

***The Bilingual Reform: A Paradigm Shift in Foreign Language Teaching.* Wolfgang Butzkamm and John A. W. Caldwell.
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A growing body of research clearly supports the principled use of the learner's first language (L1) in aid of second and foreign language learning, especially when teaching at beginner and intermediate levels. With this volume, Butzkamm and Caldwell make a vital contribution to the field by providing clear step-by-step instructions to guide teachers in using a wide variety of bilingual teaching techniques. What's more, these techniques are firmly grounded in a clear and comprehensive theory of positive L1 support.

In the introduction, the authors discuss the combination of factors which have contributed to the stigmatization of L1 use in the classroom. In some teaching contexts, many teachers overuse the L1, due in part to their own limited oral proficiency in the target language (TL). At the same time, effective bilingual techniques have been criticized or simply ignored by other teachers who cannot speak their students' L1. Furthermore, policies and teacher training programs which have promoted TL exclusivity as best practice at all levels have caused many teachers to feel inadequate or guilty about using the L1, even when such practices may in fact be pedagogically sound. Rejecting the widely held view of the L1 as a hindrance to learning or as a resource of last resort, Butzkamm and Caldwell convincingly argue that explicit TL-L1 connections should act as the foundation for learning in a modern communicative approach. This positive view of the L1 is supported throughout with quotes from learners and teachers who have used bilingual techniques with great success. The authors also bring to light an impressive list of studies demonstrating the effectiveness of such techniques—including the seminal work of Dodson (1967)—which until now have received little attention.

In Chapter 1, Butzkamm and Caldwell explain how teachers can supplement TL explanations and nonverbal communication strategies by using the "sandwich technique": The teacher says a phrase in the TL, provides a discreet L1 translation in the tone of an aside, and then restates the phrase again in the TL (e.g., "Why are you late? *Dōshite okureta no?* Why are you

late?"). Rather than leaving students struggling to figure out meanings on their own, precise and immediate comprehension is ensured, with very little time given over to the L1. Students use a similar sandwich technique when they ask "How do you say *isogashii* in English?" or when they insert L1 equivalents for TL words they have not yet learned, as in "I went to the *toshokan* yesterday." The teacher or another student can supply the needed TL expressions, which are then noted and learned so that the L1 equivalents will not be required in the future. The authors suggest that these techniques can allow teachers to quickly establish a TL atmosphere in the classroom while promoting more authentic, meaningful communication in the TL than would be possible in classes where the TL is used exclusively. Comprehensible input can be maximized and learners can express their ideas more spontaneously as they discuss high-interest, level-appropriate topics, gradually becoming less dependent on the L1 as their proficiency in the TL improves—all in keeping with a truly learner-centered, communicative approach.

Chapter 2 deals with the theory of *dual comprehension*, which holds that input must ultimately be comprehended on two levels—that of meaning and that of form. The authors explain how L1 translations can be used to impart dual comprehension, following time-honored teaching strategies. In Chapter 3, the authors demonstrate how the L1 "provides an indispensable Language Acquisition Support System" (p. 66), facilitating learning with respect to vocabulary, communication skills, grammar, and reading and writing. The authors also present 10 maxims which deftly refute arguments commonly made against L1 use, along with a final maxim that reaffirms the value of monolingual activities, provided that learners have been sufficiently prepared: "Direct method lessons can be fun. Monolingual explanations and paraphrases are not outlawed but will become ever more important" (p. 87).

In Chapters 4 and 5, Butzkamm and Caldwell discuss the importance of establishing connections between TL expressions and existing L1 knowledge, and demonstrate how the L1 can act as a key for understanding TL grammar through *mirroring*—providing "literal translations and adaptations with a view to making the foreign structures salient and transparent to learners" (p. 106). In Chapter 6, the authors explain how bilingual, semi-communicative drills can help students to recognize patterns in TL sentences. Students learn how to make substitutions and create their own TL sentences which can then be used in communicative exchanges and short pieces of creative writing. Chapter 7 builds on the previous chapter, presenting a series of lessons based on brief dialogues and role-plays. Once comprehension has been

clearly established, students memorize the dialogue and learn to imitate the teacher's pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation through a series of "skill-getting" activities. Next, students learn how the structures in the dialogue can be manipulated and substituted, and finally students apply what they have learned as they create and perform their own role-plays. The theory behind this approach is explained in Chapter 8. As speaking is a complex skill that requires the learning of a whole range of sub-skills, Butzkamm and Caldwell advocate both "part practice" and "whole practice," in agreement with skill theory and modern brain research. The authors warn against assuming that learners will acquire the TL holistically simply through participating in communicative exchanges.

In Chapters 9, 10, and 11, the authors suggest many ways that high-quality TL input can be made fully comprehensible with L1 support such as reading and telling stories to the class, using bilingual readers for silent reading, using different soundtracks and subtitles on DVDs, and doing TL-L1 translation, re-translation (translating back into the TL), and, for more advanced learners, consecutive interpreting (i.e., not simultaneous). In Chapter 12, the authors draw parallels between strategies employed by young developing bilinguals and second language learners, while Chapter 13 contains ideas for teaching classes in which the learners do not share a common L1. Finally, Chapter 14 proposes directions for future research which would serve to demonstrate the relative effectiveness of bilingual and monolingual techniques in a variety of teaching situations.

Butzkamm and Caldwell's work is surprisingly wide in scope; however, readers will find a wealth of additional studies on the topic in another recently published volume, edited by Turnbull and Dailey-O'Cain (2009). Taken together, these two volumes represent the state of the art in this burgeoning area of research. *The Bilingual Reform* is highly recommended for teachers wanting to expand and improve their repertoire of teaching strategies and to weigh their own beliefs against Butzkamm and Caldwell's carefully reasoned approach. As the title suggests, many readers will no doubt experience a shift in thinking with respect to the role of the L1 in their teaching practice.

References

- Dodson, C. J. (1967). *Language teaching and the bilingual method*. London: Pitman.
- Turnbull, M. & Dailey-O'Cain, J. (Eds.). (2009). *First language use in second and foreign language learning*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.