

REL Pacific Ask A REL Response

English Learners

October 2021

Question:

What does the research say about how schools have allocated language instruction in 90:10 or 50:50 bilingual language models?

Response:

Following an established REL Pacific research protocol, we conducted a web-based search for resources related to approaches in allocating language instruction in dual language models (see Methods section for search terms and resource selection criteria). We first prioritized studies in the Pacific and other Indigenous contexts for greater relevancy to our partners in the Pacific region; however, we included studies with more generalizable findings due to the limited amount of research available in these contexts. During our search, we found many studies that compared a dual language model to business-as-usual instruction and/or to other second language instructional models. However, fewer studies compared language allocation approaches within specific models.

References are listed in alphabetical order, not necessarily in order of relevance. Descriptions of the resources are quoted directly from the publication abstracts. We have not evaluated the quality of references and the resources provided in this response. We offer them only for your reference. Also, our search included the most commonly used research resources, but they are not comprehensive and other relevant references and resources may exist.

Research References

de Jong, E. J., Yilmaz, T., & Marichal, N. (2019). A multilingualism-as-a-resource orientation in dual language education. *Theory Into Practice*, 58(2), 107–120. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1214859>

From the abstract: “Dual language educators and program planners rely on the concept of ‘language as a resource’ as a foundational principle of dual language education (DLE). Traditionally, the term has been juxtaposed to viewing language as a problem and treating students’ home linguistic and cultural experiences as a deficit rather than an asset for teaching and learning in school. In this article, we argue that a ‘multilingualism as a resource’ orientation is needed as a new or additional paradigm in order to re-imagine DLE within the current context and to respond to the increased diversity within DLE programs. We use Duverger’s model that considers language allocation decisions at the macro, meso, and micro levels as a lens to examine the multilingualism-as-a-resource orientation. Drawing on examples at the program model, curricular, and interactional level, we illustrate both the importance as well as the challenging dynamics that emerge as sociopolitical context, language use, and status intersect in the context of two-way immersion programs.”

Freire, J. A., Delavan, M. G., & Valdez, V. E. (2021). Grassroots resistance and activism to one-size-fits-all and separate-but-equal policies by 90:10 dual language schools en comunidades latinas. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 1–18.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13670050.2021.1874868>

From the abstract: “Bilingual education—chiefly the subcategory of dual language bilingual education—has been undergoing a pattern where the interests of language-minoritized communities have in several contexts been pushed out of the way. One aspect of this gentrification process has been the *fiftyfication* of dual language bilingual education policy, where privilege is placed on a 50:50 balance of language allocation between English and the partner language. Using thematic narrative analysis, we looked at the only two dual language bilingual education schools in the U.S. state of Utah with a 90:10 language allocation. Findings show that (a) the two charter schools were pressured in multiple ways to conform to the state’s fiftyfication policy, and (b) the schools and their Latina/o communities resisted the policy and associated pressures on behalf of their students through forms of grassroots language activism and bottom-up resistance. Although these actions ultimately resulted in the official revision of the state’s DLBE policy to be inclusive of multiple language allocation models, the schools had to continue their activism to benefit from the policy change as the state then moved to a separate-but-equal policy approach that continued the privileging of the 50:50 model. Implications for scholars and policymakers are discussed.”

García, O., Flores, N., & Chu, H. (2011). Extending bilingualism in U.S. secondary education: New variations. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 5(1), 1–18. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ915374>; full text available here:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233095570_Extending_Bilingualism_in_US_Secondary_Education_New_Variations

From the abstract: “This article challenges 20th century ways of conceptualizing bilingualism, arguing that they are no longer applicable to the linguistic heterogeneity of the 21st century. Using case studies of two small high schools in New York City, this article re-imagines the possibilities of bilingual education to more accurately reflect the realities of bilingual students. Rather than imposing a top-down process, these two schools, although very different demographically and pedagogically, attempt in different ways to create language education policy through a collaborative process that incorporates bilingual students’ hybrid practices and gives students agency in negotiating their linguistic repertoires. These two schools provide a window into new and innovative ways of approaching bilingual education for the 21st century.”

