A Study of Dual Language Immersion in Riverside County

Author: Jennifer C. Watt

Date of Successful Defense: 11/26/01

The thesis has been accepted by the thesis committee in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education.

Sharon H. Ulanoff
Thesis Committee Chair

Juan Necoceda
Thesis Committee Member

Thesis Committee Member

Thesis Committee Member
A Study of Dual Language Immersion in Riverside County

Jennifer C. Watt
California State University San Marcos
College of Education
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Chapter 1:

Introduction

Bilingual Education is a topic that generates considerable debate in the state of California and elsewhere in the United States. While some argue about the benefits of knowing and learning two languages (Collier, 1997) others criticize bilingual programs and the outcomes (Baker, 1992; Rossell, 1992). It has been estimated that there are over six thousand spoken languages throughout the world (Grimes, 1992) and fewer than twenty-five percent of the world’s approximately two-hundred countries recognize two or more official languages. Given the nature of the global economy, I wonder how bilingual education is considered by some to be a detriment. It’s hard to believe the depth of issues that arise over this topic, negative and positive. Bilingual education in itself isn’t a new phenomena.

Problem Statement:

Roughly twenty-five percent of California’s school age population are English Language Learners (California State Department of Education, 1998). Of that population, only twelve percent are receiving instruction in their primary language. When Proposition 227 became law June 2, 1998, it became mandatory that all ELL students receive the “overwhelming” majority of their education in English through Structured English Immersion, SEI programs (California Educator, 2001). SEI
programs are those that provide students with one to two years of primary language support before they are placed with native English speakers in mainstream classroom environments (California Education Code 305, 1998).

According to Eugene Garcia (2000), the assumption behind the initiative was that teaching children in their native language served only to hold them back in their acquisition of English and therefore in their future educational success. Parents of minority language students are allowed to sign waivers that would allow their children to be placed in primary language support classrooms. Despite research that shows the benefits of instruction through the primary language in Late-Exit bilingual programs (programs that maintain and support the student’s primary language) (Collier, 1997; Ramirez, 1995), many districts chose to follow the SEI model of instruction for ELL students. Of those that chose to follow a Late-Exit model, a popular choice was Two-Way Immersion/Dual Language Education/Dual Language Immersion programs to support their ELL students. These programs are made up of native English speaking students and ELL students that are placed together in a cooperative learning situation where they will help each other become proficient in the other’s language. These programs follow many different models, but the goals of all is to educate students so that they become bilingual and biliterate. The criticism by researchers of these programs: Are the ELL students receiving the same quality of education as the native English speakers? Are ELL students being placed at a
disadvantage because they are being grouped with native English speakers (Valdes, 1997)?

Background:

Our country’s forefathers spoke many different languages. In fact, German lost by one vote in becoming our country’s language of commerce and government (Crawford, 1998). Multilingualism was an integral part of our country’s early government and economy. So when did bilingual education become a political issue? Looking back in our nation’s history, we know that we are a nation of immigrants. As Europeans came to the United States of America, they settled into geographic areas that are to this day, still largely defined by that culture. For example, we see sectors of major cities that can be described as “Little Italy”, “Chinatown”, “Jewish”, “Black”, ect. (Crawford, 1998). Immigrants also fell into certain employment molds. The Chinese handled the laundry, the Jewish were the shopkeepers and the bankers, the Irish were the laborers, and the Italians dealt in produce. How did these newly arrived people assimilate into Anglo culture? For the most part they didn’t; their children did. The myth that European immigrants just ‘assimilated’ into the Anglo-English speaking culture is simply not true. Because they were geographically isolated and protected in their ‘islands’ of their own culture and language, the need to learn English wasn’t urgent (Crawford, 1998). In addition, these children of these immigrants attended schools in homogeneous settings, where most
often, they were taught in their primary language while they were acquiring English in the public school system. The notion that everyone had the opportunity to achieve the "American Dream", by becoming whatever or whoever you wanted, was blocked by the 'glass ceiling' of unequal educational opportunities. The majority of these immigrant children never went on to further their education beyond elementary or high school. Often times they dropped out of school to help their parents financially. Colleges in the early part of the century were culturally characterized as Anglo, male and Protestant (Biddle & Berliner; 1995).

Purpose:

The purpose of this paper is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of one Dual Language Immersion program with a 90/10 model (See Theoretical Framework page ) in Southern California. In order to do so I attempted to answer to following research questions:

1. What do parents and teachers perceive as the program's strengths?
2. What do they perceive as the program's weaknesses?
3. What do they feel are the benefits of a Dual Language Immersion program?
4. What expectations do parents and teachers have for the students?
Chapter II:

Theoretical Framework

History:

To situate a study that examines the success of a Dual Language Immersion program, the basis of the bilingual education movement must be explained. Our educational system could never be explained as "equitable" at its inception in the nineteenth century (Valdes & Figueroa; 1994). Universities and colleges began to screen-out immigrants as potential students by mandating tests which were written from an Anglo frame of reference. According to Valdes and Figueroa, standardized tests were "developed to favor students whose backgrounds provide them with the appropriate cultural capital (p.1)". The Anglo majority sought to protect their position of dominance by making education for minorities an almost unattainable goal.

