

Texas: A Tapestry of Languages



There are close to half a million
second language learners in our
classrooms.

(PEIMS, 1999-2000)



- ◆ As Texas moves towards closing the gap among minorities, school districts need to be prepared with the necessary tools for meeting the needs of all of its students.
- ◆ The upcoming state mandates (Senate Bills 4 and 103) will impact many students across the state.



- ◆ Schools of the 21st Century dictate that we be responsive and reflective practitioners, grounded in theory in the areas of curriculum and instruction, and prepared to develop literate and contributing members of a diverse society.



Literacy requires an understanding of reading and writing in many forms, including print and electronic images, intertwined with the ability to interpret critically and apply new information to existing knowledge. Thus, school literacy programs must involve students in learning to read and write in situations that foster critical thinking and the use of literacy for independent learning in all subject areas.

(Professional Standards and Ethics, Committee, IRA, 1998).



Therefore, it is critical that every child acquires the fundamental literacy skills necessary to experience success, and for second language learners, this involves literacy development in two languages.



- ◆ Effective biliteracy instruction depends on our understanding of first (L1) and second (L2) language acquisition and the conventions of the L1 and L2.
- ◆ It is also guided by our knowledge of the principles, components and stages of reading development for children who develop literacy in two languages.



- ◆ Children who enter our schools with a language other than English have a notable knowledge of their native language, a “linguistic knowing” that they utilize unconsciously in their daily communications.
- ◆ We need to understand and value all that children know about their language.
- ◆ Teachers must build on this linguistic knowing of their L1 in order to teach children a concept not yet developed.



Many Factors Influence Reading

- ◆ We need to be grounded in this knowledge in order to understand the purpose of a particular activity and its relevance with respect to the particular needs of our students.
- ◆ We need to understand how the different activities fit together and how effective reading instruction depends on the depth and quality of how it is guided: *what and how we teach children.*

Reading Processes in English and Spanish

- ◆ Basic processes and strategies used in reading in Spanish and English appear to be very similar, and one language may be readily applied to the other.
- ◆ There are some differences between students developing literacy in Spanish and literacy development in English.





Literacy Development

Because literacy is so critical for students' academic success, it is important for educators to make informed decisions about instructional practices.



The Syllable in Spanish

- ◆ Spanish utilizes the syllable as the pivotal point of departure for literacy development. Spanish is a syllabic language:

mamá → ma - má

manzana → man - za - na

sol → sol



“Sound it Out!”

- ◆ In English, “sounding out” implies separating words into individual sounds, for the most part.

cat → /k/ /æ/ /t/



Onset and Rime

- ◆ This is important to understand because of the focus on **onset and rime** in phonological awareness.
- ◆ Onset and rime in English separates the initial sound of a word from the rest of the word.

Onset-Rime Blending and Segmentation

- ◆ Blending/segmenting the initial consonant or consonant cluster of a one syllable word (onset) from the vowel and consonant following the onset (rime)

sun → /s/ + /ən/
 onset rime

cat → /k/ + /æt/
 onset rime



Onset and Rime in Syllables

- ◆ The natural developmental process in Spanish begins with sensitivity to syllables, then to the onset and rime within a syllable, and finally to individual phonemes.
- ◆ It is important to understand that we must introduce both frameworks for bilingual students.



Informed Decisions

- ◆ However, the issue is not whether to teach students onset and rime – they have to master both frameworks. The issue is knowing when to introduce the second (L2) framework.



Bilingualism

- ◆ Bilingual students are constantly working within two phonological systems, sorting out two spelling patterns, and learning to apply the appropriate phonics system for each of the frameworks (L1 and L2).



Phonics in Dual Language

- ◆ When we say “phonics instruction”, the connotation is different for Spanish speakers than it is for English speakers.
- ◆ In Spanish, it means letter/sound correspondence. To English speakers, it suggests patterns of letters that yield certain sounds.

English Vowels



	FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK
HIGH	iy (meat) ɪ (mitt)	uɪ (pool)	ʊ (pull)
MID	ey (mate) ɛ (met)	ə (mutter)	ow (coat)
LOW	æ (mat)	a (pot)	o (caught)

Spanish Vowels



	FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK
HIGH	iy (igual)	uw (uva)	
MID	ε (ego)		ow (oso)
LOW		a(al)	



English Phonology

In English, each written vowel can represent more than one sound:

bit	bite	bat	bate
bother	bow	bought	
eagle	entire	enough	
sit	sigh	siege	



Phonological Systems

Spanish

- ◆ Five vowel sounds represented by 5 letters
- ◆ 1 sound represented by *b* and *v*
- ◆ *Th* sound written with a *d* in Spanish

English

- ◆ Eleven vowel sounds represented by 5 written vowels
- ◆ *b* and *v* have 2 distinct phonemes
- ◆ *Th* sound in *three*



Syntactic

Spanish

- ◆ Subject is optional
(S) O V *Está lloviendo.*
- ◆ Article usage
La vida es dura.
El hombre es mortal.
- ◆ Tag Questions
¿Estás cansado, verdad?

English

- ◆ Subject required
(S)VO *It is raining.*
- ◆ Article usage
Life is hard.
Man is mortal.
- ◆ Tag Questions
You're tired aren't you?

