suspect from the L2 learning point of view.

Medium- and message-orientated activities

Some aspects of L2 acquisition are indeed identical to L1 acquisition. However, others are not, and it is these differences which are crucial in an analysis of L2 acquisition and classroom practices. Of interest here are the performative strategies exhibited by both L1 and L2 learners, not merely because they are relatively

easy to observe, but also because they are important for pedagogical reasons to be explained later.

Weir (1962) recorded the speech of her two-year-old *monolingual* child when alone in his cot before going to sleep. She found that her child operated at two main levels, both in private and public speech. At one level he played with language as if it were toy or a game. Here the focus was on the language itself or on his own language-learning process. In this game he generated utterances of four types: i) he imitated and repeated utterances heard previously; ii) he substituted utterance elements with other known utterance-elements in order to create hitherto unexpressed utterances or even new concepts; iii) he added elements to known utterances in order to extend their meaning or function; and iv) he chained together a number of known utterances in a flow of speech. He made these various types of utterance to himself rather than during communicative interactions with others. In addition to imitating isolated utterances heard previously he would on occasions combine two or more of the various utterance types described above in a linguistic order and in a connected flow of speech (Weir 1962, 109). For example he would combine imitation with substitution and extension:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| a) What colour | b) I go up there |
| What colour blanket | I go up there |
| What colour mop | I go |
| What colour glass | She go up there |

In a keynote conference lecture Bruner (1983) gives several examples of such speech activities, for example, where a little girl says, 'the hat - the blue hat - the blue blue hat [= the very blue hat]', as if learning to extend the length of utterances. She is, as it were, playing or practising with language by herself, outside normal communicative events. This form of pleasurable play, like any other form of play, is part and parcel of a child's learning how to cope with the world, both in the present and in the future. It can be said that she is rehearsing for a performance yet to come. Wells (1975, 53) calls these speech activities 'practice':

Practice covers play with linguistic patterns at the level of sound, syntax or lexis, and substitution routines where attention is on the pattern rather than on the content of the utterance. (This category would include many of the utterances that Ruth Weir recorded and presented in 'Language in the Crib').

Butzkamm (1993, 64) gives several examples spoken by his own fifteen-month-old monolingual daughter as well as by the children of other researchers, including Lindner (1898, 47), Pilch (1966, 54), Range (1976, 80) and Miller (1977, 89). At times children 'rehearse' aloud in front of others, although their speech is not necessarily directed at others around them. Butzkamm (1993, 66) quotes Holt (1970, 71-2) who mentions the strategies used at mealtimes by his two-year-old daughter. She would say 'Pass the sugar. Pass the pepper. Pass the toast. Pass the jam.' When these items were handed to her, the other members of the family realized that she did not really want any of them and that she was in fact practising or testing her own use of language.

For very young children this enjoyable language game is, like any other play activity, an end in itself, since they will not be conscious at the time of its ultimate developmental purpose. When playing with language in the situations quoted above, the children's minds are focused on language or the language-learning process, so that such strategies can be called *medium-orientated* activities. They are, as it were, continually preparing themselves through verbal exploration and discovery for any future verbal interactions with other people. These interactions with others are *message-orientated* communication, because in those situations the message takes precedence over *how* to use the language or the medium. The more children learn how to cope at message-orientated levels, the greater their language proficiency, and the fewer are the occasions on which they will need to resort to medium-orientated speech activities. However, they will never disappear completely in later life, as can be seen, for instance, when a competent native speaker searches for a word during a conversation: at that moment the individual is reverting once more to a medium-orientated level. In terms of the above strategies first-language acquisition can thus be seen as a fluctuating process between medium- and message-orientated communication, with medium-orientated communication decreasing as an individual's language proficiency increases (see Dodson, 1985b).

Before dealing with the language strategies used by developing bilinguals, it should be noted that one of their languages will always be stronger (in terms of 'ease of use') than the other for given areas of experience, even though this difference might be extremely small in some of these areas. It should also be noted that either language could be the stronger for given areas. For the sake of clarity the weaker language will here be referred to as the second language.

Bilingual strategies of language acquisition

When strengthening their second language, developing bilinguals will, on the one hand, use the medium-orientated strategies described above for the first-language learner. On the other hand, when using these strategies they will often make use of their stronger languages to consolidate the functional meaning of particular utterances by speaking them in both languages one after the other, as if they were acting as interpreters for their own purposes, especially if they are young children (see, for example, Leopold 1939-49; Burling 1971; or Fantini, 1976). Comparing and contrasting utterances across two languages also helps the developing bilingual to keep the two language systems apart. Depending on the amount of initial interpreting practice done for any language item, this strategy eventually disappears altogether, by which time the sentence-meaning has become fully welded to the second-language utterance. These bilingual interpreting activities occur with the strategies relating to imitation, substitution and extension.

