

## Dual Language: A Study on Teachers' and Administrators' Perceptions of Dual Language Effectiveness: Pre-K through Third Grade in Spain

San Juanita G. Hachar<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

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It may appear, in some ways, Spain is like the United States of America, which, for the most part, has not sanctioned, nor fully supported, the acquisition of a second language. In the United States of America, there is a more common tendency to introduce a foreign language in high school, when, unfortunately, it is almost too late for the student to be able to acquire the language as a native speaker. Spain has had the same situation. Some English teachers are graduating from universities with a degree in English, but can not speak it fluently nor confidently. They can merely translate. Spain is now promoting a 100% effort to have English as a second language, not as a foreign language. This study will look at the rapid change in Spain that embraces a bilingual, bicultural program with an emphasis on teaching methods, attitude changes, and the importance of teacher development in the process of change. We need to see that change is constant. Without change and conflict, there is no growth. Spain is growing and enhancing a bilingual, Spanish / English world. How they are achieving this, quickly and with positive results, is the major thrust of this paper.

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**Keywords:** bilingual education, dual language, Madrid, Europe

### 1. Introduction

This study examines the implementation of dual language programs, additive bilingual education programs, of instruction in Spain. More specifically, the study focuses on the distinctions in implementation in three types of schools: public, private and concertado.

Spain was one of the European countries least interested in adapting to bilingualism. Since Franco's 40-year rule of Spain, other languages or dialects were not welcomed or permitted. The sentiment carried on so that even in 2013 Hollywood movies shown on television are dubbed in *Castellano*, Spain's term for the Spanish language. The European Union in 2004 put Spain on notice that they had to have English as their second language for better opportunities for students, or EU money would be withheld. Spain's Department of Education decided that public schools would implement bilingualism with 1/2 day Spanish and 1/2 day English.

Spain began in 2007, with bilingual Kindergartens in 225 public schools in Madrid, with schools competing to see who would enter among the 225 first schools. Year by year a grade level was added to the bilingual grades. Teachers were trained, and hundreds were sent to England to improve their English, at government expense.

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<sup>1</sup> EdD, 5201 University Blvd. Laredo, TX 78040, Tel: 956-326-2437, Fax: 956-326-2434. Email: [sjhachar@tamiu.edu](mailto:sjhachar@tamiu.edu), [sjhachar@gmail.com](mailto:sjhachar@gmail.com)

Now, in 2014, bilingualism has spread throughout Spain, and the original kindergarten groups, are now finishing 6th grade. Meanwhile, middle schools began to have some courses in English beginning in 2009. The fluency level of the students is amazing. Following the CLIL philosophy 100%, and a 50% English/50% Spanish program, the level of English is equal to native English speakers.

Dual language models are now implemented in each of the schools. To properly interpret the effectiveness of the bilingual programs, multiple factors must be taken into account and the influence of each must be analyzed: Curriculum alignment, pacing, and sequencing.

## II. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze available data where a dual language program of instruction exists and evaluate effectiveness of the program based on survey results.

## III. Research Questions

The following research questions will direct the qualitative portion of this study: To what extent are teachers trained in implementation of dual language programs.

To what extent do administrators provide training in implementation of dual language programs.

To what extent are teachers aware of the significance of dual language instruction in their profession.

To what extent are administrators aware of the significance of dual language instruction in their profession.

## IV. Significance of the Study

Research suggests that dual language programs, additive bilingual programs, are beneficial to students since these programs promote retention of the native language and the second language. (Hoff, et al., 2012) Because bilingual education remains an issue of intensity in political and educational arenas, other factors should be taken into consideration when analyzing effectiveness/success of such programs. (Rios-Aguilar, Canche, & Moll, 2012). Factors such as alignment, pacing, and sequencing of lessons must be examined further. If a correlation is relevant, the quality of bilingual education for students could improve.

