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**Am I a bilingual teacher? A teacher's reflection upon her own pedagogical practices of
teaching English in Brazil**

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“If we spoke a different language,
we would perceive a somewhat different world.”

Ludwig Wittgenstein

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ABSTRACT: Although there are no considerable basis in practical experience and research findings, bilingual education is a controversial and frequently misunderstood field (Krashen, 2007). Also, the concepts of bilingualism and bilingual education are seen to be complex and may involve several dimensions in their definitions. With the great globalization and studies in the area of bilingualism, suggesting advantages to being a bilingual speaker, the demands for bilingual education grow increasingly worldwide. Thus, some schools in Brazil teach bilingual programs that serve children in order to teach them English, though they do not always follow standards of Bilingual Education. In this context, this study aims to ponder over these issues by presenting an analysis of a teacher's own reflections upon her pedagogical practices in a bilingual classroom, in a so-called bilingual education environment in a private school located in the southern Brazil.

Key-word: Bilingualism, Bilingual Education, Kindergarten, Pedagogical Practices

Number of words: 8.000

RESUMO: Embora não haja uma base considerável na experiência prática e nos resultados da investigação, a educação bilíngue é um campo controverso e muitas vezes mal compreendido. Além disso, os conceitos de bilinguismo e educação bilíngue são vistos como complexas e podem envolver várias dimensões em suas definições. Com a grande globalização e estudos na área de bilinguismo, sugerindo vantagens de ser um falante bilíngüe, as demandas para a educação bilíngue cresce cada vez mais no mundo todo. Assim, algumas escolas no Brasil com programas bilíngues, com o intuito de ensinar o Inglês, nem sempre seguem os padrões da Educação Bilíngue. Neste contexto, o presente estudo tem por objetivo refletir sobre essas questões, apresentando uma análise das próprias reflexões do professor sobre as suas práticas pedagógicas em sala de aula bilíngue, em um ambiente de educação bilíngüe em uma escola particular localizada no sul do Brasil.

Palavras chave: Bilinguismo, Educação Bilíngue, Práticas pedagógicas, Educação Infantil.

Número de Palavras: 8. 000

1. Introduction

Being a bilingual child, raised in a home where Russian, Spanish, and Portuguese were spoken was always a challenge for me. As years have passed, I grew up, started to major in Letras-Ingês UFSC and also started teaching in a context which claims to be bilingual. The issue began to constitute the focus of my attention and made me interested in understanding what lies behind being a bilingual education teacher and teaching in a so-called bilingual context.

Moreover, in recent years, speaking more than one language has become a norm rather than an exception. Therefore, there is a need not only to define bilingualism, but also to understand the effects that have aroused in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA henceforth). There are two major perspectives so as to define what bilingualism is. The first one is “the fractional and the “holistic”, according to the Encyclopedia of Bilingual Education (González, 2008, p.78). On the other hand, another perspective proposed by Grosjean (as cited in González 2008, p.79) claims that in the process of learning two languages, each of them contributes for the process of learning itself, therefore, the result is more than “the sum of the parts”. Despite the differences, in both perspectives the ultimate goal is to achieve balanced proficiency regarding language abilities.

Nevertheless, besides the fractioned versus holistic dichotomy, in some countries, such as the United States, the bilingual education debate is far from black and white, and grey areas are filled with criticism stemming from broader societal issues outside classrooms and schools (Matielo & Heineke, 2013). Because Brazil belongs to a dissimilar context in the sense that it does not share certain canonical features with countries as the United States, investigating bilingual education is thus seen as fruitful, for it might help to shed light into the

complexities inherent to the process of teaching bilingually in Brazil where English is still seen as foreign language.

In this sense, the present study aims to propose a qualitative, reflective-oriented analysis of a teacher inserted in a so-called bilingual education context, more specifically a pre-school in the south of Brazil. Moreover, it is aimed at reflecting upon a teacher's classroom practices, bearing in mind her pedagogical actions and experiences in this bilingual context. The research questions that will guide the present study are the following:

(RQ1) How is a bilingual education program for two to three year old children implemented in a Brazilian southern school?

(RQ2) What elements of such a program stand out in comparison to the Bilingual Education programs established in the context of the United States?

