CHAPTER 13

Bilingual Language Acquisition and Learning

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CASE STUDY: Learning English as a second language

Clara is a 5-year-old attending a monolingual kindergarten in New York. This is Clara's first experience in school, as she had no preschool experience in Puerto Rico. Clara's teacher contacted her parents after 3 months because Clara does not speak to any children, even those who are Spanish speakers. She also appears to have some difficulty listening in the classroom, attending more to off-task noises and movements of the other children than to the teacher. She completes written work, such as writing her name, copying words, coloring, and completing crafts projects, with no reminders. Her play skills are adequate, and she occasionally joins other children to play ball and use the swings during recess, although, even in these situations, her interaction with others is minimal. Clara and her family emigrated 1 year ago from a rural area of Puerto Rico, and Spanish is the main language spoken in the home. Her parents completed elementary school and both worked in farming in their homeland. The family came to join some relatives who have been living in New York for more than 10 years.

What can Clara's teacher do to help her become more fluent in English, increase her attention and listening skills, and interact more in class with the other children? On what information and experiences did you base your answer?

INTRODUCTION

There are as many as 6,912 different languages spoken in the world (Gordon, 2005). Of the people living on this planet, 5 billion speak 30 of these languages, while 1.5 billion others speak 6,888 of these languages. Accelerated migration from country to country for political or social issues in the past half century makes it certain that many individuals have been

exposed to more than one language or culture. In fact, 300 different languages are spoken in the United States, 820 in New Guinea, 297 in Mexico, and 145 in Canada.

The United States is home to 5 million children who attend K–12 programs and whose primary language is one other than English. These children are frequently termed **English-language learners**. The language most commonly spoken by these students is Spanish (79 %), followed by Vietnamese (2.9 %). Other languages spoken by children in the United States are Hmong (1.8 %), Korean (1.2 %), Arabic (1.2 %), Haitian Creole (1.1 %), and Cantonese (1 %). Another 100 languages are spoken by less than 1 % of children in this country (Office of English Language Acquisition, 2002). Each language has its own structure and rules, and each speaker has an individual language-learning history that includes using his or her first language and acquiring English.

The classroom teacher must understand the process of learning English as a second language and the factors that are associated with this process: the length of exposure to English, the type of exposure to English, the level of development of the child's first language, and the motivation for learning a second language. These are the factors that the classroom teacher must consider to determine whether the child is experiencing typical problems related to learning a second language or if the child has a language disorder.

The purpose of this chapter is to enable teachers to differentiate a language *disorder* from a language *difference* when working with children who are learning a second language. In this chapter, L1 (first language) refers to the child's native, dominant language spoken in the home and L2 (second language) refers to English.

The United States is home to 5 million children whose first language is not English.

DEFINITIONS OF BILINGUALISM AND RELATED TERMS

There are several terms associated with L2 learning: *bilingual*, **bilingualism**, **primary** or **dominant language**, *language proficiency*, *learning* a language versus *acquiring* a language, and *language dominance*, as well as *bilingual programs*. The term *bilingual* is defined, by some, as the ability to communicate orally and in writing in more than one language and,

by others, to include the ability to communicate about a variety of topics. *English-language learner* is also a term that has been used to designate a category of bilinguals (Langdon, 2008; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2008).

There are also terms that refer to the age of L2 learning. For example, children who acquire two languages prior to age 3 are referred to as *simultaneous bilingual learners*, as they are acquiring both L1 and L2 simultaneously. Children who acquire two languages after that age are referred to as *sequential bilingual learners*, as they are learning these two languages in sequence (i.e., first L1, then L2). These terms do not define the individual's level of proficiency, as a student might be more proficient in speaking about certain topics in one of the two languages but more proficient in writing in the other language due to more experience in that language.

In very few cases, bilingual (or multilingual) individuals display a balanced competence in all their languages (Baker, 2006; Baker & Prys Jones, 1998; Bialystok, 2001). In terms of competence, Kohnert's (2009) definition of *bilingual* is operational and practical: Bilinguals can be defined as individuals who have systematic experience with two or more languages to meet present or future communication needs.

One important consideration is the distinction between how a language is learned. Learning a language implies a conscious process, which takes places in a classroom. Acquiring a language implies a more naturalistic process in all contexts (e.g., home, play, and school) that includes communicating with parents, family members, and friends (Krashen, 1981). To summarize this difference, the acquisition of a language is defined by the natural development of a language as opposed to the intentional learning of that language.

