

# **LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

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## **1. Introduction**

The following report deals with the case of Language Teacher Training in Relation to Bilingual Education in England and Wales. In actual fact, the situation I refer to is almost exclusively based on the English context; although I shall make some comments concerning the distinction between England and Wales. Education in Scotland is organised separately from England: there is a Scottish Education Office and important differences in policy and practice. It is therefore not possible to write of the United Kingdom without detailing important distinctions between the separate countries which make it up.

As a further introductory remark, I would add that I have followed the structure of national reports agreed by the sub-committee. However, many of the headings do presuppose an active and explicit policy in a particular country with regard to Language Teacher Training and Bilingual Education. This is not the case in England in particular and in the United Kingdom in general. Unlike other colleagues on the committee, I do not have statistics to quote and policy statements to refer to. In short, bilingual education, as defined by the sub-group is hardly apparent in the UK. Much of what I say therefore is an explanation of the background and rationale for this absence.

There have been very thorough reports prepared in recent years which have given detail of language policy, teacher education and the state of language medium teaching in Britain (cf. Quartermaine, Greaves, Mackiewicz and Coyle). I do not want to go over the many insights offered in these reports. However, I shall link issues for the present purposes, something which I do not believe has yet been done, and attempt to bring the situation up to date as I understand it.

The information contained in this report has been gathered from contact with those involved in the areas of bilingual education and teacher education, research collected from the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT) in London, and reference to publications of the Bilingual Sections' Association.

### **1.1 The National Linguistic Situation**

As has been noted by various authors, the English do not have a strong tradition in second language learning. English imperialism and the influence of the U.S.A. has resulted in English becoming a worldwide lingua franca. English is one of the core official languages of the EU: even in this working group, it is assumed that the natural language of discourse will be English. The situation has not encouraged the English, either as individuals or at

governmental level, to see language learning as an essential prerequisite to establishing economic and cross-cultural relations. The 'island mentality' has not been substantially shaken by linguistic imperatives.

Until the mid-80s, languages in secondary schools were taught primarily as an academic subject and relied on success in prose and version translations, dictation and the mastery of formal grammar rules. Since this time, and under the influence of Council of Europe publications, the emergence of communicative language teaching, and the apparent positive effect on motivation of the graded objectives movements, curricula and syllabuses have been reformed and are now much more transaction and oral based than before. Even so, in five years of secondary school education, modern foreign languages (and by this we really mean French for the most part) were only compulsory for the first three years. It was the norm for all but the very brightest pupils to 'drop' languages at the end of their third year (age 14) in secondary school. The least successful transferred to other subjects or continued with minimal language learning on various European Studies courses. Only literate 'arts' students carried on with their modern language studies at 16+.

The British tradition has not, until recently, been one of centralised curricular control. Schools set their own academic frameworks; exams were organised by semi-autonomous exam boards linked to the universities.

All this changed with the Education Reform Act of 1988. For the first time in England and Wales, a National Curriculum was prescribed by central government, setting out subjects to be studied at various phases of education and giving detail of assessment criteria and structures according to which schools and exam boards were to work. Percentages of time allocated to the Core Subjects of Maths, English and Science were set out.

So-called Foundational Subjects, of which languages were one, were also defined in terms of structure and assessment format. One early result of this is that languages, albeit in a restricted sense, became compulsory for the five years of secondary schooling (age 11 - 16) (since the 'failed' primary school language learning experiment of the 1950s, modern foreign languages are rarely taught to 5 - 11 year olds in British primary schools). In practice, this policy has subsequently been watered down, so that pupils in their fourth and fifth years of secondary school can now opt for a so-called 'short course' in languages; namely, modern language learning but in a vastly restricted sense.

The situation in Wales is particular. Here, it is accepted that Wales has a special cultural heritage which has to be defended. This heritage includes the Welsh language. Even so, the situation is complex. Welsh as a first language is mainly spoken in rural areas. Here, parents often see the acquisition of good English as a way for their children to 'escape' their immediate economic milieu. In towns, the attitude is often the opposite: individuals see Welsh as part of their cultural individuality and wish to promote it. Welsh is therefore taught as a second language, along with more common modern foreign languages such as French and German. Both aspects are recognised in official legislation; although there is some disagreement over the requirement of Welsh by some teachers, parents and other Welsh nationals.