It wasn't until the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's that the needs of minority and minority language students were addressed. Following the gains of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 against de facto and de jure segregation in the United States of America, came the birth of Title VII, which addressed the needs of linguistic minority students. Title VII was passed by President Lyndon B. Johnson on January 2, 1968. Title VII authorized resources to support English Language Learners through training teachers and aides to develop educational programs and materials that would better disseminate the curriculum to non-
English speaking students. The program didn't receive any federal funding in 1968, its first year, yet received seven and a half million dollars in 1969 to fund twenty-six projects (Crawford, 1998).

In 1972, a lawsuit was filed by Mexican-American parents in New Mexico demanding primary language instruction for their children; Serna v. Portales Municipal Schools. The federal courts ruled in favor of the parents. In 1974, a San Francisco case brought further support for bilingual education in Lau v. Nichols. Chinese parents sued the San Francisco school district over their children's inability to understand the language of instruction. The lower courts ruled in favor of the school district because there was no physical discrimination (separate buildings or classes). The federal courts overthrew this ruling because there existed a situation where the students were not receiving the same access to the curriculum; they couldn't understand the language of instruction.

Although the Lau case became a catalyst for bilingual education support, it didn't make bilingual education mandatory in the public school system. Because the Office of Civil Rights never clearly stated just how school districts should remedy the inequitable situation of language minority students having access to the curriculum, school districts across the nation addressed the issue differently. Under Title VII, funds could go towards English Immersion programs as well as bilingual programs. Many school districts didn't have the training or the qualified bilingual instructors to implement successful bilingual programs.
In the late 1970's, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), released an unfavorable study of bilingual programs in the United States of America. They reported that there was no difference between the effectiveness of 'Sink or Swim' English Immersion programs and bilingual programs. They reported that 49.6% of the teachers felt that they lacked proficiency in their student's native language and that 86% of minority language students were still retained after having primary language instruction (Crawford, 1998). The controversy was that bilingual education was hindering the academic success of minority language students. Of course the study failed to take into consideration differing models of programs, teaching methodologies, and the socioeconomic status of the students.

The criticism of bilingual education in the late 1970's was that the students, ironically enough, were being segregated from the mainstream because of primary language instruction. It was reported that seventy-four percent of all Spanish-speaking students and fifty-three percent of all Spanish-speaking high school students were attending predominately minority institutions; most Title VII grants were given to highly segregated school districts (Crawford, 1998). The political climate of implementing bilingual programs in the early 1980's continued to draw controversy. School districts fought against the Office of Civil Rights push for bilingual programs. The argument was that bilingual programs were costly, difficult to maintain, and that they would separate American society into fragmented cultural groups (Crawford, 1998).
Political groups pushed for Special Alternative Instructional Programs (SAIPs) that used no native language.

Under the Reagan administration, school districts had more flexibility in determining which programs they would implement to meet the needs of their minority language students; SAIPs or bilingual programs. During this period of time, the Office of Civil Rights didn’t investigate as many school districts that were not in compliance with meeting the needs of minority language students under Title VII; there simply wasn’t enough coverage. This drew sharp criticism from the minority activist groups that felt that the government wasn’t living up to its obligation in protecting the rights of minority language students.

In Castañeda v. Pickard. Section 1703(f) of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, school districts were required to overcome language barriers that prevent language minority students from having equal access to the curriculum. The court set up a criteria of how an educational program must help minority students:

1. It must be based on a "sound educational theory."
2. It must be "implemented effectively," with adequate resources and personnel.
3. After a trial period, it must be evaluated as effective in overcoming language handicaps.

Under this standard, many ‘bilingual’ programs were found to be lacking in meeting the needs of minority language students in schools across the nation. The Castañeda standard was used in the early 1980’s in deciding that a Denver school district had a "half-hearted program in
transitional bilingual education” (Crawford, 1998). The courts ordered the Denver school district to make changes that included evaluating staff qualifications, better training of teachers and aides, and improvements in language assessments. It was also during this period that the English Only movement grew in popularity. This group wanted to make English the official language of the United States of America. This group proposed that English would be the language of all public services and there would be no translation provided from official government documents such as voting ballots to public services to phone book pages (Crawford, 1998). In the California election of 1986, Proposition 63, English as the official state language, was voted into existence by a three to one margin. It was also during this period that U.S. Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett, eroded support for bilingual education. Bennett criticized the validity of bilingual education programs in the U.S.; he referred to the Bilingual Education Act as “a failed path... a bankrupt course” (Crawford, 1998). The standards and requirements that were set up in Title VII to protect language minority students became suspect. Bennett attacked these requirements as “a sense of cultural pride cannot come at the price of proficiency in English, our common language” (Crawford, 1998).

The same Title VII standards that helped in the Lau v. Nichols lawsuit didn’t hold up in a 1989 lawsuit in Berkeley, California; Teresa P. v. Berkeley. The lawsuit was based upon districts hiring unqualified teachers to teach in bilingual classrooms. The district won because the
criteria of what good teaching in regards to a bilingual setting could not be differentiated from any other educational setting. What also hurt support for bilingual education was the influx of immigration from Spanish speaking countries and Southeast Asia. This provoked a xenophobic backlash from Anglo society (Crawford, 1998). According to Gonzalez and Garcia (1995), from 1981 to 1990 around 7,388,062 people immigrated to the United States; this represented a sixty-three percent increase in the immigrant population compared to the previous decade. Issues over assimilation v. multiculturalism were on the forefront. Those that supported assimilation of these new immigrants saw the public school system as the assimilating agent; teach them English quickly. Those of the multicultural perspective thought that we should embrace multiculturalism and the diverse cultures of the students. Increased racial tensions from the 1992 Los Angeles riots added to this debate. The issues over a "common glue" (common language) came into play.