Terms such as **proficiency** and **dominance** are commonly used to quantify and qualify the level of mastery of the first or second language. Proficiency refers to the degree of mastery of the individual's linguistic ability for listening, understanding, speaking, reading, and writing. Dominance indicates which language (or languages) is (are) mastered with greater competency. For example, which language (L1 or L2) is stronger?

Because the first language is spoken in the home, it is not uncommon for students who are learning a second language at school to be more familiar with terms related to the home, such as utensils or furniture. Thus, expecting equivalent knowledge of vocabulary or competence across two languages may not be a realistic goal when working with L2 learners. No single test or series of tests can capture all the elements of the concepts of proficiency or dominance.

Other concepts related to the interaction between two or more languages include *code-switching* and *language loss* when discussing issues regarding bilingualism. In bilinguals, **code-switching** is a common phenomenon. It consists of using a word, phrase, or sentence from one language while communicating in the other language. Language loss occurs when someone loses proficiency in a language. There are many causes of this phenomenon, such as loss of exposure to and practice of the first language (Anderson, 2004).

Both code-switching and language loss should be considered in deciding whether a student has a language difference or a language disorder in the L1 or L2. An important first step is to evaluate the student's communicative proficiency in both L1 and L2.

STAGES OF SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNING

The learning of an L2 develops in stages. Five stages of L2 development have been identified and are briefly described below (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Even though these stages were first described almost 3 decades ago, they are still referred to in the current research literature.

Stage I: The Silent/Receptive or Preproduction Stage

During this period, the learner has a vocabulary of about 500 words. This period may last from the beginning of exposure to the language to 6 months after first exposure. During this time, the child may not say much, which is why it is referred to as the "silent period." This silence is natural, as the child is not yet comfortable taking risks to produce words or sentences in the new language.

This stage has implications for Clara, the student we met in the case study at the beginning of the chapter. Clara's teacher has already contacted her parents after 3 months. Should her teacher wait another 3 months to see if Clara can progress beyond Stage I before considering other options?

Stage II: The Early Production Stage

This period may last for another half a year. During this stage, the learner may communicate with one- or two-word phrases and understands a number of different questions: yes/no, either/or, and who/what/where questions.

Stage III: The Speech Emergence Stage

This stage can be one more year. During this time, the learner can use short phrases and simple sentences to communicate. In addition, the learner can engage in dialogues and may use longer sentences, but errors may be evident.

Stage IV: The Intermediate Language Proficiency Stage

This stage lasts another year, and the student may use more complex sentences but may still need to ask for clarification.

Stage V: The Advanced Language Proficiency Stage

During this stage, learners are using specific vocabulary and can participate successfully in the classroom. This stage lasts 3 to 5 years.

What is most important to understand is that it may take an L2 learner at least 3 years to become proficient in the new language. In the next section, we present a framework for understanding communicative proficiency.

A FRAMEWORK OF COMMUNICATIVE PROFICIENCY

Cummins (1981, 1984, 1989, 2008) proposed a model to differentiate two types of language proficiency: (a) the language proficiency noted in a context-embedded, face-to-face situation, referred to as **basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS),** and (b) the language proficiency acquired in a context-reduced (academic) situation, which is referred to as **cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).**

BICS refers to the language skills needed for social interaction on the playground and school bus, along with playing sports and talking on the telephone. Consequently, these

contexts are less cognitively demanding. CALP refers to formal academic learning that requires the language abilities to listen, understand, read, and write in the context of classroom material requirements. These contexts are cognitively demanding. These concepts are demonstrated in the following examples:

BICS: "Open your books to page 5." (Less complex)

CALP: "Explain the character's motivation in the story we just read." (More complex)

L2 learners usually acquire BICS within 2 years of contact with the second language, while they may require 5 to 7 years of exposure before CALP is achieved. Although it may take an L2 learner up to 5 years to catch up to the level of a monolingual peer's academic performance, the school team does not have to wait this long to determine if an individual is experiencing a language problem. Thus, early intervention may be initiated in the presence of a genuine language disorder.

The difference between BICS and CALP can be applied to the case study presented at the beginning of this chapter. For example, Clara and her family have been in the United States for only 1 year. Consequently, she may be in the process of achieving BICS.

BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

The term *bilingual program* designates different types of academic programs that vary in scope and practice for teaching and using (a) two languages or (b) only English. The scope of programs range from not offering any support for their L2-learning students (**submersion**) to two-way bilingual programs in which speakers of both languages are learning together (also referred to as **dual immersion** or **two-way immersion)**.

Between these models, transitional programs offer instruction in the two languages for 2 or 3 years, with initial emphasis on the first language. Students are dismissed once they attain sufficient proficiency to learn in an English-only classroom. No further instruction or support is offered for children's first language after that time.

Developmental bilingual programs are geared to prepare students to become bilingual and biliterate (Brisk, 2005; Herrera & Murry, 2005). These programs are composed of the following models: the **Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE),** the **Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)**, and the **Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)** (Reed & Railsback, 2003). These instructional approaches are employed in bilingual classrooms and are also utilized by mainstream teachers.

The SDAIE approach consists of teaching content subjects in English while ensuring that the language used is comprehensible to the student in lesson plans following the SDAIE model. Some of the features of the SDAIE model are as follows:

- Teacher models

- Focusing on engaging the children's interest

- Teaching of vocabulary, idioms, and double meaning (e.g., *red/read*)

- Slow speech rate and clear articulation

- Gestures and facial expressions

- Writing and listening

The SIOP model was created by observing guidelines and standards for L2-acquisition programs in the United States (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2004). The SIOP model is similar to the SDAIE model. This model focuses on providing strategies and pedagogical tools for classroom teachers. The key features of the SIOP model include the following:

- Lesson preparation

- Strategies

- Interaction

- Practice/application

- Lesson delivery

- Review/assessment

Finally, the CALLA model follows four foundational beliefs: active learners learn best, students can self-identify the most effective learning strategies for themselves, strategy instruction is more effective for academic learning, and strategy training can help facilitate transfer of learning to new tasks. CALLA is organized around five phases of instruction: preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, and expansion. Ongoing assessment is used in each phase to help continuously plan appropriate instruction (Herrera & Murry, 2005).

The classroom teacher must understand the process of learning English as a second language and the factors that are associated with this process.

ASSESSING SECOND-LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

It is important for teachers to determine the stage of their students' second-language development. Krashen (1981) states that students should be exposed to situations in which they can comprehend what they hear while being challenged to continue developing their linguistic skills. For example, if a student can understand and respond to "what-doing" questions, they are challenged to provide a reason for an action. A typical session may ask, "What is the lady doing?" If she is buying fruit, the student may respond that she is using the fruit to make a salad or that she wants to keep it for a snack.

Before any intervention can be planned, assessment of the student's oral and written language in his or her first and second languages needs to be completed, along with a history of his or her educational background. Collaboration of parents and classroom teachers is critical. This is because parents can provide additional information about a student's progress over time (Gutiérrez-Clellen & Kreiter, 2003; Langdon, 2008; Restrepo, 1998; Roseberry-McKibbin, 2008).

Information is collected to determine which language might be dominant for which specific tasks. Using a three-tiered approach, as found in the next section ("Response to Intervention"), school personnel are able to assess, intervene, and document each student's progress in the least restrictive environment (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2009). To determine the best approach to children's language and learning abilities, we will next review the **Response to Intervention (RtI)** approach.

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RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

In the past, an L2-learning student who was experiencing difficulties received some accommodations in the general-education classroom, with or without direct consultation from specialized personnel such as a **speech-language pathologist (SLP)**, **special educator**, **adaptive physical educator (APE),** or other specialist. Progress was not always consistently documented, and referral for full testing was one of the more consistent solutions to the student's learning problem.

The RtI model challenges pullout service, allowing the mainstream and L2-learning student to receive more quality instruction in the classroom with timely interventions. RtI is a systematic model that blends general-education and special-education approaches, emphasizing the importance of good instruction over time and documenting its efficacy via curriculum-based measurement.

RtI was created as a prereferral procedure to intervene before students met with failure. Not only do students receive tailored support, but frequent assessment is required to document progress. Only when the most appropriate, research-based interventions are used and progress is not evident can a referral for full evaluation to the Child Study Team go forward.

RtI was the answer to over-referral of students for special-education evaluation. The accountability component of RtI is what makes this approach different from previously used models of prereferral intervention. RtI consists of three tiers (National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2007).

