

# SURMOUNTING BILINGUAL TEACHING

## 超越双语教学

● 姜君丽 著

吉林科学技术出版社

# Bilingualism Without “Bilingual Education”

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藏书章

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## 超越双语教学

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## ABSTRACT

The dissertation aims at providing a proposition for the learning of second language in primary, secondary and tertiary level. It suggests that the learning of a second language be completed within nine to ten years of normal school arrangement in which English is taught with communicative method. The learning will achieve the desired success with the advantage of the combination of students' younger age, early start and longer hours of exposure, which are the main causes of the success in the immersion schools in Canada and bilingual schools in China.

Language is at the center of human life. We use it to express our loves or our hatred, to achieve our goals and further our careers, to gain artistic satisfaction or simple pleasure. Through language we plan our lives and remember our past; we exchange ideas and experiences; we form our social and individual identities.

Some people are able to do some or all of this in more than one language. Knowing another language may mean getting a job; a chance to get education; the ability to take a fuller part in the life of one's own country or the opportunity to emigrate to another country; an expansion of one's literacy and cultural horizon; the expression of one's political opinions or religious beliefs. A second language affects people's careers and possible future, their lives and their very identities. In a word where probably more people speak two languages, the acquisition and use of second languages are vital to the everyday lives of millions. How to help people acquire second

languages more than effectively is an important task for the twenty-first century.

Today, school children in many countries begin learning a second language in elementary school. Bilingual education has existed in one form or another for 5000 years or more. Bilingualism and multi-lingualism are very characteristic of human societies and mono-lingualism a limitation induced by some forms of social change, cultural and ethnocentric development.

But the teaching of a second language both at home and abroad is not satisfying. The dissatisfaction with the results obtained by traditional method, often at great cost to schools and language systems, and the expenditure of tremendous effort by students and teachers, is a perennial stimulus for change in language education. Learners typically spent years learning English and yet many of them were still unable to use the language effectively. They often knew a good deal about the language but were unable to use this knowledge to communicate appropriately.

Many people concluded that it was poor investment if all work seemed to offer so little practical result. Students had a basic foundation of language knowledge but they did not know how to put that knowledge to active use. To help them to communicate and use that language knowledge, it was gradually recognized and accepted that some new ways to language teaching and learning was needed. Language as communication involves the active use of grammar and vocabulary to listen and read effectively and to speak with and write to other people. Language needs to be learned functionally so that learners are able to see that different forms communicate different meanings.

One problem confusing laymen and experts alike is the difficulty students meet with when they learn a foreign language. Is language difficult? Then why do infants acquire it so easily and conveniently? If it is easy, why do college students meet with difficulties while learning a foreign language? What is the interplay between language acquisition and age?

Noticing the phenomenon, some people suggest the implantation of the Canadian immersion program to China. Actually, a lot of such "bilingual schools", claiming the use of English as a medium of instruction of other courses. In Shanghai, there are 260 such experimental schools where some 55,000 students are enjoying the bilingual education. The number will reach 300 and 500 by the year 2005 and 2010 respectively. It is reported that bilingual education is very successful in both English and other courses without the possible harm to Chinese. It seems that bilingual education is a trend and a direction.

We doubt the necessity of such programs in enhancing English proficiency. It is too costly and may be limited by the lack of bilingual teachers. It is reported that there is a shortage of bilingual teachers in the experimental schools in Shanghai. We would like to know the main factors influencing second language acquisition. Since the Canadian program is the source of such move, we investigate the program and explore the possible causes for its success and failure so as to find ways for further improvement.

In the thesis, the nature of language is discussed along with the theories of language development. How do people develop language competence? Is it simply imitation and reinforcement? Then why only human being have the ability to learn and use a language?

Human beings are equipped with an innate capacity, a built-in mechanism called the language acquisition device or LAD. Even with the innate capacity, outside help is needed. It is observed that children acquire the mother tongue with the help of motherese. Motherese is such an input that helps the child to learn the language under a loving atmosphere where he interacts with joy.

