Achieving academic control in two languages: Drawing on the psychology of language learning in considering the past, the present, and prospects for the future

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Abstract

This paper first considers what it means to become truly proficient in a language other than the native one. It then looks briefly at the evolution of dual language programs. Next, it focuses on the issue of whether the first language (L1) or the second language (L2) serves as the language of mediation. Other dual language program issues are then discussed, such as how proficient learners actually become in academic and social language in the L2, their proficiency in grammar and pronunciation, and possible administrative constraints in the design and execution of such programs. Finally, attention is given to a guidebook written directly for dual language learners and for their teachers in which learners are encouraged to take a proactive role to ensure that they make the most of their dual program language learning and use experiences.

Keywords: dual language program, immersion program, translanguaging, inner voice, L2 pragmatics

1. Introduction

How well are children in U.S. public schools mastering other languages in class? This paper will first consider what it means to become truly proficient in a language other than the native one. It will then look at the evolution of dual language programs. Next, we will discuss the issue of whether the first language (L1) or

the second language (L2) serves as the language of mediation. Fourth, the paper will touch briefly on other dual language program issues such as how proficient learners actually become in academic and social language in their L2, their proficiency in grammar and pronunciation, and, finally, possible administrative constraints in the design and execution of such programs. Fifth, we will discuss the preparation of a guidebook for dual language learners.

There is evidence that various types of dual language programs are successful according to research reports, especially with regard to immersion programs (see Fortune, 2012, for a recent review of the literature). It is also fair to say that dual language programs have become a relatively permanent fixture in North American schools. Consider, for example, the long wait lists for programs in numerous states across the US. The consequence is that parents may be putting their children into a dual language program which is not their first choice, but rather the one where they stand a better chance of getting their child admitted (as I learned with regard to a charter school program in Forest Lake, MN which offers both Spanish and Chinese immersion programs).

In this era of increased multilingualism, advanced language proficiency is actually being called for in the workforce. Many of the original Culver City, CA Spanish immersion pupils (1970-1976) now as adults no longer profess to know Spanish very much at all.[1] My hunch is that they never achieved advanced proficiency in the language. Serving as evaluator of that program from 1971 to 1975 and then doing research on a similar program in St. Paul, MN in the mid-1990s, I came away drawing the conclusion that the students stop short of achieving high-level proficiency. In other words, they lack a proficiency level that would sustain them for a lifetime.

Since the US is characterized as a monolingual society where ability in other languages often serves more as window dressing than serving a more substantial role in communication, it is legitimate to speculate as to what advanced target language (LT) proficiency would look like. What would it take for, say, 6th-grade students to be good enough in their language skills so as to:

- have people think their pronunciation is native or near-native in the LT (i.e., the one that they are learning in the program)?
- get the pragmatics right in the high-stakes situations in the LT (e.g., making a polite request effectively)?
- have only a few minor grammar errors in their oral language (as opposed to glaring breaches of agreement, such as in Spanish gender, for example, *un muchacha bueno*)?
- have relatively easy access to the necessary vocabulary in the LT?

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[1] I attended the 40th reunion of that program in 2010 and spoke with the eight graduates who attended.

- read and critique scientific material of interest in the LT without having the language be an obstacle?
- express themselves in written language at a reasonably communicative level in the LT?
- take a major role in a presentation and discussion of a scientific topic entirely in the LT, without the need to switch to the L1 for terminology?

Recent evidence from a CLIL study underscores the importance of my third and fourth questions above. The findings from a study of what makes for language proficiency in German-English CLIL program lower secondary-school students in Berlin would suggest that vocabulary knowledge and grammatical control are major contributors to success in studies both in L1 German and in L2 English (Zydatis, 2012).

The rest of this paper will delve into issues that may have a determining effect on just how proficient students become in the LT. We will look briefly at the past, then consider current efforts to produce students who are proficient in an LT, and will then look to ways to enhance the process of attaining LT proficiency.

