

## **Immersion 2012: Bridging Contexts for a Multilingual World**



October 18-20, 2012  
Crowne Plaza Hotel  
St. Paul, Minnesota

### **Symposium: Bridging Languages in Immersion Education**

*Saturday, 1:45 pm, Capitol Ballroom*

*Jasone Cenoz*, University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU  
*Durk Gorter*, University of the Basque Country - IKERBASQUE  
*Elana Shohamy*, School of Education, Tel Aviv University

Discussant: *Fred Genesee*, McGill University

The symposium discusses language separation vs. holistic multilingual approaches in immersion education. Research indicates that new insights can be obtained when the whole linguistic repertoire of multilingual speakers and language interaction are taken into account. The implications for teaching, assessment and research in immersion education will be discussed.

### **Presentation 1. Focus on Multilingualism**

*Jasone Cenoz*

1. Hard boundaries and unreal aims
2. Holistic perspectives
3. "Focus on multilingualism"
4. Discussion

*EXAMPLE 1: Navigating between languages*

**-Talking about a personal problem with a close friend.** Only if I always speak Basque to this friend I would use Basque, otherwise I use Spanish

**-Chatting on the internet.** If it is with my friends I would use Basque, if it is that I just join a "chat" I think that I would use Spanish

**-Reading the newspaper.** I usually read newspapers in Basque and Spanish

**-Listening to what your friend did at the weekend.** That would be in Basque, I have very few friends who use Spanish to talk about daily things.

**-Writing an application for a job including your CV.** As we live in the Basque Country I would use Basque but there can be exceptions. I have my CV ready in Basque but if I need a job in Spain I would translate it.

- Reading a novel.** I tend to use Spanish, there are more things to read in Spanish and the things I am interested in are usually written in Spanish
- Watching a movie.** The same as for books, usually in Spanish
- Listening to a lecture on multilingual education.** In Spanish or Basque, I could follow well in both, but not so well in English
- Reading a legal text like the Basque Country Official Gazette.** I would read it in Spanish because we have learned most technical words in Spanish
- Sending an e-mail to ask for information about a job** I would look at the information first and then depending on what it is I would use Spanish or Basque
- Sending an SMS to a friend** Basque or Spanish depending on the friend
- Talking to a doctor in hospital about a health problem** I would probably use Spanish because most doctors prefer to speak Spanish.

*EXAMPLE 2: Facebook interaction*

- Jon: **zmz??** <how are you?> (B: Zer moduz?)  
 Miren: **osond ta z!** <very well and you? > (B: Oso ondo eta zu?)  
 Jon: **osond** <very well> (B: Oso ondo)  
 Miren: **te e vistoo** <I saw you > (S: Te he visto)  
 Jon: **yaa yo tambienn pero stabas lejos** <I also saw you but you were far away>  
 (S: Ya yo también pero estabas lejos)  
 Miren: **jeje barka x no saludartee eh!** <jeje sorry for not saying hello eh >  
 (B/S: ¡Jeje barkatu por no saludarte!)  
 Jon: **jajajja lasai=)** <jajajja it's ok > (B: jajajja lasai)  
 Miren: **te e visto ta,bien kon el skate** <I have also seen you with the skate > (S/E: Te he visto también con el skate)

## **Presentation 2. Focus on Multilingualism and Basque immersion classrooms**

### ***Durk Gorter***

1. The Basque Country and the Basque language
2. Basque, Spanish and English in education
3. "Focus on multilingualism" in Basque schools
4. Teachers' views
5. Discussion

*EXAMPLES: Teachers' views*

- If these students get used to using languages in so messy ways, will they be able to make themselves understood to those who do not have their linguistic background*
- When I have to teach Basque and English I go outside the classroom and come back again as a "different teacher"*
- The target language should be the only one used in the class. A real and good model should be given to the students so that they can improve their levels.*

*-There is no coordination. It could be easy for Basque and English because I teach both subjects but the books are different and it is difficult to coordinate.*  
*-Having a language to compare was useful for me when I was learning English as a kid because I didn't need to learn all the grammatical structures by heart...*  
*-I'm aware of the fact that the knowledge we get in a language is useful when learning a second language. But, the truth is that as an English teacher I don't follow this.*  
*-In my school there is coordination between some of the teachers of Basque and Spanish for some of the tasks done in some levels.*

### **Presentation 3. Expanding the 'language' construct: Assessing multilingual competencies**

***Elana Shohamy***

This paper challenges the practice of monolingual language tests where test takers are expected to demonstrate their academic language proficiency in one language, the one which is considered to be more powerful. This is so since approaches to language testing reflect ideologies of nation states which require all its residences to practice one specific hegemonic languages in the name of cohesion and integration (i.e., monolingual mediums of instructions in schools, citizenship tests for adults and monolingual scales such as the CEFR and the ACTFL). Yet, monolingual tests are based on narrow and outdated views of languages which is perceived as closed, standard, uniformed and finite, forbidding 'other' languages from 'smuggling in'. These views stand in stark contrast to current understanding of multilingualism and multimodality competences where a number of languages and modalities interact with one another in creative and meaningful ways; Second language learners, whether immigrants, or those who acquire additional languages do not leave their home languages behind; rather they continue to employ them in many different ways and make use of the L-1 as instrumental resource for efficient functioning and communication. Yet, testers comply with these monolingual ideologies rather than create tests and scales which would reflect the complexity and openness of languages and practiced by in this day and age. The high cost of the use of monolingual tests is that the real academic knowledge, which is crucial for immigrant students to acquire as part of their schooling, at the time while they are engaged in the process of acquiring new languages and after - does not get manifested; they therefore obtain lower scores on such tests. The monolingual testing practice causes loss of content and knowledge relevant for advancement of education as multilingual students rarely reach identical language proficiency in *each* of the languages but are still compared to monolingual users. This argument will be supported by ample data about benefits and advantage of tests which are based on broader language construct (e.g. a math test where the questions are presented in two languages and/or use images, symbols and graphics). Such integrated approaches enable the manifestation of more realistic knowledge and highlight the 'advantages' rather than the 'problems' that multilingual users possess. A recommendation will be made to employ such approaches in immersion program where a number of language interact.

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