Sánchez, M. T., García, O., & Solorza, C. (2018). Reframing language allocation policy in dual language bilingual education. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 41(1), 37–51. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1172753>

From the abstract: “This article addresses language allocation policies in what is increasingly called ‘Dual Language Education’ (DLE) in the U.S., offering a challenge to the strict language separation policies in those programs and a proposal for flexibility that transforms them into ‘Dual Language Bilingual Education’ (DLBE). The article offers a historical review of policies and practices in bilingual education and the ways in which the present language policies for DLE have come about. It then provides a critical assessment of those policies, which focus on teaching two languages, rather than educating students bilingually. We argue that the rigid language allocation policies of DLE ignore the sociolinguistic realities of bilingual learning for all students, especially for language-minoritized

bilingual students. The main part of the article sets forth a new alternative policy proposal for language allocation that more coherently reflects the dynamic nature of bilingualism and reclaims the criticality of bilingual education and its social justice purpose. The proposal embodies an understanding of bilingual education through a translanguaging lens to open up spaces where students develop not only their bilingualism and biliteracy, but also a criticality that resists social arrangements of language normativity that differentiate and exclude. The translanguaging allocation policy proposed here works with the existing spaces for English and the Language Other than English, but introduces three components that offer the flexibility and criticality needed to educate bilingual students for the future: (1) translanguaging documentation; (2) translanguaging rings; and (3) translanguaging transformative spaces.”

Somerville, J., & Faltis, C. (2019). Dual language as strategy and translanguaging as tactic in two-way dual language programs. *Theory Into Practice*, 58(2), 164–175. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1214875>

From the abstract: “In this article we draw on translanguaging theory and notions of strategies and tactics as a way to understand what we refer to as dual languaging in the context of TWDL schooling. We provide examples of dual languaging practices in fourth-grade math and social studies lessons that took place in a Spanish-English TWDL elementary school located in a large Midwestern city. We propose that the children’s use of dual languaging practices was a tactic shaped by and in response to the TWDL model. We argue that it is important for educators to understand: (a) how the notion of Spanish and English as separate languages in TWDL oversimplifies students’ and teachers’ actual languaging practices, and (b) how the language distribution model in TWDL schools can shape the languaging tactics and strategies taken up by children and their teachers.”

Spencer, T. D., Moran, M., Thompson, M. S., Petersen, D. B., & Restrepo, M. A. (2020). Early efficacy of multitiered dual-language instruction: Promoting preschoolers’ Spanish and English oral language. *AERA Open*, 6(1). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1248442>

From the abstract: “The purpose of this cluster randomized group study was to investigate the effect of multitiered, dual-language instruction on children’s oral language skills, including vocabulary, narrative retell, receptive and expressive language, and listening comprehension. The participants were 3- to 5-year-old children (n = 81) who were learning English and whose home language was Spanish. Across the school year, classroom teachers in the treatment group delivered large-group lessons in English to the whole class twice per week. For a Tier 2 intervention, the teachers delivered small-group lessons 4 days a week, alternating the language of intervention daily (first Spanish, then English). Group posttest differences were statistically significant, with moderate to large effect sizes favoring the treatment group on all the English proximal measures and on three of the four Spanish proximal measures. Treatment group advantages were observed on Spanish and English norm-referenced standardized measures of language (except vocabulary) and a distal measure of language comprehension.”