2. The evolution of dual language programs

Programs for promoting multilingualism are viewed in different ways in the US. A major reason for the move to dual language programs was to eliminate the stigma attached to programs primarily for minority students, aimed at removing the *shackles* that they suffered by virtue of having to *rid themselves* of a home language in favor of the societal language. Dual language programs were also intended to avoid the perception of giving unfair advantage to the *haves* by providing them yet another program to advance themselves at the expense of the less fortunate minority students. The guiding principle behind a dual language program is that everyone is benefiting. The reality of such programs, of course, varies according to the particular site, the administrative handling, the teachers involved, and the financing of the program (see de Jong, 2011).

Historically, bilingual programs were often seen as a stop-gap measure for minority pupils. According to Palmer (2009), views in U.S. society toward English-speaking middle-class children learning a foreign language differ dramatically from mainstream views toward immigrant children learning English. A Spanish-speaking child must learn English; it is expected, and any failing is considered a problem. For an English-speaking child, the learning of a foreign language (even one like Spanish, which is rapidly becoming a second national language) is viewed as an attractive option for enrichment, with any level of success highly valued and applauded. Perhaps one of the more important side-effects of immersion education is the double standard that it may reflect when majority-group children are applauded because they can say a few words in the minority language, while

high performance is expected from minority-group children. In reality, both groups merit praise for their accomplishments in their respective L2.

Nowadays, however, there is a paradigm shift because the minority language is actually slipping away. In other words, children growing up in homes where the LT at school is spoken around them choose not to learn that language, often with the support of their parents who want their children to succeed in life and do not see how high proficiency in their heritage language could contribute to that goal. So, the new challenge is to reach these heritage learners and cater to their special language needs. This creates a new kind of linguistic diversity different from that which was found in the past (see García, 2009, for an international historical perspective). The current challenge is how to educate all students equitably and meaningfully. As García and Sylvan (2011) put it:

> Imposing one school standardized language without any flexibility of norms and practices will always mean that those students whose home language practices show the greatest distance from the school norm will always be disadvantaged . . . models of bilingual or multilingual education that impose norms of language use in one or the other language without any flexibility will also privilege those whose language practices follow monolingual norms in two or more languages . . . (p. 398)

Garcia and Sylvan recommend providing a model of multilingualism that adopts a dynamic plurilingual approach with *translanguaging*[2] as an important strategy so that students and teachers can make sense of learning moment by moment. Elements of translanguaging are not new. The early bilingual programs allowed for simultaneous translation and other means for language switching. However, the recent use of the term is meant to promote in a positive way the use of multiple *languages* simultaneously to communicate; translanguaging constitutes a form of flexible *bilingualism*. Means for using translanguaging in language assessment are also being explored in recent studies (Lopez, Guzman-Orth, & Turkan, 2014; Shohamy, 2011).

Although nonheritage English-speaking students may learn more of the minority language in an immersion program than in a foreign-language-in-the-elementary-school (FLES) program in U.S. public schools, they are still likely to graduate from such programs less proficient in the minority language than minority-language speakers are in English. This is most likely due to the dominance of English in their community, the fact that their only access to input in the LT is often the classroom, and the fact that the implicit message that they receive from the larger context is that English *counts* more than an L2, be it Spanish or whatever language

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[2] *Translanguaging* is "the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system" (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 401). For a PowerPoint on how translanguaging is used effectively in elementary-school EFL instruction in Sweden, see Gunnarsson (n.d.).

(Palmer, 2009). Of course, nowadays minority students may have limited skills in the L2 or not know the language at all, even in cases where the LT is spoken by family members at home. This reality says a lot about motivation in language learning. The motivation to learn a minority-group language may be extremely low, and, ironically, even lower if it is a heritage language of the children. This is because pupils may be embarrassed about their roots. This was definitely the case with my wife of 47 years who was a monolingual speaker of Yiddish until she entered kindergarten, but who today has extremely limited Yiddish skills, due largely to her desire from a very young age not to use the language. When I evaluated a bilingual elementary school program in East Los Angeles in 1980-81, I found the Spanish surname children were poorer at Spanish and less motivated to learn it than were their Anglo peers.