## V. Background of Bilingual/Dual Language Programs in Spain

### V. A. Concertados

The translation of *concertado* requires explanation. A *concertado* is a religious school that is supported by public funds. This is a common practice in Spain because there are hundreds of religious schools throughout the country. Because of the large numbers of concertados, it became more economically efficient and effective for the government to help with the financing of students in attendance. The *concertados* follow all public school rules and programs; however, they have a great deal of autonomy, including teaching religious classes, hours that are shorter than a traditional eight hour school day of the public schools. The closest resemblance to what a *concertado* could be in the United States could be a charter school or a school financed by public *vouchers*.

### V. B. Public Schools

Madrid, Spain currently has a population of approximately 6,000,000 inhabitants. Madrid, the capital and largest city of Spain is the city chosen to conduct this study. With its surrounding suburbs, Madrid boasts of six million inhabitants, a mix of economic levels, with approximately 20% being immigrants from Africa, Latin America, and other European Union countries. Spain is divided into provinces or *comunidades*, but the federal government does have some standards and regulations to which all areas must conform.

According to the administrators participating in the study, in 2003 Madrid's government, *La Comunidad de Madrid*, established in some of its public schools a bilingual program supported by a tax-based funding from *La Comunidad*. Two hundred twenty (220) schools are now part of the official bilingual schools, teaching ½ day in English and ½ day in Spanish.

The 220 public, bilingual schools in Madrid do NOT represent all the public schools in Madrid, which number approximately 1,000 schools. There are 17,000 teachers in Madrid, including all subjects, and various languages: Spanish, English, French, and German being the most prevalent. There also are Jewish schools offering Hebrew, and Arab schools offering Arabic. 98% of the population in Spain is Roman Catholic. The Constitution requires religious education in the schools (not "catechism" of specific church rules and beliefs). The public school visited for this study offered religious class. Interestingly, it was noted that a crucifix was prominently displayed on the wall along with various generic religious posters on the wall. Parents expect religious education to enhance their child's moralistic knowledge.

Subjects, such as science, and social studies, art, music, physical education, reading, are taught in English in the dual language schools. They follow the European Common Framework for Education. The 220 official bilingual / dual language public schools in Madrid offer English for ½ of the school day, and Spanish the other ½. Every teacher must have a degree in English. They apply to teach within the bilingual program and are assigned to schools within the program. Interestingly, the principals do not get to select the teachers. Teachers are assigned to the schools and the principal must work with those assigned to the campus.

The teacher and student work day is 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., with academics taught in the mornings, before lunch, and courses such as music, art, and computer are taught after lunch. There is a 30 minute break in the morning, and a two hour lunch break in the afternoon, about 1:30 -3:30 p.m., depending on specific schools' schedules.

Teachers are autonomous. They do not submit plan books, nor attend any meetings or courses except during the 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. school day. Any courses they attend after these hours are 100% voluntary, and depend on the teachers' interest in self-development. They can not be observed unless they ask to be observed. Principals tell us that even if constructive criticism is made, many teachers are offended, unless they have specifically asked for feedback. Public school teachers even get to choose the book(s) they use for English. They may choose NO book, and have the option of designing their own course.

Public schools are able to receive Fulbright Scholars or scholars from the USA, Ireland, Canada, UK, or Australia who are offered one year fellowships by the *Comunidad de Madrid*. Working papers, housing allowance, and a stipend are offered to English native speakers to be teacher assistants to help teach with the English teacher who may not be a native speaker. Since working papers are very difficult to obtain in the European Union, with most jobs only available with European Union passports, native speakers from outside the European Union are rare, and enter Spain's public schools through fellowship programs. This element helps to maintain a higher level of English in the public schools than in most private or *concertado* schools, with a few outstanding, highly selective private schools being the exceptions.

External exams are administered to assess English proficiency levels in many schools. The two most solicited external exams are the Trinity College London oral exam or the Cambridge University written exam. The Cambridge written exam consists of some multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank items. Students can pass this exam without much oral fluency.

