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1961

Johannesburg College of Education

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/25104

Malherbe, E.G. (1961). Learning English in a bilingual country: Address given at the inaugural meeting of the English Academy of Southern Africa, in July 1961. Symposium: A Journal for Education in Southern Africa, pp. 108-118.

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ENGLISH ACADEMY

LEARNING ENGLISH IN A BILINGUAL COUNTRY

by PROF. E. G. MALHERBE

An address given at the Inaugural Meeting of the English Academy in Southern Africa in July 1961.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen:

I would like to thank you very much for your kind introduction. I do take it as a compliment that you have invited me to address this august gathering of the English Academy. I am the only Afrikaner on this whole programme and, therefore, I feel complimented that you have asked me but, I must say, that it was with a certain amount of diffidence that I accepted this invitation to address you. That diffidence, as I have been attending these meetings, has been changed almost to trepidation when I noticed with what elegance the other speakers addressed you.

My linguistic antecedents go back quite a bit—I am older than most of you—and I can say this that my education has been through two strange media, the one High Dutch and the other English. I was born in the Orange Free State under a Republican flag and my father fought right through the Boer War against the British and my mother and my sister and myself were captured by the British and put into a concentration camp and the British burnt down our home. Nevertheless, the Orange Free State, despite fights with the British, never had a hostile feeling to English; that is why the Orange Free State until fairly recently was the most bilingual province in the Union. There is a subtle difference between the word British and English!

EARLY SCHOOLING

Later we moved to the Cape Province and there I went to school in a unilingual environment where the medium of instruction was almost exclusively English. I may say that as regards Afrikaans, the Afrikaans "taalbeweging" virtually started in my grandfather's home in Wellington, when S. J. du Toit and Hoogenhout came to read their first efforts in poetry to my aunts, who were young girls at that time. So that my antecedents are very much in the Afrikaans field and I learnt whatever English I know in a very artificial situation by having it used as a medium of instruction. I say this here because of what may follow later. Now in our home my father was a Dutch Reformed Church Minister. He had the practice, (and that was also true in my grandfather's home), of having family prayers in the mornings in English and in the evenings in Dutch. That is how I learnt my first English from the English Bible. Knowing the biblical stories fairly well from the Dutch Bible I could follow the English Bible that way and picked up whatever English I learnt in the home in that particular way. They had the custom which was perfectly natural also of singing English hymns at prayers in the morning and, of course, "sange" in the evening. I often wondered whether we have not neglected the Bible as an educational organ in this country too much, and quite apart from religious motives, I feel that the Bible is a monumental piece of literature which from the point of training people in an easy way to pick up vocabulary and good language in either language, the Bible should be used far more, and could be used in the home in the same way.

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MEANING OF BILINGUALISM

Now this training that I went through is not unique because most of the men of my generation, your leading statesmen and others, have had much the same background. General Botha, General Smuts, General Hertzog, Dr. Malan, all were trained in their school days, and even at the University, through English medium. Somehow, they survived! Now, I give this here, as I said before, in order that you might understand some of the prejudices and points of view that I may express during this address. Now coming to bilingualism, this word has a very wide range of meanings. As a University person, I always have to start off with a definition. As ordinarily understood, it means the co-existence in the same individual, home, community or state of two languages, each at a certain but not necessarily equal level of efficiency. In the individual this range extends along a scale of attainment all the way from almost zero minimum at the one end, involving merely a colloquial

knowledge of the mother tongue, or first language, plus a very casual or elementary acquaintance with the other tongue, to the other end where there is supposed to be found an ideal state of perfection in both languages hardly ever attained, even in one language by itself—Shakespeare and Dante rolled into one within an Anglo-Italian community!

In holding that the latter state of perfectability in both languages connotes true bilingualism, many people contend that there is no such being as a truly bilingual person. This argument is sometimes used as an excuse by lazy monoglots in a bilingual country for not learning the other language. If 100 per cent perfection is looked for it is doubtful whether one could easily find a truly unilingual person. Another misconception is to think of bilingualism as necessarily synonymous with equilingualism. It isn't.

Now what is to be our criterion?

I would say that realising (a) that we have to do with two variables and (b) that ability in a person's first language may vary greatly among individuals according to native capacity and training quite as much as ability in the second language and (c) that an infinite number of combinations is possible depending on the particular circumstances, our definition of bilingual must of necessity be a pragmatic one.

Bilingual for what, must be the criterion. It is also a question of degree. The how-much-ness of a person's bilingualism can be graded like steps on a ladder, depending on the purpose for which such bilingualism is required. For instance, a person may be perfectly bilingual to be a tram conductor and say "kaartjies asseblief/tickets please" . . . whereas he could not possibly pass effectively in the civil service; and a person in the civil service, writing the kind of letters that our chairman referred to, may not be good enough to be a teacher . . . so there are very many grades, depending on the type of function that is to be performed and corresponding roughly to certain social and professional demands in a particular country.