Semantics

- ◆ Cognates

general

doctor

fabulous

excellent

- ◆ False Cognates

exit - éxito

assist- atender

attend - asistir

embarrass

Pragmatics

◆ Tú vs. Usted

◆ Tú ————— familiar
 you

◆ Usted ————— respect





Initial Reading L1 & L2

- ◆ English Reading Methods

- ◆ Word recognition

 - Sight word

 - Phonics

- ◆ Socio-psycholinguistic

 - Whole language

 - Balanced Program

- ◆ Spanish Reading Methods

- ◆ Métodos Sintéticos

 - Alfabético

 - Fonético

 - Silabico

- ◆ Métodos Analíticos

 - Global, palabras

 - generadoras

 - Lenguaje integral



Initial Writing in L1 & L2

◆ LDBG

5 written consonants in English, *but* 11 vowel sounds

consonants are more consistent

◆ aiauae

vowels 100% consistent in Spanish



Conventions of L1 & L2

- ❖ Sort out two sound systems
- ❖ Sort out two spelling patterns
- ❖ Distinguish phonetics in L1 and phonetics in L2
- ❖ Spanish: letter/sound correspondence
- ❖ English: patterns



Bilingual Children

- ◆ Children also learn that some sounds are the same in both languages, and also learn that there are certain boundaries for sounds.

school

/skʊl/

escuela

/eskuela/

specific

/spəsiˈfɪk/

específico

/esˈpeˌsiˈfiˌko/



Phonological Awareness

- ◆ Phonological awareness is being able to differentiate units of sounds (phonemes, syllables, and other segments) and to use these units in the cognitive processes involved in literacy activities.



Phonemic Awareness

- ◆ Phonemic awareness, a subcomponent of phonological awareness, requires not only the awareness of individual sounds (phonemes), but the manipulation of these sounds in activities such as rhyme, blending sounds to form a word, counting the number of sounds in a word, isolating phonemes in a word, and segmenting sounds in a word.



What Transfers?

Children who had phonological awareness and Spanish word recognition skills performed better on the transfer tasks compared to those children who could read some Spanish words, but who demonstrated low Spanish phonological awareness, (Durgunoglu et al).



Cognitive Benefits of Bilingualism

- ◆ Concluded that the former children were able to transfer metalinguistic abilities related to phonological awareness in Spanish to English word recognition, without formal instruction in English phonological awareness, because similar types of word recognition processing underlie the two languages.



Cognitive Benefits of Bilingualism

- ◆ Research has shown that bilingual children younger than age 6 outperform monolingual children on isolated tasks of metalinguistic awareness related to reading (García, Jiménez & Pearson, 1998).



Cognitive Benefits of Bilingualism

- ◆ Yugoslavian preschool and kindergarten children were significantly better at explaining how words differed in their length and referents (Gonez and Kodzopeljic, 1991).
- ◆ Spanish-English bilingual children in El Salvador outperformed their monolingual counterparts on sentence grammaticality tests (Galambos and Goldin-Meadows, 1990).



Cognitive Benefits of Bilingualism

- ◆ French-English and Mandarin-English 4 and 5 year old bilingual preschoolers outperformed monolingual English-speaking preschoolers on metalinguistic tasks specifically related to beginning reading (Bialystok, 1997).
- ◆ Bialystok also pointed out that bilingual children performed the tasks equally well in both languages, meaning that they were also able to transfer this knowledge from one language to the other.



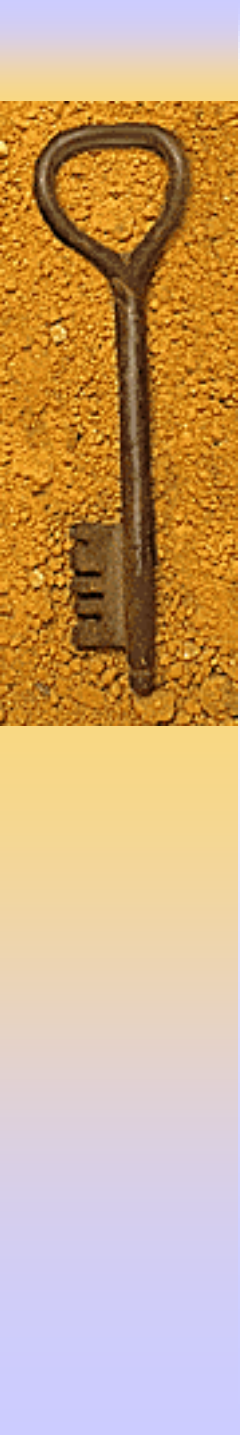
Cognitive Benefits

- ◆ Bilingual persons have a special awareness of language and its function.
- ◆ They possess an enhanced awareness of the relationship between English and their L1, which leads them to successfully use bilingual strategies of searching for cognates, transferring and translating, as well as transferring strategies for invoking *prior knowledge, inferencing, questioning, and monitoring*.



Cognitive Benefits

Learning in two languages provides for a more resilient cornerstone for cognition and a more diversified body of mental abilities.



Facilitating Literacy Development in L1 and L2

- ◆ Teachers need quality professional development and educational materials that are balanced in great literature and reading instruction in both languages.
- ◆ Rhymes and chants must be accessible *in both languages* for developing oral language skills.