

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Teaching Emergent Bilingual and Dual-Language Students

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Who are emergent bilingual students?
- Why are specialized educational programs required for emergent bilingual students?
- What are the most effective educational programs for emergent bilingual students?
- Why are additive bilingual instructional settings more advantageous than subtractive bilingual instructional settings?
- Why is it important to identify former emergent bilingual students?
- Who are the bilingual students in two-way dual-language programs?

Ms. Malone, the multilingual and multicultural coordinator for the Newsom School District, is meeting with three sets of parents today. The first couple—Mr. and Mrs. García—are from Mexico. They arrived in the United States 6 years ago, and just moved from Texas to Illinois. They have three children: a 3-year-old, a 6-year-old, and an 8-year-old. Mr. García works in construction, while Mrs. García takes care of the house and watches the children. Although Mr. García speaks some English, Spanish is the language spoken in the home because Mrs. García primarily speaks Spanish.

The second couple—Mr. and Mrs. Fonseca—are from Honduras and arrived in the United States a month ago. The father has been accepted into a master's degree program in engineering at the local university. His wife does not have a work permit and will stay at home.

The father, who speaks English and Spanish, tells Ms. Malone that they speak Spanish at home. They have two children: a 5-year-old and a 9-year-old.

The third couple—Mr. and Mrs. Pham—are from Vietnam. They have been in the United States for 6 months. Mrs. Pham works part-time in a nail salon, while Mr. Pham is a cook in a Vietnamese restaurant owned by a relative. They speak enough English to do their jobs, but they speak Vietnamese at home. They have three children: a 6-year-old, an 8-year-old, and a 10-year-old.

School district personnel tested all the children in English. They identified them as emergent bilingual students because they speak their home languages but need to learn English in school.

Ms. Malone recommends that Mr. and Mrs. García and Mr. and Mrs. Fonseca enroll their 5- and 6-year-old children in the district's Spanish–English two-way dual-language (DL) program, which only begins in kindergarten and first grade. She tells them that DL education is one of the most effective bilingual education programs offered in the United States.

She recommends that the Garcías' and the FONSECAS' 8- and 9-year-old children be placed in the district's one-way Spanish–English DL program because the children have never been in a two-way DL program and have limited proficiency in English. In the one-way DL program, they will be with other emergent bilingual students who speak Spanish and who are learning English. Bilingual teachers fluent in Spanish and English will teach them by using both languages throughout elementary school.

Ms. Malone explains to the Phams that the district does not have a sufficient number of Vietnamese-speaking children to offer a two-way or one-way DL program for Vietnamese-speaking children. Therefore, she recommends that the Pham children attend Culver School, which has a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI). In this program, the Pham children will receive English-as-a-second-language (ESL) instruction for 90 minutes each day, 45 minutes of instruction in Vietnamese 4 days each week, and the rest of their daily instruction in all-English classrooms.

All the parents are confused. They do not understand why their children will not be placed in all-English classrooms right away. They think that this is the best way for their children to learn and speak English immediately. As you read this chapter, think about what Ms. Malone will tell each set of parents.

This chapter introduces you to the different types of bilingual students discussed in this book and to the educational programs that serve

them. First, the book introduces you to a major focus of the book, emergent bilingual students—students who know a minority language at home and who are in the process of acquiring a new language, English, at school (O. García & Kleifgen, 2018; O. García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). Next, the specialized programs that the federal government has approved for the instruction of emergent bilingual students are presented. Then, the academic performance of emergent bilingual students is discussed. In the next two sections, two other types of bilingual students—former emergent bilingual students and bilingual students in two-way DL programs—are described. The chapter closes with concluding remarks.

EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS

O. García et al. (2008) coined the term *emergent bilingual students* to refer to students who speak a minority language at home and who are learning English at school. This is a much more positive term than some of the other terms that historically were used. For example, the United States government has referred to students who do not know English as limited-English proficient (LEP) students, limited-English-speaking students, English language learners (ELLs), and, most recently, English learners (ELs) (Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], 2015). These terms are considered deficit because they do not acknowledge that the students already know a language other than English. To counter deficit terms, the term *emergent bilingual students* is used throughout this book rather than other terms such as ELLs or ELs. Some educators currently use the term *multilingual students* to recognize the multiple languages and dialects that students may know. However, because this book explicitly focuses on students' acquisition of two languages, regardless of dialectal variation, it uses the term *emergent bilingual students*.