Points are awarded to teachers who attend courses, workshops, or who serve on committees outside their official working day. The points are used for advancement in salaries, some supervisory posts (with some teaching as well), and points can be used for teachers to select which school to which they want to be assigned.

Some public schools are in better areas than others, some have more flexible and teacher-friendly directors, so when teachers have accumulated points, they can select where they work instead of being assigned.

Students and most teachers eat at school where a full, healthy lunch is provided, served family style. This investigator observed a coffee break in the morning, where teachers are served by cafeteria personnel in a formal-style dining room: Coffee, tea, milk, hot chocolate, juice, fresh fruits (oranges, apples, bananas, and kiwis), breakfast breads, French bread slices with olive oil and tomato sauce, different cheeses, and bran cereal with dried fruits.

Lunch at 1:30 p.m. is served with the same menu for the teachers and students, although the teachers have a private dining room. It is noteworthy to observe the lavish, healthy lunches served at school! A typical lunch consists of several courses. The food arrives in large platters for family style servings.

One lunch that this researcher observed consisted of: *paella* with a drumstick, for the appetizer, followed by large, baked sausages, potatoes, a salad, and mushroom *quiche*. The only salad dressing offered was olive oil and vinegar. There were no processed foods. All food is cooked on-site. Dessert was fresh fruit and/or home-made raisin cookies, made by the school cooks, from scratch. Drinks offered are water, milk, and coffee / tea for adults. It must be remembered, that this is a PUBLIC schools.

#### V. C. Private School in a Suburb of Madrid (Las Rozas, Spain – 100,000 inhabitants)

This school is located in a neighborhood of upscale, individual homes (not apartment buildings). It has lovely brick buildings in a campus that is attractive. The day is long, from 9 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Because it is private, the owner wants to offer more than what the public schools offer, so the teachers' days are long. Unlike the USA, in Spain the private school teachers have longer hours, more duties, and fewer fringe benefits than in the public schools. The salary is usually much lower than public schools. Because of the reasons explained above, the school that I chose to visit in a suburb of Madrid has a very high turnover every year within its English teachers. On the average, few teachers return, with the others accepting work in public schools for better pay, hours, and autonomy.

English teachers teach two grade levels, requiring double preparations. They did not have an assigned classrooms, so have had to move from room to room with all their teaching supplies. Spanish teachers, however, do have, and have had, their own rooms.

Breakfast and lunch here is of the same quality as the public schools: healthy, varied, family-style serving, with fresh, non-processed foods for both breakfast and lunch.

Essentially, in Spain, the children only eat the evening meal at home, about 9:00 p.m. being the average hour of family dining. Since the school hour begins much later than comparable primary schools in the USA (9:00 a.m. instead of 7:30 a.m.), there is no push to get children into bed, with 10 - 11 p.m. bring the usual bed-time for many children.

The private school visited in Las Rozas declares itself to be a *bilingual school*. It DOES offer English as a subject, but only has English scheduled 4 days a week: 3 days per week for 60 minutes, and one day for 90 minutes. This is an increase since last year when English was offered only 45 minutes per day. All teachers have a university degree.

The economic pressure is high on private schools because public schools offer more English per day, a truly bilingual program, free, whereas parents pay for private schools for less English. For that reason, parents who want to emphasize English, are beginning to place their children in public schools for the bilingual aspects. Private schools are used buy some parents for social advancement or in order to keep their children in the neighborhood where they live.

#### V. D. A Concertado School in a Small Town (Montilla, Spain -25,000 Inhabitants)

This town is mainly agricultural with olives, olive oil, grapes and wine as the leading industries. It is essentially a middle class town, with no poverty in evidence (no substandard housing in evidence).

The school is in a building of over 100 years of age, brick and cement, with marble stairways, and arched porches. It is from a religious order known as the *Salesianos*, a world-wide chain of schools, with literally 1000's of schools worldwide.