With regard to the specific LT program that majority children are placed into, it is likely that these majority children will encounter initial difficulties in communication and, consequently, may have a sense of insecurity or even one of failure in the presence of native speakers of that language, assuming that the program has some or many native speakers (Cohen & Swain, 1976). In the early days of immersion education, participation in such programs often was of a *pull out* nature, where participation in the program ostracized the students by playing up their *deficit*. This was true in the early years of the Culver City Spanish Immersion Program, one of the first in the US. In more recent years, programs have become large enough so that the entire school is participating in them. Sometimes the programs are so large that they are housed in more than one building. In addition, the programs do their utmost to ease the burden of studying the school subjects through a language in which the children are still gaining proficiency. For example, realizing that students will not understand everything they say, immersion teachers use body language, visuals, manipulatives, exaggerated facial expressions, and expressive intonation to communicate meaning (Fortune & Tedick, 2003).

There is also a clear distinction between two-way immersion programs and dual language programs that involve instruction in two languages from the start. It would appear that immersion programs, at least in the US and Canada, with their emphasis on *natural* immersion into the language, are producing in the students a form of what I would term a pidgin language[3]—since the pupils in such programs tend not to be formally taught the grammar in the early years (Harley, 1993; Swain, 1991). They are expected to pick it up from the environment much as native-speaking children do. In dual language programs where the languages, especially the nonnative language, are taught early on, according to research findings

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[3] That is, their own modified and peer-reinforced variety of the language, such that in the Romance languages such as Spanish and French, they may essentially avoid the use of the subjunctive and conditional forms of the verb.

reported by Thomas and Collier (2013), there is considerable evidence that the instruction programs have a resounding impact on development in both languages. These findings apparently hold for both majority and minority group students.

I visited a dual-language program, *La Escuela Bilingüe Internacional*, at its two campuses, the one in Oakland, CA for pre-kindergarten (starting with 3-year-olds) through grade 1, and the one for grades 2-8 in Emeryville, CA.[4] My impression, without formal measurement but as an evaluator and researcher of both early bilingual and immersion programs, was that the mostly English L1 learners were relatively fluent in oral Spanish, especially at the upper elementary level. Having the teachers keep the languages separate and formally instruct pupils in and through both of them seems to have paid off. The several 5th-grade students that I had personal interviews with did not appear to me to be lapsing into pidgin Spanish, that is, poor pronunciation, lack of gender, and general nonnative-like language use that I have observed in one-way immersion programs where language mixing is permitted. So this might be an argument in favor of not encouraging translanguaging in the classroom.

Possible explanations for the apparent language success in this particular dual language program would include the fact that the students are from families where parents pay to have their children schooled in an accredited private charter school. The fact that the two prekindergarten grades have three teachers in each classroom (a lead teacher and two associate teachers) and the class size is limited to 20 children means that each pupil gets substantial comprehensible input. Teachers stick to their language guise and the students know that something serious is going on. Another factor is that the program starts early: two years before kindergarten. In addition, starting in kindergarten pupils receive one hour per day of English instruction (unlike in *pure* immersion programs), and instruction early on in the LT includes instruction in grammar. Another notable feature of this charter school program is that as of 3rd grade, all the students study Mandarin as well, so that they are not only developing solid skills in Spanish but some reasonable fluency and literacy in Mandarin as well.

3. Learning content through the L1 and the L2

The fact that immersion, two-way immersion, and dual-language programs have existed in the US for many years has provided an opportunity to observe how elementary-school pupils can learn content material either through their L1, through the L2, or through both languages simultaneously. The programs present themselves in a myriad of ways. While getting content through the L2 can

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[4] See the program website (http://www.ebinternacional.org) for its description.

work, there is usually some deficit in the processing of the academic content, at least initially.[5] There are various reasons for this deficit. One reason is that the learners lack an understanding of vocabulary that would help them grasp the concepts. Another reason is that LT grammatical structures may render the concepts less accessible. To add to the complexity, the language of transmission of content (i.e., through the LT) does not fully determine the language that learners use to process this information. In fact, the language that the pupils use for thought in the classroom varies.