However, naturally developing bilinguals have two major additional bilingual strategies in medium-orientated speech which are not available to first-language learners. On the one hand, whenever necessary they will ask for the functional meaning in their stronger language of words and sentences in the second which they have not understood or only partly understood. On the other hand, they will constantly seek, through their stronger languages, models for correct and appropriate second-language utterances to satisfy the pressing needs of the moment, so that they will be able to express themselves correctly during subsequent message-orientated speech.⁵ Adults regularly use the same bilingual medium-orientated strategies when they find themselves in a country whose language they do not know. Although language acquisition of both naturally developing monolinguals and bilinguals includes medium-orientated speech activities, for developing monolinguals these activities are *monolingual*, but for developing bilinguals they are *bilingual*; they are crucial for the L2 learner in his proper development of fluent and accurate monolingual L2 message-orientated communication. However, in many L2 immersion programmes such activities are taboo. The question must be asked whether the appropriate model for L2 teaching and learning ought to be the natural language-learning process of the young bilingual, or that of

the young monolingual who by definition has no experience whatever of acquiring a second language.

If in the initial stages of second-language learning bilingual help is withheld or not available, as in L2-medium education, the individuals will have to guess the meaning of the L2 utterances they hear. It is obvious that at first they will guess incorrectly on many occasions, and as a consequence many of them will switch off and retreat into their shell, even if it is for that situation only. They will have to possess quite strong personalities to persevere in such interactions after having experienced a number of similar failures in the past. On many occasions the L2 learners must at best be satisfied with mere gist understanding through non-verbal cues and the previous acquisition of some L2 vocabulary.

As mentioned earlier, when pupils begin to speak in their second language in the classroom, the teacher is often so glad that the target language is being used, that any faulty language produced will not be corrected. This, of course, is a signal for the pupils concerned that they have made themselves understood, and as no correction was made, that the utterance spoken was linguistically correct. If the teacher does correct a pupil's utterance, this is often done rapidly in order to avoid an interruption in the verbal interaction, with the result that the pupil is not aware that a correct version has been given. I have observed many classroom situations in English-medium international schools in South America and Europe, as well as in state schools in Birmingham and Wales, where the teacher did, in fact, make a deliberate and slow correction of a pupil's faulty utterance, before continuing with the interaction. In less than five minutes, however, the pupil concerned would once again produce the same utterance with the same errors. It is clear that merely listening to correct forms does not help the pupil a great deal in the development of native-like utterances. It is also clear that a second language cannot be learnt properly through 'osmosis' only, that is, where the learners are plunged into a monolingual 'second-language bath'. In that situation most of them will drown.

L2 pupils receiving L2 education must not only be allowed to make use of bilingual medium-orientated strategies when by themselves, like their naturally developing bilingual counterparts, but they ought to be given active help by the teachers to apply these strategies properly. If this is done, pupils' L2 communicative competence increases more rapidly, and the development of FI is

kept to a minimum and eventually almost totally eliminated. Without such help, pupils develop a 'façade' competence, where speech is faulty and individual utterances are often ambiguous as far as meaning is concerned. This is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs when the target language is being used for academic purposes, where accuracy in the expression of concepts is of prime importance.

When individuals' second-language speech consists more or less of F1 utterances, it is often the case that a large number of their written sentences will also be in F1. I have seen many essays of this type written by pupils in international English-medium schools and by ethnic-minority pupils in Britain and Germany. The errors made are not merely spelling errors which could in fact be made by any first-language writer, but errors in word order or the omission of words. Tenses are invariably expressed wrongly, with a heavy emphasis on the use of the infinitive. It was also found that in the scripts of pupils of different ages the same errors appeared again and again, as confirmed by Cummins and Genesee (1985) when dealing with French Canadian L2 immersion programmes in Canada. It seems that years of L2 immersion education, often as many as fifteen, do not enable pupils to acquire the second language effectively, and at the end of it all they are left with an L2 speech facility which cannot, and does not, allow them to participate fully in the employment and leisure activities granted to the native speaker.