Many people seem to think that bilingualism has a deleterious affect on intelligence. I found, however, that, in this country, after testing in 1938 over 18,000 pupils in 240 representative schools throughout South Africa, bilingual children on the whole reached a higher all round level of scholastic achievement than unilingual children. The superiority in intellectual development of bilingual over unilingual children may be due to selective factors in the social nature which operates in South African society—the exact rôle which such factors play must still be determined. The most rigorously scientific investigation in which these factors were kept more or less constant is that made by Arsenian in his study "Bilingualism and Mental Development," and I will just give you his conclusion: He says no reliable differences in intelligence or age-grade status were disclosed between a group of monoglot and a group of bilingual children—matched person per person on race, sex, socio-economic status and age in months. Most of the evidence against bilingualism is based on a priori arguments rather than on fact. It is contended that because a bilingual child has to learn two names for a certain thing instead of one, his mental growth is halved! Jespersen, the prominent authority on language study who has frequently been quoted here, asserts categorically, and I quote:

"The brain effort required to master two languages instead of one certainly diminishes the child's power of learning other things."

Now this, I venture to say, is going beyond the facts. It assumes that the human mind is like a box which can hold just so much and no more, so that if a new language or subject is put in, the others get pushed out! The human spirit is no such mechanical contraption, it is an organic growth with all the flexibility of an organism. We know actually too little about human capacity to put such arbitrary limits to a man's powers of assimilation. The main point is that there must be the will or the urge to learn. If one surveys the best experimental evidence on the question, for example, the work of Ronjat, Pavlovitch, MacCarthy, Shiller, as well as that by Arsenian, whom I have just quoted, one finds no scientific proof of the alleged mental inferiority of bilingual children. One of the things I tried to do in this big survey of 18,000 children was to make sure that these factors that may be influencing selection, such as socio-economic status, home background and so on, were kept constant, and only when you break down all your classes into those little groups can you be sure that you are really comparing the same things. Now in Prof. Jeffares very interesting and excellent lecture, (if I may say so) at the beginning of this session, he showed how in recent times the increasing speed and efficiency of communication have contracted our world into a small neighbourhood. This has increased the need for people of all races and countries thus brought ever more closely together to learn languages other than their mother-tongue. In short homo sapiens must now become a linguistic amphibian if he is to survive as an educated person in the modern world.

INDUCEMENT TO BILINGUALISM

This applies particularly to members of the smaller language groups who must become bilingual in order to share in the present civilisation. This was realised and stated more than 60 years ago by H. G. Wells when he said, "the inducements to an Englishman, Frenchman or German to become bilingual are great enough now-a-days but the

inducements to a speaker of the smaller languages are rapidly approaching compulsion. He must do it in self-defence. To be an educated man in his own vernacular has become an impossibility. He must either become a mental subject of one of the greater languages or sink to the intellectual status of a peasant."—The truth of what Wells wrote more than half a century ago has applications with peculiar force to the emergent nations in Africa today. Dr. de Kiewiet you will remember, when he visited Africa last year, likened the new nations in Africa ". . . to a maternity ward of premature infants, it is too late for birth control, its problems are those of delivery and post natal care . . ." Sir Eric Ashby, in his monumental report on education in Nigeria, to which Prof. Jeffares referred, called "Investment in Education," assumes almost as axiomatic that English will be the medium of all future education in Nigeria, despite the fact that there are nearly 200 vernacular languages spoken by some 35-million people in that country. Now we find, to continue Dr. de Kiewiet's metaphor, that these young African nations, having cut the umbilical cord of political colonialism, will now have to learn to embrace the intellectual colonialism under a wider culture for spiritual nourishment in order to avoid being starved by their own aggressive and limiting nationalism. This point was expressed in another and more picturesque way by an old Zulu Chief giving evidence before an education commission in South Africa on which I served some 25 years ago. We were stressing the importance of the vernacular in the education of Zulu children. "Yes," he said to us, "that may be so, but if I know only my own language I am no better than a chicken scratching around for its food in a narrow pen. If, however, I know the white man's language I can soar like an eagle." The political pressures for learning a language other than one's own mother-tongue are becoming greater every day. Under sputnik pressures the optimists today are studying Russian fairly widely in most Western countries—the pessimists are beginning to study Chinese!

You know the English are very loath to study other languages. John Milton said that this inability to learn foreign languages was due to the prevailing cold weather in England which precluded people opening their mouths properly when they spoke! I find that the case of the English is largely a matter of attitude. It's a well-known fact that a feeling of superiority or snobbery acts as a handicap for English-speaking peoples in acquiring another language, even in a bilingual country like Natal! While the Americans tell the world that they are the greatest nation on earth, the British simply assume that they are! Renier, in his amusing book "The English, are they Human?" said that whereas the English considered themselves superior to the rest of the world, the Scots only consider themselves superior to the English!

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL

I must pass on to something far more serious and probably dull, and that is the implications for the school.

