

International perspectives and global trends in English language education for non-native speakers in the early years

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English Language Education, December 15, 2012, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong

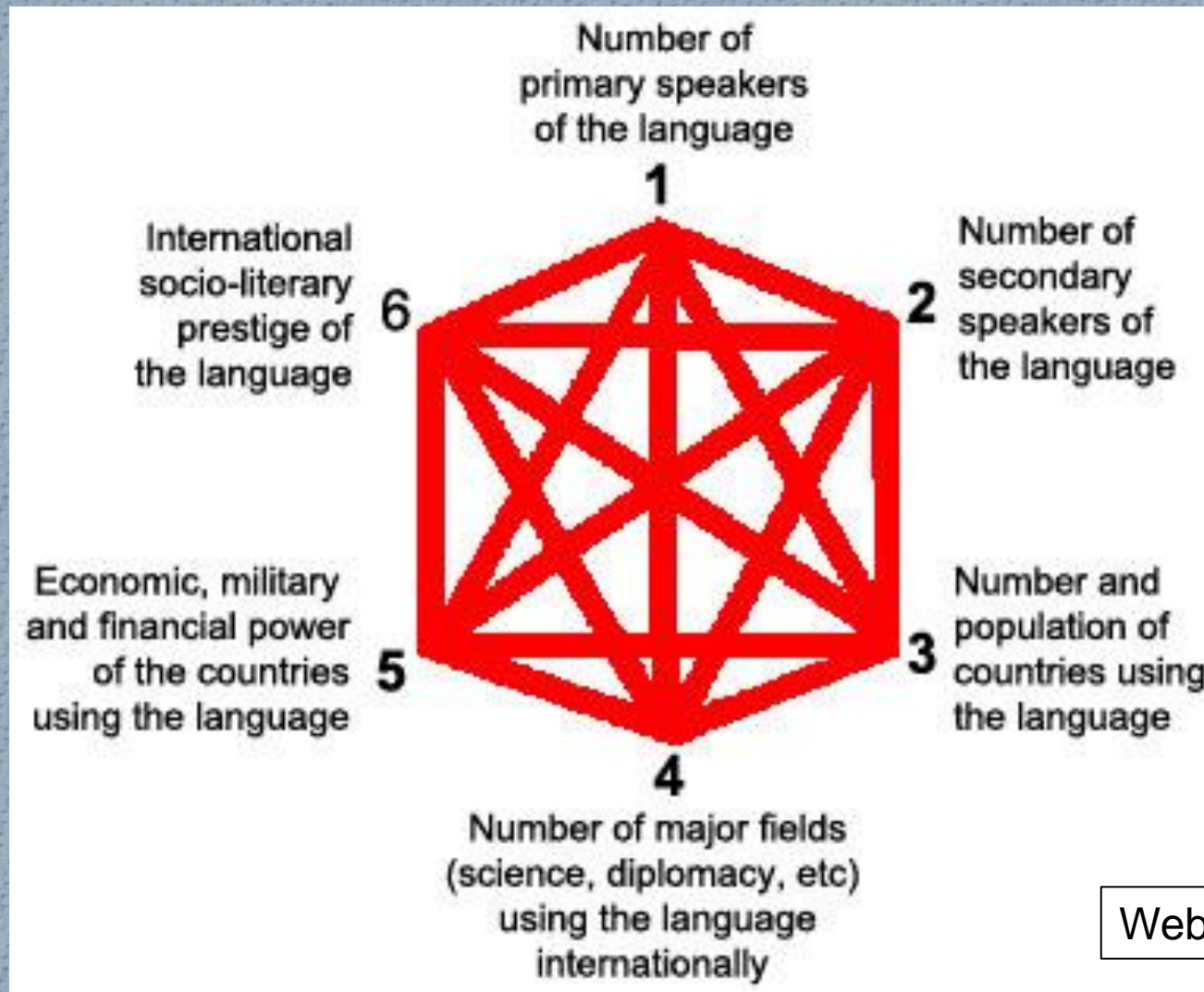
Overview

1. Growing influence of English on early education
2. The emphasis on bilingualism
3. When should we introduce the second language?
4. Approaches to early foreign language instruction
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Growing influence of English