It should not be assumed, however, that the application of bilingual medium-orientated strategies as a corrective measure solves all problems overnight. It was the aim in a small experiment made in Birmingham primary schools with intakes of five-year-old community-language pupils who spoke little or no English on entry, to ascertain how long it would take before specific high-frequency utterances used during bilingual medium-orientated play would be used freely at message-orientated level (Dodson, in preparation). The teachers in the experiment initially established what they considered to be high-frequency utterances used by the pupils' first-language peers, for example: 'Please, give me xxx', 'Can I have xxx?', 'Can I go to the toilet?', 'I've lost my xxx'. The ESL unit in the multicultural centre of the authority had made translations of these utterances into various community languages together with bilingual tapes for the teachers' use. The pupils learnt to say each

English utterance after hearing from the teacher or the tape the equivalent utterance in their own language. The utterance was then placed into a small playlet consisting of three or four utterances which became a 'basic situation' for role-playing. Although the pupils greatly enjoyed this medium-orientated activity, they were still not necessarily using the utterances in real situations as they arose during the school day. In the case of one utterance, 'Please, do up my coat', it took a whole week or more of daily role-play including the specific utterance before the first of the pupils began to speak this English sentence as a genuine request without any prompting from the teacher.

It is important to note that the basic utterances, such as those above, which pupils had mastered at medium- and message-orientated levels were also used as springboards in substitution and extension work so that they learnt the skill of creating, to them, entirely new English utterances to express their own thoughts. Teachers were surprised to find how quickly pupils began to create and use a whole range of new utterances at message-orientated level, without having to resort to F1. Yet none of this could have been achieved without the pupils' having initially received precise first-language functional equivalents, followed by medium-orientated activities relating to comparing and contrasting, as well as substitution and extension. (For further information on substitution and extension work, see Dodson 1985a, 171-2 or 1974, 102-12). Whenever a pupil used an incorrect English utterance during the practice phase, he or she would not only be given the correct version but would also practise the correct version there and then, often together with the whole class. In other words, if grammatical accuracy is not emphasized from the very outset, it is almost impossible to prevent the development of F1.

As stated previously, L2 immersion programmes have a further effect on L2 learners. If monolingual L2 programmes persist, the learners' use of their first language, especially in the subject areas dealt with in secondary schools, will remain at a rudimentary level. Some older pupils in Welsh-medium schools report⁴ that they find it most difficult to discuss academic subjects with linguistic ease in their original first language after years of focusing on these subjects in their second language. Unless there is a great deal of sympathetic help at home, there is a danger that at least a small minority of pupils in L2 immersion programmes will not only develop F1, but will also

see the use of their first language atrophy in given areas of experience. When they leave school, they will be disadvantaged in areas of employment which require accurate and fluent use of either or both of their languages, although they may have a greater than average native intelligence.

Summary

In summary, the concerns expressed in this chapter relate to two main aspects of L2 education. The first of these is the effect of L2 education on L2 pupils' development towards fluency and accuracy in their second language, that is, towards competent bilingualism. As far as I know, no systematic study has been made of L2 pupils' proficiency in Welsh when they leave secondary school at the age of eighteen, that is, after thirteen years of Welsh-medium education.⁶ These studies have, however, been made on Canadian French immersion programmes. Hammerly (1989, 16-17), for example, quotes Pellerin and Hammerly (1986), who made a study in 1984 with eighteen-year-old Grade 12 pupils from two secondary schools in the Vancouver area. The pupils had received French-medium immersion education from the age of five. The researchers had taped, recorded and transcribed informal, unstructured interviews on very familiar topics. Hammerly writes that

the average number of incorrect sentences among these twelfth grade students was 53.8 per cent when only grammar and vocabulary were counted and 55.3 per cent when errors in the use of *liaison* and major pronunciation errors were included. There were, of course, considerable individual differences: the strongest student had 40.3 per cent incorrect sentences and the weakest 72.48 per cent. This was after nearly thirteen years -- or 7,000 hours of French immersion.

Hammerly (1989, 18) also makes the observation that

although the students managed to communicate nearly all of their ideas, they did so in Frenglish, not French. Frenglish is not a language, nor a dialect, but an embarrassment. A 6-year old may sound cute coping with communication needs in very faulty French but would you say the same of a 30- or 40-year old?

In Wales one has to rely largely on anecdotal evidence from teachers, parents and university departments of Welsh. It would seem that specific and systematic investigations into the Welsh

proficiency of L2 school leavers are much overdue. Internal or external examinations in subject areas are not an ideal way of measuring these factors, although they will give some indication.

Greater focus should be placed in schools on correct L2 speech right from the outset. As soon as new intakes begin to express themselves in faulty Welsh, corrective measures should be taken immediately. The precise meanings of those sentences with which pupils have difficulty should be given through pupils' L1, followed by interpretation and substitution practice at medium-orientated level. Pupils should be encouraged to find out from teachers the correct way or ways of expressing sentences they might need in Welsh at message-orientated level, but which they have not yet heard or been taught, together with subsequent speaking practice of these sentences. Teachers should also be fully aware that initially many sentences they speak have not been heard or consolidated by their pupils. Ideally teachers themselves should be given an opportunity to cope with a hitherto unknown L2 in an academic environment where this foreign/second language is spoken by the natives and used as a medium of education. This would show them how easy it is to slip into L2 F1 if help of the kind mentioned above is not available. As this is not feasible, teachers will have to use their imagination to gauge how much empathy is required to satisfy the linguistic, and consequently personal, needs of their pupils.