This study is organized as follows order: first, an introduction has been provided to contextualize and establish the objectives of this study. Then, a review of literature will follow, in which important concepts related to the research are presented and discussed. In sequence, in the method section, the procedures and steps followed are outlined. After that, a results and discussion section is presented. Finally, concluding remarks, pedagogical implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research follow.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Bilingual Education and Bilingual Education Programs

The concept of bilingualism and bilingual education is very complex and its definition can involve several dimensions. As Cárdenas (1986, p. 360) states, “Bilingual Education came into favor as an alternative program in the late 1960’s”. Speaking two languages rather than just one has obvious practical benefits. A person who learns another language these days grows up with a strong language capability in an increasingly globalized world.

Many paths are presented today for the study of bilingualism. Children learn language faster than adults and this learning is natural, this is fact. Bearing in mind that bilingualism in the present study is previewed as a sociolinguistic phenomenon, it can be said that bilingualism is a linguistic competence that can occur in different degrees that are determined according to the linguistic region where it is used (Ortiz & Xavier, as cited in González, 2008, p. 4-5). The applicability and effectiveness of the various methods of bilingual teachings are being spread in academic discussions.

According to Mello (2010), when we consider Bilingual Education, we do not have too much assurance of the concepts and assumptions, since they are usually diffuse and varied, many of which overlap or do not have clearly defined boundaries. In reality, not always the parents of students and teachers are clear about what in fact Bilingual Education is, how it can be introduced and taught and which requirements it should have.

As Mello points out (2010), the term “bilingual education” has been used to comprehensively characterize different forms of education in which students receive instruction or part of the instruction in a different language from what they normally use at home. Bilingual education has several definitions and ”they differ to the objectives, the

characteristics of the students, the distribution of instructional time in the involved language, approaches and pedagogical practices, and other aspects of language that is used and the context in which they are inserted.” In most cases, the programs are monolingual, but are popularly regarded as bilingual due to advances in learning a different language than the one they use at home with the family.

According to Genesee (as cited in Mello 2007, p. 3), “true bilingual education is instruction that occurs in school in at least two languages.” Unfortunately, this is not so in the majority of cases, given that the instruction through two languages is limited to the initial phase of schooling, as in programs of transitional type. A bilingual school is one that provides the student with stimulation in the second language, and in the same way the student mimes the actions of the adults around her/him. These programs begin in the mother tongue and are gradually introducing the L2 in a proportion of up to 50% of the time for each language. Bilingual education also encompasses aspects of paralinguistic value, for example, openness to cultural diversity.

In the nineties, Baker (1993, as cited in González, 2008) and Roberts (1995, as cited in González, 2008) came up with two types of processes that were happening when bilingual education was used. The first was called assimilationist, which happens when a group together shares common ideas and merges together socially. The other process was called pluralism, which occurs when a group has maintained their individual identities. Wallace (1975, as cited in González, 2008) has focused on some issues related to bilingualism and realized that there were two types of results in this process of acquiring a second language. He describes them as additive and subtractive. The *additive* bilingualism happens when a student has their own language and acquires a second language resulting in cognitive benefits. A *Subtractive* bilingual program works out when a student acquires a second language and forgets their first language.

Other kinds of programs, such as *Submersion*, occur in an environment where only one language is used. The student is in a tricky situation since there is little or no attempt to assist the student in understanding the language used in the class. In the *Pullout* program, students spend part of the school day in a mainstream classroom, but are pulled out for a portion of each day to receive instruction in English as a second language. In a *Transitional Bilingual Program*, students are provided with the support needed in the content area in their native language also through which English will be taught. A *Maintenance Bilingual Program* holds the idea that it is most effective for students to be exposed to their home languages for longer before the class becomes English-only. Students are also given support as regards their first language skills. A *Two-way* or *Developmental Bilingual and Immersion Program* takes place with language minority¹ students from a single language in the same classroom with language majority² students.

Bilingual education involves different concepts in different contexts and countries due to: ethnic issues, educators, legislators and socio-political factors. Bilingual education emerged in the 60s as a political response to the educational problems of children that were arriving at school and were speaking another different language from the one that was used in the classroom. Bilingual Education has taken the main characteristics of compensatory education because these students had difficulties in following the material given in class and because of this they had low income and high dropout rate. As put forward by Mello (2010), “to remedy these problems special programs were created whose initial goal was to develop the language skills of these children in English language, so that they could quickly be placed in regular education programs.” Thus, it is possible to perceive a huge driving force behind it,

¹ Language minority students refer to those students who are speakers of not so commonly spoken languages and therefore not very often taught languages.

