Citation


Abstract

The article on bilingualism and literacy by Mayer and Akamatsu describes the acquisition of language skills and application between signed and written languages. The predominant theory is the idea of linguistic interdependence. There are various models, and routes to literacy, that have been applied to Deaf and hard of Hearing students in order to achieve literacy in both English and ASL. However, these authors state that there is not enough longitudinal research to support these claims.

Summary

*Bilingualism and Literacy* presents the idea of how to acquire and use two languages. The prevailing theory of thought is linguistic interdependence theory. This posits that bilingual programs provide students with greater and easier access to curricular content and higher levels of literacy. The common underlying proficiency that students have in language 1 (L1—ASL), will allow them to learn and master a second language (L2—English or any other written language). There are numerous models, strategies and practices that can be applied to provide Deaf students with the opportunity to gain mastery of written language by exploiting the common underlying themes, functions and laws between L1 and L2. The strategies exploit both L1 and L2 dominance and hybrids of both in order to increase exposure, acquisition and mastery by the students. While there are plenty of tools and practices
that are presented, there has not been enough research to support this theory and claim of bilingualism practice.

**Outline**

I. Principal claim of Bilingual Programs
   
   A. The use of a natural sign language as the primary language of instruction allows students to have a greater and easier time learning curriculum content and develop higher levels of literacy (page 136).

       1. This predication has not been proven—no research to support this thesis

   B. Focus on the issue of text-based literacy and achievement in reading and writing

       1. Attempt to quantify the impact of bilingualism on the education of deaf students

   C. Assumption/ Prediction of Bilingualism

       1. Students in bilingual programs would achieve improved literacy levels; however, there is not a body of research that can prove this convincingly (page 136).
II. Theory Informing Practice

A. Linguistic Interdependence Principle (page 137)

1. Proficiency in a first language (L1) will be able to support the learning of second language (L2).

2. Dual Iceberg Model (page 137)-see Figure 10-1 Appendix A
   a. The common underlying themes and rules for languages will allow this to occur
   b. Common underlying proficiency makes the transfer of cognitive, academic or literacy-related skills across languages possible

B. Support for Bilingual Programs

1. Supporters believe that Deaf/ HoH students who have achieved high levels of proficiency in a native sign language (e.g. ASL) as their first language (L1), then a positive transfer of cognitive, academic or literacy related transfer would occur to a second language (L2), such as English. (page 137)

2. There “may be a threshold level of proficiency in both languages which students must attain (page 137).”
a. Difference between communication skills and language (page 137)

i. BICS—Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

ii. CALP—Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

3. Learners must be exposed to enough of L2 to increase their CALP (page 139)

a. Need enough exposure to English in order to better understand the academic and literacy skills, rules and functions of the language

II. Becoming Literate in a Signed or a Spoken Language

A. How to become literate in L1 (ASL)—Bridging between Languages

1. 4 Phases (see Table 10-1 on pages 138)

a. Phase 1- Learning the L1

i. Hearing bridge—spoken English

ii. Deaf bridge—natural sign language

b. Phase 2-Social to Inner Speech
i. a developmental stage where internal thinking
   about the use of the language when interacting
   with others occurs

   • Hearing Bridge—egocentric spoken L1

   • Deaf Bridge—Egocentric Sign

c. Phase 3-Inner to Written Speech

i. change from understanding the meaning to
   starting to apply it

   • Hearing Bridge—Spoken L1

   • No Deaf Bridge because of a lack of
     written sign language

   • difficult for Deaf students because there
     is no change from inner to written

d. Phase 4-Learning Synoptic Genres

i. knowledge of the language and being able to
   discuss it

III. Developing Literacy in a Second Language (page 139)
A. 2 ways to develop language skills (bridges from inner speech to literacy in a second language)

1. Reading and Writing
   a. Positive correlation between the ability to read and write in L1 and the subsequent ability to master these same aspects of the L2.

2. Qualitative/Quantitative exposure to L2
   a. Similar to linguistic interdependence theory; implies that through interactions with print, students will learn not only to read and write, but will learn the language itself.

IV. Bilingual Models of Literacy Education for Deaf Learners

A. Linguistic Interdependence Theory (page 139)

1. interactions with L2 will provide Deaf students the ability to learn to read and write, but also the language rules and functions

B. Whole Language Instruction (page 141)
1. focus of the instruction is not on the language but on achieving content and understandings only use English for academic success and content-area comprehension

C. Metalinguistic/ Metacognitive Bilingual Model (page 141)

1. underlying assumption that Deaf readers and writers are different there is direct teaching of the linguistic aspects of L1 and L2 in order for students to make useful comparisons

V. Literacy Development in the Bilingual Context-Strategies (page 141)

A. Fingerspelling

1. used to connect ASL and English print

2. highlight relationships among language elements ("chaining structures")

B. Linking the acquisitions of English with ASL knowledge

1. Transcription

   a. written code developed to encode ASL (Gloss Notation)

2. Translation

   a. from one language to another
3. Contact Sign (page 143)
   
a. System of sign in which ASL is produce in English word order

C. English-based Signing and Strategies (page 143)
   
1. Sign system that follows English syntax by adding markers like as ING and S
   
2. Strategies—fingerspelling, recalling and mouthing

VI. Summation and Application (page 144-45)
   
A. there are numerous descriptive accounts of bilingual programs, strategies, practices and teaching

B. there is not enough longitudinal research that tracks literacy to confirm these claims