It would appear that students differ in just how capable they are of thinking through academic issues in the LT. So, when they are thinking through issues that are challenging to their brains, to what extent are they doing it in the LT and to what extent in the L1? Motivated by a desire to explore this issue, I conducted research some years ago in a Spanish full-immersion program in St. Paul, MN. The study focused on the languages that grade 3-6 students actually thought in for accomplishing classroom tasks (Cohen, 1994). A team of undergraduates from the University of Minnesota followed 32 3rd-6th-grade pupils around for five months, tracking by means of verbal report the languages that the pupils used for tackling math and science tasks. A finding from that study was that the students used their L1 more than the L2 for conceptually complex verbal problems in math. The students were found to start processing a word problem in Spanish by reading it to themselves or out loud, and then to either perform online translation to English before solving the math problem, or to continue in Spanish until or unless they encountered a conceptual problem.

Early research findings from late-French-immersion in Canada have shown some evidence that use of L1 supports the learning of L2 (Behan, Spek, & Turnbull, 1995; Behan, Turnbull, & Spek, 1997). The students in late-French-immersion programs (i.e., middle-school students) were found to use English for vocabulary searches, to structure the activity, to argue out the issues, and to plan their presentations in French. The conclusion from that research was that learners worked through their cognition in their L1. The use of English apparently also helped the teachers know what the students were thinking when they were engaged in complex tasks. So this early work suggested that L1 use in communicative and immersion L2 classrooms served as a cognitive and metacognitive tool, as a strategic organizer, and as a scaffold for language development.

A subsequent study along the same lines by Swain and Lapkin (2000) found a wide variation in the use of the L1. Functions that tended to be performed in the L1 were the focusing of attention, figuring out what was expected,

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[5] This is also the case with CLIL programs in Europe (see Zydatis, 2012, regarding a German-English CLIL program).

developing an understanding of the task, looking for L2 vocabulary, and seeking information about an activity. It was also found that there was more use of the L1 with peers, especially if the purpose was social as in expressing feelings; and that there was less use of the L1 in science than in writing. Not surprisingly, they found the amount of L1 increased as the issues became more abstract. They also found that as L2 proficiency increased, L1 use decreased. The bottom line apparently was that the L1 was used as a tool to mediate their understanding of the task and also for understanding the content associated with the task. The reason why the choice of language for mediation makes a difference is that if languaging is principally going on in the L1, it is not surprising that the students are not so fluent, so articulate, or native-like in the LT. It could be argued that what makes it possible for pupils to think comfortably in the L2 is that they are well-rehearsed at doing this.

As an outgrowth of the Cohen (1994) study, an intervention was conducted at the same school in St. Paul, MN to enhance the academic language of 5th-grade Spanish immersion students (Cohen & Gómez, 2008). The focus was on improving their inner voice in the LT. The students' development of their inner voice in the LT appeared to assist them in solving problems in science and history. A few years later, Turnball, Cormier, and Bourque (2011) conducted a quasi-experimental study to determine if, when, and how the L1 was used when students in the first years of their L2 learning talked about complex science concepts. Specifically, the researchers looked at differences in the complexity of oral utterances and at differences in the use of L1 in oral utterances among late-immersion 7th graders who were participating either in a special literacy-based program (*N* = 25) or in a program involving the typical, district-prescribed approach (*N* = 24). In order to assess whether increased use of the L1 in complex statements about the context was positively associated with gains in French and science knowledge, each turn was coded as French only, English only, or as a codeswitch (e.g., *Il a tremblement de terre sous l'eau et* shake *et* cause a tsunami).