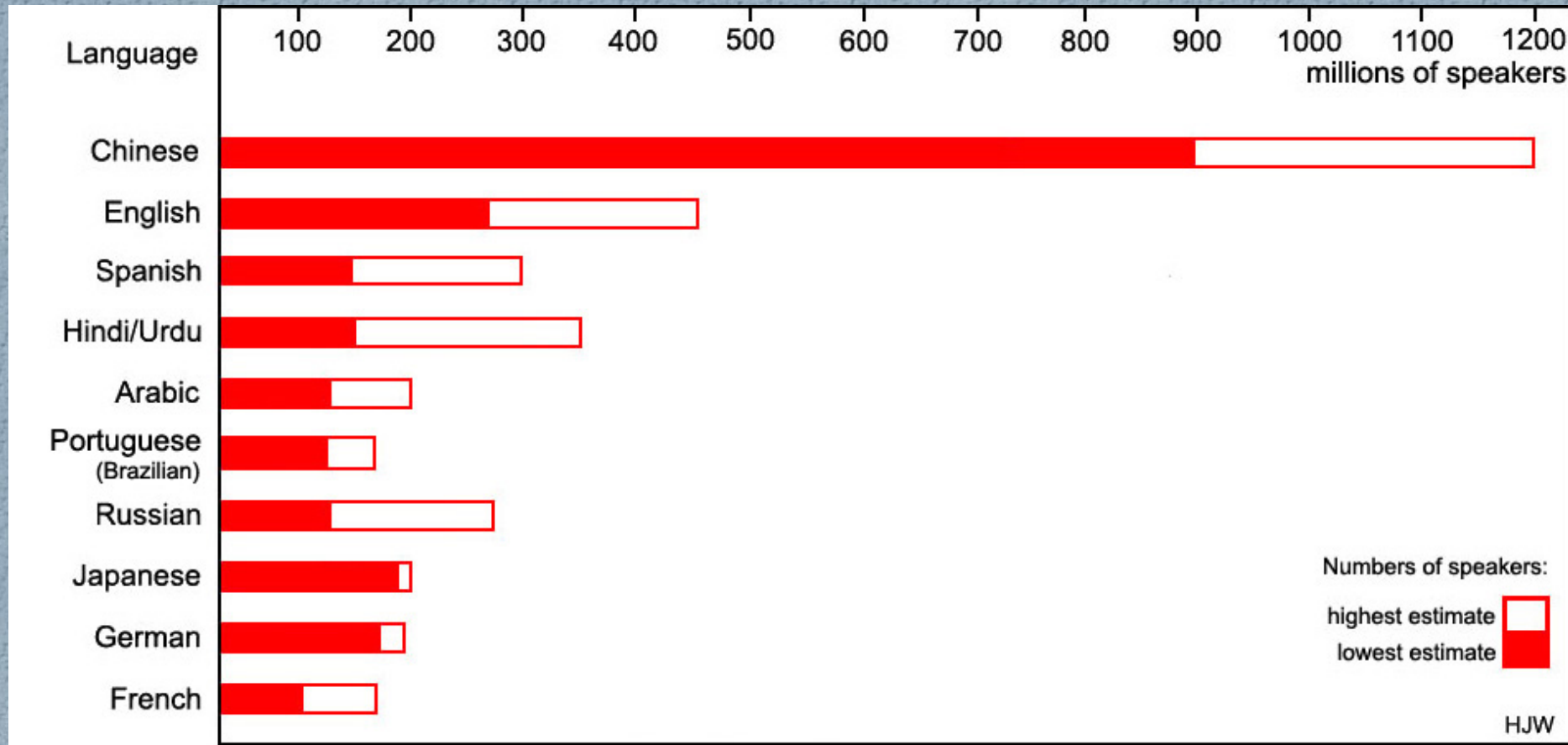
- o Influences of languages shrink and expand over time
- o Weber (1997) discussed the “explosive growth” of the English language
- o He ranked the world’s languages in terms of their influence