What about people learning a second language? Is it still imitation and reinforcement? Or is it recapitulating first language development? It seems to be both. Input is needed but is not enough. Second language acquisition results from the specific inter-actional, meaning-negotiated conversational turns. Negotiating of meaning is a necessary first step to grammatical acquisition. It permits the learner to focus on form. Output is a necessary mechanism of acquisition independent of the role of comprehensible input. It provides opportunities for contextualized meaningful use, test out hypothesis about the target language and to move the learner from a purely semantic analysis of the language to a syntactic level.

Since children acquire a language within the first several years of their life, it seems reasonable to ask whether adults will go the same way. Experiments seem to favor children in learning a language, whether first or second. Younger age is linked with ultimate attainment and native-like achievement in the most critical area. The explanations include critical age and personality factors. The social and personality changes in the self-concept and self-identity that are responsible. Because of the differences in age, people will get different input and attitude.

In one word, younger age is favored as long as second language learning is concerned. It is further proved by the Canadian Immersion



program, under which, French, the foreign language, is taught, through other courses right from the beginning of the school year. It is the use of a second language in real communication environment with real purpose. Age and length of exposure are being taken good use of. The results show a success in terms of second language achievement, first language attainment and the achievement of other courses in comparison with ordinary curriculum groups.

There are conditions for generalizing the program. Canada is a multilingual country with many bilingual teachers and outside class FSL environment. We need to think twice before imitating them. At present in China, we have programs similar to that of Canada in that some of the courses are taught in English. There are other schools doing a program that is between the traditional and the Canadian immersion. Their curriculums are almost the same as the traditional but more time is focused on English teaching. With longer hours of exposure and advanced teaching method, such programs are successful in producing bilinguals. Our investigation proves that desired results may be achieved without the use of the so-called bilingual education.

With the development of world trade and communication, the whole globe is becoming smaller. The learning of another language besides the mother tongue is becoming a trend. Besides the commonly accepted benefits and conveniences of better work opportunity and travel, there are good effects for the learner in terms of linguistic and cognitive development. Most important of all, a bilingual is not a combination of two monolinguals. He is a completely new human being with brand new perspective to the world. With this new view in mind, the testing of any bilingual

proficiency should be different.

The thesis consists of ten chapters.

Chapter One is a brief introduction to the theoretical background against which this study takes place and the objectives of the thesis. Chapter Two to four is theoretical review of the nature of language and factors influencing second language learning. Input, interaction and output are discussed. The four skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing are to be trained by their own right. The ability to speak is enhanced through the chances of speaking but not through enough listening and reading or writing though they may influence each other a bit. Chapter Five discusses age factor. It is believed that early is better in that early means longer period of exposure, better learning method, suitable treatment of language as a means of communication. Language is of organic nature and very complicated. The learning of a language to a beneficial level will require at least seven to nine years. It is hypothesized that the learning be taken place from grade one in primary school and be finished as a course at the end of high school so that in college, English will be as a tool for the learning of advanced knowledge in the other field. To make clear this proposal as reasonable and worth trying, in Chapter Six we recalled the Canadian program, analyzes the causes for its success and failure. The Canadian case clearly shows that in learning a second language, the decisive factors are age and length of exposure. Teaching through a second language only makes sure of two factors: 1) the time of exposure 2) the learning of a language in authentic circumstances. Chapter Seven focuses on our investigation in China, where bilingual education is in the experimental period. But our interest is not whether the experiment is