In 1997, Proposition 227 was co-authored by a wealthy Silicon Valley businessman, Ron Unz and a Santa Ana teacher, Gloria Matta Tuchman; the Unz Initiative. This initiative proposed to eliminate bilingual education from the public school system. Not surprisingly this proposition passed due to misinformation as to what bilingual education is; to teach English through the use of the primary language (Krashen, 1997). How the school districts across California reacted to the implementation of Proposition 227, Education Code 305, depended on
how receptive they were to bilingual education before 227 passed; those that didn’t support primary language instruction adopted Structured English Immersion programs and those that didn’t turned to alternative bilingual programs. According to Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, Garcia, Gutierrez, Stritikus, & Curry (2000), there was a sixty percent reduction in the amount of primary language instruction in California after Proposition 227 became law.

Why Bilingual Education?

What makes bilingual education so valuable in helping ELL’s acquire English? According to Krashen (1997), there are three components that make a bilingual program successful. They are as follows:

1. Comprehensible input in English (ESL, sheltered subject matter teaching).

2. Subject matter knowledge, from classes taught in the primary language.

3. Literacy development in the primary language.

Comprehensible input, information that is understood by the student, in the primary language helps to facilitate the development of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency in English (Cummins, 1981). Cummins (1981) proposed that there is a Common Underlying Proficiency, what students have as a base in their primary language, transfers to their second language. Research collaborates that children
that arrived with a strong foundation of literacy skills in their first language utilized those skills to acquire their second. Conversely children that don't have a strong foundation of literacy in their first language and are prematurely immersed in their second language, don't have the same base of skills (Cummins, 1981).

Ramirez et. al (1991) examined several types of bilingual programs and their effectiveness under the "umbrella term" of bilingual education as they were researching the effectiveness of transitional bilingual education. Three different types were studied: Structured English Immersion, Early-Exit, and Late Exit. All three of these programs had the same goal of transitioning ELL students into English mainstream classrooms; the difference was the approach of the program.

The programs differed in the amount and duration that English was used for instruction as well as the length of time that students participated in the program (Ramirez et. al., 1991). Structured English Immersion programs were defined as those that are primarily English-Only with "Pull-Out" instruction in the student's primary language. Early-Exit programs were defined as those that provide some primary language instruction within the first few years and then transitioned to English-Only instruction. Late-Exit programs were defined as those that provide primary language instruction up until the fifth or sixth grade. The program's effectiveness was measured by children's test scores in English language arts, reading, and mathematics, all administered in English (Ramirez et al., 1991).
Ramirez et. al. (1991) documented that there was little to no difference in how the students of the Structured English Immersion and Early-Exit programs fared by middle school; they were both below the national norms when it came to standardized testing. The students of the Late-Exit programs however, did better than these groups in standardized testing (Ramirez et. al. 1991).

*What are Dual Language Immersion Programs?*

Dual Language Immersion Programs, also known as Two-Way Immersion (TWI) programs or Dual Language Education (DLE) programs fell under the category of a Late-Exit model in that they maintain the student’s primary language (Crawford, 1998). Dual Language Immersion programs are those that use a blend of a target minority language and English to instruct. Minority language students are supported in that they receive instruction in their primary language and acquire English in a sheltered environment. Language majority students, the (strong majority) native English speaking students, are supported in that they already speak the language of the dominant culture and have access to support outside of school in the form of parental support, availability of reading material (in English), and the media. The outcome of this instructional approach is to promote bilingual and biliterate students.

The first Dual Language Immersion program began in the United States in 1963- less than ten were in existence up until 1981 (California
Department of Education, 2000). According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (2000), there were 261 programs in existence in 1999: 244 Spanish/English, 6 French/English, 5 Cantonese/English, 4 Korean/English, 2 Navajo/English, and 1 Chinese/Spanish. The overwhelming majority of these programs are established at the elementary level. California has the most Dual Language Immersion programs in the United States; 92 out of 261.

According to Lindholm-Leary, a leading expert in the field of Dual Language Immersion, there are four critical components that support and fuel this type of program:

1. The program essentially involves instruction through two languages, where the target language is used for a significant portion of the students' instructional day (target language is used here to distinguish the second, or non-English, language of the program).

2. The program involves periods of instruction during which only one language is used.

3. Both native English speakers and native speakers of the target language are participants.

4. The students are integrated for most of content instruction.

Dual Language Immersion programs are different in that they target the minority language as the status language (English is usually considered to be the status language) (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). The English experts, native English speaking students, look to the minority language students as models and the minority language students look to the majority language students as models in return. In an environment
where English is usually the dominant language, focusing on the minority language provides minority language students with the language support necessary to access the curriculum and the native English speakers to be immersed in another language. Native English speakers are supported in that English is the dominant language of mainstream American culture as far as literature, the media, and spoken language. There are two major models that Dual Language Immersion programs follow, 90/10 and 50/50. The difference between these two models is the distribution of languages for instruction. In the 90/10 model, Kindergartners and First Graders receive ninety-percent of the instructional day being taught in the target language and ten-percent in English. In the Second and Third Grades, students will receive eighty-percent of their instruction in the target language and twenty-percent in English. By Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grades, the students’ instruction is divided by the target language and English. In the 50/50 model, students receive half of their instruction in the target language and half in English throughout their elementary years (Lindholm-Leary, 2000).