Tier 1: High-Quality Instructional and Behavioral Supports for All Students in General Education

Research-based, quality education using ongoing universal screening, progress monitoring, and assessment to design instruction is provided to all students in the general-education setting.

The basis of RtI is the delivery of high-quality instruction by a qualified teacher using evidence-based instruction in the general-education setting. Teachers should implement a variety of research-supported teaching methods and approaches. Teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students should use teaching methods and approaches that are research-supported for these populations and should receive the training they need to be qualified teachers of diverse students. (NASP, 2007, p. 3)

Tier 2: Targeted Supplemental Services for Students Whose Performance and Rate of Progress Are Below What Is Expected for Their Grade and Educational Setting

Based on comprehensive evaluation, interventions are provided to students with intensive needs.

Identified students receive additional strategies and supports that are provided by general- and special-education teachers, and support services. . . . Further outcomes on critical achievement variables are monitored to determine the degree of responsiveness. Judgments of degree of responsiveness take the student's cultural and/or linguistic diversity into account. Lack of progress at this point indicates the need for intensive instruction and supports. . . . For students with cultural and/or linguistic diversity, lack of satisfactory progress may not constitute a learning disability if the language of Tier 2 services was not accessible for the student or if the services were inappropriate for the student's culture. (NASP, 2007, pp. 3–4)

Tier 3: Intensive, Individualized Intervention That Has Been Designed Based on Comprehensive Evaluation Data From Multiple Sources

Students who are indentified as at-risk or who fail to make adequate progress in general education receive interventions. At this level, there is a "clear need for more intensive, specialized services, [and] a special education evaluation is usually conducted" (NASP, 2007, pp. 4–5). For all students, including L2 learners, the evaluation should include assessments in various academic and language areas, including input and observations from parents and teachers involved in the education of the student. In deciding eligibility for special education, the team must determine if instruction was adequate and if interventions and assessments were culturally sensitive.

APPLICATION OF THE RTI MODEL TO LANGUAGE INTERVENTION

Each student presents with a specific set of needs and level of performance with respect to his or her L1 and L2. In applying the RtI model, the recommendations need to be made very

carefully, as there are differences from case to case depending on the age of the student and his or her own language and experience history. Some illustrations of how the RtI model can be applied to different student needs follow:

- Parents report that their child had delayed language development in the L1. This will result in a possible slower rate of development of the L2. This does not mean that the child has a learning difficulty or that he or she might not be able to acquire two languages. However, this may mean that the child may need more time provided via Tier 1 to reach criterion on any given task.

- Parents report a significant medical history, such as multiple ear infections at a young age. This may result in delayed language development in the L1 and indicate that this child needs special instruction and accommodations, beginning with interventions at Tier 2 rather than Tier 1.

- Teachers and parents report that the student has had more difficulty than siblings and/or peers in keeping up with language and academic learning, even in the L1. In this case, beginning interventions suggested for Tier 2 would be more appropriate.

- Parents report that the child has moved a great deal from school to school due to economic hardships. Recommendations for Tier 1 would be preferable before proceeding to Tier 2.

RtI recommends types of intervention and specific instructional approaches. The adequacy of instruction is a critical concern when evaluating the performance of L2-learning students. Whether these students had the most appropriate instruction in L2 acquisition based on their current level of language function is a serious concern. This is because general education teachers, for the most part, have not experienced sufficient professional development in evidence-based best practices in assessment and instruction of L2-learning students. To help you achieve better understanding of these practices, the next section details principles for professional development that promote positive L2 learning and how these principles guide best practices.

PRINCIPLES FOR PROMOTING POSITIVE SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNING

Crockett (2004) described five effective principles for promoting positive L2 learning, not only for higher achieving students but also for those who may experience a learning difficulty. First, teachers should identify the elements that need to be learned and demonstrate these elements with examples. Second, teachers should provide students with strategies and multiple opportunities to apply those strategies. One approach is to have the students participate in small-group interactions. This may provide the opportunity for some L2 learners to interact as tutors. The small-group interactions also enable teachers and students to offer ongoing feedback on skill development. Third, activities presented to students should be meaningful and relevant. Fourth, students with reading and writing difficulties may benefit from explicit instruction in word decoding and spelling. Fifth, all students benefit from

the effective instruction provided to students with language-learning disabilities. Examples of these strategies are presented in the following sections.