Factors that determine the influence of a language



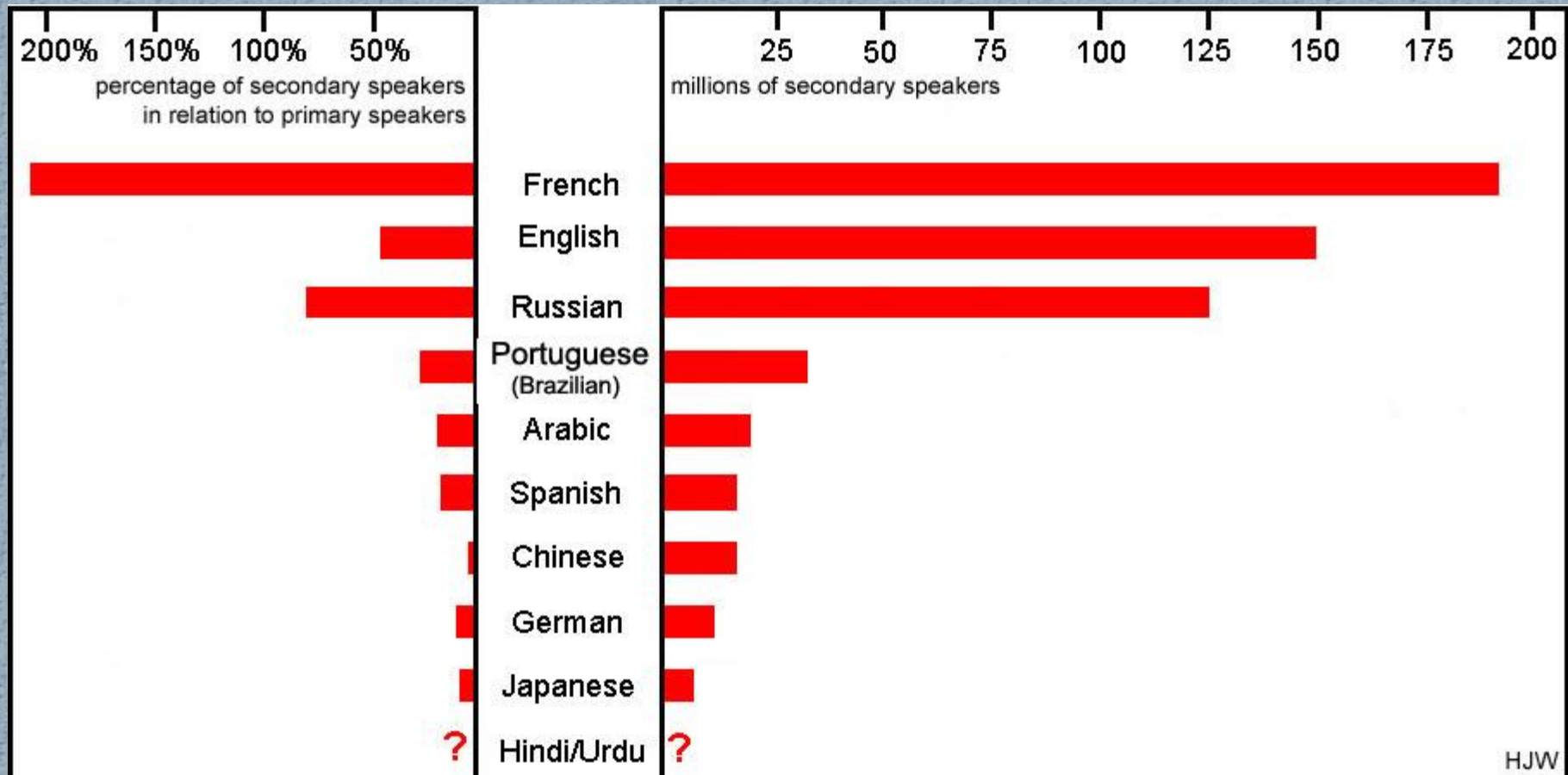
Weber, 1997

Number of primary speakers of a language

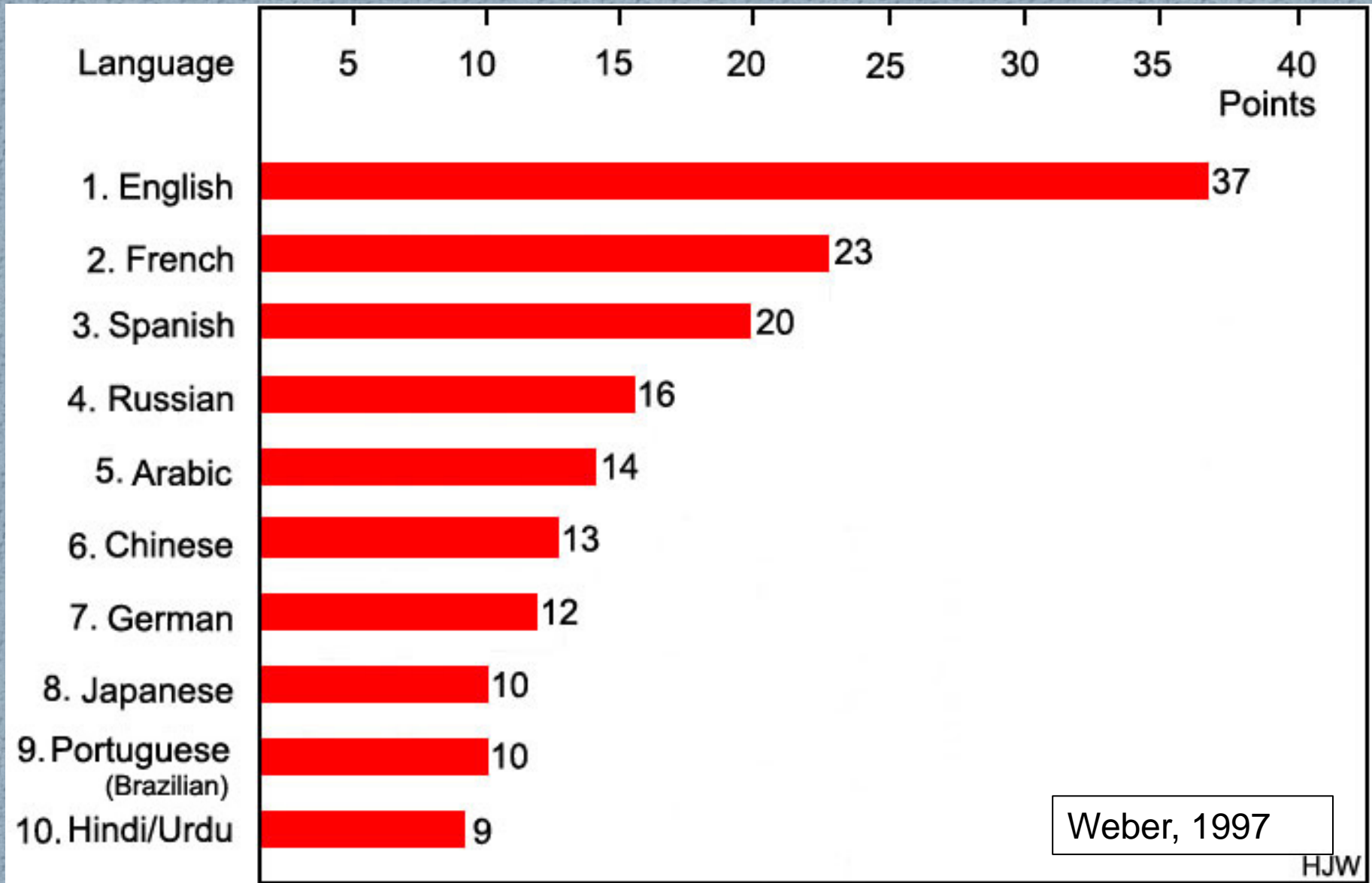


Weber, 1997

Number of secondary speakers of a language



The 10 Most Influential Languages in the World



Factors that determine the influence of a language

Top Ten Languages Used on the Internet

Language	% in Internet	Internet Users
1. English	28.9%	326,781,864
2. Chinese	14.7%	166,001,513
3. Spanish	8.9%	100,966,903
4. Japanese	7.6%	86,300,000
5. German	5.2%	58,711,687
6. French	5.0%	56,368,344
7. Portuguese	3.6%	40,216,760
8. Korean	3.0%	34,120,000
9. Italian	2.7%	30,763,940
10. Arabic	2.5%	28,540,700

[Source: "Internet World Users by Language," Internet World Stats, 2 June 2007, Miniwatts Marketing Group, 20 June 2007, <<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm>>.]