Choosing a particular model depends upon community/political pressure, student populations, finances, and programs at the secondary level (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). For a Dual Language Immersion program to be successful, the parents and community have to be exposed to the research that supports the basis of this type of program; the benefits of primary language support for minority language speaking students. Both 90/10 and 50/50 models produce biliterate and bilingual students, but
research suggests that the students that participate in the 90/10 programs develop higher levels of proficiency in the minority language and overall bilingual proficiency (Lindholm-Leary, 2000).

Also, other implementation considerations such as qualified, bilingual staff and the up front costs of purchasing new materials will influence which model a school chooses. The most important consideration is the student population; are there enough minority and majority language students to support a particular model? Ideally, enrollment should be fifty percent language minority and fifty percent language majority students to support a 50/50 model or 90/10 model. At the very least a ration of thirty percent minority language student and sixty-seven percent language majority students are needed to support these types of models. There have to be enough minority language students to model the language for the majority language students and the programs have to meet the educational and language needs of both groups in an equitable classroom environment (Lindholm-Leary, 2000).

Social and Academic Equity in Dual Language Immersion Programs:

According to research conducted by Lindholm-Leary, student populations can influence the instructional direction of a 90/10 program. Through evaluating 90/10 programs throughout California, Lindholm-Leary found that when the instructional focus is geared towards the native English speaking students (seriously scaffolding/ 'watering down')
the level of the minority language used), the language minority students don’t score as well on standardized tests as the language minority students in 90/10 programs where the level of the minority language is not as scaffolded. These programs are differentiated as 90/10HI (high) and 90/10LO (low). In 90/10HI programs, there is overall higher levels of proficiency in language and reading in the target language, but lower levels of academic achievement in English. In 90/10LO programs, there are lower levels of proficiency in language and reading in the target language, but higher levels of academic achievement in English.

Valdes (1997) explored the quality of instruction that language minority students were receiving in their primary language in Dual Language Immersion programs. What she found further validated Lindholm-Leary’s observations of 90/10LO programs. When the language majority students are receiving their instruction in their second, non-proficient language, the quality of the language used in instruction is scaffolded so that the language majority students can understand the lesson.

Parental Concerns:

Valdes (1997) cited an example of how Anglo parents in the past have protested the presence of ELL students in their children’s classrooms. They claimed that they weren’t receiving the same level of comprehensible English that their peers were in classes without ELL children. Valdes explores the idea of what research would reveal about
how the parents of the minority language students feel about the level and quality of the minority language used with their children. To what extent does socioeconomic status drive a program's instructional focus? Lindholm-Leary found that at the core of these programs, their instructional objectives weighed heavily upon the attitudes and perceptions of the program's participants; the teachers and the parents. Parents with lower levels of education that had children in 90/10HI programs felt lower levels of support from the district than did parents with college-level education at 90/10LO programs. The lower level of support was consistent with other research reporting on low-income and minority parents feeling alienated, mistrustful, and not as valued by their children's districts (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). Also, 90/10 program teachers that were surveyed strongly agree that they weren't adequately trained in the DLE model, how to treat students equitably, that students were being treated equitably, and that they didn't have a lot of support from the community or their administrator. Finally, it was also observed in 90/10LO programs, that the parents of the majority language speakers, the Anglos, tend to dominate and control parent committees (Lindholm-Leary, 2000).

Through reviewing relevant literature that pertains to Dual Language Immersion programs, there seems to be a theme of unresolved conflict as to the validity of bilingual education and the effectiveness of these types of programs. It is agreed that multiculturalism and multilingualism are an issue in the American
educational system- the problem seems to be how we go about addressing it. Is bilingualism an advantage or a detriment? When Crawford (1997) was interviewing people on the street during the campaign for ending bilingual education through the Unz initiative, he found that most people did support bilingualism but differed in their views on how to implement an effective bilingual program. Is separating minority language students from majority language students so that they can receive primary language support segregation? Are Dual Language Immersion programs the types of programs that could provide equal opportunity for language minority students to have access to the curriculum?
Chapter III:
Methodology

Setting:

One town in a district in Riverside County was chosen for data collection. The district is located in Southwest Riverside County off of Interstate 15. The district is situated in a town that is considered to be a 'bedroom community'; the majority of the town's population commutes to Los Angeles and San Diego. Before Interstate 15 was built, this was a very small community with the only major industry being an upholstery factory. The climate is very desert-like, punctuated with an oasis of green such as the golf courses that can be seen upon entering town. Beyond the golf courses there are mountains in the distance with seas of tract homes that stretch out below well-manicured green belts. There are wineries and an 'old' part of the town that draws tourists. The old part of this town would be considered the buildings that have been there since the 1970's. These would be the buildings located closest to Interstate 15 and the older freeways. Located outside of town are Indian reservations. The community has experienced exponential growth in the past ten years due to the affordability of family homes. Even though this town is relatively a 'new' community, there are still subtle delineations of economic class. The poor tend to live around the older parts of the town that have the low income housing, the lower and middle classes tend to live in the housing tracts located in the geographic center of town, and the upper-middle class and the 'rich' tend to live closer to the golf
courses. Despite the varying degrees of socioeconomic backgrounds, the population is overwhelmingly young families. The importance of education is evident by the growing number of schools and the active involvement of the community. The atmosphere of the town is conservative, Christian, and Anglo. The district prides itself on its commitment to providing quality education. Over the past three years, the focus of the district has been to align its curriculum to the new state standards, raise standardized test scores, and improve the ranking of individual school sites' Academic Percentile Index (API).