The results showed that the L1 did act as an important cognitive tool to help make sense of complex science content. During the initial oral interviews, both groups relied mainly on English. During the initial interviews, use of French was linked with lower levels of complexity, and use of English or code-switches was associated with higher levels of complexity. During the final interviews, the experimental group's oral output was more complex, but these students still needed English to manage and articulate this greater complexity. When students spoke French only, their utterances were less complex. Correlational analyses showed a positive and significant relationship between code-switching and text length (number of words) and the total number of words written in French. Error rates in written French decreased for both groups as more English or code-switching

were evident in their oral production. While correlations between language use and science results were less clear, there was a positive and significant correlation between utterance complexity and results in science for both groups. Consequently, the hypothesis that the greater number of turns coded as *English* or *code-switches* would be positively correlated to an increase in complexity, better results in written French, and better results in science knowledge was generally confirmed.

Drawing on several of Vygotsky's theoretical insights concerning mediation, the relationship of cognition and emotion, and the zone of proximal development, Swain and Lapkin (2013) suggested principled use of the L1 and target language in immersion programs:

- Students should be permitted to use their L1 during collaborative dialogue or private speech in order to mediate their understanding and generation of complex ideas (languaging) as they prepare to produce an end product (oral or written) in the target language. However, as proficiency in the L2 increases, students should be encouraged to use the L2 as a mediating tool. Further, when new and complex material is introduced within and across grades, students should again be allowed to make use initially of their L1 to language, that is, to mediate their thinking.

- Teachers need to set clear expectations about L1/L2 use in order to create a secure classroom environment in which students are able to engage in interaction with confidence. For younger children, this goal can be accomplished through a teacher's consistent use of the L1 or the LT. For older children, this goal can be further accomplished through teacher/student negotiation of a set of classroom practices relating to the use of the L1 and the LT. Swain and Lapkin assert that successful realization of this goal with older students involves making beliefs explicit about the cognitive/emotive interface in language use and language learning, leading to a constructive climate of cooperation in the classroom.

It would appear that teachers can play a substantial role in setting the rules for language use in a given classroom. A case in point is what happened when an instructor from mainland China, who was fresh out of an MAT degree in Idaho and had only been in the U.S. for two years, took over teaching a 5th-grade Chinese immersion class at a Spanish and Chinese immersion school in Hopkins, MN. He was appalled by the *Chinglish* going on in the classroom.[6] The students had had 5 school years before starting 5th grade to perfect this hybrid code, with lots of English mixed in with Chinese. His reaction was to insist that his students speak only

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[6] Note that, in principle, there is a difference between code-mixing, as in this case, and code-switching, as in translanguaging, though in reality sometimes the data look very similar. In both cases, there is shuffling back and forth between one code and another.

in Chinese. So he spent a full month coaching them in how to do this. When I visited his class, I observed the students taking charge of a game where one played the role of a detective and needed to ask fellow students a series of questions in order to determine who had committed a given crime. English was not used by the students at all during this game. The teacher sat on the sidelines and did not intervene even once during this activity. The results in this classroom simply demonstrated how much impact teachers can have once they decide that they wish to reverse a language use trend in a given immersion classroom.

The experience of this strong-willed 5th-grade teacher reinforced a sense that I had, which is that immersion students need more guidance in how to be immersion students so as to avoid the creation of a pidgin language, in this case *Chinglish*. The experience motivated me to write a guidebook for learners on how to be better performers in their given program. The guidebook and a companion guide for teachers has been piloted to a limited extent and the plan is for more piloting. The guidebook will be described below (see Section 5).

As can be seen, there are opposing views as to the best way to achieve advanced proficiency. One view is to keep the languages separate, at least in oral use. So students may be thinking in their L1, for instance, but need to use only the LT in class during the LT portions of the curriculum. Another view is that translanguaging be openly encouraged in the classroom, thus allowing for bilingual conversations where the teacher is speaking mostly or entirely in the LT and some of the students in the L1 from time to time.