The importance of language in a multi-lingual country like South Africa has important implications for the school. There is constantly a demand for more time to be devoted to languages in our schools, which are already suffering from an over-crowded curriculum. This faces teachers, who have pupils at school for only about five hours per day, with the unenviable choice between giving pupils less content for example in arithmetic, science and social studies on the one hand, and on the other committing them to linguistic insularity. Of course linguistic insularity can in its turn have a limiting effect on content in fields of knowledge other than language. The educational implications of bilingualism are not the same for persons living in a bilingual country as for people living in a unilingual country. I think we must distinguish between these two when we deal with individuals. In the latter, that is in a unilingual country, only relatively few children of a more marked linguistic capacity, or of wealth and leisure, at their own option study a foreign language. For example, you find that in Scandanavian countries and in Holland people study English. British children learn French, which they probably speak only if they go abroad and even then rather inadequately. In the former, that is in a bilingual country, all children, including the average and below-average are compelled by necessity if not by law, as in South Africa, to learn a second language at school. This means, as it does in S.A., that over a third of every child's time at school is taken up with the teaching of the two official languages. African children have not only to learn two official languages, but have also to keep up their vernacular. This means that nearly half of the school time is taken up with the teaching of languages amongst the Bantu. While, therefore, the education in bilingual and trilingual countries is enriched, linguistically there are also hidden penalties. Complaints by Universities and by Commerce and Industry that high school graduates are deficient in general knowledge may find some justification here. Also the study of a third modern language or of the classical languages, for instance Latin or Greek, which formerly had such an important place in the curriculum, has thus virtually been ousted for all but a small percentage of pupils. Here I may mention in passing that the recent decision of the Joint Matriculation Board to allow Bantu high school students to offer three languages at the A level, that is a Bantu language, English or Afrikaans, has had a very serious effect

on those students who come up to university. If they take Bantu as a first language, obviously either English or Afrikaans, usually English, would be taken at the lower level; and we find that, since this has been introduced in practice, Bantu students coming up to the Medical School in Natal, are so deficient in their knowledge of English, which is to be the medium of instruction throughout their Medical course and in which all their Medical books are printed, that they cannot manage to do their Medical training without supplementary training in English. Consequently we have made it compulsory in our Medical School for every student to pass a first course in English and a first course in social science, so that he can at least learn to use the language. We found that in studying the progress of Medical students throughout the Medical School, where we have quite a number of B.Sc.'s who have come up from Fort Hare, Witwatersrand and Cape Town Universities, that there is a far greater incidence of failure amongst those B.Sc.'s than there is amongst the students who come directly into the Medical School and who have gone through this preliminary two years. This shows what a tremendous importance a language has for people when they learn at a University. And I think the point was made before in some of the addresses here, that nearly half of the students at our Universities today do not study any language at all; they are the engineers, the people who take sciences, and become the skilled barbarians. They have no chance of learning a language and by the time they get to their third year they are very sensitive of that themselves; they often come to us and ask us whether we cannot do something about it. At the University of Natal, as I think Prof. MacMillan mentioned, the only remedial treatment that we can give them is to get them to take the Speech and Drama courses, in which they excel quite considerably. The Accountants, the Architects, the Engineers are taking this course because they realise that in their professions they must learn to speak accurately and concisely, and to write effectively.

The subject that I have to speak on is learning English in a bilingual country. I shall omit, therefore, a discussion of bilingualism as it occurs in a single individual or the consideration of minority language groups in unilingual countries, however interesting and equally valid their problems may be. I shall confine my observations to the learning of English in an officially bilingual state. As a concrete example let us take South Africa because it is the country that we know best and because it is the most bilingual country in the world today. At any rate it has administratively applied bilingualism in schools in a more universal and thoroughgoing way than any other country I know of. When the four provinces were united into the Union of South Africa in 1910, one of the main principles laid down in the Act of Union was: "Both the English and Afrikaans languages shall be official languages of the Union and shall be treated on a footing of equality and possess and enjoy equal freedom and rights and privileges." Therefore every child in every school throughout the Union is taught both English and Afrikaans as languages; the only exceptions that are made are in the case of diplomat's children who stay here for only a short while. The study of the second language is started not later than one or two years after beginning school, and the results of this official policy are reflected in the census figures which show a steady rise of bilingualism amongst our White population of seven years and over, during the last forty years. In 1918, the percentage who indicated on the census form that they were able to speak both English and Afrikaans was 42%; in 1921 it had risen to 51%, in 1926 to 58%, in 1936 to 64%, in 1946 to 69%, in 1951 to 73%. If one takes only the age group of 10 years to 64 years the percentage was 78% in 1951, the last year for which census figures are available. Today my guess is over 80% of the people in South Africa will have stated on the census form that they can speak both English and Afrikaans. The degree of what that means nobody can really ascertain. Some people think they can speak another language if they can swear intelligently in the other language! The number who speak Afrikaans only was 8% and the number who could speak English only was 14%. Similar census figures for Canada, which is often spoken of as a bilingual country, show, according to the latest Whittaker's Almanack, that only 12% of the population of Canada speak both English and French. The reason, apart from the deliberate and official school policy, for the high percentage of bilingualism in South Africa lies to a large extent in the geographical and social interspersion of the two languages in our community. It is not like Canada where geography and religion divide the French from the English Canadians. The two languages are so widely interspersed in South Africa by usage in the home, schools and in everyday activities of commerce and industry, as well as in the Government service, that only a very small minority can regard the second language as a foreign language. Therefore the methods of instruction used in the schools need not necessarily be the same as those used in unilingual countries for learning a foreign language. I think this is a very important point. The South African situation is to a large extent unique and this must be kept in mind in the discussion which we are having on this topic. The methods will also vary according to the prevalence of the supporting background in the second language outside the school-room.