The Dual Language Immersion program that I studied was located in a predominately middle-class neighborhood housed inside another school. The students of this program were from varying areas of town, not necessarily the neighborhoods that bordered the school site. When the program began in July, 1998, the school district changed the boundaries so that the native Spanish speakers could be provided bus transportation. The overwhelming majority of the native Spanish speakers live in the other side of town; the older sections. In the overall demographics of the school district, Latinos consist of 18% of the total population and Anglos 70%. The demographics of the particular program that I studied were 26% Latino and 63% Anglo.

The program began with only one section of Kindergarten in July, 1998 and then added sections as the original Kindergartners progressed from 1998. When I studied the school, the original Kindergartners were third graders. Currently, these original Kindergartners are in the Fourth
grade. The program was described as a 90/10 Dual Language Immersion program (Spanish/English). There were two teachers per grade level, a CEO (administrator), and an independent school board which consisted of the CEO, parents, and teachers.

**Sample:**

I surveyed the parents of native English and native Spanish speaking students and the teachers of the Dual Language Immersion program. I tried for an equitable balance of the language minority and language majority students' parents, but I was only successful in getting two Latino parents to participate. The teachers that I surveyed were a mixture of Anglo and Latino.

**Data Collection Procedures:**

I used a survey (See Appendix A) that I handed out to twenty parents the nine educators of the program (This also included the CEO.) They surveys were completely anonymous with no identifiers whatsoever to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. In addition, I interviewed two parents, the only two parents that participated in their homes. I interviewed them directly reading the questions that the other parents answered on their surveys and recorded the responses.

**Data Analysis:**

Of the twenty-nine surveys that I handed out to the parents and
educators, I received eight back from the parents and four back from the educators. I recorded the responses and looked for patterns of how they responded as a whole. The patterns that emerged included that the parents had very definite opinions over their children's educations and that they were supporters of bilingual education.
Chapter IV: 
Findings

Teacher Responses/ General Patterns:

There was a wider range in the responses that the teachers gave as opposed to the parents. Three out of four of the teachers were Latino; they all had different labels for what kind of Latino they were- "Chicana, Hispanic, and Mexican". How they defined their academic success ranged from student success to their own academic accomplishments. Two of the respondents felt that assessments were only somewhat valid, while the other two were on different end of the spectrum stating that "assessments should drive education" and the other stating that they were "completely invalid". When questioned about student performance in relation to standardized tests, half of the educators stated that they only somewhat correlated. One educator stated that standardized tests assisted in focusing in on areas of improvement and the other stated that they didn't. In response to the types of strategies that they employed in the classroom to meet the individual needs of the students, they responded that they used similar approaches; "cooperative learning, small group instruction, S.D.A.I.E. (Specifically Designed Instruction in English), and peer tutoring.

Teacher Responses/ Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses:

When asked how they would describe the program in just one
word, half of the responses were positive and half were negative; “excellence”, “advantageous”, “needy”, and “problematic”. When questioned about the strengths of this program, two of the educators described it as being the philosophy of the program while the other two described it as being the students and the staff. When asked about the weaknesses of this program, the teachers gave a variety of answers ranging from leadership to communication. When asked about their level of commitment in advocating for the program, half of the respondents reported that they barely advocated, one was an advocate and the other was a complete advocate. When questioned about which group was more politically involved in the program, the responses were unanimously, “the Anglos”. When asked about who the real beneficiaries of this program were, three out of the four of the teachers felt that the native English speakers benefited more than the native Spanish speakers.

**Parent Responses/ General Patterns:**

When asked why they would place their children in a Dual Language Immersion program, they all responded that they wanted their children to have the advantage of being bilingual. When asked about their personal background in regard to Dual Language Immersion programs, only two of the parents had some background in Dual Language Immersion programs. When asked about their ethnic backgrounds, there were only two that responded to being non-Anglo.
When questioned about their expectations for their children from this program, they all responded that they wanted their children to be bilingual and biliterate. When questioned about their level of involvement in the program, the majority of the parents responded that they weren't as involved as they would like to be. When asked about holding the teachers accountable to the state and district standards, the majority of the parents stated that they were confident that their children's teachers were following the standards.

**Parent Responses/ Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses:**

When asked to describe the program in one word, seven out of nine parents responded positively while only two had a negative view of the program. When questioned about the strengths of the program, the parents' responses varied from the teachers, children, parents, principal, and the plan of the program. When asked about the one thing that they would change about the program, the parent responses were varied from improved communication between parents and administration to the teachers improving their levels of academic Spanish. When asked how politically motivated they were to advocate for the program, the parents' responses as a whole reflected a higher level of advocacy than the educators who responded. When asked who they perceived as the beneficiaries of this program, the parents' responses were more neutral—they felt that both the native English and native Spanish speakers
benefited from this program. Only the Spanish parents responded that they felt that the "americanos (Anglos)" , the native English speakers, were the beneficiaries.
Chapter V:  
Conclusion

General Patterns:

In evaluating my data, the only pattern that I found between the parents and the educators was their belief in bilingualism. All of the participants were a part of this program because they believed in the underlying philosophy. More of the teachers than the parents had a background in Dual Language Immersion programs. Almost all of the respondents were Anglo; I had a very hard time getting Latino parents to talk to me. The parents as a whole were confident that their children’s teachers were following state standards and directing instruction towards them.