² Language majority students, on the other hand, refer to those speakers of commonly spoken languages and therefore very often taught languages.

which would explain the great amount of programs created to address the problems related to language diversity in some countries.

Today, after five decades of research about the models and the implementation of various types of bilingual education programs, it is clear, then, that bilingual education progresses and shows positive results, but somehow, it seems invisible. As Mello argues (2010), models are bilingual goals, plans, educational, linguistic, and ideological orientations in relation to linguistic and cultural diversity in society. Nonetheless, we still have the types of programs that are guided by structural and contextual specific characteristics.

With regards to our specific context, it is possible to state that Brazil lacks at the moment sufficient number of bilingual professionals to meet the domestic market (Mello, 2010). The Brazilian schools must prepare their students for this reality and, therefore, develop immersion programs that meet our cultural reality. According to Freeman (1998, as cited in Mello 2007, p. 8), attention must be paid to the complexity of the process of planning and implementation of a bilingual program in the sense that it is necessary to take into account what it means to educate a population linguistically and culturally different in ideological and practical terms, and how school and community can together establish goals and means for this to happen successfully.

With the current global political and socio-economic outlook, driven by globalization, there is an increasing need to master a second language (Krashen, 2007). In view of this demand, many schools have begun to offer their services in the option for Bilingual Education. The linguistic diversity of the English language learning has important implications for the design of programs to address the range of levels of fluency in English language learners' literacy and cognitive growth. Moreover, the goal of teaching English is to empower learners as regards their communicative skills in the English language. Thus, one needs education programs that are designed to meet the students' needs.

Programs designed in the United States accommodate students who are speakers of different languages, whose teachers do not need to be proficient in the language of origin of their students. As put forward by Krashen (2007), the popular concept for bilingual classes is that the more you are immersed in a context of English the more you will absorb this language. Nonetheless, students are more likely to benefit best when inserted in a bilingual environment after they have mastered their mother tongue, since learning the basics in their mother language might be more beneficial than learning two languages simultaneously. In a simple way, if the students are literate in their native language, they have more understanding and are able to transfer this learning to other languages.

It is important that the students understand the input they receive as a starting point to master the second language because without understanding it, the students' learning process is hindered. This is linked to the misconception about how much student practice is required for acquisition to occur. Students, as well as native-English speaking students, need to gain control over language and feel comfortable about using it, with the help of the teacher and they will only do so in an environment where they feel secure and welcome, in which the affective filter is lowered (Krashen, 2007). Another important thing to consider in the context of bilingual education is that the English language learning in the content areas continues to represent demands and challenges in classrooms around the world. In order for English language learners to become successful students, they need to learn contents as well as the English language skills needed to access that content, which needs to be done gradually, depending on the program designed to cater for the students' needs.

As put forward by Krashen (2007), the components of a good bilingual classroom are: classes taught only in English, without translation, which can provide comprehensible input in English to be properly processed so as to aid acquisition. Thus, it is necessary to foster classrooms in which students feel more confident and from which they are able to profit.

However, according to Krashen (2007), in bilingual education models, speaking only in English from day one does not help students. Actually, students may get nervous and anxious, which can even put them down.

2.2. Bilingualism and Cognitive Advantages: Overview of Some Findings

Some recent findings on bilingualism accentuate the differences which have been studied between monolinguals and bilinguals. Some recent findings suggest that monolinguals can control a wider range of vocabulary and that they have less difficulty in the processes related to lexical retrieval, which apparently persist with age in bilinguals (Portocarrero, Burright & Donovanick, 2007 as cited in Matielo & Heineke, 2013.).

Studies have shown that bilinguals are cognitively more flexible than monolinguals (Adi-Japha, Berberich-Artzi, & Libnawi, 2007 as cited in Mello, 2010). However, this flexibility is not well defined yet but probably it is treated as a result of constant language switching by a bilingual when a mental organization is needed. Additionally, inhibitory control mechanisms and working memory³ together might be working on the bases of such a cognitive flexibility.