England has never really had a national Language Policy in any detailed sense of the word. It does not recommend or prescribe modern foreign languages; an early attempt to do so for the

National Curriculum was heavily criticised by the teaching profession for creating two classes of languages, and subsequently abandoned. It has had an open-door attitude to all European languages in theory, whilst, in practice, higher education patterns of students learning languages and consequent teacher supply has meant that French and German predominate in school, followed, a long way behind, by Spanish and Italian.

The reforms I list above have taken place against a background of dissatisfaction with the state of schooling in England. Schools and teachers have been accused of underachieving and failing their pupils. The preoccupation of consecutive ministers of education and national inspectors have been to raise standards. English teaching, particularly reading, has been the focus of public, professional and political debate. There has been a strong opposition to so-called modern teaching methods, and 'progressive techniques' has become a derisory term. The 'back-to-basics' movement has grown in strength. In so far as we have a language policy, therefore, it has been mostly concerned with the teaching of English. In this, socially sensitive language materials, for example those displaying a range of cultural particularities, have been rejected in favour of a return to the canon: a prescribed list of set texts coming from the English literary heritage of past centuries. Evidence for this policy can be seen in the suppression of the LINK materials, which were being especially developed to teach pupils about variety in language usage.

I raise all these points to emphasise that the preoccupation of the British government has been with raising standards in National Curriculum subject areas and a clear definition of language correctness. Modern language teaching and learning somewhat falls outside of these objectives. There is an apparent willingness to increase the time given to foreign language learning in secondary education; although the administrative and operational set-up of schools often mitigate against this. The style of communicative language teaching employed in recent years has mostly avoided the overt criticism levelled at modern approaches to teaching English. This is surprising since the two share many characteristics. Is it because modern language learning is not taken seriously enough, does not count in terms of pupils' future performance in the economy? All this to say that if we do not have a specific policy on bilingual education it is because the preoccupation has been with, for example, raising standards in science rather than teaching science through the medium of the foreign language. Indeed, the latter might be considered to be a threat to the former. In this sense, concerns over academic achievement have come before promoting notions of European citizenship and training pupils to operate in a range of modern foreign languages.

## **1.2 Bilingual Education**

For the purposes of this work group, bilingualism refers to Language Medium Teaching (LMT), the employment of content-based syllabuses; in brief teaching some or most aspects of a particular subject area, for example, geography, science, business studies, through a foreign language. This is not the normal definition of bilingualism in Britain, where it is most often used to refer to so-called 'community languages; in other words, the languages of immigrant communities. The status of these languages, how they are taught in schools, and how teachers are trained is not the subject of this report, or indeed the business of the working group.

Wales is a special case. Welsh is still considered to be a living official language: for example, there are Welsh TV programmes; road signs are in Welsh and English; official documents are drafted in both languages. As such, the situation in Wales is akin to other 'multilingual countries in Europe; for example, Belgium and Switzerland. Most Welsh medium teaching occurs in primary schools; although some does also take place in secondary schools. In these, some aspect or all, of the curriculum is delivered in the medium of Welsh. Apart from medium teaching schools, Welsh is taught as a second language in primary and secondary schools. In December 1993, the Secretary of State for Wales decided to postpone introducing Welsh as a second language in Key Stage 4 of the National Curriculum (age 14 - 16). The reason for this was that some schools were having difficulties in preparing to do so. There was also evidence of shortage of staff in this area. It was therefore decided to postpone this introduction until 1999, when children who were introduced to Welsh as a second language for the first time in 1988 have reached the Key Stage 4 of their education.

Much of what I describe could be interpreted as painting a negative picture of the English and their attitude to learning modern foreign languages. However, I should point out that when representatives from other countries argue enthusiastically for LMT and bilingual education, they are often really talking about learning English as a Foreign Language. For the reasons I state above this is understandable. However, I feel we have to be measured in our declared success or failure of different countries in adopting this approach to second language learning.

Bilingualism in terms of the working group definition has a rather chequered history. The idea of teaching various subject areas in a foreign language is many centuries old. However, in recent decades, the value of this approach to second language learning has been noted by authors (cf. Hawkins) and even policy writers (cf. DES 1977). However, there has never been any official encouragement behind such ideas to make them become a reality in a large number of schools. Ministry documents have not been explicitly against such practice, but they have not been actively for it either. As a result, it has fallen to particular individuals, schools and departments to develop LMT or 'Sections bilingues' in their own local context. Invariably, these developments have relied on local staffing and the enthusiasm of the individuals involved.

As when any project is undertaken with enthusiasm and commitment, the history of experiences with LMT is, for the most part, a successful one. However, at present I have only been able to locate about six or so schools in Britain offering this type of language and subject learning. In certain cases, these schools are 'European Colleges' and thus are founded on principles of intercultural and interlingual education. In other cases, programmes have been established by particular teachers with a commitment to work in this way.