Increase Comprehensibility

Students benefit from content that is supplemented with pictures, along with objects, demonstrations, gesture and intonation cues, or peer tutoring techniques. Activate schema (e.g., ideas, mental images, and associated meanings) and preteach key vocabulary (vocabulary to be used in lengthier texts). The use of choral responses with other students can also help increase comprehension.

Increase Interaction

Structure cooperative learning opportunities in which students learn to use language to achieve goals to complete a given project. Selecting children for each group who can support the L2 learner and work effectively from a technical standpoint is key.

Increase Thinking/Study Skills

Teachers can engineer activities that ask higher-order thought questions (e.g., "What would happen if . . . ?"). Teachers can also model "thought language" by thinking aloud (e.g., "What did he or she *think, believe*?"). In other words, teachers can explicitly teach and reinforce study skills.

Use Student's Native Language to Increase Comprehensibility

Using verbal rehearsal in a student's native language to support L2-acquisition goals can help with recall. Verbal rehearsal can be done in both the child's first and second language, strengthening the connections in both language systems.

Total Physical Response

The total physical response (TPR) method was developed in the 1960s as a language-learning tool based on the relationship between language and its physical representation or execution (Asher, 1966, 1969, 1972, 2000). TPR emphasizes the use of physical activity to increase meaningful learning opportunities and language retention. A TPR lesson involves a detailed series of consecutive actions accompanied by a series of commands or instructions given by the teacher. Students respond by listening and performing the appropriate actions. This method needs to be adapted to students' level of English-language skills. TPR is an especially good technique for L2-learning students in Stage I, since it does not rely on oral production.

Language Experience Approach

The language experience approach is also known as the dictated stories approach (Carrasquillo & Rodríguez, 2002). The student dictates a personal experience to a teacher

or aide. Subsequently, the student uses the text that has been dictated as reading material. This is a very effective strategy not only for addressing L2 fluency but also for increasing reading and vocabulary skills.

Dialogue Journals

The dialogue journals approach is also known as the interactive journals approach. A written dialogue between teacher and student that mirrors everyday communication is a powerful way to develop communication skills. The teacher does not evaluate the form of the student's written skills. Instead, the teacher focuses on the intent (meaning) of the student's communication effort.

Many of the strategies suggested in this section would be appropriate for the teacher in the case study presented at the beginning of this chapter. In the next section, we present more specific strategies that have been utilized in teaching content material to L2-learning students. We selected these strategies because they should be incorporated in every classroom where there are children learning English.

The classroom can be structured to enable students to interact cooperatively with one another and with the teacher.

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING CONTENT MATERIAL

The seven strategies listed below are those most frequently mentioned by researchers as being useful for instructing L2-learning students. These strategies are (1) use of a thematic approach, (2) explicit teaching of learning strategies, (3) use of various media, (4) incorporation of the

students' experiences in the learning process, (5) vocabulary building, (6) teacher discourse, and (7) **scaffolding**.

Use of a Thematic Approach

In this approach, a consistent theme is used to reinforce a topic throughout the curriculum to develop growth in oral and written language skills (Beaumont, 1992). For example, if a curriculum's goal is to examine the formation of clouds and rain, the topic can be addressed through the selection of an appropriate book that describes this process. Next, words connected to the formation of clouds and rain can be listed, followed by the definition of each word. In social studies, students can apply concepts by interpreting a weather map or by following weather in other cities.

Farr and Quintanar-Sarellana (2005) indicate that thematic instruction has an effect on motivation, engagement, and sense of purpose. They argue that encouraging students to work together on projects develops their language skills through asking questions, solving problems, negotiating, and interacting with peers.

Explicit Teaching of Learning Strategies

In this model, specific instruction about the material to be learned is provided in terms of the "why and how" of events in the classroom. Prior to initiating a unit, a discussion about what the students already know about the material takes place and points to be covered in the classroom session are written on the board. Before reading a textbook, students are taught to preview the text by examining chapter headings and subheadings, diagrams, and pictures, along with discussing the text's content. Students are assisted in learning to tap metacognitive and cognitive understanding achieved through awareness, reflection, and interaction. A graphic organizer (referred to as a K-W-L Chart) can be created that lists what students already **k**now about the topic (K), what they **w**ant to learn based on the chapter preview (W), and then—after concluding the chapter—what they did **l**earn (L). (For more information on explicit teaching of learning strategies, see Duffy, 2002; Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005; and Savaria-Shore & Garcia, 1995.)