a success or not for it has been proved to be a success. We are supposing that with nine hours each week and good method of teaching and learning, desirable result can be achieved without bilingual education. According to our investigation, it is true. In Chapter Eight bilingualism and its effect are highlighted. Bilingualism was thought to be harmful in the past but now it is proved to be beneficial not only to the cognitive aspect of a person but to the other courses as well. Chapter Nine is a discussion of bilingual proficiency. Theories on language proficiency are reviewed, among which Cummins' perception is discussed in detail. For a second language learner, it takes 2-3 years to develop the basic interpersonal communicative skills and 7 years to develop the cognitive/academic proficiency. Knowing two languages is much more than simply knowing two ways of speaking in that bilingual development may facilitate cognitive functioning. A bilingual person is totally different from any monolingual in that they have two languages. They should not be compared with any monolingual because they are just different. To achieve the good effect from a second language learning experience, a threshold levels of linguistic proficiency must be attained to avoid cognitive disadvantages and to allow the potentially beneficial aspects of becoming bilingual to influence cognitive growth, which means a certain length of time is required. Chapter Ten presents a general conclusion of the whole thesis.

Bilingual education is only a choice but not a necessity. We can do better without it. It is hoped that this finding is beneficial to English language teaching in our country.

## 中文摘要

本文作者吸取当代二语习得理论与实例，分析影响语言习得的诸多因素，特别探讨年龄因素，语言习得时间长度和接触量对习得的决定作用，双语水平问题，以及双语对于人们认知、语言、交际等诸多方面的有利影响。

文章分析了利用二语作为教学语言的加拿大沉浸式教学模式，其成功的主要原因，调查了中国中小学课程安排，英语、数学、语文等的课时量，特别是英语课程设置及其上课模式，并与加拿大沉浸教学进行对比，证明在中国不用进行规模宏大并对教师有特殊要求的沉浸式教学，只要从小学到高中保证一定课时量的英语接触，运用适合儿童和青少年的开放式教学模式，学生将达足够高的英语水平，这个水平的达到可以让学生在大学省却英语作为一门课程的学习，而是利用英语作为学习其他专业课程的手段和工具。

作者认为，我们应当在小学到高中这个阶段完成英语学习，这样也就恰当地利用了年龄优势，使得英语教学适合语言作为交际工具的特征，并同时适合青少年心理特征，让他们寓学于乐，由此大大提高我国的英语教学效率和质量。

### 一. 外语学习现状与要求：

随着国际交流的日益频繁，作为交际工具的外语显的越来越重要。外语学习也成为在语言学界和教育学界日益重要的话题，引起语言学家语言教育学家和教育家的日益关注。

对于外语教学，中外都存在许多的不满存在，人们不能理解对于语言学习所花时间精力与所获得的收益之间的巨大差别。在中国，外语教学被称为一壶烧不开的水。目前的英语教学在范围

和程度上都有了前所未有的进展，但比之国际交流的需要，似乎还有相当的差距。大学生应付大学英语四级考试困难重重，其压力让教育家同情，让学生家长心疼。而学生在高校所获得的“高分”与用人单位所不满的“低能”之间的差别同样让人不无疑惑。外语到底有多难？怎样才能学好外语？怎样才算学好了英语？

既然中学生和大学生学习语言难，是否小学生学习起来容易？人们首先想到了提前开始学习外语。家长们的见解包括“笨鸟先飞”，至少保证时间。人们还所观察到，儿童轻松自在地习得母语，如果语言难，何以婴儿可以学会语言？如果语言不难，何以大学生学不会一门英语？年龄和语言之间有什么联系？

一些双语学校也应运而生，他们号称用英语授课，用英语本族语人做教师，全英语环境。而家长们也似乎趋之若鹜，望子成龙是每个家长的心愿。而目前世界上 60% 的人掌握两种语言以上的现状似乎也是令人着急的理由。

面对中国英语教学现状，对英语作为外语的需要，以及现在所出现的各类双语学校，我们有必要问一句：在中国是否有必要进行沉浸教学呢？沉浸教学是否适合我们的国情？我们是否能够普及双语教学，把它当作提高英语教学效率的一个灵丹妙药？我们更应该问的是，我们可以从沉浸教学中学到一些什么，可以避免一些什么？