One crucial factor in the present and future success of such schemes is, of course, the availability of exams for pupils to take at the end of their LMT programmes. In this sense, the English do not have a record of achievement. Few exam boards have been prepared to offer exams combining a modern language and a curriculum subject area. Those which have done, offer a limited range, for example, geography in Spanish. Some of those which existed have been discontinued. Sadly, at present there is only one exam available: GCSE business studies in Spanish, and there is little prospect of large-scale expansion in this area in the immediate future.

In the absence of a declared national promotion of LMT and 'bilingualism' on the part of official agencies with responsibility for the curriculum, the only other likely expansion in 'sections bilingues' is to come the 'Language Colleges'. These colleges have been established in recent years following a government initiative to find ways of developing relations between schools and industry on a particular focus. They take as their model the so-called 'City Technical Colleges', where government and school funding is matched by a similar amount from industry in order to enhance the technical, scientific and information technological provision of the school. The language colleges do the same for modern foreign languages: extra languages are taught; there is a greater commitment to language learning across the age phases; and some LMT may, although by no means has to, take place. At present there are thirty or so Language Colleges in existence and the number is growing quite fast; although eventual figures are unlikely to accede double these figures. These colleges are in an early stage of development and it is at present difficult to gauge their impact on LMT policy and, indeed, successful second language learning overall.

### **1.3 Language Teacher Training**

Having set out the above, characteristic as it is of a certain amorphousness over the issue of LMT or 'bilingualism', it is perhaps unsurprising if legislation over language teacher training in this area suffers from a similar lack of urgency. Recent development in teacher training in the UK have been excellently described by Greaves in his SIGMA paper. Suffice it to say that the policy here has been one of school-based training, where trainees are to spend at least sixty percent of their training time in schools, working alongside teachers and mentors. There is not a tradition of curricular prescription for those training to teach on Britain. Competencies have been set out in most recent reforms (cf. DES 1992); although these are mostly of a generic or general subject specific nature. In other words, we do not yet have a official training programme expressed in terms of language teaching specifics, although we are told that one may eventually be forthcoming, let alone a particular policy recommendation on bilingual language teacher training.

In terms of primary language teacher training in Wales, all institutions are required to have an integral part of their courses in Welsh as a second language. It is not compulsory for students to pursue this component, but those who successfully complete it are awarded a certificate of competence. Some institutions deliver their courses in Welsh. Here, extra 'directed time' is required for the teaching of Welsh.

My 'Introduction' has been a lengthy one. It is so in lieu of detailed specifics in the rest of the report. The absence of these is simply because such programmes and policies do not yet exist in Britain. However, I shall add comment where I am able and make recommendations wherever possible.

## **2. LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING IN RELATION TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

### **2.1 Initial Teacher Training**

#### **2.1.1 At university level**

Following on from what I have detailed above, it is perhaps unsurprising if there does not exist an extensive programme of teacher training in relation to bilingual education in Britain.

The traditional route into teaching is the one year Post-graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), which graduates take after gaining their first degree. These courses are run and awarded by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and consist of training in subject methodology and general pedagogic skills. Traditionally, the PGCE was regarded as a sandwich: a term predominantly in the HEI; a term in full teaching practice; a further term in the HEI.

The PGCE traditionally had a great deal of autonomy, and degree of differences could be identified between one HEI course and another; although courses as a whole were overseen by a national professional body (CATE). However, since 1993, a government sponsored body, the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), has been set up to take control of all aspects of initial and in service education: course content, finance, accreditation, recruitment, etc. One of the TTA's major preoccupations has been to diversify training; namely, to remove it from predominant control by HEI. There are therefore various SCITT (School-Centred Initial Teacher Education) schemes operating, for example, where training takes place entirely in schools with minimum input from HEIs. Other schemes, some involving no HEI input at all, are at the planning stage.

It is therefore unsurprising that these policy initiatives, focusing as they do on routes into teaching and specifying training content, have been primarily preoccupied with generic skills rather than specialist methodology courses; the type, which, perhaps, training institutions could best provide.

We have then a similar vicious circle: in the absence of a national language policy, there are little explicit statements concerning second language learning and teaching, let alone bilingualism; because, there is no policy in this area, teacher training prescriptions from the TTA do not include it. As a result, similarly to the situation in schools themselves, initiatives are local and rest primarily on the enthusiasm of an individual or group of individuals.