Strengths and Weaknesses:

All of the teachers were in agreement that the English experts were the true beneficiaries of the program whereas the majority of the parents believed that both the English experts and Spanish experts were the beneficiaries. As far as what they would change about the program, the teachers focused on materials and communication and the parents were more concerned about communication and the apparent political strife amongst themselves.

What the surveys couldn’t convey was the political nature of this program within the district. The program came under scrutiny towards the end of the 2001 school year because of low scores of the Spanish
speakers on the state standardized exams in English and the APRENDÁ and SABE (standardized tests in the Spanish language) exams. The program's language majority students, the native English speakers, scored better than the native Spanish speakers on the Spanish exams. The program's charter was renewed for another year but was changed from a 90/10 to a 70/30 model. Spanish will be treated as an "enrichment" part of the curriculum and used to teach science. Student demographics also played into this decision; there was low enrollment of native Spanish speakers, 26%.

From reviewing the literature on Dual Language Immersion programs from Lindholm-Leary, I found this particular program to follow more under a 90/10LO model. It's not truly a 90/10LO because the native Spanish speakers didn't perform better in English than Spanish; they did poorly in both. If the goal of this Dual Language Immersion program was to support their minority language speakers, they failed in this regard. From speaking with teachers and district employees, there seems to be differing views on the long term outcome of this particular program. Many supporters argue that the test scores of the minority language students will improve over time, while others argue that the minority language students will fall through the cracks of a program that was specifically designed to help support them through primary language instruction.

Valdes (1997) had a valid argument about the role of parental/community pressure in the success of minority language students in Dual Language Immersion programs. When Anglo parents complained about
their children not receiving the same quality of education because the level of English was scaffolded for ELL students, school officials took note. Do all of the parents of the language minority students feel the same way that my two parent respondents felt too—that the “americanos(Anglos)” were the real beneficiaries of this type of program? Is socioeconomic the real determinant of how language minority students will fare in a Dual Language Immersion program?

From what I observed, the majority of the language minority students were bused in from the other side of town to participate in this program. When the program board had meetings, I noticed very few of the language minority students’ parents present. This was evident by where they were sitting in relation to the other parents. Because all of the official meetings were carried out in English, they sat in the back of the room with headsets on so that they could understand what was being said through a translator. The majority of the Anglo parents were sitting up in the front of the room and addressed the board frequently, unencumbered by the need for translation in advocating for their children. The non-English speaking parents were more the observers and not the participants. If the parents of the language minority students aren’t as vocal as the Anglo parents, it would seem pretty unlikely that they would be as politically cohesive in advocating for the quality of education that their children deserved.

If I were to study this particular program again, I would focus more on the dynamics of parents interaction at the program board meetings. I
believe that there would be a definite pattern of who has more of a voice from reviewing minutes of the program over the past few years. I would also chart the long term progress of the program’s first Kindergarten class from 1998 to how they are performing academically now. How would the perceptions of strengths and weaknesses change?

From studying this microclimate of parents and teachers that all support the underlying philosophy of this type of program, I now understand how Proposition 227 passed. Even with the best of intentions, there are still perceived inequities in the best of bilingual programs.
Appendix A:
Teacher/Parent Questionnaire

Educators:

#1. What is your personal background in regard to Dual Language Immersion programs?

#2. How would you describe your cultural and ethnic background?

#3. How do you define academic success?

#4. How valid do you feel standardized tests are in reflecting the academic achievement of your students?

#5. In what way would you say that standardized tests are related to the performance of your students when compared to alternative assessments and teacher observations?

#6. What strategies have you employed in your classroom to meet the individual needs of your students?

#7. In one word, how would you describe this program?

#8. What is the greatest strength of this program?

#9. What is the one thing that you would want to change about this program? Why?
#10. On a scale of 1-10, (1=barely and 10=extremely) how politically motivated have you been to advocate for this program?

#11. In your opinion, who are the more politically involved group of parents in this program: the Anglos or Latinos? Why?

#12. In your opinion, who are the beneficiaries of this program: the native Spanish speakers or the native English speakers? Why?

#13. Additional Comments:

Parents:

#1. Why did you place your child in a Dual Language Immersion program?

#2. What is your personal background in regard to Dual Language Immersion programs?

#3. How would you describe your cultural and ethnic background?

#4. What are your expectations for your child from this program?

#5. How involved are you as a parent in this program (activities/time volunteered)?

#6. How do you hold your child's teachers accountable to teaching to the state and district standards?
#7. In one word, how would you describe this program? Why?

#8. What is the greatest strength of this program?

#9. What is the one thing that you would want to change about this program?

#10. On a scale of 1-10, (1=barely and 10=extremely) how politically motivated have you been to advocate for this program?

#11. In your opinion, who are the real beneficiaries of this program: the native Spanish speakers or the native English speakers?

#12. Additional Comments
Appendix B:
Teacher/ Parent Responses

Teachers:

#1. What is your personal background in regard to Dual Language Immersion programs?
Three out of four teachers reported that they had some background in Dual Language Immersion programs/ Two-Way Immersion programs.

#2. How would you describe your cultural and ethnic background?
The educators identified themselves as: “Chicana”, “Anglo”, “Hispanic” and “Mexican”.

#3. How do you define academic success?
Academic success was described by three out of four of the teachers in terms of district and state outcomes. One educator defined it in terms of their own personal success education-wise; she described it as her master’s degree.