Another advantage that bilinguals tend to have over monolinguals is the ability to solve problems that present misleading or conflicting cues, which has been confirmed in some studies (Bialystok & Martin, 2004). Two examples of this advantage have been successfully confirmed with the Attention Network Test (ANT), which measures alerting, orienting, and executive control; and the Stroop Test⁴ (of mental or attentional flexibility). Regarding ANT, Costa, Hernández and Sebastián-Gallés (2008) showed that Catalan-Spanish bilinguals

³ Working memory is a limited-resource memory system responsible for the online processing (the work) and temporary maintenance (the memory) of information when we carry out certain complex tasks, such as problem solving, reading, speaking, and writing (Baddeley & Logie, 1999)

⁴ The Stroop test measures the interference in the reaction time of a task.

responded faster and more positively during the tests in comparison to monolinguals. Moreover, Bialystok (2009) demonstrated that early and older bilinguals performed better on the Stroop test, suggesting that their executive control is more enhanced than monolinguals.

Research has also focused on bilingualism and aging to determine whether or not the positive effects of bilingualism tend to persist with age. Bialystok and colleagues (2004) report the cognitive advantages of adult bilinguals and investigate if bilingualism attenuates or diminishes the effects of aging on cognitive control in older adults. When comparing monolinguals and bilinguals, results reveal that bilinguals respond faster to experiment conditions demanding more from working memory. As Bialystok et al (2004) point out, older bilinguals exhibit greater advantage for the same condition, potentially related to controlled processing that enhances over time and that bilingualism helps to counterbalance age-related losses regarding executive processes. This finding corroborates that bilinguals are cognitively smarter, but also demonstrates that positive effects on bilinguals' cognition prevail and enhance with time.

3. Method

This qualitative study aims at better understanding the practice of a bilingual education teacher in a bilingual classroom. For the present study, this teacher-participant, in this case the researcher, aims at better understanding how bilingual education is implemented in a specific school, in the Brazilian context. This research can also be considered an action research (Dornyei, 2007) since it is a reflective process of progressive problem solving.

3.1 The context

The school in which this research was carried out is a private school located in the south of Brazil that offers bilingual education from the age of 2 years on, with bilingual classes taught to students of 2 and 3 years of age in the kindergarten. The classes take place in the morning with the duration of 3 hours daily, including lunch. Classes included a teacher and a helper to assist in the activities, but mainly with the hygiene episodes. The school offers a variety of environments to ensure the comfort of the students such as a park, classes equipped with computers, a library. Also, there are many bilingual books available, as well as educational games to stimulate the children's imagination, with corridor walls riddle with work done by students, for instance.

3.2 Participants: This researcher as a participant and as a teacher

Being a multilingual child being born in Brazil, but due to the parents' work in European countries for several years, such as Russia and Poland, speaking both languages fluently and also Spanish, studied in bilingual schools and got to know various cultures. This researcher-

participant is 26 years old, attends the last semester of English Language and Literature major at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, and has previously studied Philology at the University of the Russian Union of People, with interests related to education. She has worked for three years at this school in the south of Brazil, which now constitutes the context of this research. The focus of this work is on self-assessment, criticism and analysis related to pedagogical practices in the classroom, bearing in mind the experiences and pedagogical practices as a bilingual education teacher.

3.3 The bilingual Students

Bilingual classes for Kindergarten 2 and 3 consisted of 13 students overall, 6 boys and 7 girls, 8 two-year-old students, one being an Italian student and one American. Students come from upper middle class families. Most of their mothers are housewives who are always present in the children's educational lives.

3.4 Instruments for data collection

In this research, lesson plans and daily handouts are used as sources of analysis to verify the extent to which the classes taught can be considered to promote bilingual education. Also, a thorough recollection of memories by the present researcher-teacher will also take part in the data collection process.