I have been able to locate only one PGCE course (at Nottingham University) which formally covers bilingual education (LMT), and this does not commence until September 1997. This is, in many ways, a pilot, although the background to it involves close contacts and networking in Europe and has been instigated by the initial teacher training team in Nottingham under the leadership of a lecturer who has taken a particular interest in this style of second language learning and teaching. The plan is to offer additional training in LMT to students with good first degrees training in Geography, History and Science. Such students must also be capable in French: defined in terms of completion of an 'A-level' (roughly equivalent to the baccalaureat) in one or both languages. Students follow the normal PGCE course structure: a foundational phase; main teaching practice; and post teaching practice training. However, in parallel to this, they receive additional language training in order to update their linguistic skills and courses in LMT methodology. There is then a LMT teaching practice in secondary schools organised at the end of the PGCE; this may be abroad or in a suitable school in the UK. Assessment is through written assignment and satisfactory

completion of teaching practice. Successful students will then be able to offer their main subject as well as the same through the target language.

Another pilot course is the TEL2L (Teacher Education by Learning through 2 Languages) project based at the University College of St Martin in England. This is due to start in Sept. 1997 and involves a partnership between institutions in England, Germany and Spain (and later France). The scheme recognises that each country has a different route to qualified teacher status. In Britain, it envisages that a new 4-year BA with Qualified Teacher Status will be created. The focus of TEL2L is MBE (Mainstream Bilingual Education) and involves a series of placements, exchanges, language learning, methodology and school experience leading to a developed competence in both languages and pedagogy. The national outcomes for the project will be a nationally recognised qualification for upper primary and/or lower secondary teachers specialised in teaching Science and Geography through the medium of a foreign language.

There are about four main provider institutions of Welsh medium primary and secondary teacher training courses, including both the one-year PGCE and the four-year BEd. Welsh is offered as both a first and second language, enabling students to train for Welsh medium schools and to teach Welsh as a second language in English medium schools.

### **2.1.2 At non-university level**

I have not been able to locate any formal non-university teacher training in relation to bilingual education. Clearly, schools experienced in LMT may be involved in it but, as I have stated above, this is a minority only. Training would therefore depend on ad hoc agreements, or, by chance, such a school operating in a SCITT scheme. I do not know of any.

## **2.2 In-service teacher training (INSET)**

### **2.2.1 At university level**

I recognise that much of what I have written will be read as an apology for the relative absence of language teacher training in relation to bilingual education. There is not much evidence in Britain of a developed policy linking these two areas. However, what I have outlined will, I hope, not only explain why this is the case but also offer ideas on how the situation might be changed.

It would be surprising if the type of education reforms I have listed above did not also involve INSET. They have!

Up until the 1980s schools were supported and partly managed by Local Education Authorities (LEAs). Finance was devolved to LEAs from government who administered funds for education in the community; including teachers' salaries, the material upkeep of the buildings, and INSET. The latter was organised by local subject advisers, often based in Curriculum Development Centres, who organised programmes of INSET support. Over and above this, teachers could apply to LEAs for financial support to pursue further qualifications: MAs, diplomas, certificates and the like, often provided by local HEIs. Professional development was often driven by individual teacher's needs and aspirations. This

situation has changed considerably during the 1990s. Finances are now mostly devolved directly to schools who have their own choice and responsibility in managing their accounts. It might be said that they are run as small businesses, and, certainly, a new management level has arisen, consisting of individuals solely responsible for the running of the school rather than the education of children in it. Schools then are much more accountable: to themselves, school governors, and local parents. Exam results are published and used as a measure of the quality of teaching in the school. The school organises its own publicity, the philosophy being that competition is healthy and quality schools will attract pupil numbers and grow, and the reverse, of course.

The importance of this for INSET is that funds set aside for professional development are now devolved directly to schools. It is then for the management teams in schools to decide how it should be spent, priorities, and who it should be spent on. In other words, INSET is now school rather than individual driven. INSET funds are targeted by schools. In the absence of clear policy, according to which a school will also be inspected, from central government on bilingual education it is unsurprising that there is little demand for this type of INSET. Because there is no demand, no HEI courses are provided. In fact, HEI-based INSET itself has become less popular; firstly, because of the withdrawal of financial support for teachers; and secondly, because of the TTA who also has responsibility for teachers' continuing professional development. As previously stated, one of the stated objectives of the TTA is to diversify teacher education away from the HEIs. The TTA also work from an instrumental model for INSET, again stressing generic managerial skills and pastoral competencies rather than pedagogic knowledge. Certainly, the few modern language MA course which are still running in the country may cover the issue of bilingual education (LMT), but this would be in an incidental rather than a policy driven manner, would depend on local experience and expertise, and would involve very few teachers indeed.