Demographic statistics indicate that the number of emergent bilingual students who attend United States public schools continues to increase. According to the Condition of Education (Hussar et al., 2020), 5 million emergent bilingual students attended public schools in 2017 compared to 3.8 million in 2000. They represented slightly over 10% of public school students. The majority of them were enrolled in elementary school.

Approximately 75% of emergent bilingual students are Spanish speakers (United States Department of Education, 2022). Other languages spoken by emergent bilingual students include (in alphabetic order): Arabic, Brazilian, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Korean, Nepali, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Samoan, Somali, Swahili, Tagalog, Urdu, and Vietnamese, among others. Although the largest numbers of emergent bilingual students

live in California, New York, Texas, Arizona, and Illinois, they increasingly are found in other states throughout the United States.

TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS APPROVED FOR EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS

A large percentage of emergent bilingual students (97%) participate in language programs specifically designed for them (United States Department of Education, 2022). Currently, 46 states provide some type of bilingual education program for emergent bilingual students at the elementary level (Rutherford-Quach et al., 2021). A bilingual education program includes home or first-language (L1) instruction and English as a second language (ESL) or English instruction.

Some of the states that previously outlawed bilingual education (such as California and Massachusetts) now allow bilingual education (A. García, 2020). When bilingual education was unavailable in California and Massachusetts, the academic performance of emergent bilingual students did not improve, but substantially decreased or stayed the same.

Just placing emergent bilingual students in all-English classrooms is illegal (Ovando & Combs, 2018). Although some emergent bilingual students succeed when they are only placed in all-English classrooms, most do not. To characterize this situation, many bilingual educators refer to the placement of emergent bilingual students in the all-English classroom as submersion or sink or swim. Although schools cannot place emergent bilingual students in all-English classrooms, parents have the legal right to do so.

Legal Basis for Specialized Programs

Two federal court cases provide the legal basis for the United States government's requirement that states that receive federal funds provide specialized programs for emergent bilingual students: *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) and *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981). In *Lau v. Nichols*, parents of Chinese-speaking students in San Francisco filed a lawsuit against the San Francisco United School District for violating their children's rights because the school district did not provide instructional help for their children to acquire English. The United States Supreme Court ruled that providing non-English-proficient Chinese students with the same or identical education as native-English-speaking students did not constitute equal education according to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Court required the San Francisco School District to take positive steps to overcome the educational barriers that the non-English-speaking Chinese students faced. However, it

was beyond the Court’s responsibilities to specify what the school district had to do.

The Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Education outlined in the Lau Remedies what states and school districts had to do to provide equal education for non-English-speaking students (K–12) in school districts that received federal funds (see Lau Remedies, *web.stanford.edu*, 2022). As the first remedy, school districts had to determine the extent to which children entering the school district spoke a language other than English in the home. Second, based on the children’s language proficiency status, the school district had to provide them with appropriate services. Lastly, when there were 20 or more emergent bilingual students who spoke the same minority language in a school district, district personnel had to develop and place the children in an approved bilingual education program.

The first two remedies remain in effect today, but the third remedy, which required bilingual education, was changed in 1981 to include other types of services. The Fifth Circuit Court in the United States ruled in *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981) that school districts’ program choices had to meet a three-part test, which expanded district options. The three-part test includes the following:

1. The chosen program has to be “recognized as sound by some experts in the field or . . . considered . . . a legitimate experimental strategy”;
2. “the programs and practices . . . [are] reasonably calculated to implement this theory effectively” (i.e., there are adequate resources and personnel); and
3. the program succeeds, after a legitimate trial, in producing results indicating that students’ “language barriers are actually being overcome” (*www2.ed.gov*, Office for Civil Rights).

When Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary School Act in 2015, known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), several new requirements were established for the education of emergent bilingual students. Now, states must use standardized or uniform criteria within the state to identify emergent bilingual students and include a measure of English proficiency for emergent bilingual students when evaluating the academic quality of the school district.

Types of Approved Specialized Programs

Table 1.1 shows the different types of programs that the federal government currently approves for emergent bilingual students at the elementary level. Brief descriptions of each program are provided below.