## 二. 双语教学—沉浸教学成功分析

双语教学是运用外语作为教学语言，讲授数学、地理等诸多学科。世界上加拿大是最早实行双语教学的国家，他们的作法是双语教学成功的例子。当时加拿大的外语（法语）教学状况不太令人满意，而早期法语沉浸教学正是对一般正常外语教学的极端的改变。当时人们不清楚把法语（外语）当作上课用的语言，学习结果会如何，也不清楚运用法语做教学语言，其他的学科能否

学好。而对学生的母语—英语会有什么影响，他们的英语是否会正常发展也不敢肯定，因为在这之前的研究证明，同时接受两种语言对儿童的大脑有坏的影响，虽然这些研究后来被证明是不科学的，但学者们还是小心翼翼。所以，研究者对学生的认知能力，法语语言技能，英语语言能力以及其他的学科能力如数学等四个方面的能力作了测试。人们想知道沉浸学生的法语语言技能是否比一般学校的学生的好的，这些一般学校的学生每天学习 20-30 分钟的法语。沉浸式的学习法语是否对学生的认知、英语和其他学科有害。除此之外，对不同情况的沉浸，早和晚沉浸，也做了对比，因为早和晚沉浸意味着法语学习的不同时间长度。

研究证明：1) 沉浸教学对认知能力—表现在在智商方面没有破坏作用。从四年级开始，沉浸学生的智商远远高于对比学生，也许这还不能说明沉浸学生的高智商来源于沉浸教学，但至少可以说沉浸教学没有坏处。2) 三年级前，沉浸学生在英语的一些方面不如对比生，但从四年级以后，结果是相反的，沉浸学生在英语各方面都好于对比生。外语的提高对母语十分有利，因为两种语言之间有迁移作用，不同学习的侧重点帮助学生注意到两种语言的不同。3) 数学等其他学科的成绩与一般学生没有区别，同样好。4) 除此之外，沉浸学生在交际方面的成绩更突出，可能是他们在外语课堂的经历使他们对听话人的需要更加敏感。5) 他们的外语语言接受能力几乎等同于本族语人。两种学生的法语能力差别巨大，以至于人们又发明了另外的比较—沉浸学生和法语本族语学生的比较，结果是，沉浸学生的法语则是略低于法语本族语学生。

究其原因，应当说第一，时间长度是一个决定因素，一定的时间长度对于学习的结果十分重要。部分沉浸的学生的成绩显示了时间与成绩的关系，他们的成绩好于普通学生但差于全沉浸学

生。他们的成绩恰恰与早沉浸的学生中的与他们沉浸长度相同的低年级学生一致。比如五年级的半沉浸学生与二年级的全沉浸学生一样，而到八年级，部分沉浸学生与低一级的全沉浸学生一致。这说明接触量是一个决定因素，时间量决定接触量，开始时间早也可以加大接触量。可以这样说，沉浸学生的外语水平远远好于普通课程的学生。他们的接受能力可以与本族语学生媲美。早沉浸的学生达到这种较好的外语水平需要6至7年。

第二，学习环境也非常重要，全天候的外语环境是优于一般的短时接触的。而外语环境的支撑还是时间，一定的时间保证外语环境。

第三，年龄影响语言学习。早沉浸和晚沉浸的区别可以通过接触年限展示，时间长度之重要可见一斑。但早沉浸和晚沉浸的区别还表现在其他方面，早沉浸学生对于外语更加自如，而且保持他们的能力时间久。这说明什么呢？说明年龄的作用。年纪小可能可塑性大，而年纪大则可塑性小。儿童早期，影响他们的好恶明显的个性还没有形成。

沉浸教学的主要成功要素可以归纳为：用外语做讲授其他课程的上课语言创造了一个外语环境，这个环境使学生整天处于外语思维中，保证了接触量和输入量。在六至七年后显现成果，说明语言学习需要时间的保证。开始早，利用了年龄优势。年龄优势可以分为大脑优势和性格优势，年龄小，大脑左右不分，效果好。年龄小，性格开放，更适合语言学习。