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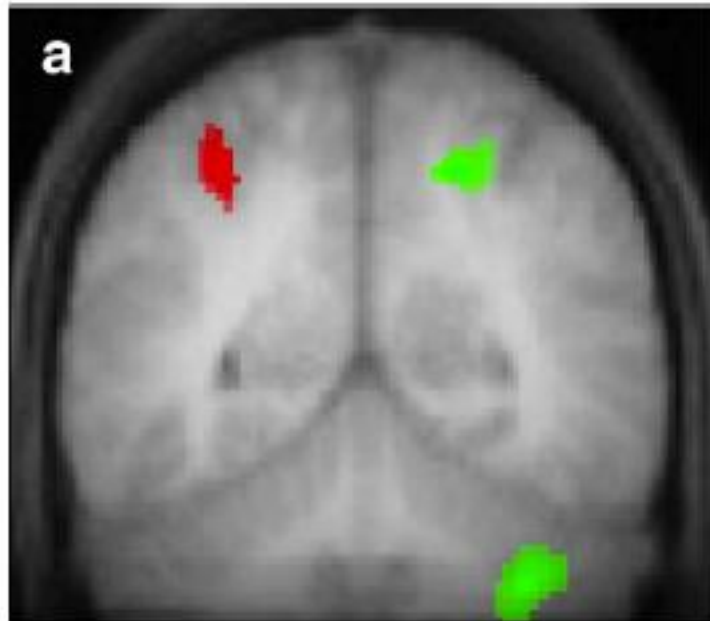
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The emphasis on bilingualism

- The following slides on bilingual brains are from Professor Brendan Weekes, The University of Hong Kong

The emphasis on bilingualism

Proficiency

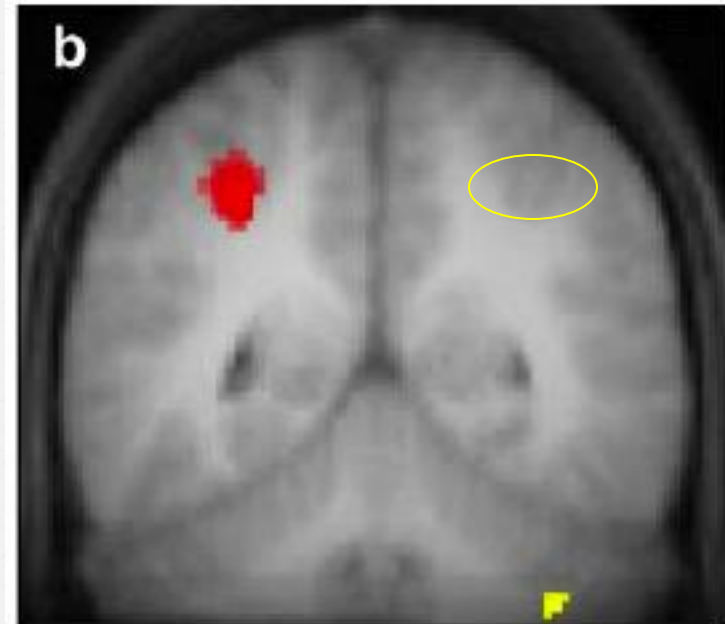


Y = -60

High Proficiency

R

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Y = -54

Low Proficiency

L

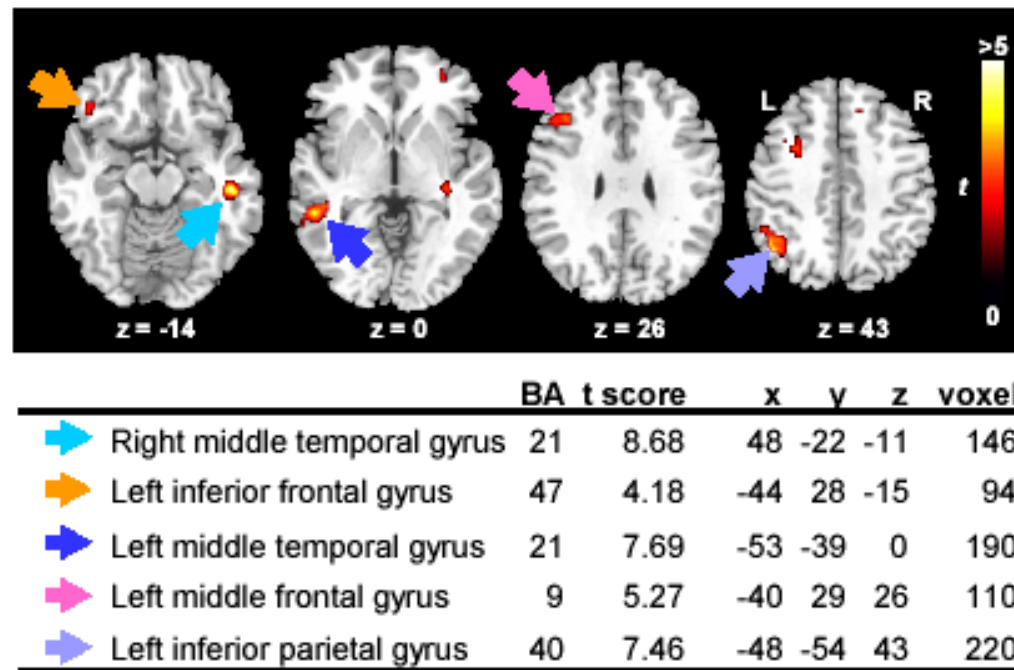
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Majerus, Weekes et al. (2008a;b). *NeuroImage*