3.5 Procedures for data collection and data analysis

First of all, I have embarked on a project of reflection remembering and describing the classes, as well as examining past events. After that, the project entitled “My Pets” was used to scrutinize the routine activities in the classroom of the bilingual classes taught. Following that, I have attempted to report the moments and the activities used, showing in details the materials and procedures used in the classroom by the teacher and the typical participants. Finally, I attempt to compare and contrast my pedagogical actions with the bilingual education programs reported in the review of the literature so as to verify the extent to which the classes taught can be considered bilingual education based.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

This section will compare and contrast the concept of bilingual education performed by me as a teacher in the classroom and with the models proposed by experts in bilingualism, taking into consideration the research questions presented in the beginning of this study. To start off, this section will address the first research question:

(RQ1) How is a bilingual education program for two to three year old children implemented in a Brazilian school?

In the context investigated in this study, a bilingual education program for two to three year old children was implemented through a project called My Pets Project – 2013, which is explained in detail in the following paragraphs.

The project in bilingual preschool 2 and 3 was chosen from the theme proposed by UNESCO in 2013, "Cooperation for Water". With the constant presence of that essential element to our survival, we studied a variety of activities that could contribute to making students understand the need to preserve the water that is present in our routine. During the month of March, the project allowed to observe the interest of children in animals, especially those that are present in our daily lives. In order to ensure continuous interest and participation in the activities proposed the research-teacher chose the project "My Pets" (our pets). The main objective from this theme was showing to our group the importance of water in the lives of the animals, as well as in our lives. It was believed that this topic would facilitate the learning of the English language for students.

The justification of the theme is that it offers a wide field of exploration areas, such as science, mathematics, arts, literature, movements to mention but a few. The allure of the class by domestic animals was visible at times like story-telling and moments of discussion in our circle time (when students were gathered prior to the beginning of the class).

Some specific objectives were the goals to be achieved in the project. We started using the tools to promote the stimulation of language (English) in order to enriching and enlarging the vocabulary, sharpening the pleasure of literature by storytelling, providing moments of pleasure through recreational activities and developing them with the participation of the whole group and at the same time developing the children`s individuality. Music was the most used tool in the process of learning a second language, including the children and motivating their participation and therefore enhancing their practice of the vocabulary studied. Moreover, gestures and body movements were also part of the dynamics in the classes, which impacted on the children`s enhancement in terms of their gross motor skills.

The resources used in class were full of different types of materials, many of them papers, glues and colored glues, glitters, crayons and wax crayons, Play dough modelings, glitter, “*papietagem*” (paper sculpture), inks, gouaches, pieces of tissues, balloons, scraps, cds and books were in the material list. Some tools as movies and music were also used and children were very happy with them. Some movie examples we used in the classroom were: All Dogs Go to Heaven, The Goldfish Oscar, Nemo, the Adventure Under the Sea. As regards the music in the classroom, songs that made reference to colors, shapes, and numbers were used with the children.

A different and an important section were the books. Books were themed and used for one or two weeks, and a special one was chosen by the teacher with the purpose of working with fruit, quantity, colors, and concepts, such as day and night.

The decision of working with the book was made by the teacher and the special one was “The very hungry Caterpillar” by Eric Carle that tells the story of a caterpillar who was very hungry, and every day of the week she ate a fruit. On Monday she ate an apple, but it was not satisfied. On Tuesday she ate two pears, on Wednesday she ate three plums and so on. Coming the weekend the caterpillar ate more things like cake, lollipop, pie, cheese and so

on. And in a very dark night the caterpillar decided to rest, it then decided to make a cocoon, the next day to everyone's surprise it decided to leave her warmth, and formed a beautiful colorful butterfly.

A schedule was established to organize the classroom routines. On Mondays we worked with literature, after the Circle Time I read the Caterpillar story in English to the students. For the reading, I imitated voices and made a thriller and even invented music to make the story more entertaining, always being charming and playful for kids. After reading the story, we went to the activity tables, having in mind that two tables were for free activities and the main table with the teacher to the main activity. The main table goal was devised to produce our own caterpillar, each student chose a color and made small balls with crepe paper and glue on paper (when we were already working with the fine motor coordination). Thus, we created our hungry caterpillar. Monday was also a Literature Day, as it was previously mentioned, and the teacher decided to introduce to the children the cartoon "Finding Nemo". We went to the video room and the helper prepared a bowl of popcorn and together we watched the movie. After the movie, each student reported in Portuguese what they liked most. The teacher asked some questions in English.

