

James Cummins The nature of Language Proficiency

Overview: Second Language Acquisition (=SLA):

Source: Basic principles for the education of Language-Minority Students: An Overview.
Prepared by the Office of Bilingual Bicultural Education.

Educational Goals for Language Minority Students

Previously theoretical frameworks

Cultural deficits

Language mismatch

Contextual interaction theory

Principle one: the linguistic threshold

Principle two: the dimensions of language proficiency

Principle three: the common underlying proficiency

Principle four: second language acquisition

Principle five: student status

Implications for instruction

Primary language use

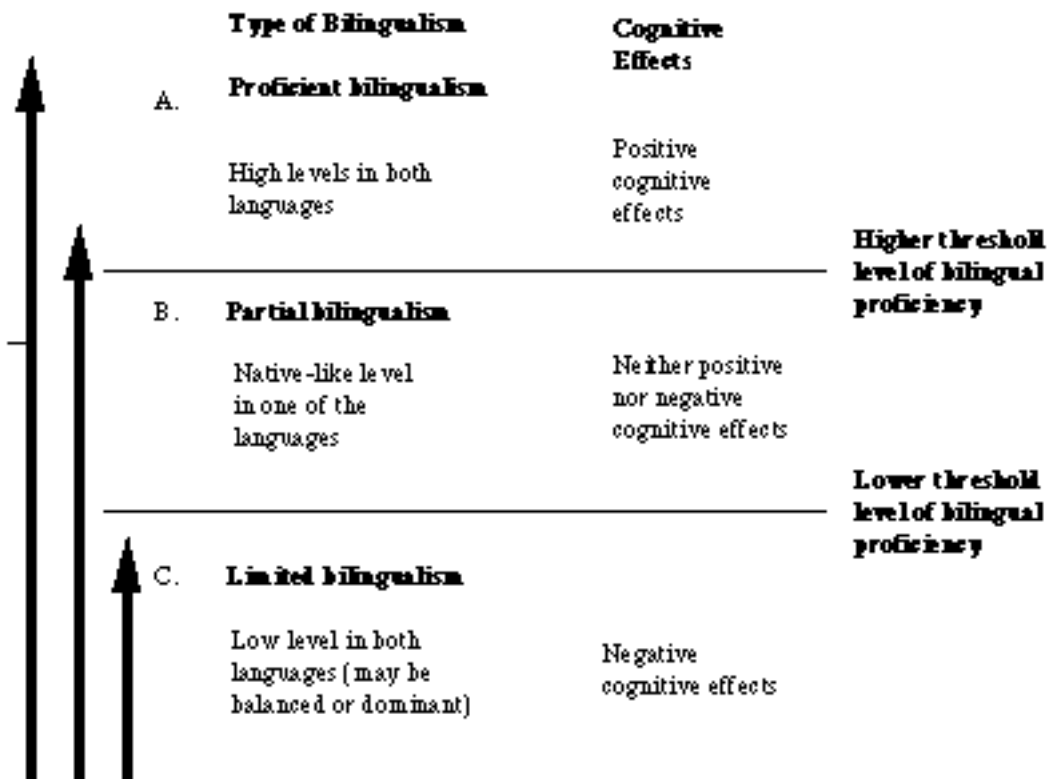
Second language acquisition

Student status

Principle one: the linguistic threshold

Figure 8:

Cognitive effects of different types of bilingualism*



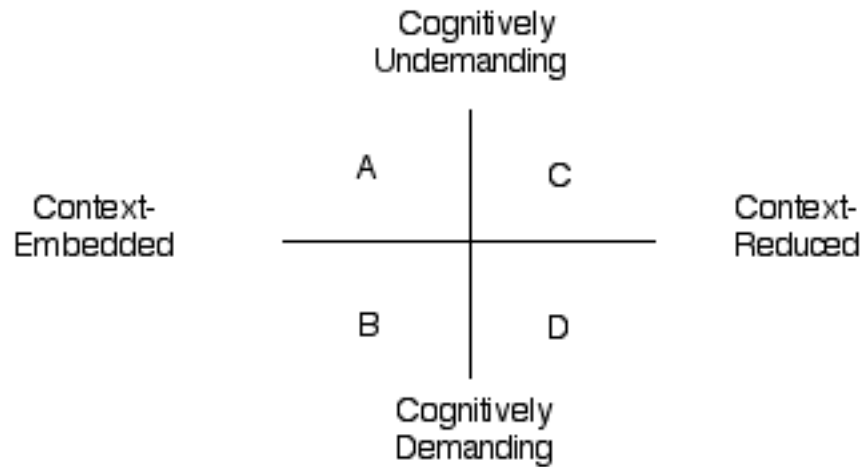
*Adapted from Toukomaa and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977, p. 29.

James Cummins, The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. California State Department of Education. Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center. p. 39.

Principle two: the dimensions of language proficiency

James Cummins, The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. California State Department of Education. Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center. pp. 3-51 (pp. 3-20; 20-40; 40-51).

Figure 2: (page 12)



1. According to Cummins, what is language proficiency? How does a misunderstanding of language proficiency lead to a failure to recognize when students are having trouble with subject matter due to language deficiencies?
2. Is the separate underlying proficiencies model of language or the common underlying proficiency model of language correct? Or are both correct? Defend your position.

Principle three: the common underlying proficiency

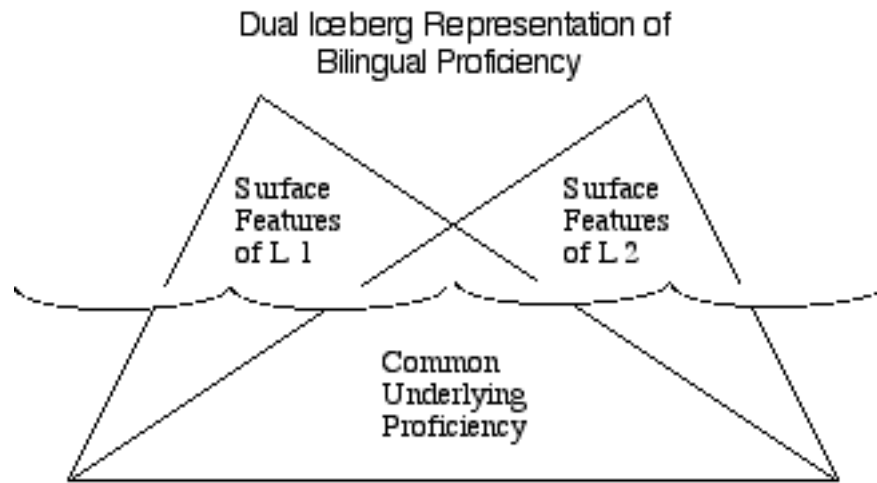


Figure 6

James Cummins, The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. California State Department of Education. Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center. p. 24.

Principle four: SLA (=Second Language Acquisition)

Maturation and developmental constraints

1. developmental sequences

2. younger versus older learners
3. focus on form

Krashen's "hypotheses":

1. the acquisition versus learning dichotomy
2. the natural order hypothesis
3. the monitor hypothesis
4. the input hypothesis
5. the affective filter hypothesis

Memory

1. focus, involvement, that is, "time on task"
2. paying attention (i.e., noticing) as the minimal requirement
3. noticing and focus on form

Motivation—different views

1. sociological views (cultural, societal, et cetera)
2. short-term versus long-term
3. a cause or an effect?

Principle five: Student status

see also "Motivation" above