The emphasis on bilingualism

Age of Acquisition

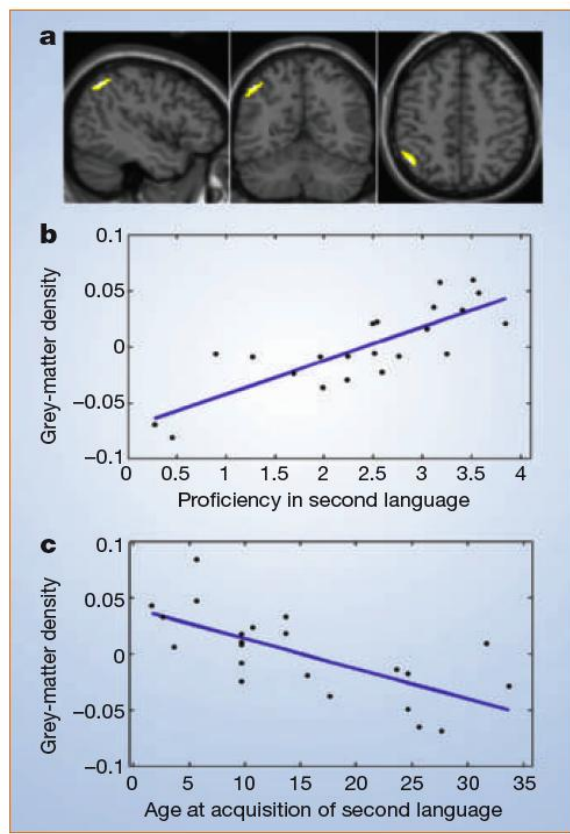
Figure 1



Weekes, Chan and Tan (2008). *Neuropsychologia*

The emphasis on bilingualism

Plasticity

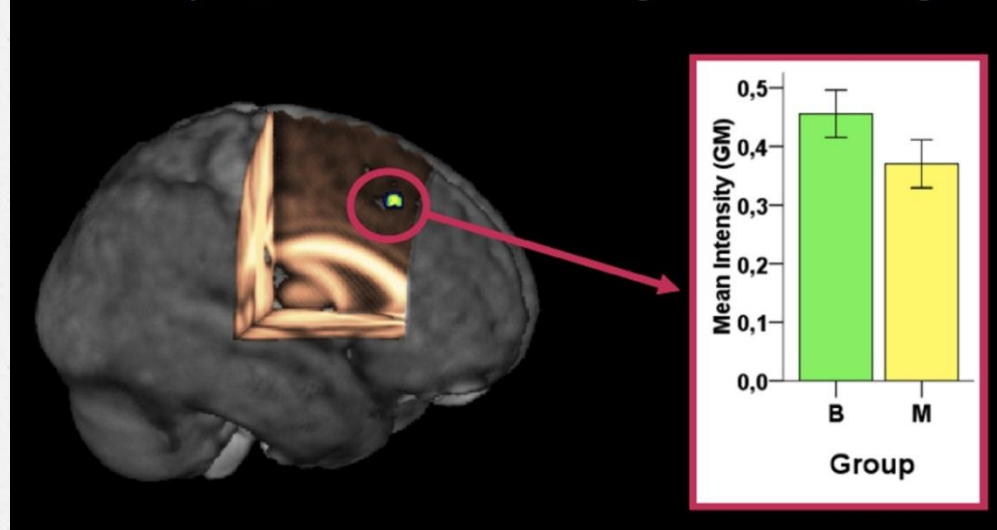


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Mechelli et al. (2004). *Nature*

GM density differences between bilinguals and monolinguals



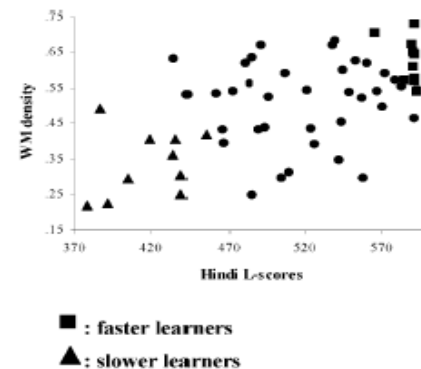
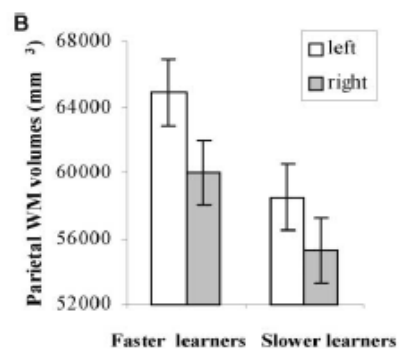
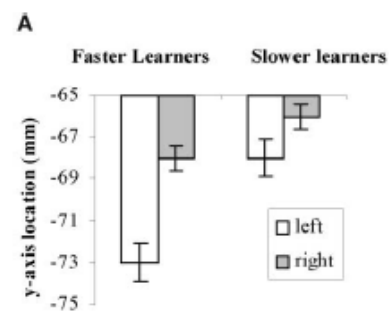
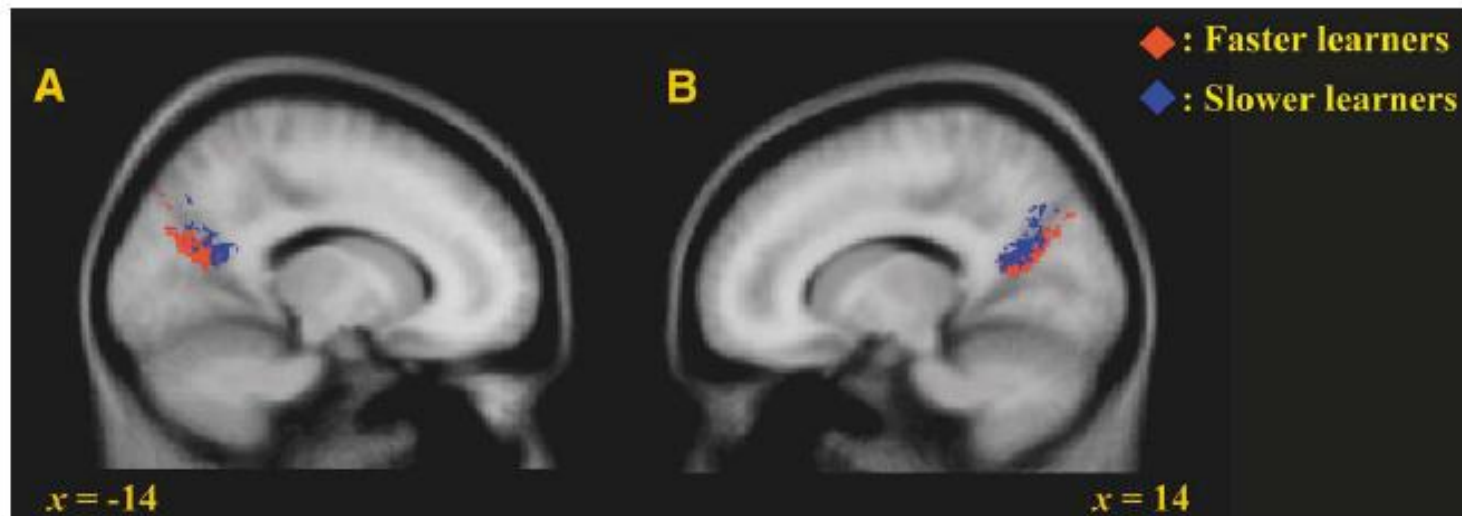
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Abutalebi et al. (2008). *Cerebral Cortex*