4. Other issues concerning dual language programs

When the notion of starting learners off in a language other than their mother tongue was first introduced, there were high hopes that the learners would literally soar in their abilities. Years of various kinds of dual language experiences have caused educators to temper somewhat their expectations. Generally, the learners develop competence, but there is a decided gap between what they can do in the LT and what native speakers can do in different language domains.

4.1. The proficiency of L2 learners in academic vs. social language

To what extent are the pupils capable of speaking in the L2? What can they speak about? In developing an L1, children have numerous opportunities to enrich their social language, whether talking about whom they like and dislike, their concerns and aspirations about the special things in their lives, their interactions with siblings and their parents, and the like. To what extent are these

areas developed in the L2? It is perhaps not so surprising that immersion students are better for the most part at academic language than social language. Much of their class time focuses on academic language. Fortune (2008) found that, most of the time, learners express emotions through their L1, with a practical implication being that teachers may actually need to teach learners how to express their feelings through the LT. Consistent with this view, I observed a 1st-grade Spanish immersion teacher in a Spanish immersion program in Forest Lake, MN working with her students on the language of emotions: getting them to identify verbally various emotional states. She used pictures to help her students deal in Spanish with the emotional states of happiness, sadness, anger, and excitement. Presumably, these kinds of exercises can get the pupils to be more comfortable using the LT to discuss their emotions with their peers.

4.1.1. The learners' grammatical control

A major gatekeeper in determining how far learners ultimately get in their L2 proficiency is grammar. Especially in immersion programs, there has been a decided effort to refrain from teaching too much frontal grammar and from correcting the use of grammar. The consequence, as noted above, has been that immersion students (such as in the Spanish immersion programs that I have had experience with in St. Paul and in Forest Lake, MN) have developed a striking pidgin language where the students share what can appear as a blatant disregard for issues such as gender agreement, number in the verb, and tense and aspect issues (e.g., non-use of the conditional and the subjunctive).[7] One solution may well be that of coaching learners in the use of grammar strategies (see Section 5).

4.1.2. The learners' pronunciation

Developing fluency in a language can have a toll, namely, it may be at the expense of a feeling of social well-being. Becoming fluent may inadvertently involve embracing an accent that is acceptable to the LT group. The problem here is that pupils may find that they are having to give away part of their own identity to sound that way. In fact, as they reach puberty, the learners may wish to avoid sounding too native-like because deep down inside, it just does not reflect their self-identity. I remember from the early days of French immersion in Canada that some pupils perfected the French /r/ only to regress to an accented /r/ in

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[7] Research in French immersion has also shown that, despite some years of comprehensible input, students' spoken and written French may well contain numerous morphological, syntactic, and lexical deviations from native-speaker norms (Genesee, 1987; Lapkin, Swain, & Shapson, 1990).

order to not sound *too French*. A more striking example of conformity was reported to me by the Colombian research assistant in the Spanish immersion program that we were working with in St. Paul. She related to me that a native-Spanish-speaking 4th grader spoke native Spanish when speaking with her mom on her cell phone, but then she reverted to English-accented Spanish after getting off the phone since the prestige variety was the accented one. So this truly is a psychology of language learning issue, and an important one to bear in mind in such teaching contexts. Language programs may be working at cross-purposes with societal trends.

4.2. Administrative constraints on the program

A final issue regarding dual language programs concerns the administrative structure of the program and its impact on the outcomes. In the early days of bilingual and immersion programs, the practicing of different models of bilingual instruction was not necessarily constrained by budgetary considerations. Bilingual programs, for example, often had federal funding to help defray the costs. Now the local school districts are more likely to be paying for public programs, which more than likely calls for various administrative compromises. In other words, the model may not be *pure* but rather *mixed*. Consequently, if the school program is open for all children, this would mean being obliged to include recently arrived pupils who are new to the particular language program and, therefore, do not have the language background that their peers have. In the early years of immersion, when classes were kept small and experimental, the numbers of native speakers of the LT was kept low so as not to intimidate the learners. Now, even with fancy labels like *dual immersion*, the reality is that poor performing pupils may be somewhat lost in the administrative shuffle. This reality would help to explain why private charter schools have sprung up, with the parents paying a considerable amount to keep them functioning.