QUALITATIVE LOSS

Although the number of people who state on the census forms that they are able to speak both English and Afrikaans has increased in a remarkable way, there seems to be a good deal of evidence to indicate that this quantative increase has not been matched by qualitative improvement in the use of the second language, and particularly in the case of English where it is the second language. In fact there is plenty of evidence to show that Afrikaners are now beginning to speak English almost as badly as English speaking South Africans used to speak Afrikaans in the days when Afrikaans was less widely used! One notices this in the schools, and through to the Training Colleges and the Universities. You notice it in the Civil Service. I have been, for my sins, examiner for the Public Service Entrance examination for a number of years and could see this deterioration going on very steadily—particularly where we used fairly objective tests in measuring linguistic ability in the Civil Service. To what can this deterioration be ascribed? I contend that the causes are political, social and administrative. Political and social factors influence the children's attitude towards the second language. On the administrative side the main reason is the growth in the number of single-medium schools in this country where English and Afrikaans speaking children are segregated and deprived of the normal opportunities of hearing the second language spoken by children of their own age group, inside and outside their schools. This is where we, of the older generation, were much more privileged because then the children were not divided, we mixed quite freely with each other and we didn't notice whether a person was really English-speaking or Afrikaans-speaking; they were just good and nice people to associate with.

A WRONG PRINCIPLE

Under the pretext of the pedagogical principle of home-language medium, our European children are artificially "kraaled" off from one another into unilingual medium schools during the most impressionable period of their lives—Afrikaans-speaking on the one side and English-speaking on the other, as if our children came from two linguistically exclusive types of home. South Africa is the only bilingual country in the world where home-language medium is enforced by the State with a view to splitting the children living in one community. The operation of the school as a dividing factor is having a serious affect on the training of our teachers and leaders. To be trained as a teacher today, a South African youth goes from a linguistically homogeneous school to a unilingual Normal College or University. The chances of his learning to associate with and to understand his fellow South Africans of the other language group are, therefore, reduced to a minimum. In many cases the only mental picture which he has of his fellow South Africans is the distorted version presented by a one-sided daily press, and he often dismisses what appears in the other language press as propaganda. The S.A. child learns to think in terms of labels and clichés instead of in terms of warm and intimate contact. If he becomes a teacher, he only goes back to the same one-sided type of school as the one which produced him. I am speaking in general terms, and there are exceptions on either side, but we are thus inbreeding the very type of teacher and school principal against whose original one-sidedness, usually in English schools, the establishment of separate unilingual schools was a reaction and the supposed remedy. We are accordingly developing in our educational system what are practically closed circuits of human association. This has important political and social consequences. By accentuating language differences it has caused a set-back to the process of developing a corporate national feeling of South Africanism amongst the younger generation. This separation of our children ignores basic facts in the linguistic constitution of our South African people, namely that in a very large proportion of homes English and Afrikaans are used as languages. As far back as 1938 I found on this survey that I referred to, that 25% of the school children hear only Afrikaans at home, 32% hear only English and that in 43% of the homes both English and Afrikaans were spoken. Today with a large number of people being able to speak both English and Afrikaans I am sure that this figure of 43% must be near to 50% because young people marry into the other language group, and this mixing is probably on the increase, except that people find their mates at Universities and at Normal Colleges and in that way the chances of people falling in love with people of the other language group are diminishing.

Strictly speaking, therefore, if the home language medium principle is to be consistenly applied, one should have to teach at least 50% of our school children through both English and Afrikaans medium. Today, however, this amphibious linguistic background of our school children is totally ignored, and they are all cut into two separate sections on the all or none principle as regards school medium. In justification of this, the authority of the census figures is quoted, where, in response to the question on the census form: "What is the language usually spoken in your home?" (note well the word language is singular) we find that 38,000 people, that is 1.4% of the Europeans in South Africa, indicated that both English and Afrikaans were spoken in their homes. Now from the nature of the question it is quite obvious that only one language was expected to be given to the answer and persons who filled in more than one

language were obviously answering the question wrongly. From this question insofar as it has been correctly interpreted, we learn that Afrikaans is the dominant language in 57% of the homes and English in 39% of the homes. Not one of the other languages, for example Nederlands, German, Yiddish, Greek, Portuguese, etc., spoken in the Union, reaches 1%. Intelligent persons, that is the people who interpreted the question correctly, would of course indicate one language only. Obviously there are many homes where more than one language is spoken, not only English and Afrikaans but also English and Yiddish or English and German or German and Afrikaans and so on. The purpose of the question obviously was to ascertain which was the dominant language, in the singular, spoken in the home. The responses giving more than one language should be regarded as errors of which there is always a margin in the interpretation of census questions. Not even the wisest Director of Census anywhere in the world has succeeded in devising a completely fool-proof form. The interesting point is that this error figure has remained constant through the years which shows that there is a certain incidence of error that is constant despite the fact that the proportion of people speaking both languages has increased. It was therefore very silly to conclude, as has been done, chiefly for political reasons, that there are only 1% of the homes where both English and Afrikaans is spoken. It has been said that, as there are after all only 1% of people who speak both English and Afrikaans at home, there is nothing wrong with the children being divided into two water-tight compartments. To have obtained proper data regarding home language background, a far more refined method should have been used, somewhat on the lines that I used in the bilingual survey I made in 1938, by which I also discriminated as to whether it was the father or the mother or brothers or sisters who spoke the other language or whether the second language occurred often, sometimes, or never in the home.

AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

I come now to the use of English as a medium of instruction. In a bilingual country one must distinguish between teaching the two languages as subjects and using them as media of instruction. Though the regulations differ somewhat in the four provinces, it can be assumed that all White and Coloured children in S.A. in schools are taught both official languages—English and Afrikaans—as subjects. All indigenous African pupils are taught their vernacular language as well as at least one of the European languages as subjects. For the moment I shall limit my observations to the schools for White pupils, although a good deal of what I may say is applicable mutatis mutandis to Bantu pupils as well. Obviously the child begins to learn his first language as a subject right from the start, but when and how a beginning should be made with the study of the second language as a subject becomes a question of educational method and depends on circumstances. According to the best educational theory in S.A. today, both official languages should be taught to all pupils as subjects right from the beginning but with the following important provisos:

1. That the child must hear the second language first and then only later on learn to speak it; next to read it, and then lastly only, to write it. In fact this order is given in the report of the Commonwealth Conference on the teaching of English as a second language to which references have been made—the conference held at Makerere College in Uganda last January.

2. That the young child must under no circumstances be forced to learn to read or write the second language until it can do so in the first language. This is a necessary proviso, particularly where the one language is phonetic, for example Afrikaans, in its spelling and the other, English, is not phonetic in its spelling—in fact it is the most absurd spelling that you can ever think of in any language in the world!

3. That it does not matter how early in school life a child starts the second language, provided that it follows the mode of acquisition of the first language in learning it. This is best achieved in free association with other children who speak the second language, and failing the presence of such children, the second language should be introduced conversationally through games and other interesting experiences of intrinsical and educational value to the child, starting with the activities in the schoolroom and going on to simple stories in the field of history, geography, nature study and so on. Using this way the language lesson, whether in the first or second language, becomes ancillary to the other subjects instead of being somewhat sterile by itself. I think the most sterile teaching is done when languages are just taught by themselves. In Bantu schools today you will see a most pathetic spectacle of this going on. Too often these language lessons which occur once a day on the time table are occupied with uninteresting drivel as far as the content of the language exercises is concerned. Conversely every lesson, no matter whether it is arithmetic, history or health in the primary school, should also be a language lesson in the sense that the teacher should insist on every child using good clear forms of expression when it speaks about that subject. For slovenliness in language leads

to slovenliness in thought, no matter what the subject. There are many experienced teachers who realise this and carry this principle into effect in both official languages because they find that the time allotted to either of the two languages as subjects is really too little for them to ensure proficiency in the use of that language, particularly in its spoken form. The importance of language in its spoken form cannot be over-emphasised at school during the child's extra curricular activities also. This is where speech festivals such as we have annually in Natal, do such excellent work, and one cannot start early enough in the child's life. I told you how, for instance, I heard the Bible stories by ear in the other language long before I was able to read it in that language. Young children's ears are extremely sensitive to intonation and pronunciation, they learn a language by associating a word directly with its object and not via a word in the other language as we are inclined to do when we are adults. Adults are often lost in the eternal triangle between the object, the English word, and the Afrikaans word, instead of going direct from the word to the object or the action which has to be described in sound. I do not think for a moment that learning two languages interferes in the slightest with the child's mental development, provided it is done in a natural way. The attitude towards a language is all important; the prestige a language enjoys in a community facilitates the learning of it. History tells us how in Europe the radiance of Versailles used to spread to the homes of noblemen in Germany, Poland and Russia. Even today the prestige which French enjoys enhances the learning of that language in smaller countries neighbouring on France, such as Belgium and Switzerland and even Holland. On the other hand the snob value of a new language may have the effect as it did in America of making immigrant children ashamed of their parents and their traditional culture. This race-shame can become pathological and unsettling in its effect on group and individual personality. Similar effects have also been observed in Wales.

