

Biliteracy Development in Dual Language Education – Strengthening Bridges between Languages

Karen Beeman: kbeeman@cntrmail.org

Cheryl Urow: curow@cntrmail.org

- The Bridge is the instructional moment in teaching dual language when teachers bring the two languages together, guiding students to engage in contrastive analysis of the two languages and transfer the academic content they have learned in one language to the other language.
- Bridging involves the use of cross-linguistic strategies and leads to the development of metalinguistic awareness.

Dual language instruction has three parts: instruction in the non-English language, the Bridge (both languages side by side), and English instruction. The Bridge occurs once students have learned new concepts in one language. It is the instructional moment when teachers bring the two languages together to encourage students to explore the similarities and differences between the two languages in the phonology (sound system), morphology (word formation), syntax and grammar (sentence structure), and pragmatics (language use) of the two languages, that is, to undertake contrastive analysis and transfer what they have learned from one language to the other. The Bridge is also the instructional moment when teachers help students connect the content area knowledge and skills they have learned in one language to the other language.

The Bridge is a simple but powerful concept: with strategic planning, the Bridge allows students who are learning in two languages to strengthen their knowledge of both languages. The Bridge is a tool for developing metalinguistic awareness, the understanding of how language works and how it changes and adapts in different circumstances. An important aspect of the Bridge is that it is two-way. It goes from the non-English language to English and from English to the non-English language. It recognizes that because bilinguals transfer what they have learned in one language to the other language, they do not have to learn content in both languages, even when they are tested only in English. For example, if students study math only in Spanish, the Bridge provides opportunities for them to attach English to that math content without relearning the math concepts and skills again in English.

For many years in the United States we have taught students to keep their two languages separate. One reason for this practice is to avoid devaluing the non-English language, which often occurs when English comes into the time devoted to the non-English language. While the potential for devaluing Spanish, for example, and thus limiting students' ability to reach deep levels of learning in Spanish is a consideration that must be addressed, keeping the two languages separate has had the unfortunate effect of emphasizing to students that what they know in one language cannot be used in

their other language. We have also assumed that students have engaged in contrastive analysis on their own. But not all students know, for example, that pairs of words like *energía* – energy are cognates. Recent research has shown that bilingual students who receive instruction in how their two languages are similar and different engage more regularly and successfully in cross-linguistic transfer, the application of a skill or concept learned in one language to another language, than do bilingual students who do not receive such instruction (Dressler, Carlo, Snow, August, and White, 2011) and that bilingual students who understand how their two languages are similar and different achieve higher levels of academic success (Jimenez, García, and Pearson, 1996). The Bridge is our response to this reality.

Sample Contrastive Analysis Areas of Focus for the Bridge

Element	Spanish	English
<p>Phonology (sound system)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on sounds that are different in the two languages and that need to be explicitly taught. Highlight sounds that are similar. 	<p>Students may use the letter “k” to represent the /k/ sound in Spanish in words such as <i>uitar</i> which they may spell as <i>kitar</i>.</p> <p>Both Spanish and English have silent letters. The “h” is a silent letter in Spanish that occurs at the beginning of words (<i>hormiga, hermano</i>)</p>	<p>Students may use the /d/ sound from Spanish to represent the /th/ sound in English since this sound does not exist in Spanish, spelling <i>brother</i> as <i>broder</i>.</p> <p>English has many silent letters that appear throughout words (chrysalis)</p>
<p>Morphology (word formation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on word formations that exist in Spanish and not in English and vice versa Focus on cognates (words with similar origins) 	<p>Words are formed in Spanish with suffixes that are pronouns: <i>Llámame</i>. This does not occur in English.</p> <p>Both use similar prefixes and suffixes:</p> <p>Informal – Informal Socialismo – socialism Amoroso – amorous Preparar – prepare Profesión – profession Institución – institution Educación – education</p>	
<p>Syntax and Grammar (Sentence Structure)</p> <p>Both languages have rules for punctuation, grammar, word order, etc.</p> <p>Identify the areas that are similar and highlight the areas that are different.</p>	<p>Punctuation rules are different <i>¡Me encanta!</i> - I love it!</p> <p>Articles have gender <i>El título</i> – The Title <i>La revolución</i> – The revolution</p> <p>Accents change the meaning of words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>El papa vive en Roma.</i> <i>La papa es deliciosa.</i> <i>Mi papá es muy trabajador.</i> <p>Spanish has reflexive verbs: <i>Se me cayó</i></p>	<p>There is only one way to refer to articles in English (the).</p> <p>English has a different noun-adjective/order agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Squared centimeters vs. <i>centímetros cuadrados</i>. <p>English contains possessive nouns whereas Spanish does not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My grandmother’s house - <i>La casa de mi abuela</i>.

<p>Language Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each language reflects underlying cultural norms. • Identify different cultural norms or contexts that are reflected in language use. 	<p>¿Cuántos años tienes? (We don't ask people in Spanish how old they are; instead, we ask how many years they have).</p> <p>Students may use figurative language from English in Spanish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Estoy encerrado afuera</i> (I am locked out!) instead of “<i>Me quedé afuera</i>”. 	<p>How old are you?</p> <p>Sayings are culturally bound: Students may use Spanish constructs during English:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My fathers win lots of money (<i>Mis padres ganan mucho dinero</i>). <p>In Spanish we refer to parents as “<i>padres</i>”, the plural of father; to win money means to earn it and it also means to be victorious.</p>
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Additional Readings

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