5. Preparing a guidebook for dual language learners

Guidebooks have been written for some dual language, especially immersion, programs. However, the bulk of the literature on dual language programs is aimed at the teaching staff, the administrators, and parents, and not directly at the learners themselves. One such guidebook aimed at teachers by Fortune and Menke (2010) acknowledged that learners may encounter difficulties functioning in their respective programs. The handbook provides dual language and immersion educators and parents with rich information and resources that address the common concerns with children who struggle with language, literacy, and

learning. Another more recent example of a guidebook aimed at the teaching staff and administrators is for teaching Chinese immersion, a language considered a challenge language for English speakers, and one for which there is both a lack of curricular materials and a lack of qualified teachers (Asia Society, 2012). This particular guide has sections focusing on the basics of program design written by experts in the field and has detailed descriptions of exemplary Chinese immersion programs across the US. However, again, the focus is not on communicating directly with learners but rather with their teachers and with administrators.

Given the increasing complexity of dual language programs and the diverse nature of demands being put on learners, there may well be a benefit to developing guidebooks for learners themselves on how to be better performers in their given program. A guidebook written expressly for learners would include strategy instruction, which covers the basic skill areas, as well as grammar and pragmatics. So, this brings us to the challenge of how to coach students in these programs in order to maximize the benefits of the programs. Drawing on insights from the field of the psychology of language learning, the goal is to find ways to maximize the learning of and through the language and, thus, to empower learners to become more proactive in their approaches to their language program. A major challenge, of course, is to write the guide in language that is comprehensible for, say, 4th-6th graders.

It was in response to this noticeable lack of a guide written directly for children that I wrote such a guidebook, with a companion guidebook for teachers (Cohen, 2014a, 2014b). The guidebook has so far been piloted with with 5th and 6th-grade Spanish immersion students at the Lakes International Language Academy (http://www.lakesinternational.org/) in Forest Lake, MN, USA, and there are plans for further piloting this next year. The guidebook includes the following:

1. An effort to increase young learners' awareness of their perceptual, cognitive, and personality-related learning style preferences, namely, their typical preferences for approaching the learning of the L2.
2. Presentation of material to heighten students' awareness about language learner strategies, namely, the processes that they consciously select in learning and using language in general and in the completion of specific L2 language tasks (whether learning new vocabulary, using the correct tense of the verb, or making a request).
   In the guidebook, language learner strategies are classified by
   • Goal:
     – strategies for learning the L2, for example, identifying, distinguishing, grouping, memorizing strategies,

- strategies for using the L2, that is, performing their knowledge by means of retrieval, rehearsal, communicative, or cover strategies;
- Function: metacognitive, cognitive, social, or affective;
- Skill: listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, or translation strategies;
- Other language aspects:
  - strategies that learners of, say, Hebrew or Arabic, use in order to successfully inflect the verb for gender,
  - strategies that are used by learners at different proficiency levels,
  - strategies that learners use for interactions within specific subcultures,
  - strategies for dealing with speakers of different varieties of the L2.

3. A heads up for learners that their motivation is likely to fluctuate according to the task they are working on. A solution applied in this learners' guide is to have the learners take their own motivational temperature as they do different language tasks and to make adjustments when needed. The instrument suggested for this is Taking My Motivational Temperature on a Language Task constructed by Cohen and Dörnyei (2006) in 2001.

4. Guidelines for fine-tuning the L2 inner voice, namely, enhancing the students' L2 inner voice. In the Cohen and Gómez intervention (2008), the instructors taught students to talk to themselves in L2 academic language using cardboard cell phones, while looking at themselves in a pocket mirror or using puppets, and writing postcards to themselves in the L2 (which they then mailed to themselves). At the beginning of the study, the students were not aware that they already used an inner voice in English to solve problems. They learned that they could use an L2 inner voice as a vehicle both for solving academic problems and when employing metacognitive strategies to monitor their vocabulary and grammar.