The emphasis on bilingualism

Learning



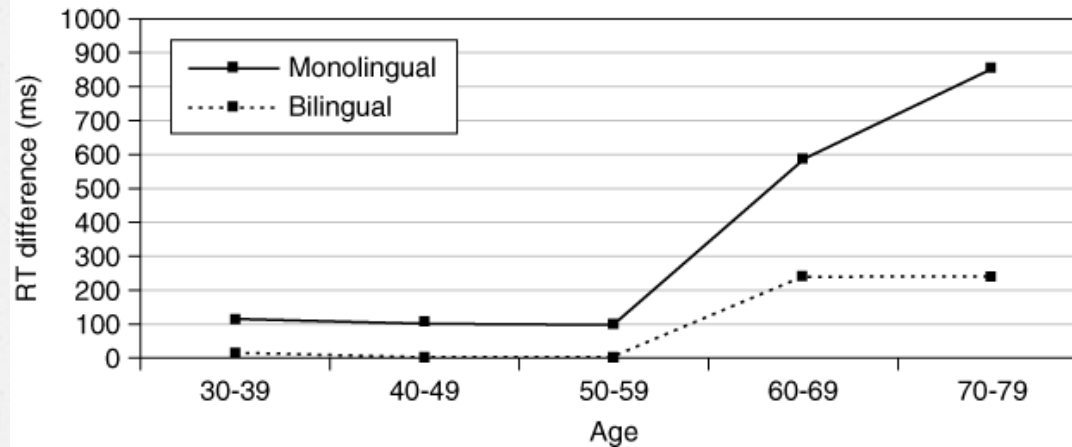
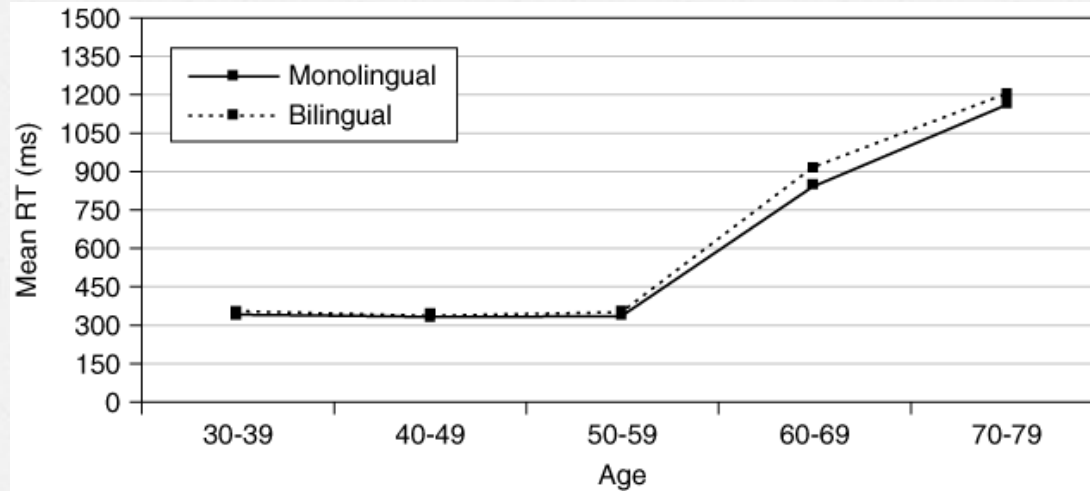
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Gollestani et al. (2008). *Neuron*

