



Book Review

**The Bilingual Revolution: The Future of Education is in Two Languages
(2017)**

**Fabrice Jaumont
Brooklyn, NY: TBR Books**

**Reviewed by Majd Sarah
The University of Texas at El Paso**

INTRODUCTION

The Bilingual Revolution is a key piece in bilingual educational for both scholars and parents as it ties together learning and teaching aspirations with language ideologies and identities. Jaumont's masterpiece engages readers in personal, political, and community stories of the country's growing bilingual revolution and describes a systematic process recommended for parents and educational leaders who seek to create their own bilingual program. In the following sections, I summarize the main arguments of the book starting with the first chapter and ending with chapter thirteen. Then, I analyze the revolution Jaumont calls for and recaptures the book's most important contribution: proposing a U-turn in our education to establish schooling practices that reflect the essence of our complex American identities and diverse linguistic ideologies.

SUMMARY

The Bilingual Revolution begins with a foreword written by Ofelia Garcia who sheds the light on the roots of bilingual education in the United States. Garcia mentions that throughout the 18th century, there were high numbers of schools where a language other than English was used as the medium of instruction. Just as earlier forms of bilingual education in the United States are traced back to the 1800s, oppositions to such programs have also been present since then. These oppositions resulted in a remarkable increase in English-only public schools and bilingual school were not established until much later. This led communities to depend on after school programs or weakened classes to provide their children with mother tongue exposure. Today, bilingual education takes a new approach and Fabrice Jaumont's book depicts this U-turn and demonstrates the power behind communities and their vital role in empowering heritage language speakers.

Chapter 1 highlights the willpower of parents and their magnificent role in creating dual-language programs in the United States. Parents' interest in such programs mainly emerged from their desire to preserve their linguistic heritage and to grant their children valuable skills and a broader linguistic repertoire that can help them flourish in a globalized world. While in chapter 2, Jaumont presents the story of Brooklyn's first Japanese-English dual- language program and the dedication of five Brooklyn mothers who led to its success. First, they reached out to other parents and educators who have gone through the same experience. Then they found the right model, Glendale's side-by-side Japanese-English model and surveyed the local community for interested families and a best-fit host school. This initiative faced many challenges, yet the

school principle did not drop the initiative and New York's first Japanese-English dual-language program opened its doors in September 2015. In Chapter 3, the story of an Italian dual-language program illustrates many of the challenges and successes faced when creating program from the bottom up. The parents involved in this initiative had difficulties finding a host school and maintaining families' interest and involvement in this initiative. Due to these hurdles, the first two attempts in establishing an Italian-English dual program were unsuccessful, but at last, it was launched in 2015 with an astonishing number of applications reaching 270 applications for twenty seats only.

The German Dual-language initiative in chapter 4 is another great story of a group of parents at an immersion preschool who realized the need to create such a program in order to continue their children's bilingual education at the elementary level. Adapting a milestone approach, the families set goals and deadlines. Despite their promising roadmap, the German dual-language program was postponed due to the significant decrease in the number of registered children and interested parents as well as the school administration reluctance to start the program. Although many families were disappointed, the hopes for a German dual-language program are still high. Chapter 5 is a tale of the multi-year efforts to establish two Russian dual-language programs, one in Manhattan and another in Brooklyn. Families sprang in action to assemble the Russian community and attract non-Russian speakers into the program. While the Russian program in Brooklyn was a huge success, unfortunately the Manhattan initiative did not materialize because of the daunting battle to secure a location. Additionally, chapter 6 narrates the story behind New York City's first French dual-language program started by three Brooklyn mothers. Thanks to the motivated communities and supportive administrators, the domino effect in the city resulted in multiplied French dual programs and immensely increased population of enrolled students.

The story of the first Arabic-English dual program in New York City is slightly different. In chapter 7, Fabrice Jaumont provides a historical account of how the Khalil Gibran International Academy developed the program in 2007. Sadly, even when the academy's mission was clearly identified and stated, its dual-language program did not last. Post 9/11, there were multiple press attacks and advocacy groups reactions which portrayed the Arabic language and anything related to it negatively. Yet with the persistence of the Arabic-speaking community and the support of school administrators and local organizations, two bilingual programs opened their doors to students offering instruction half day in Arabic and half day in English. On the other hand, Chapter 8 tells the story of the first Polish-English dual-language program in Greenpoint. The large Polish-American community celebrated the launching of this program in September 2015; a celebration that was highly supported by parents, officials, diplomats, and the city as a whole. The uniqueness of this initiative is the immense support it has received from parents with or without a Polish heritage who saw this dual language program as a rich comprehensive cultural and linguistic experience. In chapter 9, Fabrice Jaumont discusses the roots of the most common dual language programs in the United States. The impact of Spanish-English dual-language programs goes far beyond the Spanish-speaking community. Amistad and Cypress Hills Community are examples of the determination, inspiration and persistence of both parents and educators in creating such bilingual programs and serving a significant number of students. Chapter 10 demonstrates the success of The High School for Dual Language and Asian Studies and its excellence in serving a diverse population in Manhattan. The school was founded in 2003; however, at the beginning the administration faced difficulties to persuade families to sign up. Today, it is extremely successful, very well established, and sets a great example for other high schools to follow.