#4. How valid do you feel standardized tests are in reflecting the academic achievement of your students?
One teacher stated that assessments should drive education. One educator felt that they were invalid. Two educators felt that they were only “somewhat” valid.

#5. In what way would you say that standardized tests are related to the performance of your students when compared to alternative assessments and teacher observations?
Half of the educators reported that standardized tests correlate somewhat. One educator stated that they assist in focusing in on “key areas of improvement”. One educator stated that they didn’t correlate with student performance; authentic assessments demonstrate a stronger correlation.
What strategies have you employed in your classroom to meet the individual needs of your students?

The educators described a variety of strategies that they have employed in the classroom: S.D.A.I.E. (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English), small group instruction, peer tutoring, and cooperative learning.

In one word, how would you describe this program? Why?

The responses were as follows: "excellence", "advantageous", "needy", and "problematic".

What is the greatest strength of this program?

The responses were as follows: "parental involvement and teacher/parent dedication to the philosophy of bilingualism", "opportunity to be bilingual", "the students" and "the majority of the staff members".

What is the one thing that you would want to change about this program? Why?

The responses were as follows: "Leadership- weak on TWI design and charter law", "It is not an equal in the district, we need equal access to testing materials, and we need to be a part of the school we teach at, rather than an disembodied appendage", "The communication among teachers. The lack of materials in Spanish. The support provided to teachers.","A staff member- she has been destructive and is misinformed. She does not have a content foundation."

On a scale of 1-10 (1=barely and 10=extremely), how politically motivated have you been to advocate for this program?

The responses were as follows: "1-I like to spend evenings with my own children and there are too many radicals who attend board meetings to bitch.", "1", "7", and "100!"

In your opinion, who are the more politically involved group of parents in this program: the Anglos or Latinos? Why?

The responses were as follows: "80% Anglos and 20% Latinos. The difference between the groups is that the Anglos have more
education and pursue issues further—whereas Latino parents are easily intimidated. "Anglos, because they know that if they make enough noise they will create waves. The Latino culture is not as aggressive or negative.", and Anglos—the program was designed for them."

#12. In your opinion, who are the beneficiaries of this program: the native Spanish speakers or the native English speakers? Why?

The responses were as follows: "Ideally, the beneficiaries should be the EO’s and ELL students (all of them). However, a weak leadership can be lead to believe that test scores are the ultimate goal, and not bilingualism. If the ELL students, whom the program was intended to help, will be discouraged and EO’s will be encouraged. Strong leadership can use the research to guide this program to be the best", "Both. However it grieves me to see many of the Spanish speakers working below grade level in their native language. I would like to have a more positive impact on their education.", "The native English, because they tend to have much more support in their own language, whereas the Spanish speakers are not having to stretch their learning.", and "Native English—the program was designed for them."

#13. Additional Comments:

There was only one response: "XXX does not have the demographics to support this program! Spanish speakers are faced with social out casting and the immigration stop plays and important role-fear."

Parent Responses:

#1. Why did you place your child in a Dual Language Immersion program?

All of the parents expressed an interest in their children becoming "bilingual and biliterate". One parent expressed an interest in their child being exposed to Latino culture, "So my children would have a better understanding of cultural differences, along with learning what I believe
is the most important second language, Spanish.”

#2. What is your personal background in regard to Dual Language Immersion programs?
The responses were as follows: “Little to none-familiar with ESL”, “No background whatsoever.”, “None”, “None”, “Nací en Mexico- cerca de la ciudad de Mexico. Fue escuelas bilingues en al ciudad (I was born in Mexico- close to Mexico City. There were bilingual schools in the city.)”, “No mucho (not much)”, “I've read research and I watched the program develop.”, and “I am a Spanish major and I grew up in an area where Spanish was the prominent language. I have heard of the success these programs have attained.”

#3. How would you describe your cultural and ethnic background?
The responses were as follows: “Caucasian”, “Very White/America, Mexicana- Mi cultura es mexicana y mi nacionalidad es americana (Mexican- My culture is Mexican and my nationality is American.)” “Anglo background where there are no people of color.”, “Mexicana (Mexican)”, “Anglo”, and “Anglo with an intense exposure to the Latin culture.”

#4. What are your expectations for your child from this program?
The responses were as follows: “To be bilingual and aware of other cultures.”, “To be well-rounded in understanding that there are many options to consider. To be understanding of different people, cultures, and languages.”, “I expect an acquisition of two primary languages and an overall complete education.”, “To be bilingual and thus have an advantage in the business world.”, “Aprendiera ingles rapidamente (That my child will learn English rapidly.)”, “To excel in both languages. My child is at this time above average in both languages.”, “Pretty high. I expect her to be very fluent and articulate in Spanish and English.”, “Para mejorar Ia ambiente. Aprender los dos idiomas y tener la misma habilidad en ingles y español (To improve his environment. To learn two languages and have the same ability in English and Spanish.)” and “To be fully bilingual and sensitive to all cultures.

#5. How involved are you as a parent in this program?
The responses were as follows: “Not as much as I would like to be
due to work, but I do what I can.”, “Not enough. The first year volunteered in the classroom. The second year I went to some board meetings and field trips. The third year I did research regarding the By-laws, went to board meetings, and field trips.”, “I attend monthly meetings and am working on attaining a second language myself.”, “I work with both of my boys in school work.”, “Voluntaria dos días de la semana y ayudaba con fiestas para el salon (I have been volunteering two days of the week and helping with classroom parties.)”, “Soy una persona de informacion para los otros padres y con los aciones politicas (I have been acting as the liaison between parents and political issues.)”, “I’m not very involved due to my full-time job as an educator and cannot easily attained meetings.”, and “I volunteer weekly in the classroom, attend meetings, and am up to date with the goings on of the program.”