In working in such a fashion, students were provided with the opportunity to stimulate their listening skills, such as the basic social ones: please, thank you, sit down, wash your hands, quiet, please, for instance. Selected a practical vocabulary so children felt able to acquire it and use it throughout our routine.

On Tuesday, when Math was dealt and after the Circle Time we recalled the previously viewed movie. With the notes we took yesterday, we reminded students what they reported having appreciated the most. After this delightful conversation we decided to make a huge marine world with various fish, algae, plants, stones, and various other animals. We had a huge and white paper poster board and with many questions posed by the teacher like: What

color is the sea water? Which color was the fish. Was the sea just blue or had other colors? The cardboard started being colored with their information and with many colors of gouache we started our drawing, it was painted and after it was put in a safe place and ready for drying. Math was too important on Tuesday, so we read the book again (The very hungry caterpillar) only a time for looking at the amount of fruit that the caterpillar ate every day of the week. After Circle Time we went to the room and the first mathematical table was full of colorful game (the goal of the game was to find the objects and put on the colors selected). The second table had green play dough, for which the student had to make small balls in order to create a caterpillar. The last table was aimed at selecting the fruit for each colorful plate, and they needed to say out loud the name of the colors chosen.

In Mathematics we used many activities and books including primary colors, geometric shapes (circle, square, triangle), the textures (smooth , rough), 1-5 count, classification, logical order would be developed for the student to get a varied vocabulary and improve their basic mathematical notions in English.

Wednesday was a Science Day, and we decided to make an experiment with water. The helper took a jar of clean water and a jar of dirty water and we asked the students: what color is the water?, Is water wet?, Where do we find water? We use water for?. After this experience each student took an A3 sheet of paper and drew what caught more of their attention from the experiment. In our Science day we decided to do our cooking class. We made a delicious apple pie, and at the time of preparation all students helped to count the spoons of sugar, the slices of apple, and the amount of milk and eggs, always with the help of the teacher and the helper.

In Natural Sciences, were carried out introducing scientific concepts through experience, experiment and observation. Core areas such as Environmental and Green House

will contribute Science lessons related to our main element, water. Our five senses are also the focus of a research study of the water.

Thursdays were days for music and drama, on which we sang several songs with the music teacher and his guitar. Songs such as: "If you're happy", "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes", "Here Comes the Sun" by Beatles, among others. After the music we did a dramatization imitating a caterpillar and later the butterfly. Taking advantage of this moment of relaxation the teacher asked some questions such as: what are the colors of the butterfly? Is it big or small? Does the caterpillar crawl or walk? And so on. Sometimes on Music Day, we had to decrease the music time to conclude some work we had started before and had not finished yet and in that proper week, in order to finish our wall on the sea theme, we have ended the poster full of finger prints we did our fishes and to represent the algae and plants we glue straw.

Fridays were the most expected days by children, a day off. After the circle time, they played on the park with the game "Teacher says" with the commands: run, up and down, turn around and jump. The teacher chose a color and students had to try to get into the chosen color with one of the commands selected by the teacher. And as Friday was a day off, we used to play with toys that students brought from their homes and then went to the "nucleo" to see the animals that use the water to survive. We saw ducks, fishes, rabbits, turtles and others animals.

At 10:00 AM children arrived at school and when they entered in the class, the sound was turned on and the teacher started singing the songs of welcome and good morning. This introduction lasted about 10 minutes. After introducing, children were invited to sit on the floor to our "Circle Time". The circle time lasts at least 20 minutes and it was the moment when we talked about the routine, the rules, and the activity we prepared for the day. After the Circle Time, children were invited to sit at the tables and start the activity. In the bilingual

room we have 3 tables, 2 are reserved for free activities, such as drawings, PlayDough, etc. With the supervision of the assistant and at the head table they have full attention of the bilingual education teacher. Upon completion of the activity we are invited to have lunch, then the children go wash their hands singing a song that the teacher invented for washing hands. It is important to point out here that for each instruction/command children sang a song related to the task they were performing.