LANGUAGE OF CONQUEROR

In countries where the second language is the language of the conqueror, there is hyper-sensitiveness which acts as a psychological block against the learning of that language. The nursing of what Adler calls a deeply wounded collective self is often exploited for party political purposes, as in South Africa, to the detriment of children's learning processes, particularly where these people have never suffered anything and know nothing about it, but is a sort of induced suffering through propaganda. I once overheard a teacher introducing an English lesson in a rural school situated in a predominantly Afrikaans-speaking community in the Transvaal, by saying: "Come children, let us now again wrestle for an hour with the enemy's language" ("Kom kinders laat ons nou weer vir 'n uur gaan worstel met die vyand se taal"). Mind you, they did wrestle, I can assure you! Needless to say, I found by means of standardised tests I gave in that school, that the pupils were two years behind those in a similar school two miles away where the teacher did not nurse such hostile sentiments towards the English language. As Professor Hughes, who was formerly here in South Africa and later taught in Canada, pointed out, "the ex-vanquished has no monopoly of psychological wounds." No one wins in a war; we are all losers, the victor is no exception. Recent political developments in S.A. where the English-speaking element is fast becoming the underdog have demonstrated the dictum of Mazzini that the morrow of the victory is more perilous than the eve. In fact just recently, in Natal, a young teacher told me of an incident when they were all excited over this Republican business. She had said, "Now children, you've been very good," (this was in an English medium school), "I'm going to read you a story, a nice story but it's in Afrikaans," and there was a groan from the children: "Oh, no, not that terrible Verwoerd language!" Of course, S.A.'s history is full of this, and you find that John Buchan protested against Milner's introduction of English as a sole medium of instruction—virtually an attempt to kill the Dutch language after the Boer War. He warned him, and it's a very interesting fact and I wish I had the actual words here, but he said, "in no country must a statesman ever destroy the holy places of a people." He also quoted what Coker said to Sir Walter Scott: "If you un-Scotch us you make us mischievous Englishmen!" Now I believe that the attitude which children have towards the learning of the second language is more important than the notion of mental obfuscation. In any event, the theory that bilingualism necessarily affects intelligence in a deleterious way has not been proved, as I said before. Those who have expounded this theory seem to have disregarded the wonderful resilience of a child's intellect. Most children seem to recover from whatever teachers try to teach them at school, provided however, as I said before, that the emotional element does not supervene. It is curious that the emotional element is the thing that sticks in memory far more than the things that go via the element of reason. The success with which learning is effected at school depends very much on whether the language is one that is eagerly sought after, or the language is the language of a nation feared, hated or despised. In the Talmud you find the following words:

> "He who teaches Greek to his child is as bad as he who is breeding swine."

That was in the Talmud. In this country you have heard this phrase:

> "Die taal van die veroweraar in die mond van die verowerde is 'n taal van slawe" (the language of the conqueror in the mouth of the conquered is a language of slaves).

I must say I never felt a slave! Of course, this was one of the anti-British slogans made popular in South Africa after the Anglo-Boer War, though it has been taken over from the Flemish language history of more than a hundred years ago, and it has persisted in this country for more than half a century. I would say therefore that psychological factors must be taken into account when assessing the efficacy or otherwise of school methods, procedures, and administrative machinery employed in connection with the education of young children in a bilingual country. Many experiments in this field in so called research have been of doubtful value, because of the failure to grasp the complexity of the situation and the all important rôle which social selection plays when one compares the attainments of individuals and of groups. In all these investigations one is faced with the same difficulty which besets the interpretation of intelligence test results, namely, that they are valid only to the extent that all the other environmental factors are homogeneous and are kept constant. I feel, as Prof. MacMillan said, that there is a tremendous scope for very interesting research and I wish somebody would repeat the survey that I did in 1938 using exactly the same tests that we used then and then you would be able to see to what extent there has been a change in the linguistic background of children in this country.

I come now to the question of language—using language as a medium. In S.A., the child must be taught up to the end of the primary school through the medium of the home language. In most of the provinces except Natal, they do so right up to Matric. Parents cannot choose the medium of their children: I insisted on my own children going to an Afrikaans-medium primary school and in the secondary school they went to an English-medium high school, with the result they were completely bilingual as far as children can be bilingual and it wouldn't have mattered what University, whether Afrikaans or English, they went to after that.

It is legally possible, according to the old law, to introduce the second language as a partial medium, as an additional medium, beyond the primary stage, but that is very very rarely done today. For reasons already mentioned the home language medium principle is more strongly entrenched in the educational enactments in S.A. than in any other country. I must not be misunderstood here. As an educational principle, where one goes from the known to the unknown, it is natural to use the child's home language as a medium of instruction, especially in the early stages. This is perfectly sound and if you want to read very humorous accounts, those of you who read Afrikaans, you must read Postma's book "Die Esel se Kakebeen" of his experiences as a young Afrikaans child completely unilingual going to a school where everything was done in English and his confusion then—but he has somehow recovered!

Education to be effective must utilise the child's own environment and experience as a foundation on which to build. Where the child, however, has contacts with the second language in his home or outside environment, then there is no reason why the school which should really be a replica of his environment, should not use the second language in its spoken form, as a partial medium right from the beginning. In certain schools where both English and Afrikaans children are taught in two ways, firstly in parallel classes where each class is taught separately according to the child's designated home language, this type of organisation has at least the advantage that the children will hear the second language spoken on the playground and not merely in a language lesson. The other method is of course, as you know, the so-called dual-medium method which takes the form sometimes of teaching some subjects through Afrikaans-medium and some subjects through English-medium. The other form of dual medium is where the teacher uses both media in the same lesson. We have found that where teachers are able to do that, the progress of children, not only in the language, but even in the various subjects has been considerably above the average, other things, intelligence and so on, being kept constant. If a child, for instance, listens to a lesson and the teacher, as most good teachers do, repeats at the end of the lesson what has been said before, the child's mind usually goes clean off and goes to the sports field and thinks of his girl friend and so on, because he has heard that before while the teacher is repeating, but if the teacher repeats the information in the other language, there is always a little bit of a spark, a new impulse, coming into his mind, giving him a slight nuance of differences of concept. For instance, talking about an isosceles triangle, no child except those who knew Greek could really make out what that was but if you say "dit is 'n gelykbenige driehoek"—"equal-legged triangle"—a child immediately grasps that meaning. In history you read about the legislative assembly—"die wetgewende vergadering"—as soon as he gets these two impacts, the concept hits him twice. I have found that in schools where this has been consistently done there was no diminution in the child's own language, and there was an enrichment of concepts in the child's content subjects and a tremendous gain in the child's second language because

we were all the time switching to and fro with a considerable enrichment of concept.