Many Welsh-medium schools do have language preparation sessions during the preceding summer of their pupils' entry into their schools. It is suggested that such activities should be continued at least for the first two years or so, after the pupil has entered school. This would also give teachers time to gain precise information about their pupils' individual linguistic difficulties, and ensure that their L2 interlanguage does not become fossilized. Wherever possible, pupils' linguistic difficulties should also be tackled in specific lessons set aside for this purpose during term time. Whilst L2 pupils will have to be withdrawn from their L1 peers during these lessons, the advantages gained would more than compensate for any disadvantages, especially if the school took the necessary steps to ensure that no pupil suffered academically.

The other main concern in L2 education was the deterioration of L2 pupils' first language in given subject areas. The only way to overcome this is by introducing bilingual education for at least some subjects. The proportion of first-language teaching for L2 pupils of

the subjects chosen need not reach 50 per cent. One lesson in five, carefully planned, would be sufficient to allow L2 pupils to acquire any new L1 vocabulary and, equally importantly, to develop a linguistic L1 fluency and syntax equivalent to that of their peers in monolingual schools for the same areas of experience. Inversely, bilingual education would also help L1 Welsh-speakers in the same classroom to express themselves fluently and accurately in what to them is their second language. This is precisely what Professor Jac L. Williams had in mind when he constantly reminded us that the future of Wales and its language depended on its population learning to become competent bilinguals.

Notes

- 1 Professor R. M. Jones, formerly Professor of Welsh at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, confirms that Professor Jac L. Williams held the views attributed to him in this paper. At the time Professor Jones was Research Lecturer in Professor Williams's Department of Education.
- 2 'An "immersion school" for the first few months is painfully silent.' When L2 pupils begin to participate more in verbal interactions at a later stage, initially through one- or two-word responses, 'they don't always use it [the L2] correctly, of course; they make basic errors. The idea is to pick out these major errors and to drill them to eliminate faults of structure. This is difficult in the immersion situation...' (Swain, 1972, 26) Many of these errors thus become fossilized. This problem is compounded when L2 pupils find themselves in the same class as L1 speakers, especially when subject syllabuses have to be followed in a given time.
- 3 This development is confirmed by Eric Evans who was formally Language Adviser for the old County of Glamorgan and at the time was Director of the National Language Unit, Wales, and Director of the Schools Council Primary Schools Project in Bilingual Education during its final years, subsequently becoming Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Wales, Cardiff.
- 4 The evidence in all these instances is anecdotal, but it was offered to me directly by individuals who are familiar with this field.
- 5 Butzkamm (1993), when dealing with *bilingual* medium-orientated (private and public) speech activities of developing infant bilinguals, refers to a number of researchers (e.g. Kiehlhöfer and Jonekeit 1983, 57; Leopold 1949, 14; Porsché 1983; Ronjat 1913; Saunders 1980/82, 143, 195; Taeschner 1983, 42; Zierer 1977, 147) who have recorded the various types of bilingual medium-orientated speech activities of developing bilingual children. These include: a) repeating a word, phrase or sentence (depending on age) in the other language; b) asking for an L2 equivalent for an L1 utterance for immediate or later use when speaking in their L2;

c) asking in L1 for meanings of L2 sentences heard but not understood, and d) asking for confirmation in the stronger language to ensure that the meaning of L2 words, phrases or sentences heard has been correctly grasped.

6 Whilst writing this paper I was made aware of a study in progress by Dr Tim Williams who is investigating the Welsh proficiency of seventeen/eighteen-year-old final-year sixth-form L2 pupils as well as L2 school-leavers from Welsh-medium schools. Dr Williams records the speech of these pupils in small focus groups of six pupils during informal discussions. This work is ongoing. In a personal letter he writes that 'these pupils speak in a pidgin-like Welsh. My early findings show that the main errors are as follows:

- a) tendency to use simple verb forms ("Rydwi i wedi gwneud" instead of "Fe wnes i", that is, the perfect instead of preterite) and the over-use of the periphrastic present tense in Welsh;
- b) avoidance of mutations;
- c) deficiency of subject specific vocabulary in L2 (Welsh);
- d) considerable interference from L1 in L2, in terms of sentence structure and vocabulary;
- e) deficiency of general vocabulary in L1 (English);
- f) tendency to 'reach for words' in L1 and malapropisms.

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