The emphasis on bilingualism

Aging



Bilingualism



The University of Hong Kong



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香港大學百周年

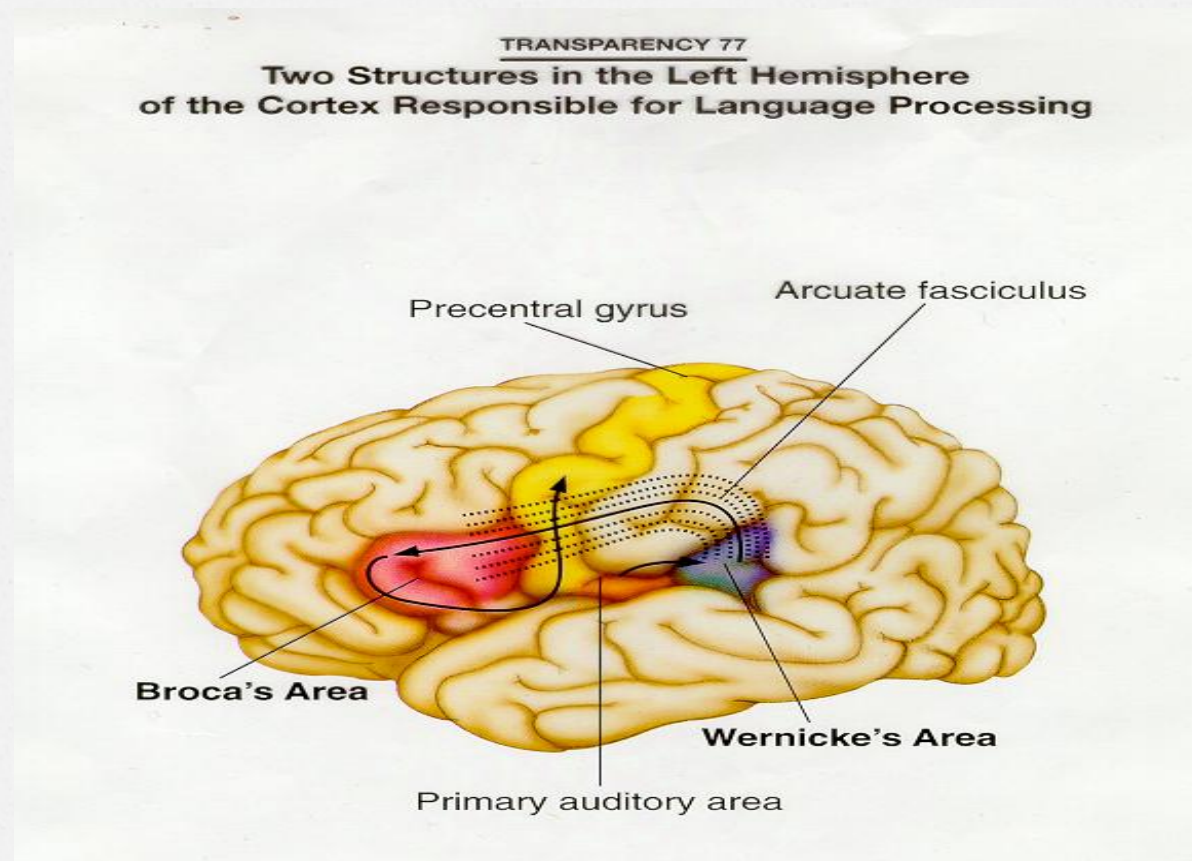
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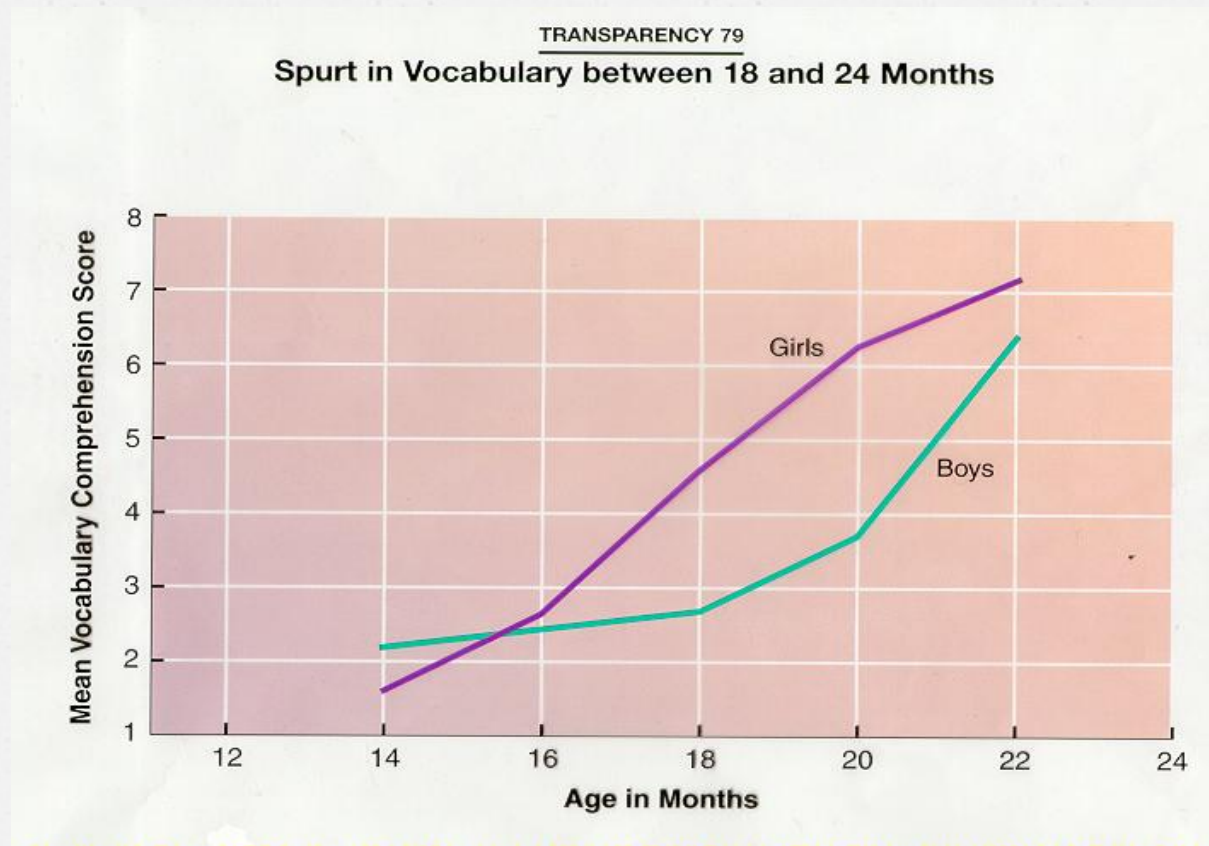
When should we introduce a second language?