The only university-based INSET course I have been able to identify in England is the proposed DIESeLL project (Distance Inset for Enhancing Second Language Learning), which is a partnership between the University College of St Martin, MidSweden University, Østfold College, and led by the University of Jyväskylä. The project involves English in the first instance (sept. 1997; the first intake of participants will be from the three Nordic partner countries: Finland, Sweden and Norway); although a German version will also later be created. Participating teachers will be limited to upper secondary school level, with a restricted number of subjects taught through the foreign language (biology, civics/philosophy, geography, history and mathematics). Once the programme has been piloted and refined, access will be broadened to include tertiary and lower secondary levels, with an increase in the number of target languages and range of MBE subjects. The aim of DIESeLL is to create a transnational distance learning curriculum and set of materials for beginner and experienced MBE teachers. Interesting though the project is, it is clear that, in the immediate future, it is unlikely to have a large impact on LMT in England.

### **2.2.2 At non-university level**

There is clearly a lot of self help both within and between those few schools involved in LMT. There is also an association for these schools which publishes a regular newsletter and organises conferences. As for the 'language colleges', they have a contract with CILT, a major provider of non-university modern languages INSET in the UK, to provide professional

support to them. However, this again is mostly about offering an information service and opportunities and a forum to share good practice rather than providing specialist training. At present, it is unclear how many 'language colleges' will be involved with LMT, and, thus, what INSET will be required.

There is GEST (Grants for Education Support and Training) funding being made available in 1997 - 98 for Welsh teachers to increase the number of them able to teach other subjects through the medium of Welsh by providing training to enable them to transfer from English to Welsh-medium teaching. I do not yet have details of the type of courses which may be offered.

### **3. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING IN RELATION TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

#### **3.1. With respect to the nature of the schools**

See my notes above with respect to 'language colleges' and 'sections bilingues'.

#### **3.2. With respect to new technologies**

There is considerable interest in the employment of IT in language learning; although actual use is patchy and, again, often depends on a local enthusiasm in a school. There is a national organisation, NCET, with a specialised brief to offer support for IT in education, including modern languages. In particular, those committed to autonomous language learning are exploring the integration of IT in this, but, again, it is hardly everyday practice in most schools. The cost of using IT is also prohibitive for schools.

There is some interest in IT support for teachers and training teachers. There is, for example, an international project centred around Exeter University in the UK. The Open University also makes widespread use of IT in training teachers by nature of its distance learning brief. However, this type of support is at a very early stage of development. I have been unable to track down anything that specifically relates to teacher education and bilingualism; although both the DIESeLL and TEL2L intend to make extensive use of IT in both the development and operation of their courses.

#### **3.3. With respect to initial and INSET training**

See comments in 2.2.2

#### **3.4. With respect to mobility of language teacher trainers and trainees**

As reported, the Nottingham University PGCE, TEL2L and DIESeLL possibly include at least one stay abroad; although they vary as to how obligatory this might be. Aside from that, the local enthusiasts in schools and universities that I write of most certainly do make use of contacts abroad to travel and develop materials for their LMT work. The developmental aspect of their work is clearly seen as the major objective for those involved in this area of activity.

### **3.5. With respect to methodology**

As reported, because LMT is small scale at the moment there is not a large quantity of nationally available materials, still less a commonly agreed methodology. Those involved do share methodological ideas and materials, but, currently, there are few publications, if any.

## **4. NEW NEEDS IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING IN RELATION TO BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

Starting from such a low base, it is perhaps tempting to recommend ambitious plans to bring about a revolution not only in modern language teaching but the necessary teacher education to support it. It must be said that the case for LMT is not yet proven. What experience we have with it suggests it does work in certain contexts, but this is a long way from concluding that this style of second language learning is an imperative. Nevertheless, it is clear that the absence of a clear policy in Britain with regard to second language learning and the type of ITT and INSET structures I have described are hardly facilitating for teacher education in this area. One is looking for common European agreement, possibly in line with the European Framework for Language Learning recently published by the Council of Europe. Such an agreement would need to be followed by a nationally stated policy with regard to bilingualism and teacher education, both initial and in service. Only then would schools support it, and back up their support with financial resources. Only when there is such a demand for teacher education of this type will providers offer the necessary teacher training and professional development. Only then will supply meet demand.