After the lunch time we watched a video collection, and the teacher chose "Baby Einstein" in order to enhance the vocabulary of colors and objects used in everyday life. Another video watched was the cartoon "Finding Nemo" by Disney aforementioned with the purpose of working the underwater world, its colors, and its inhabitants. The story is about Nemo which is a clownfish that lives with his father on the sea. One day on the way to school, Nemo moves away from his father and got lost. In the deep sea, the adventure begins with the vivid colors and a beautiful nature being shown by his father to his son after many obstacles finally found each other. But the week reported in here was a bit different because it was added one more video called "The adventures under the sea with Hi 5" with the aim of enhancing the colors and marine life.

Also important, the classes of Arts were given in order to stimulating the students on their fine and gross motor skills. Extra activities also presented on the plan were offered through the activities presented in the daily plan, thus the teacher tried to seek to promote the individual creativity of each student and their relation into a social group.

Some of the activities they have done were: making puppets, drawings, paintings, modeling, origami and papietagem (paper sculpture). The frequency of students into the library, movie sessions, cooking classes, visiting to the core and classes at the Green House were some of extra activities prepared to the students.

During the project, students have understood the reason to have good water and what it was for, where we could find it, when we would use it and who needed it for surviving. At the end of the project, it was expected that students had been raised their awareness regarding the need to cooperate for the preservation of water, as well as for pets that needed water for their survival.

The assessment/the evaluation was done gradually. Since the development of children was constant, there was the need to record their daily behavior and the cognitive, affective and motor development. At the end of the semester an individual assessment be administered, in which positive aspects will be highlighted, as well as what still requires development, and possible negative factors that still need to be developed, and negative factors that somehow influenced the progress of the group.

The Daily Routine, in the beginning of the school year teachers prepared a pleasant and welcoming room to bid welcome the children. Each teacher ought to have had their planning ready. The class duration was of 3 hours from Monday to Friday, from 10AM to 1PM. The Bilingual 2 and 3 class had 18 children (11 girls and 7 boys). The bilingual students of 2 years old were 6 children and 12 children of 3 years old in this class.

And the Planning of the Week all were followed by a previous schedule. Every Monday had literature - when we had the story with drama. On Tuesday – Math worked with deepening mathematical concepts (colors, sizes, selections). And on Wednesday - Science with experiments, mixtures of colors and etc. Then on Thursday – Music day when teacher brought his guitar and sang nursery rhymes in the English language. After that on Friday – was a free day with games and activities inside and outside the classroom.

Once a month we had our cooking class and made our tour to the school farm, familiarizing themselves with the animals. And with the attempt to insert the student in an American culture we used to celebrate also the dates, such as Easter Day, St. Patrick's Day,

Valentine's Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, always bringing culture to the classroom. An example of it was the Halloween week when we did various activities related to the theme, and also decorated the school with embellishments like Jack-o-Lantern and mummies, and with fun the bilingual education teachers were dressed in costumes like witches and other ones and went from room to room screaming: "trick or treat". For the cooking class each bilingual class was made a Jack-o-lantern, and at the end was decided who won the competition. Students enjoyed themselves and understood more about this commemorative day.

After all activities, at 12:00 PM, lunch was served by the bilingual education teacher and her helper, only speaking in English. After lunch we made our time of relaxation, we went to the video room to watch a relaxing video, and at the same time the 2 year old students were taken to the nap room with the assistant and the rest stayed with the teacher in class. At 12.45 PM we went to the park and at 1:00 PM the students were delivered to monolingual teachers of Portuguese regular classes, and "Bye- bye" was said. This routine was repeated week after week. In short, it is possible to perceive that the themes and topics dealt with suggest that a focus on the children's well being was kept, as well as raising their awareness as regards the environment and the language needed to convey the intended ideas and concepts that were part of the classes.

As regards RQ2, in relation to the elements of such bilingual education program that stand out in comparison to the Bilingual Education programs established in the context of the United States, a series of aspects merits closer attention. As I cited before, the term bilingual education, according to Mello (2010), has been used to comprehensively characterize different forms of education in which students receive instruction (or part of the instruction) in a language different from what they normally use at home. Thus, this study evaluated, to some extent, the course of a bilingual classroom in a private bilingual school in the south of

Brazil. This bilingual school aims to get students to speak fluent English, from early childhood education. Every morning, the children attended bilingual classes taught by the researcher-teacher, in which English only was used. Only in times of risk was it allowed to use the mother tongue.