The greatest opposition today against the parallel class and dual medium system has come from the so-called Christian National Education policy. It's an ironical fact, and I don't know whether you know it, that the original Christian National Education Schools which were established immediately after the Anglo-Boer War, used the dual medium system and certain subjects were taught through the English medium and certain subjects through the Afrikaans medium—at that time it was Dutch medium. My own wife was taught in that type of school—In fact her father was one of the founders of the C.N.E. school—and he would be horrified to find that the present idea of Christian National schools is attributed to what he had started, because the founders made the big distinction between British and English, and they felt that English was an important culture of which they should not deprive their children, and that is why they taught certain subjects in English and certain subjects in Afrikaans, in the original C.N.E. schools. Some of our most bilingual writers in S.A., from Jan Celliers onwards, were taught this system where both media were used. You will be surprised to know that Jan Celliers who was considered to be one of our first great Afrikaans poets wrote his poem "Die Vlakte," first in English, then he wrote it over in Afrikaans. These people had their feet, as it were, in two cultures and were enriched by that. I first had experience with this system, and it was only in later years for political reasons that the C.N.E. system was used to justify the segregation of our children into single medium schools.

INVESTIGATION

Now I don't want to take you through the details of the investigation I made to find out whether the use of the second language, as a medium, in any way affected the languages respectively or their content subjects, I must just summarise by saying that the children gained in proficiency in their second language over those in single medium schools, while their first language was unimpaired, depending on the quality of their first language instruction, age and intelligence, home background, socio-economic conditions being kept constant. I found however, that by the time the child reached standard VI at the end of primary school they were in no way behind in their content subjects as a result of their second language being used as a medium of instruction. At the beginning, particularly in cases where the second language was totally unknown to the child, there was a distinct handicap but this handicap tapered off as the child went on in school. In subjects like arithmetic where language doesn't play such a big rôle, the initial handicap was smaller than in subjects like geography and history, where language plays a greater rôle, both in communication to and expression by the pupil.

The result showed further that whatever initial handicap there was, as the result of the partial or exclusive use of the second language as a medium, this handicap proved to be precisely in proportion to the relative strangeness of the language used as a medium and practically disappeared where the child's knowledge of the second language approximated that of his first language. In a country, therefore, like S.A. where both English and Afrikaans are used in nearly 50% of the homes of the pupils, and where according to the latest census figures as I have shown, about 80% of the population speaks both languages, it would seem that the dual medium method of instruction would give expression more adequately through the principle of home language medium than the separate schools where only one medium is taught. Our subsequent experiments and controlled observations have shown that the use of both media of instruction in the bilingual school has significant educational advantages for the children, not only in the academic attainments but also in their developing more tolerance and understanding of the other cultural section. There is a theory that while the brighter child may survive the use of the second language as a medium, the duller child suffers badly. I made a special study of that aspect, and in a careful comparison of the relative achievements of brighter and dull pupils, I found that in the bilingual school situation the duller pupils were not relatively handicapped any more than the bright pupils as regards content, and that they hold their own in the first language. What was, however, most significant was that their relative gain—that is the duller children's relative gain in the second language—was nearly twice as big as that registered by the higher intelligence groups. It would seem that the concrete linguistic experience gained by contact with the second language in the playground and in other concrete ways, in a school where both media are used, is crucial in the case of the dull child. The survey also showed that children educated in such schools speak the second language in the playground three times as often as children in unilingual schools.

It would seem, therefore, that a child's educative process is facilitated by using both channels of communication available in the supporting environment afforded by a bilingual country like S.A. rather than by confining children deliberately only to one. A language is not learned in a vacuum. You must learn it in connection with something, just as you would use it later on in your actual life after leaving school. There cannot, therefore, be any psychological or educational reason why that same practice should not be followed as regards the

spoken word, beginning with using the second language as a medium as well as the first language. The second language in later life ceases to be an obstacle and begins to be an opportunity, particularly where the individual has attained a facility to read and enjoy the literature of the second language. Now Afrikaans is a really wonderfully transparent and flexible medium of expression. I don't think there are many new languages that are so versatile for expression as Afrikaans is; it has nothing missing in vocabulary because whatever may be missing it either picks up from Dutch continental roots overseas, Germanic roots or, as is in many cases, picks them up simply from English. You know the story that when they introduced bilingualism on the Railways they had to have English and Afrikaans notices on the platform, and there they had introduced the word "perron" the Dutch word for a platform on the station. Two old farmers came up and the one said:

> "Man, wtha is that funny word, that 'perron'?"
> "Oh," he says, "don't you know that's the English for platform!"

In the second language new vistas are opened and the life of the individual is enriched. In this respect the Afrikaans-speaking South African stands to gain more from his second language, English, than his English-speaking friend who learns Afrikaans as a second language. It cannot be denied that the English language, having become practically a world language and having developed a great literature of more than a thousand years, covering many fields of human endeavour both from an aesthetic and from a scientific or even from a mere entertainment point of view, offers more than a younger language like Afrikaans can offer to the English-speaking person.