**#6. How do you hold your child’s teachers accountable to teaching to state/district standards?**

The responses were as follows: “No mucho(not much).”, “Because it is under the microscope (the program) they work very hard to maintain and in many cases they go beyond the standards.”, “I leave that to the authorities in charge.”, “They set the example. I expect them to follow the standards as I expect my children to follow their rules. I have been fortunate enough to have had great teachers for my children.”, “I visit classrooms. I ask for objectives and standards; I am aware of the standards.”, “I have tried to learn about the objectives of the program, network with parents, and meet with my children’s teachers.”, “Bien, tengo mucho confianza con los maestros (Well, I am very confident of the teachers.)”, and “I know the curriculum because I am an educator and I support and trust that my colleagues are doing the right thing.”

**#7. In one word, how would you describe this program? Why?**

The responses were as follows: “Widening-widens cultural views, academic views, and linguistic views.”, “Great. I believe that exposing kids to as much as possible. For example, when we went to Rosarito Beach (Mexico) for the day, my boys got out of the car and two other boys wanted them to buy gum. Instead, my boys offered them some food and played with them. I know that this would never have happened without this program.”, “Cutting Edge (two words). These are new programs and thus ahead of most programs out there.”, “Que me gusto mucho (I like it a
lot)!”, “Opportunistic! By being bilingual, the world is open to you!

“Challenging. There has been too much political stuff between the
administrator, the teachers, and the board. We have to be patient with
the English progress and understand the potential of the program.”.
“Discriminacion. Hay mucho descriminacion en relacion de la voz de los
padres. No aprecio mucho el compartamiento del administracion.
(Discrimination. There has been a lot of discrimination in regards to the
wishes of the parents. I don’t appreciate the behavior of the
administration.)” and “Positive. I see that my child is happy.”

#8. What is the greatest strength of this program?
The responses were: “Varias- la comunicacion de los niños. Los
niños sienten muy seguros (Many- the communication of the children.
The children feel very secure.)”, “The teachers!”, “The students, teachers,
and the parents.”, “Future opportunities open for students.”, “The children
and the parents involved.”, “The vision of what the Charter states- If there
is no deviation, success is inevitable!”, “The principal, teachers, and the
plan.”, and “Las maestras (the teachers)!”

#9. What is one thing that you would want to change about this
program?
The responses were: “I don’t know.”, “Los maestros necesitan
practicar su nivel de español. Hay veces cuando recibia noticias que
tuvieron errores gramaticas. Necesitamos mas comunicacion
adentro padres y maestros (The teachers need to improve their level of
Spanish. There have been times when I have received newsletters with
grammatical errors. We need to improve communication between the
parents and the teachers).”, “The amount of parental support.
English/English.”, “Parental control- too much should be standards
based and teachers should be held accountable for teaching to those
standards!”, “The politics and enforcement of them. I feel that the CEO
has not been accountable. This is unacceptable!”, “Many teachers have
their own agenda and want to do things their own way. All teachers must
have the same focus and work together. There has been an evident
discord.”, “More parental communication.”, and “Comunicacion
(Communication).”
#10. On a scale of 1-10, (1=barely and 10=extremely) how politically motivated have you been to advocate for this program?

The responses were as follows: “3 until recently- now, 12!”, “8-only because of the CEO’s lack of accountability. It was hard for me to be 100% in support of the person in charge when they didn’t know the By-laws!”,”1”, “10- excellent program!” “5”, “10- and have suffered for it. But that does not deter me. Truth must be achieved. To sit back and allow ideas and implementation to take over would be a disservice and it would show an attitude of defeat.”, “6- si tuviera un coche sera 10 (6- if I had a car it would be 10)”

#11. In your opinion, who are the beneficiaries of this program: the native Spanish speakers or the native English speakers?

The responses were as follows: “Los dos, pero poco mas de los americanos (Both of them, but a little bit more the Anglos).”, “Both! The native speakers are given a foundation in their own language then learn English. English speakers gain a foundation in Spanish and then reinforce their English.”, “Both. Children have much to benefit from both the English and Spanish cultures.”, “Both- for different reasons. The interaction is a positive for both as far as positive reinforcement in learning to get along with others. Native English speakers learn another language and for native Spanish speakers it’s the introduction to English gradually. This is something to be proud of.”, “More so the English speakers because they are learning a second language at an earlier age. But the Spanish speakers as well, as they are better understanding concepts because they are being taught in their native tongue.”, “Both! Because they continuously feed and learn from one another. They are each others best teachers. I learned my Spanish by being immersed as an adult. Children in the same environment can and will absorb more and without a doubt succeed.”, “Los americanos (The Anglos)”, and “Both!”

#12. Additional Comments:

The responses were: “La meta es el progreso-mover adelante! (The goal is progress- to move forward!)”, “My two boys are doing better I ever could have imagined.” and “I want to thank everyone who has stayed with the program regardless of what it has been through! It shows great dedication. Bottom line- It’s the kids!”
References:


Lindholm-Leary, K.J. (2001) *California State University San Jose*.