Tong, F., Lara-Alecio, R., Irby, B. J., & Mathes, P. G. (2011). The effects of an instructional intervention on dual language development among first-grade Hispanic English-learning boys and girls: A two-year longitudinal study. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 104(2), 87–99.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00220670903567364>

From the abstract: “In this article, we explore oral and reading development in Spanish and English for a sample of 70 first grade Hispanic English-learning boys and girls receiving a longitudinal English intervention and a comparison group of 70 boys and girls. Students were assessed at the outset of kindergarten and first grade, and the exit of first grade. Results showed that, on average, treatment students scored significantly better in dual oracy and Spanish literacy than control students. Girls demonstrated a faster rate in dual reading comprehension than did their boy counterparts. When the effects of treatment and gender were jointly examined, it is apparent that the treatment effect contributed to a larger proportion of variance compared to gender.”

Additional Resources to Consult

Regional Educational Laboratory Central. (2021). Ask A REL Response. *What systems and practices support implementation of dual language programs?*

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/askarel/responses/englishlearners-0421.asp>

Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic. (2019). Ask A REL Response. *What does research say about state- and district-wide policies and language policy planning to support sustainable, effective, and equitable dual language programs?*

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midatlantic/askarel_88.asp

Boyle, A., August, D., Tabaku, L., Cole, S., & Simpson-Baird, A. (2015). *Dual language education programs: Current state policies and practices*. Office of English Language Acquisition, U.S. Department of Education. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED601041>

Molina, B. S. (2020). *The impact of the language allocation plan on student outcomes in two-way dual language immersion programs* (Publication no. 2815) [Doctoral dissertation, Seton Hall]. Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses (ETDs). <https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/2815>

Murphy, A. F. (2016). Implementing and maintaining a dual language program: The nuts and bolts of a pathway to academic excellence. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 82(4), 45–53.

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1811919199?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>

Additional Organizations to Consult

Center for Applied Linguistics: <https://cal.org/>

From the website: “The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) is a non-profit organization founded in 1959. Headquartered in Washington DC, CAL has earned an international reputation for its contributions to the fields of bilingual and dual language education, English as a second language, world languages education, language policy, assessment, immigrant and refugee integration, literacy, dialect studies, and the education of linguistically and culturally diverse adults and children.”

Methods

Keywords and Search Strings

The following keywords and search strings were used to search the reference databases and other sources:

- “Language allocation” and “dual language program”
- “Language allocation” and “dual language” and “Pacific”
- “Dual language” and “Pacific region” (limiter: Since 2011)
- (90:10 or 50:50) and “language allocation”
- (90:10 or 50:50) and “language of instruction” (limiters: Since 2012; elementary education; second language instruction)
- (90:10 or 50:50) and “dual language” and “schedule”
- (90:10 or 50:50) and “dual language” and alternat*
- “Dual language” and (roller coaster or alternate day) (limiter: Since 2012)
- “Language allocation” and “instructional time” and “90:10”
- “Language distribution” and “dual language program”

Databases and Resources

We searched ERIC, a free online library of more than 1.6 million citations of education research sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences, for relevant resources. Additionally, we searched the What Works Clearinghouse database and Google Scholar.

Reference Search and Selection Criteria

REL Pacific searched ERIC and other academic journal databases for studies that were published in English-language peer-reviewed research journals within the last 10 years. REL Pacific also used resource harvesting to gather additional relevant resources. Sources included in this document were last accessed in October 2021.

REL Pacific prioritized documents that are accessible online and publicly available, and prioritized references that provide practical information based on peer-reviewed research for the education system leaders who requested this Ask A REL.¹ For questions with small or nonexistent research bases, we may rely on, for example, white papers, guides, reviews in non-peer-reviewed journals, interviews with content specialists, and organization websites. Additional methodological priorities/considerations given in the review and selection of the references were:

- Study types—randomized control trials, quasi experiments, surveys, descriptive data analyses, literature reviews, etc.
- Target population, sample size, study duration, etc.
- Limitations, generalizability of the findings and conclusions, etc.

¹ This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by education stakeholders in the Pacific Region (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawai‘i, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL Pacific) at McREL International. This memorandum was prepared by REL Pacific under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Contract ED-IES-17-C-0010, administered by McREL International. Its content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.