TEACHERS' QUALIFICATIONS

I come in conclusion to teachers' qualifications. A language teacher in a bilingual country needs not only a correctness on paper but a correct and convincing power of expression, both in writing and speaking the second language. Speech must be fluent and both accent and idiom must be such that they can serve as fit models for the growing minds to imitate. It is an excellent thing to have in every school, where possible, specialist teachers for language instruction, in the case of both the first and the second languages. In these cases it would be desirable that these specialists should have a first knowledge of a fairly high degree in their respective languages. We find, however, in the schools today that the specialist teachers in Afrikaans are far better specialists than the English specialists are in the Afrikaans schools, or rather that there are more of them. Unfortunately, not all schools can afford special language teachers and it is and will remain, as far as I can see, a common thing in the majority of primary schools in this country that the class teacher will always also be the language teacher of the class in both languages. In the smaller rural schools which comprise over 50% of the total number of European schools in this country, there is no alternative. This means that in these schools we simply must have competent bilingual teachers, unless language teaching is to prove a farce.

Leaving the question of medium aside for a moment, we insist that the teachers must be able to teach both languages effectively as subjects. In order to attain this no teacher in the public schools should be regarded as a qualified teacher without a bilingual certificate, particularly in the rural areas. I say this because the chances of importing teachers from overseas in order to teach English are diminishing by the day.

In 1938 when I made the survey on bilingualism I tested the student teachers in the Transvaal Normal Colleges with a view to obtaining a cross section of their linguistic abilities. I give here the results only of the final-year students, that is, those who were in their third year of training after matriculation in three Normal Colleges—Pretoria and Potchefstroom Afrikaans-medium Colleges and the Johannesburg English-medium College. I found to my horror that in a battery of standardised tests which we gave, comprising vocabulary, sentence completion, reading tests, composition and so on, 6% of the teachers in the Afrikaans medium Normal Colleges had not even reached a Std. VI level in the English language, that is, the average level of English medium children in Std. VI. 26% were below Std. VII; 47% were below Std. VIII in English. I should say the English-medium Normal College was no better in respect of Afrikaans. These figures were based on tests far more objective and reliable than any of the ordinary school examinations and they deserve careful consideration. The outstanding factor is that at that time about half of these students on the eve of their being released into the schools as teachers had barely a Std. VII proficiency in the second language. Incidentally, it should be noted that even in their first language, Afrikaans, 21% of the Afrikaans Normal College students fell below the average obtained by Afrikaans-medium Std. X pupils, and 5% of the English students were below the average of Std. X pupils in English. The English students seemed better in their mother tongue than the Afrikaans students—the difference was probably due to selection. I only hope that conditions are better today, but I must say that it may be of interest to note that over 90% of the Normal College students were at that time already the product of unilingual single-medium schools. The students from bilingual schools did considerably better on the whole in their second language and no worse in their first than

the products of the single medium schools. Under the circumstances the only remedy that I can see is to turn all Normal and Training Colleges into bilingual institutions, not only as regards medium but also having English- and Afrikaans-speaking student teachers together in the same institution.

I have spoken to you as an Afrikaner, and I want to make a few last points. Firstly, that English is not a foreign language in South Africa and that it can have a great and beneficent effect also on Afrikaans, and particularly on Afrikaans literature. I don't know whether you have noticed that the products in Afrikaans literature of high quality have diminished of late, and most of the best work has been done by people who had their training very largely also through English. I can quote my namesake, D. F. Malherbe, Jan Celliers, Totius, Leipoldt, Uys Krige. One of our younger poets, Opperman, is a product of Natal University—Van Wyk Louw, I. D. du Plessis, are products of Cape Town University. It is remarkable that that is so, and here I want to quote to you something which struck me when I was in Tunis little more than a year ago at a conference there, when Prof. Cecil Hourani, one of the leading educators in the Middle East, said: "To be a modern Arab man he must pass through the medium of other cultures, in order to be himself he must temporarily lose himself, one finds oneself through others, not by being enclosed in oneself. The University of Damascus was a failure because it did not allow for the refertilisation of the Arab mind which comes only through contact from outside. Such a refertilised mind becomes more and more creative in its own language and culture."

I feel sad sometimes—I speak here as an Afrikaner—when I see that my fellow Afrikaners are deprived of the experiences which I had the good fortune to go through—to make contact with a wider culture. I feel that a language has three functions: it is a medium through which learning can take place; it can be a medium of artistic expression through literature and of enjoyment; but it also serves as a means of social integration, and if we want to have a South African nation in this country we will have to do it via two languages. They used to say "een taal een volk" or "die taal is van die volk". Now the question is, can one create one nation through using two cultural media? Can the human spirit be enriched by letting light in through two windows instead of through one window? In the last resort, and I notice that was the concluding sentence of Prof. Jeffares' address, the question comes down to human values . . . the effect that this has on human beings, as the old Greek philosopher said:

"Man is the measure of all things."

I want to say that, whatever criteria we use, language is just a means to an end, it is not an end in itself, a human being is the only thing that can be an end in itself.

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