Utilization of Media

Teacher Robin Liten-Tejada, featured in the video *Profile of Effective Teaching in a Multilingual Classroom* (Silver, 1995), enhances her students' ability to use and demonstrate their knowledge through sociodramatic play and other media such as art. Sociodramatic play is also helpful for school-age children who need practice in the pragmatic aspects of language, such as making requests, being specific, and repairing communication breakdowns.

Ruíz (1988) noted a significant improvement in special-education students' oral language skills when sociodramatic play was used, in comparison with their performance in more structured academic tasks. As children discussed key elements of their play (e.g., scene, actors, and props), their ability to negotiate meaning improved. The negotiation process may require the use of particular language structures, such as turn taking, convention, and message repair (Beaumont, 1992).

Incorporation of Student's Experience in the Learning Process

In this approach, the focus is on engaging students in bridging academic content with their experiences and culture. Not only cultural content can be tapped in this approach but also culturally based modes of learning and communication (Doherty, Hilberg, Pinal, & Tharp, 2003; Farr & Quintanar-Sarellana, 2005). This method enables the student to learn to recognize words already in his or her speaking vocabulary but not yet in his or her reading vocabulary. Similarly, dictated stories can be used to help the student connect his or her experiences with a reading lesson (Carrasquillo & Rodríguez, 2002).

Vocabulary Building

To assist students in expanding their vocabulary, the weekly vocabulary list should be linked to the content that is being taught. Echevarría et al. (2004) provide suggestions for increasing knowledge of vocabulary, such as clarifying the meaning of a word by offering a synonym or cognate.

In Liten-Tejada's video (Silver, 1995), she asks students to remember a word (*creek*) that they learned the previous week. They are then asked to connect it to a newly learned word (*stream*). Students can be encouraged to create dictionaries and develop a "word wall" using the relevant vocabulary from a given lesson.

TEACHER DISCOURSE AND TEACHING STYLE

At the heart of all instruction is the teacher's style of content delivery. Langdon (1989, 2008) and Short (1991) argue for collaboration between SLPs and teachers to provide students with discourse and interaction strategies such as the ones that follow:

- Speak more slowly and enunciate clearly.

- Emphasize important words and use body language when needing to make a point.

- Use students' names instead of pronouns.

- Clarify the meaning of unfamiliar words; if a student does not understand something, rephrase what you said using simpler syntax. Ask the student to rephrase what he or she understood to ensure that the information was correctly comprehended.

- Use visuals (e.g., pictures, videos, real objects) to increase comprehension of ideas and concepts.

- Do not "correct" students, but focus on meaning with respect to both receptive and expressive language. Model conversations during the student-to-student or student-to-teacher interaction.

- Allow for additional wait time to enable the student to process and formulate an answer.

SCAFFOLDING

Scaffolding is an instructional strategy to facilitate the students' acquisition of skills. The goal is to ensure that the student can learn new material more independently and is consistent with the **zone of proximal development (ZPD)** described by Vygotsky (1962). (See Chapter 2 for a full discussion of this model.)

The scaffolds are used to move the student from his or her current level of skills to the level of the classroom target skills. This can be done with models from more advanced peers through group projects. The next section provides additional strategies to advance the student's skills within these group-learning contexts.

STRUCTURING THE CLASSROOM

The classroom should be structured to enable students to interact cooperatively with one other and with the teacher (Calderón, 2001; Kagan, 1994; Slavin, 1995). Cooperative learning activities offer students the opportunity to listen, negotiate turn-taking rules, ask questions, clarify information, repair miscommunications, initiate and maintain topics, change roles, explain, persuade, record, summarize, and apply social skill conventions when joining and taking leave of a group. For Clara, our case study student, cooperative groups for games and projects would foster opportunities for increased interactions and for language learning from peers.

After working in small groups, students can conduct a debriefing session to evaluate both the product and the process followed. This debriefing assists them in developing functional communication skills and metalinguistic awareness. The group work provides experience in highly contextualized here-and-now activities that are more frequently associated with home cultures. It also enhances practice in school language skills, such as planning and reflecting.

