

LANGUAGE LEARNING: DEFINITIONS TO CONSIDER

JUNE 23, 2017

In this newsletter we take a look at common words used in language learning and education to think about how they can be applied in our community.

BI-/MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

When two or more languages are used by a teacher to teach all school subjects. Examples include language shelter programmes, dual language programs, and plural multilingual programmes.

BI-/MULTILINGUALISM

When an individual is skillful in and uses two or more languages. Or, when two or more languages are widely used in a community.

ENGLISH-AS-A-SECOND-LANGUAGE (ESL)

English can be a second language when learned after a first language, or used in an environment outside of the classroom. ESL contexts include those learners whose mother tongue (or ancestral language) is not English.

ETHNICITY/ETHNIC IDENTITY

Historical, geographical, cultural, language associations that bind individuals together as a distinct, self-identified group.

EUROPEAN UNION (EU) SCHOOLS

Special EU schools in which many languages are taught, but the language (mostly the students' mother tongue) is the main language used in school. One foreign language is taught from grade 1 and as students go through school additional languages are introduced. By grade 12 students are bilingual (fluent in 2 languages) and some trilingual (fluent in 3 languages).

FIRST LANGUAGE (L1)

Mother tongue; the language first learned, best known or used most.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE (FL)

A language learned mainly in a classroom; for reading or communication with its speakers.

LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE OR LANGUAGE SHELTER PROGRAMMES

Linguistic minority children choose to be instructed in the language of their mother tongue, in classes with other linguistic minority children with a bilingual teacher.

LANGUAGE REGENESIS

Bringing back oral and/or written functions, giving new life to endangered language, and producing new generations of speakers.

MINORITY LANGUAGE

Language that is not the dominant language because the speakers of the language have less power and the language is spoken by a smaller number of people.

MONOLINGUALISM

Use of a single language only.

MOTHER TONGUE

Language(s) a person learns first or identifies with. Also one that is used most often by a person.

NATIVE SPEAKER

Individual whose knowledge in a language always comes from the mother tongue and language first learned.

NON-NATIVE SPEAKER

Negative label for a person with a lack of language knowledge. Compares to those who use that language as a mother tongue.

SECOND LANGUAGE (L2)

Language learned after the mother tongue language.

STRUCTURED IMMERSION

Linguistic minority students are submersed in the dominant language with little or no support for their mother tongue. Combines English-as-a-second and submersion/"sink-or-swim," with the goal of replacing the mother tongue with English.

SUBMERSION/"SINK-OR-SWIM" PROGRAMME

Linguistic minority children with a low-status mother tongue are forced to accept instruction through a dominant language. In this case the teacher does not understand the minoritised mother tongue.

TRANSITIONAL EARLY-EXIT AND LATE-EXIT PROGRAMMES

Linguistic minority children with a low-status mother tongue are initially instructed through their mother tongue to learn the dominant language. in

early-exit programmes children are transferred to a majority-language programme as soon as they develop some oral communication skills. In late-exit programmes children may receive some instruction through their first language up to fifth or sixth grade with the mother tongue sometimes taught as a subject.

TWO-WAY BILINGUAL (DUAL LANGUAGE) PROGRAMMES

When both majority and minority students choose to be voluntarily instructed by a bilingual teacher, mainly through a minority language (90 percent/10 percent model) or through both languages (50/50 model), with the dominant language taught as a subject.

References

Skutnabb-Kangas, T., & McCarty, T. L. (2008). Key concepts in bilingual education: Ideological, historical, epistemological, and empirical foundations. In *Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp. 1466-1482). Springer US.