TABLE 1.1. Approved Programs for Emergent Bilingual Students

Program type	Language groups	Length of time	Language focus
Developmental or maintenance bilingual education	Same L1 group	K–5/6	L1 and ESL
English as a second language (ESL)	Variety of L1 groups or same L1	Part-time and full-time	ESL
One-way dual-language (DL) education	Same L1 group but different proficiencies in L1 and English	K–5/6	L1 and English
Structured/Sheltered English immersion (AZ & MA)	Variety of L1 groups or same L1	Part-time or full-time	ESL
Transitional bilingual education (TBE)	Same L1 group	Early exit: 3–4 years; late exit: K–5/6	L1 and ESL
Transitional program of instruction (TPI, IL)	Different L1 groups	K–5/6	L1, ESL, all-English
Two-way immersion (TWI) or two-way dual-language education (DL)	Same L1 group and English speakers	K–5/6; sometimes through middle school	L1 and English

Note. L1 = home or first language other than English; AZ = Arizona; MA = Massachusetts.

Developmental/Maintenance Bilingual Education

In Developmental/Maintenance Bilingual Education, certified bilingual teachers fluent in the L1 and English teach emergent bilingual students from the same L1 throughout elementary school. The students receive L1 and ESL instruction, with instruction in the L1 continuing throughout elementary school but decreasing as students acquire English. The aim of the program is to help the students become bilingual and biliterate.

ESL Instruction

When there are insufficient numbers of emergent bilingual students from the same minority language to warrant a bilingual education program

(usually 20 or more students), school districts still have to provide the students with some type of English language services, usually ESL instruction. ESL instruction for elementary-age students may include explicit English instruction (see Lems, Miller, & Soro, 2017) and/or sheltered English instruction (Echevarria et al., 2017), in which teachers scaffold emergent bilingual students' access to the school curriculum by using ESL techniques. Some of the ESL techniques include teachers' pacing the speed of their talk in English according to the students' English performance levels, and accompanying their English instruction, oral book reading, and use of videos with gestures, illustrations, realia, physical demonstrations, and modeling. Chapter 3 describes how to shelter or support bilingual students' second-language (L2) instruction.

Emergent bilingual students may participate in full-time or part-time ESL instruction. During part-time instruction, an ESL teacher may pull students out of the all-English classroom for ESL instruction or participate in the all-English classroom by pushing into the classroom. In push-in ESL instruction, the ESL teacher supports the instruction and learning of emergent bilingual students by employing ESL techniques to make the classroom teacher's instruction comprehensible.

One-Way DL Education

In one-way DL education, which lasts throughout elementary school, the students are from the same minority language group but often vary in their L1 and English proficiencies. They are taught by certified bilingual teachers and immersed in L1 and English content instruction throughout elementary school. The students acquire the two languages by using them with each other and their bilingual teachers for social and academic purposes. The goals are for the students to become bilingual and biliterate. This is the program that Ms. Malone recommended for the Garcías' and the Fonsecas' 8- and 9-year-old children.

English Immersion Programs

Several states authorized English immersion programs for emergent bilingual students. These are programs that emphasize instruction in the English language.

In 2000, the state of Arizona passed a law that required students newly classified as emergent bilingual students to attend a Structured English Immersion classroom for at least 4 hours each day during their first year of classification (Mo, 2019). In Arizona's version of Structured English Immersion, emergent bilingual students received explicit instruction in

the English language, with an emphasis on “phonology (pronunciation—the sound system of a language), morphology (the internal structure and forms of words), syntax (English word order rules), lexicon (vocabulary), and semantics (how to use English in different situations and contexts),” in addition to explicit English reading and writing instruction (Arizona Department of Education, 2014, p. 4). Sadly, the expectation that emergent bilingual students in Arizona would become English proficient after participating in Structured English Immersion for one year was unrealistic. In response to the poor performance of emergent bilingual students in Arizona, the Arizona State Board of Education (2014) made several changes to how Structured English Immersion is now implemented.

In 2002, the Massachusetts State Board of Education (2022) approved a different version of English Immersion for its emergent bilingual students, which it called Sheltered English Immersion. In Massachusetts, teachers with special training in sheltered English teach classrooms in which emergent bilingual students are integrated with English speakers. The teachers employ ESL techniques to make the school’s curriculum in English comprehensible for emergent bilingual students. Teachers occasionally use students’ L1, but it is not a standard feature of the Massachusetts Sheltered English Immersion Program. In 2019, Massachusetts also allowed transitional bilingual education and two-way dual-language education (Mitchell, 2019), described below.