   For the Cohen and Gómez (2008) study, 30 lessons were planned according to the school curriculum in science and history. Each lesson emphasized the use of academic language and complex structures, in particular the subjunctive and the conditional moods, since native-speaking children at that age control these structures but immersion children were found not to (Felix-Brasdefer, 2001). Before each problem-solving activity, the teacher modeled the use of the inner voice for solving the problem. At the end of each lesson, the instructors discussed the use of academic language in class. Students were encouraged to pay attention to the strategies used in performing academic language tasks.

Strategies included creating mental linkages, repeating, highlighting, using synonyms, asking for clarification or verification, and collaborating or coconstructing responses with their classmates.

5. A focus on often neglected grammar strategies, based on insights from a website dedicated to the pursuit of ways to enhance learners' control of Spanish grammar, *The Learner Strategies Website for Spanish Grammar* (http://www.carla.umn.edu/strategies/sp_grammar). Examples are provided on the website of 72 strategies that L2 learners of Spanish have reported using successfully in their efforts to deal with problematic grammar. For example, here is a strategy for remembering which verbs take the subjunctive:

> To remember the situations in which to use the subjunctive, remember that the subjunctive is WEIRD – W (wishes, will), E (emotions), I (impersonal expressions), R (recommendations), D (doubt, desire, denial).

Research with undergraduate learners of Spanish at the University of Minnesota confirmed for the most part that use of strategies from the website was beneficial (Cohen, Pinilla-Herrera, Thompson, & Witzig, 2011). This website is mentioned just in the Teachers' Guide and the intention is that teachers in Spanish programs would explore it and determine when and how to make use of it.

6. Attention to basic strategies for dealing with L2 pragmatics. In the Learners' Guide, the section is referred to as "Strategies for knowing when and how to use language." The following is an excerpt:

> What makes things tricky for a learner of the language is that the true meaning of the sentence may not be clear. For example, if someone asks you, "Is that your cell phone?" are they just interested in the awesome phone you have or are they telling you to turn it off?

While learners are given links to both a Spanish and a Japanese pragmatics website, a more detailed explanation is provide in the Teachers' Guide, where material is presented on what pragmatics is, on the components of a speech act, and on the strategy framework for learning and performing pragmatics, as well as links to the two websites.

Insights were based on three websites for teachers, curriculum writers, and learners:

- *Pragmatics and Speech Acts* (http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/index.html), with information about six speech acts: requests, refusals, apologies, complaints, compliments, and thanking, in as

many as ten different languages. Suggested strategies for teaching the particular speech acts and sample teaching materials are provided, along with an annotated bibliography (updated in 2012), which includes information on other areas of pragmatics as well.

- A Japanese website *Strategies for Learning Speech Acts in Japanese*, (http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/japanese/introto-speechacts/index.htm), an introductory module with five additional modules, each dedicated to the L2 learning of specific speech acts in Japanese: apologies, compliments, requests, refusals, and expressing gratitude.
- An L2 Spanish website, *Dancing with Words: Strategies for Learning Pragmatics in Spanish* (http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts /sp_pragmatics/home.html). The site consists of an introductory unit and eight additional modules: compliments, gratitude and leave taking, requests, apologies, invitations, service encounters, advice, suggestions, disagreements, complaints, and reprimands, as well as considerations for pragmatic performance.[8]

6. Conclusions

Dual language programs have come a long way. A lot of exciting programs are now available. It is therefore a propitious moment to focus on supporting learners in enhancing their performance in the program in which they are enrolled. It is not a given that their participation alone will ensure that they derive the maximum benefits from such programs. It is usually the case that the learners themselves can enhance their experience in such programs by being more proactive. The potential payoff is having language skills to last a lifetime, rather than having fleeting skills, which attrite rapidly once the learner is no longer in the program.

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[8] For a paper on efforts to further update these websites for L2 pragmatics, see Cohen (in press).

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