Chapters 11, 12, and 13 deviate from the dual-language program stories previous chapters dealt with. Chapter 11 suggests a roadmap for those who are interested in starting a dual-language program in their public school. This roadmap is a guiding path for parents and

educators alike as it provides them with an excellent outline to follow starting with setting up information sessions and recruiting volunteers to communicating with principals and teachers. On the other hand, chapter 12 serves as reminder of the importance of dual-language education in the 21st century. Listing the unique characteristics of bilingual individuals, this chapter develops a rationale that can be used later to convince school administrators and other parents in the valuable advantages of bilingualism. The final chapter in this book weaves together a historical account on bilingual education in the United States and the current attitudes and practices associated with it. Today, more programs and communities recognize the many advantages of learning one's mother tongue in addition to learning English and *The Bilingual Revolution* captures this paradigm shift accurately and aids in establishing this critical change in bilingual education.

ANALYSIS

The *Bilingual Revolution* takes us in a U-turn to the origins of bilingualism and place its design and creation back in the hands of families and communities. In this section, I analyze the text within three main objectives. First, through this book, Fabrice Jaumont calls to embrace the cultural uniqueness of families and communities and promote their linguistic heritages because it is all part of our society's greater international mosaic. Second, the stories and roadmap presented in *The Bilingual Revolution* facilitates the re-engagement of communities in public schools and public education in general. Third, it helps bridge the gaps that continue to draw us apart, and it promotes a sense of unified community socially, economically, and culturally.

Parents' passion and dedication to create dual-language programs sprout from the difficulty they have faced to maintain their own language and culture and the struggle to keep passing their linguistic and cultural heritage onto the next generation. For example, in the case of Italian dual-language program, afterschool and weekend programs were not enough; and second and third generation Italian-American parents were not able to make choices regarding their children's education until the Italian dual-language program started. Jaumont explains, "they witnessed the linguistic damage occurred within their own generation, or perhaps their parents' generation, and were remarkably able to mobilize in order to reverse the process of language loss in their community" (p. 30). The grassroots initiatives discussed in chapters 1 through 10 demonstrate the will power of parents and, in some cases, the extraordinary support from school administrations, such as the superintendent support to the Polish dual-language program in Greenpoint. Moreover, *The Bilingual Revolution* offers a roadmap to re-engage families and communities in public education. Bilingual programs transform and revitalize communities, and they preserve one's cultural and history while fostering a sense of pride among heritage language groups. The stories of New York City dual-language programs demonstrate the power of parents' involvement and the potential of bilingual language programs to create a change in the U.S. educational environment and take communities a leap forward into a better future. Finally, this book bridges linguistic and cultural gaps that have long divided us. For example, the German dual-language program initiative serves a multicultural, multilingual, and multinational group of parents and students. Referring to this particular program, Jaumont further explains "everyone came from different religious and socioeconomic backgrounds. This diversity contributed to the strength of the German dual-language program" (p. 35). With such goals in mind, dual-language programs become the foundation of prosperous healthy communities. In spite of the hardships and setbacks that many of the dual-language initiatives faced, communities have achieved enormous successes in recent years. The Arabic-language program is an ideal proof of how fruitful outcomes are harvested when parents, school administrators, and community organizations come together. Stories throughout this book vividly portray the

significance of collaboration, participation, and cooperation of parents, school leaders, and communities at large.

CONCLUSION

The Bilingual Revolution by Fabrice Jaumont is a unique work derived from real world experiences and geared to serve all communities of heritage languages. Its advocacy for dual-language programs provide opportunities for children to gain essential 21st century skills, equip them with the needed elements of academic development, and preserve their cultural identity. In new initiatives, parents and educators often navigate new paths to create standards, collect resources, provide curriculum materials, and establish successful teaching practices in order to create a dual-language program. With such a daunting workload, we are in need of shared knowledges and developed resources and The Bilingual Revolution plays a great role in this aspect as it forges the path to dual-language education success, which in return touches the lives of children and adults alike and provides them with a unique opportunity to become multilingual multicultural individuals. Additionally, this book is a powerful message to educational leaders who hold the keys to the creation of dual-language programs and whose support for bilingual education opens new doors to linguistically and culturally diverse student population to succeed academically and professionally. By sharing the stories of New York City's Japanese, Italian, German, Russian, Arabic, Polish, Spanish, Chinese, and French dual-language programs, Jaumont highlights parents' power and their vital role in the bilingual movement, and the great change bilingual education in public schools can bring to communities nationally and internationally. Heritage languages do strengthen communities and promote cross-cultural exchanges and diversity in the globalized world we live in today

REFERENCES

Jaumont, F. (2017). *The bilingual revolution: The future of education is in two languages* (Vol. 1). TBR Books.