Transitional Bilingual Education

One of the first programs that the federal government approved for emergent bilingual students was transitional bilingual education (TBE). In TBE, bilingual teachers (proficient in the L1 and English), who are certified in bilingual education and early childhood and/or elementary education, teach the elementary curriculum to students who speak the same minority language. The teachers begin with L1 instruction, slowly increasing the amount of ESL instruction. The aim of the program is to move the emergent bilingual students into all-English classrooms as soon as possible. Programs that last 3 years or less are called early-exit TBE programs. Programs that continue beyond 3 years are called late-exit TBE programs.

Transitional Program of Instruction

In Illinois, when schools do not have 20 or more students from the same minority language group in attendance, the school district has to provide a part-time or full-time Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) (Illinois State Board of Education, 2022). In a TPI, a certified bilingual or ESL

teacher provides the students with ESL instruction, and a proficient speaker of the L1 provides them with as much L1 instruction as possible. If no L1 speakers are available to serve as teachers, then the school does not have to provide L1 instruction. When students are in a part-time TPI, they also will receive instruction from a certified teacher in an all-English classroom. This is the type of program that Ms. Malone recommended for the Pham children, who speak Vietnamese at home.

Two-Way DL Education

In two-way DL education (sometimes referred to as two-way immersion education), half or more of the students speak the same minority language and half or less are English speakers (Howard et al., 2018). The two language groups are integrated into the same classrooms and taught in both languages by certified bilingual teachers throughout elementary school. In some states and school districts, DL education continues through middle school. The goals of the program are to help the two groups of students to become bilingual, biliterate, bicultural, and high achieving. Students acquire the languages by using them for social and academic purposes, and they are taught the required state curriculum. They often do not receive explicit language instruction in either language. Although the most popular DL programs are for Spanish speakers and English speakers, two way-DL also includes other language groups such as Arabic-English; French-English; Mandarin-English; and Navajo-English, among others. In this book, English speakers in DL programs are referred to as English-speaking DL students or English-dominant students.

Two of the more popular two-way DL programs are 90–10 and 50–50 (United States Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2015). In 90–10 DL programs, starting in kindergarten and/or first grade, the students receive 90% of their instruction in the minority language and 10% in English, with the instructional percentages in the two languages changing until they are 50–50 in fourth grade. In 50–50 programs, the students receive 50% of their instruction in each language during all the elementary grades. Enrollment in a two-way 90–10 Spanish–English DL program is what Ms. Malone recommended for the Garcías’ and the Fonsecas’ 5-year-old and 6-year-old children.

Although you might think that the English performance of emergent bilingual students would improve with more English instruction, this is not necessarily the case. Several researchers reported that emergent bilingual students in 90–10 DL programs met their state English proficiency standards and academic standards much quicker than those in 50–50 DL programs (Acosta, Williams, & Hunt, 2019). Researchers explained that

emergent bilingual students do well in DL programs when they continue to learn in their L1 throughout the elementary grades; socialize with English speakers, who provide them with L2 resources and models; and are in classrooms in which their language and culture are supported (Lindholm-Leary & Hernández, 2011).

THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS

The assessment of emergent bilingual students is covered in more detail in Chapter 12. Here, however, it is important to realize that employing English tests developed for English speakers in the United States to evaluate the academic performance of emergent bilingual students is problematic. The authors of the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association [AERA], American Psychological Association [APA], & National Council on Measurement for Education [NCME], 1999, 2014) warned that the accuracy of such assessments with emergent bilingual students was likely to be compromised because it was difficult to know how much of their English test performance was due to their limited English proficiency or to their performance in the domain being tested. For example, although the average reading comprehension test score for a sample of emergent bilingual fourth graders in 2019 on a national reading test in English—the National Assessment of Educational Performance (NAEP)—was significantly lower (219) than the average score (224) for a sample of nonbilingual fourth graders (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020), the reason for the low scores of the emergent bilingual students—their low English proficiency or their English reading comprehension, or a combination of the two—is not known.