The school visited in Montilla has had the same Director ( a lay person) for 8 years. Under his supervision, not one teacher who has left! Interestingly, when teachers enter the teacher's lounge during a break, they come in whistling or singing-very happy. The atmosphere is calm, relaxing, friendly, and supportive for teachers and students.

The school visited offers English for 50 minutes a day. English is taught at all grade levels. All teachers have a university degree.

Over the years, there has been much research, many seminars, and countless articles based on the premise that teachers (or anyone) work better and produce more in a friendly, supportive environment than in a hostile, autocratic one. (Bryk, A.S., & Schneider, B., 2002; Ouchi, W. 1981; Rousseau, D.M., 1978; Schein, E. H., 1985). Most educators are 100% in agreement with the premise, which not only applies to faculty and staff, but also to the students. Yet, what is being done to move schools toward the aim of having supportive and friendly environments?

At this particular school, the director was observed while teaching a class in Spanish, and students were engaged in high levels of topics in a class discussion boosting faculty's commitment. Hoy & Miskel (2005) have supported the position that, "verbal persuasion is another means of strengthening a faculty's conviction that they have the capabilities to achieve what they seek. Teachers can be changed by talks, workshops, professional development activities, and feedback about achievement" (177).

## **VI. Assumptions**

For this study, the following assumptions were made:

Teachers held a minimum of three years experience in a dual language classroom.

Administrators held a director's position in a school offering dual language instruction.

Survey was confidential to the best ability of the participants.

Survey section on motivational strategies, alignment, and pacing can be quantified for the purpose of this study.

## **VII. Limitations of the Study**

The number of participants for the survey is based on currently employed personnel in dual language schools. The sample size of surveys completed can fluctuate based on external factors such as participants being absent to complete the survey. The length of the survey, too, may be overwhelming to the participants.

## **VIII. Conceptual Framework**

The thrust of dual language programs of instruction remains acquisition of a second language without compromising loss of the native language. It is critical to provide development of both languages throughout a student's educational experience (Baker, 2014). Failure to develop the native language to full proficiency, however, leads to inadequate proficiency in both languages (Kennedy & Romo, 2013; Escamilla, 2000).

Master teachers are able to incorporate the native language and personal experiences allowing engagement of the English language learner in the curriculum.

This commands rigorous instruction which is supported by Johnsen (2010). Here effective implementation of pacing of lessons correlated to the teacher's interpretation of challenging instruction.

### **IX. Instrument**

A survey was selected for this study because the number of participants was small. The survey was feasible with a population this size. The research design for this quantitative study provided the framework for planning and conducting the study. The topic of this study was chosen from Learner Centered Instruction Domain of the Lesson Cycle. The review of the literature conducted focused on dual language programs, motivational strategies, alignment, and pacing.

### **X. Procedure**

A Likert Scale survey was created to assess the 9 questions used in this study. The 9 questions were derived from definitions of motivational strategies, alignment, and pacing. The Likert Scale has 5 subscales ranging from 1 to 5: 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Undecided, 4 – Agree, and 5 – Strongly Agree. Given that the schools participating in the study do not receive an evaluation of performance, the Professional Development and Appraisal System Instrument was used to design survey questions to measure the teachers' and administrators' perception of their experiences in dual language settings.

### **XI. Design**

The study was conducted using a quantitative research design. The investigation and data analysis required use of correlation coefficient research and analysis of the central tendencies based on the responses to the nine questions.

### **XII. Data Collection Procedures**

Data for the study was composed from the Likert Scale survey administered to the participants. The demographics of the survey served as the independent variables that were analyzed in terms of training, motivation, alignment, and pacing. The nine questions that were used from the survey were the dependent variables that were used to find any correlation between both independent and dependent variables. IBM SPSS Statistic 20 software was used to determine any correlation between variables and was used to compute mean and standard deviation. The Pearson function capability of the software was used to establish any correlation. The data gathered from this software was verified using various functions of Microsoft Excel.