在中国上海等等大都市，双语教学正成为一种趋势，现在有5.5万名学生接受双语教学，又260所中小学列如双语教学实验学校，调查显示，双语学校近两年的毕业生中，40%以上的听说读写能力达到或超过1997年初二学生的英语平均水平，双语教学实验学校30%以上的初二学生听说读写能力达到或超过1997年

高一的英语平均水平，其中参加实验的学生的各学科成绩保持稳定，小学低年级学生没有出现英语拼读与汉语拼音混淆的现象。

### 三. 影响语言习得的主要因素分析：

沉浸教学的一个明显成绩是沉浸学生的语言接受水平，他们达到了与本族语学生媲美的接受能力，但他们的产出能力远远不足。他们的语法存在问题，尽管如此，因为他们的交际能力较高，他们还是可以清楚地表达自己的思想。可见语言能力不是一个，而是可以分解的，接受和产出能力可以不平衡。由此可见，听说读写这四种能力之间是不可以转换的。如果我们希望学生提高说话能力，需要给他们表达的机会来提高说话能力。

观察沉浸教学的特点，不难看出，他们的学习环境是优秀的，他们的输入量十分大，几乎所有的课程都用外语进行，而可理解输入是克拉申语言习得理论中的最重要因素，按照克拉申（1982）的理论，可理解输入是唯一的决定变量，学习者通过寻找意义就可以习得结构。但沉浸教学的结果却证明只有可理解输入是不够的。

或者，我们还可以这样理解：他们的输入是有限制的，教师上课所用句型是有限的，他们没有机会听到同龄人的话语，因为学生们之间一般运用母语交际。最重要的是，学生在课堂上是单独的听的角色，接受的角色，不是语言的直接参与者。在理论上，我们找到以下解释，分析这种有限的成功原因。

Long (1983) Vjaronis 和 Gass (1985) 认为输入是重要的，但是，它的重要性来自意义磋商的互动，而在课堂上，教师是说话人，学生的角色是听，他们很少有意义磋商的互动。所以，沉浸学生可以比喻成街上的学习者，他们没有双向的互动交流，所以，按照互动输入假设，这种习得将是有缺陷的。其缺陷在于缺少输出，输出对于语言习得必不可少。第一，输出使学习者有意义地运用他们的语言资源，他们需要被迫运用语言资源。第二，



输出还供测试假设的机会，对于所学语言的许多假设可以在运用中得以证实。第三，输出迫使学习者从语义处理转向句法处理。一般我们很少运用句法知识理解语言，因为理解语言不需要句法处理，只要有词汇和其他一些语言外的信息就可以理解输入，但是，输出则需要注意句法。

#### 四. 语言能力本质

我们需要明确外语教学要达到的目标和水平。我们教育的目标是双语人，一个双语人不是两个单独语人合而为一，而是不同于单独语人的独特的个体。他们拥有两种语言，他们的大脑不同于任何单独语人的大脑状态。所以，我们有必要弄清外语能力和水平这个问题。

对于语言能力的本质有许多解释。我们接受 Jim Cummins (1980) 对语言能力的区分。他认为了基本交际能力和认知/学术语言能力。基本交际能力需要较短的时间掌握，而认知/学术语言能力则需要较长的时间掌握。Cummins (1986) 运用两条连续体表达，一条是表达上下文范围的，其两端一是上下文丰富的，另一端是上下文缺乏的，在上下文丰富的交际中，说话人可以协商意义，语言受到大量的辅助语言和环境的支持。而在上下文缺乏的一端，交际只有依赖语言线索。两者是程度的关系，上下文丰富的交际包括每天的一般交际，从丰富到缺乏的范围依次可排列：参加讨论，给一个好朋友写信，读或写一个学术文章。