Evaluations of Bilingual Students' Academic Performance

In response to the difficulty involved in interpreting the performance of emergent bilingual students on English assessments, researchers have sought alternate ways to evaluate their academic performance. Collier and Thomas (2017) conducted longitudinal analyses of the length of time it took emergent bilingual students to perform at grade level in English. They found that when emergent bilingual students were in DL programs from K/first grade through fifth/sixth grades, it took at least six years before they performed at grade level on English tests. If students did not have the opportunity to learn in their L1, but participated in some ESL instruction, then it often took them 7 to 10 years of participation in United States schools, with many of them never attaining grade-level performance in

English. Collier and Thomas explained that one reason it took emergent bilingual students so long to perform at grade level in English was that native-English speakers continued to learn new content, accelerating the knowledge assessed on English tests, while emergent bilingual students still were developing their English proficiency. They reported that their findings showed that to keep pace with the learning of native-English speakers, emergent bilingual students needed to learn new material through their L1 as they developed their English proficiency.

Other researchers conducted comparative evaluations of the academic performance of emergent bilingual students in all-English classrooms, bilingual education programs, and ESL programs. Their findings revealed that Spanish-speaking emergent bilingual students in two-way DL programs outperformed Spanish-speaking emergent bilingual students on English reading tests in all-English classrooms and other types of bilingual and ESL programs (Slavin & Cheung, 2005; Steele et al., 2017; United States Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2015). For example, in a comparative statistical analysis of 17 studies, Rolstad, Mahoney, and Glass (2005) reported that emergent bilingual students who participated in bilingual education programs benefited more than those who participated in ESL or Structured English Immersion. Also, within bilingual education programs, those who participated in DL programs had higher test scores than those who participated in early-exit TBE programs.

Additive Bilingualism Compared to Subtractive Bilingualism

Additive bilingualism occurs when students add a new language to their existing languages. In contrast, subtractive bilingualism occurs when students lose a language as they acquire a new language (Lambert, 1981). One reason that emergent bilingual students in DL programs attain higher academic performances than students in early-exit TBE programs and all-English or ESL classrooms may be the additive nature of DL programs. Additive instructional settings generally are more motivating for bilingual students than subtractive settings. They facilitate the construction of strong bilingual identities and provide bilingual students with the opportunity to use all that they know and can do when learning academic content (see Chapter 2).

FORMER EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS

In the past, when emergent bilingual students attained grade-level performance in English or were exited from bilingual education, they no longer

were described as emergent bilingual, and their performance data were included in the data for English-speaking students. There were two consequences: Schools no longer adapted their instruction and/or assessments for the students, and information about their progress and grade-level performance was lost. Recently, the federal government recognized the lost data problem. It now requires that states with federal funding continue to collect data for former English learners (the term that the federal government uses) for 2 to 4 years after they have been exited from specialized services (United States Department of Education, 2016).

BILINGUAL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN TWO-WAY DL PROGRAMS

Two types of bilingual students are enrolled in two-way DL programs: emergent bilingual students who speak the same minority language and students who speak English—the United States societal language. The aims of DL programs are for both types of students to become bilingual, biliterate, and high achieving (Howard et al., 2018).

Although both types of students benefit from participating in two-way DL programs (Steele et al., 2017), educators implementing the programs need to make sure that they do not privilege or prioritize the performance of students from English-speaking families compared to that of students from language-minority families. Several researchers reported that it was not unusual for English to dominate DL curricular decisions and for students from English-speaking families to demand and receive more attention from the DL teachers than students from Spanish-speaking families (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Cortina, Makar, & Mount-Cors, 2015).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As a former bilingual education, ESL, and English-as-foreign-language teacher, I can attest to the fact that working with emergent bilingual students is very rewarding. Emergent bilingual students and their families usually are very appreciative of the support that their teachers provide them. A motivational factor is that, with appropriate instruction, the ongoing progress that emergent bilingual students make in school is fairly easy to see.

When working with emergent bilingual students, it is important to remember that although they are acquiring another language, English, they already have developed some competence and knowledge in their L1. The best way to help them learn in United States schools is by tapping into their L1 knowledge and competence as they acquire English. Just placing

emergent bilingual students at the elementary level in all-English classrooms is illegal in the United States unless the students' parents reject the specialized services. Also, it is important to remember that former emergent bilingual students still need instructional support when they are exited from specialized programs and placed in all-English classrooms. If you are implementing a DL program, then you need to safeguard that you are not privileging or prioritizing the performance of students from English-speaking families compared to those from language-minority families. Lastly, I hope that you enjoy teaching and working with bilingual students and bilingual teachers as much as I do.

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