I could see the use of the submersion program that occurs in an environment where only one language is used. The home language is not used at all in the classroom. Students are placed in the bilingual classroom since childhood, even before learning to speak their mother language properly, in order to sharpen hearing for the English language, without even understanding the needs of the students though. In this case, we can notice that this method of submersion occurs in an environment where only one language is used, which may suggest that the student could be in a tricky situation since there might be little or no attempt to assist the student in understanding the language used in the classroom.

It is also possible to observe the use of some features of the Immersion program, in which the students are provided with many examples of the second language in an attempt to make them feel more comfortable in taking risks. With several songs and several games, the children tended to feel comfortable to try to speak. In the story telling time, the researcher-teacher always looked for books that were routinely near the student to facilitate their understanding and association. However, it was not always possible for a student to come to an understanding because there were times when a new theme that was not part of the routine of the student was approached, and thus the students could not understand the language enough to be able to construct knowledge.

The bilingual classes in kindergarten were just in the morning, when students arrived at school and went straight to the bilingual class. After lunch, they attended classes in their mother tongue. Such dynamics are suggestive of the presence of the Enrichment, Two-way, or Developmental Bilingual program, with the change of classes from morning to afternoon.

Together with the kindergarten Portuguese teachers, we traced a lesson plan, trying to follow the same reasoning, to facilitate the students' understanding. The same lesson plans were not followed, but the same theme. This was done so as to facilitate the students' understanding of the main theme and try to help them build some knowledge. It is of great importance to stress that in this bilingual class, the researcher-teacher had a three-year-old American student, with American parents, who spoke only English at home. This student was of great importance for the bilingual classes because she was always available to help friends as a native speaker, which made an impact on the students' gain of confidence so they could try and use the English language.

In my pedagogical practices, I could also notice nuances of the presence of the Transitional Bilingual Education program, whose main goal is to provide adequate instruction and resources so that the English language learner will be more comfortable to learn and speak English. This Program works as a bridge for students, facilitating their insertion in the English culture.

To put it in a nutshell, the school herein investigated seems to fit in not one, but a myriad of aforementioned models. During the classes, speaking only English seems to have triggered social and individual development, facilitating the children's initial contact with the English language and the American culture.

5. Conclusions

Taking into consideration the fact that we are inserted in a globalized world, the search for bilingual schools is growing. I, as a bilingual child and bilingual education teacher in a bilingual school, decided to carry out this research to understand the context of which I took part as a teacher and if this context follows standards of the so-called bilingual education programs. Thus, throughout this study I was able to notice and reflect upon the implementation of key concepts related to bilingual education in a school located in the southern Brazil.

In examining how the pedagogical practices occur in the bilingual context I was inserted, I found that the school seems to attempt to replicate some standards that American bilingual education models propose. My intention with this study was to contribute to the field with some reflections on the theme in order to provide insights into how bilingual education is implemented in our country. This study revealed that the dynamics undertaken by the teacher-researcher favor specific features belonging to an array of bilingual education models, rather than fitting into a specific one. Furthermore, it is possible to perceive that the concept of bilingual education per se seems to be stretched in the context investigated, which differs significantly from where bilingual education models were originally conceived.

In conclusion, it became evident that it is of great important that teachers working in this kind of context should constantly reflect upon their pedagogical practices. Such reflection should be fed by knowledge derived by theorization and research in the fields of second language acquisition and bilingual education. In carrying out this study, I was given the opportunity to systematize what I have done in the classroom and understand why certain choices were made the way they were, a fact that in the past relied solely on tacit knowledge.

6. Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

This study was limited in a number of aspects. Nonetheless, such limitations signal open new avenues for future research. These limitations and suggestions are listed as follows:

- The findings of this study should not be generalizable, since only a single pre-school, classroom, and teacher were under investigation. A more comprehensive investigation looking at bilingual education in varied contexts with children of different age ranges should merit a closer look;
- Much of what was reported in this study relied on the recollection of my own memories. Hence, future research should include teachers' daily diaries and classroom observations.

My motivation to carry out this research was to go deeper into the topic of bilingualism and thus try to understand myself better as a bilingual education teacher and understand the context in which I was inserted. I believe this study has contributed to the understanding of own practices and I hope that it may serve as motivation for other academic studies related to the bilingualism and bilingual education to come.

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