The information presented in this section has outlined the best strategies suggested by researchers and teachers for teaching L2-learning students. The most important main points are to consider the learners' (and their families') experiences with teaching and learning processes in their home culture or country, consider that L2 learning develops in various stages, and consider the warning signs of language-learning problems. The RtI model also requires an ongoing record of student performance so that progress (or lack of progress) can be clearly documented. We next review language proficiency tests.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TESTS

The most commonly used assessments for L2-learning students are known as language proficiency tests. The purpose of each proficiency test is to classify the English-language learner's language proficiency skills into five different levels, which range from "nonspeaker" to "fluent speaker," and to provide more appropriate language instruction to the learner. What is

assessed in tests is mostly oral and written grammar, syntax, story retelling, and vocabulary, but it is not related to ability to learn new academic material in a second language.

More recent tests, created by various states, are available only in English. For example, the California English Language Development Test, first implemented in 2001, assesses English listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. This test was created to determine the proficiency of L2-learning students in each of the four language areas. Specific standards are listed for each curriculum area and at five levels of proficiency: beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced. Exit criteria for each level are also delineated for each one of the language areas (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Many of the proficiency tests were developed to provide quick measures of these students' proficiency. This tends to sacrifice the accuracy of the results; therefore, the outcomes may be available only as guides for placement, and they do not offer practical suggestions for the teacher. Consequently, classroom teachers need to supplement these statewide language tests with a performance-based instrument that they can use on a regular basis to document their students' growth and development in English (Kuhlman, 2005). For a listing and brief review of each of the proficiency tests that are commonly used, see Langdon and Cheng (2002) and Langdon (2008).

This chapter has provided some foundational knowledge about English-language learners, how a second language is learned, and how best to teach and assess these students. Let's see how the text material has shaped your recommendations for Clara, the student presented in the case study at the beginning of this chapter.

CASE STUDY REVISITED

Clara is the 5-year-old child from a Spanish-speaking family residing in New York whose kindergarten teacher is concerned about her lack of verbal participation in both English and Spanish. The best way to proceed is to have a parent conference and obtain information about her language development using Table 13.1. The following questions would assist in determining if Clara might have difficulty developing English and learning skills.

- Do the parents note any problems in communicating with her in Spanish? If yes, describe the nature of the problem. If she was delayed in developing language in Spanish, what is the status of her communication skills at the present time? If there are concerns, a screening in Spanish may be warranted. If no problems are noted, then we know that her Spanish skills are likely to be intact.

- Did Clara suffer from any ear infections or problems? If the answer is positive, was this a chronic problem? What is the hearing status at this time? If unsure, recommend a hearing screening or more in-depth audiological assessment.

- Does Clara play with other children in her neighborhood? If the answer is no, ask the reason. For example, if parents report that Clara does not engage in play with other children, this behavior may stem from lack of experience in interacting with peers. Recall that this is the first time that Clara is attending a school program.

CASE STUDY REVISITED: Learning English as a second language

A family conference with parents that addresses these questions was initiated to help determine the action to take. Clara was also given time to get used to the school atmosphere and to instruction in an English-only environment. Her teacher remembered that it was not unusual for children to be silent for a while when learning L2. In addition, the teacher ensured that the information presented in the school environment was comprehensible to Clara and to other children who are learning English. Clara was also grouped with other children to complete projects. The teacher considered the academic traits possessed by the other children that would support Clara's needs. During this interaction, she was encouraged to respond by using means other than verbal when verbal communication presented her with difficulty. In the meantime, her parents were advised to continue to dialogue with her in Spanish, along with increasing her vocabulary skills by providing labels for objects and actions. Several studies have demonstrated that concepts learned in one language can be readily transferred to another language (Oldin, 1989, 2005).

After 3 months, the school team and Clara's parents reconvened to review her language and school progress. The teacher noted that Clara had begun to be more comfortable in dialoguing with the other children in Spanish, but many of her peers made fun of her because she could not pronounce the /r/ sounds, as in *pera* and *rosa*, and had difficulty producing the /l/ sound. She also pronounces her name incorrectly, saying "Claa." Clara's parents had thought that this was normal for children her age. They discussed the recommendation for referral for speech-language intervention. The teacher has noted that Clara is now able to answer yes/no questions in English and she is intermittently using one- to two-word phrases. The latter is commensurate with Stage II in English-language development.