### **XIII. Data Analysis**

A descriptive statistics was calculated based on the variables that were used for this study. The single independent variable used was compared to the survey questions that were used as the dependent variables. Questions 1, 2, and 3 addressed motivation, alignment, and pacing – respectively. Since all participants (15) are currently employed, experience had no variance on standard deviation or on mean. The three questions had a mean close to 3, which is considered proficient.

The Likert Scale survey was based on learner centered instruction. All of the participants held a minimum of three years experience in a bilingual setting. Question 1 (Do you often make decisions on instruction based on students' interests?) Had a mean of 3.14 with a minimal error of .143 and standard deviation of .655. Question 3 (Do you agree that dual language instruction positively impacts the pacing and quality of instruction?) obtained similar results. The implication is one in which participants felt similar on motivation and pacing matters of dual language instruction. A mean of 3.43 was obtained on Question 2 since most participants answered a 4 (Agree). Over 95% of the participants agreed that their experiences in Dual Language related to Learner Centered Instruction were favorable. In terms of curriculum, none of the participants answered at the lowest level of the survey 1 (Strongly Disagree).

It is important to note that a Pearson correlation was attempted to generate, but there was no correlation. Perhaps, the lack of demographic details on the survey was also a factor in yielding constants in the Pearson correlation function. There was a strong correlation between Question 1 and 3 which implies that there is a correlation between motivation and pacing of the lesson.

#### **XIV. Findings of the Qualitative Portion of the Study**

The first objective of the qualitative portion of the study was:

*To establish to what extent are teachers trained in implementation of dual language programs.*

Respondents were asked gauge their knowledge of dual language implementation training in their designated campuses. Responses follow:

**Table 1: Extent to which are Teachers Trained in Implementation of Dual Language Programs**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No Training	6	67
Some Training	2	22
Appropriate Training	1	11
Total	9	100

Table 1 illustrates that the majority of teachers received no training of dual language methodology.

Secondly, the study sought:

*To establish the extent to which administrators provide training in implementation of dual language programs.* Respondents were asked gauge their knowledge of dual language implementation training in their designated campuses. Responses follow:

**Table 2: Extent to which Administrators had Training in Implementation of Dual Language Programs**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No Training		
Some Training	2	67
Appropriate Training	1	33
Total	3	100

Table 2 illustrates that the majority of administrators had received moderate training in dual language program implementation.

The third objective of the qualitative portion of the study was to examine: *To what extent are teachers aware of the significance of dual language instruction in their profession.*

**Table 3: Extent to which Teachers are Aware of the Significance of Dual Language Instruction in Their Profession**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No Awareness	7	78
Some Awareness	1	11
Completely Aware	1	11
Total	9	100

Table 3 illustrates that the majority of teachers were unaware of the significance of dual language instruction in their profession.

The fourth objective of the qualitative portion of the study sought to examine: *To what extent are administrators aware of the significance of dual language instruction in their profession.*

**Table 4: Extent to which Adminstrators are Aware of the Significance of dual Language Instruction in their Profession**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No Awareness	0	0
Some Awareness	2	67
Completely Aware	1	33
Total	3	100

Table 4: Illustrates that the majority of administrators were somewhat aware of significance of dual language instruction in their profession.

## XV. Conclusion

From initial observations and visits with administrators and teachers, it appears that the public schools of Madrid are leading the country in bilingual education. Money and human resources are being poured into the program. The researcher's time and visitations were limited, so a follow-up visit or two will be needed to obtain more data, especially on the results based on external and internal examinations in English and Spanish. Incidentally, the public school in Madrid was not only strong in English proficiency, but it also achieved very high standings, among the top 5%, in Spain's Spanish exams in subjects such as mathematics and Spanish literature. In a subsequent visit to Spain, the researcher intends to re-visit these three schools to note progress, changes, and to obtain more data.

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