

Cake or Cookies? Facing Business and Management Bilingual Studies

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Abstract

The main aim of this article is to approach the phenomena of collective bilingualism of the students of Business and Management studies in a non-speaking country (such as Spain), and their familiarity with English vocabulary in the subject content. From participial observation and experience of several years of the authors and professors in bilingual studies at University level, this research summarizes the most important pedagogical aspects of particular interest in this type of education, distinguishing group (cake) and individual (cookies) activities.

According to the definitions of Siguan and Mackey (1986:17-18) for individual bilingualism, this paper tries to reflect if the techniques employed group (cake) or individual (cookies) teaching speed up the students to acquire enough skills to perform successfully academic activities, oral and written in the language of Shakespeare. As a metaphor, the authors have assimilated group activities (for instance, lecture hours) with a cake that is sharable, and individual activities with cookies (for instance, personal tutor sessions) that are not sharable.

To achieve the objectives of this research study on bilingualism, it has been implemented a survey of 89 students of several Bilingual Bachelor Degrees of Business and Management studies. In particular, 13 students enrolled in the subjects of "Marketing Research I" in Rey Juan Carlos University (Madrid, Spain); 18 students of "Principles of Business Financial Management", 15 students of "Financial Management", 20 students of "Accounting", and 23 students of "Finance" in Complutense University (Madrid, Spain) of the Bilingual Degrees "Marketing Research" and "Business Administration" and "Economics" respectively in the academic year 2010-11. The questionnaire consists of 9 questions, basically structured into closed questions to be answered by checking the appropriate box. In addition, there are some questions that ask for numerical information, and others that score the importance of a particular bilingual technique using value-affirmations on a scale ranging from 1 (very low/low) to 5(very high/good).

The main completion time of the questionnaire is about 6 minutes, and basically is divided into two sections: (1) information on sociodemographic profile of students and (2) on assessment of the different techniques of bilingual education (cake or cookies) used in and outside lecture hours.

The surveys were conducted in the last week of February 2011, where the questionnaires were handed out to students during a group tutorial session established for this purpose at each University. The questionnaires have been fully completed by all students, so no sampling was needed as all students were covered for the research. Thus, data analysis has been performed through the software *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS, version.15.0), using frequency analysis, crosstabs and correlations (e.g. see Table 1)

The findings of this research show that students have special preference for the implementation of group tasks (cake) over individual tasks (cookies), to acquire enough skills for carrying out academic activities in English. Consequently, the multiplier effect of bilingualism group based is more attractive as teaching technique in Business and Management studies in English non-speaking countries.

Table 1: Correlations between bilingual education techniques

		Level of English at the beginning of the course	Level of English at the end of the course	Individual tutorial hours	Oral Group presentation
Level of English at the beginning of the course	Correlation of Pearson	1	,626(*)	,031	,464
	Sig. (bilateral)		,022	,920	,110
	N	13	13	13	13
Level of English at the end of the course	Correlation of Pearson	,626(*)	1	,465	,387
	Sig. (bilateral)	,022		,109	,192
	N	13	13	13	13
Individual tutorial hours	Correlation of Pearson	,031	,465	1	,513
	Sig. (bilateral)	,920	,109		,073
	N	13	13	13	13
Oral Group presentation	Correlation of Pearson	,464	,387	,513	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	,110	,192	,073	
	N	13	13	13	13

(Source: Own elaboration)

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