The team also suggested that Clara be integrated into the bilingual speech-language therapy program for a period of 2 months. In this case, suggestions for intervention would be moved from Tier 1 to Tier 2. Even though the /r/ sounds in Spanish may not be completely developed until age 6 or 7, the sound interfered with intelligibility at times and was a source of ridicule from peers. Parents would participate in the sessions and practice with her at home.

Clara's case illustrates how the school team can proceed when bilingual students are referred. Close collaboration with the classroom teacher is critical. To be effective, team members need to be knowledgeable about bilingual language development and best teaching techniques. In addition, the RtI model, if implemented effectively, is very helpful in offering services that will ultimately contribute to the student becoming a more successful language and academic learner.

SUMMARY

This chapter offered the reader some strategies on how to approach bilingual children when it is unclear whether they are not progressing due to an L2 development issue or because of a possible language-learning disability. This dilemma is not easily solved and requires time and specific knowledge in understanding how individuals develop an L2. Referring bilingual children for

evaluation and service is the last step the classroom teacher should resort to after attempting many different strategies within the classroom. The very purpose of this text is to reinforce the notion that there are stages of L2 acquisition that may take varying lengths of time for each child.

This text does not maintain that L2 learners should typically be referred for evaluation and classification as special-education students. Rather, this text advocates that each child needs to be served as an individual, ensuring that each child gets what he or she needs. Adopting this perspective moves the question of how best to serve bilingual and/or L2 learners away from a political agenda.

This chapter offered a review of important terms such as *bilingual*, *proficiency*, *dominance*, and *bilingual programming*. In addition, it compared and contrasted types of language proficiency, detailing the difference between basic interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic language proficiency.

Moreover, this chapter highlighted the differences between a more basic, nonacademic level of communication and the language that is required in a more formal academic setting. A brief review of various stages of L2 development was outlined as well. The chapter continued with a description of the RtI model and some preferred teaching strategies for L2-learning students. Finally, this chapter applied key foundational concepts to a case study of a bilingual child and outlined a process for intervention.

Chapter 14 continues to focus on L2 learners. This next chapter is devoted to describing the characteristics of typical speech development in bilingual children and bilingual children with speech disorders and suggesting evidence-based assessment and intervention approaches that aid in correctly identifying bilingual children in need of intervention.

KEY WORDS

Adaptive physical educator (APE)

Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS)

Bilingualism

Code-switching

Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)

Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)

Dominance

Dual immersion

English-language learner

Primary or dominant language

Proficiency

Response to Intervention (RtI)

Scaffolding

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

Special educator

Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE)

Speech-language pathologist (SLP)

Submersion

Two-way immersion

Zone of proximal development (ZPD)

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the implications of language proficiency and language dominance in assessing an L2 learner's linguistic and academic performance.

2. Request to participate in an RtI conference discussing the needs of an L2-learning student. What were the issues and how were they resolved? What was similar to or different from the information presented in this chapter?

3. Observe the instruction of a classroom in which the majority of students are L2 learners. Were any of the strategies that were listed in this chapter used? Did you think the teaching methodology was effective? Explain your answers.

4. If you were the classroom teacher, how do you think you could best collaborate with other professionals in your building if you had a student like Clara?

5. List the key concepts and strategies that were new to you in reading through this chapter.

PROJECTS

1. Take and record a sample of a bilingual, Spanish-English preschool or kindergarten child who has been exposed to English for 1 year interacting with a native speaker in each language (English and Spanish). Select similar topics, such as favorite stories or activities, otherwise you will have difference due to the context. Observe vocabulary words that a child uses in both English and Spanish. Bilingual children are sometimes more likely to know colors in English and household items in their home language. Include words from both languages in final vocabulary word counts. Write down what sounds you heard the child use in both Spanish and English, if possible.

2. Observe an SLP working with a bilingual child with a speech problem. Write your observations of the session, answering questions such as "Did the SLP use both languages in therapy or only one?" "Was the child able to respond in both languages?" "How often could you understand the child in each language?" Ask the SLP to share his or her thoughts on providing therapy to a bilingual child.

STUDENT STUDY SITE

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- Video Links
- Self Quizzes
- E-Flashcards

- Sample Forms and Assessment Tools
- Recommended Readings
- Web Resources

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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