- o There is no doubt that we should introduce a second language -- there are clearly documented benefits of bilingualism
- o Argument 1 - We should introduce the second language early.
- o Argument 2 - We can introduce the second language later.

We should introduce the second language early: Evidence from early brain development

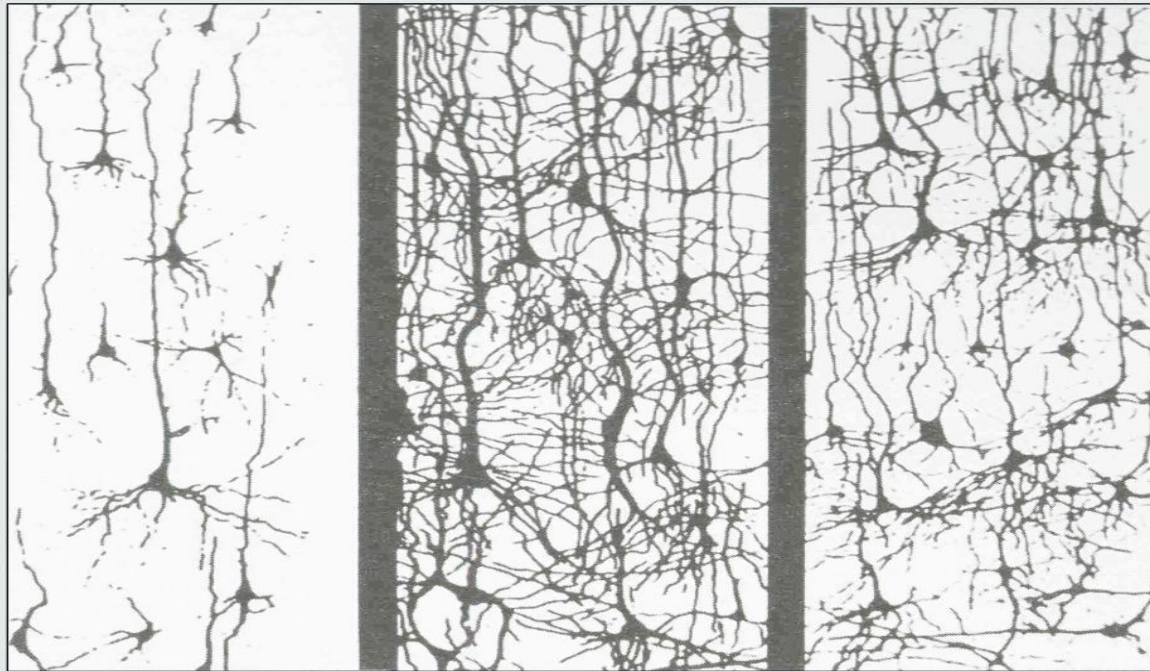


We should introduce the second language early:
Evidence from early brain development (vocabulary spurt)



We should introduce the second language early:
Evidence from early brain development (synaptic pruning)

At birth 6-year-old 14-year-old



We should introduce the second language early: Evidence from early brain development

- o There is rapid brain development in the early years and development of particular areas is associated with language
- o Environmental factors affect brain development
- o The human brain has an amazing capacity to learn more than one language and the toddler knows which language to use with whom.

We can introduce the second language later

- o Adults can learn a second language more effectively than children.
- o What are some of the prevailing myths?

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Approaches to early foreign language instruction

- o Natural versus acquired bilingualism
- o Children learn the foreign language simultaneously or successively

Approaches to early foreign language instruction

Language Immersion

- o A method of teaching a second language in which the is used as the medium of instruction to teach curriculum content
 - o Early immersion: age 5 – 6 years
 - o Middle immersion: 9 – 10 years
 - o Late immersion: 11 – 14 years

Approaches to early foreign language instruction

Language Immersion

o Immersion

- o Total immersion
- o Partial immersion
- o Two-way bilingual immersion
- o Trilingual immersion/approach
- o English as a subject
 - Note this is not bilingual education

Approaches to early foreign language instruction

Language Immersion (Bilingual Education)

- o Bilingual education is instruction in two languages and the use of those two languages as mediums of instruction for any part, or all of the school curriculum (Andersson, Boyer, & Southwest Development Laboratory, 1970)
- o Content and delivery are in two languages
- o Excludes programmes where second language is taught as a subject
- o Distinction between transitional and maintenance bilingual education programs

Approaches to early foreign language instruction

Research Findings

- Two-way bilingual immersion programs are successful frameworks (in US and other studies)

Approaches to early foreign language instruction

Research Findings

Critical Features of Successful Bilingual and Immersion programs

Method	Detail
Targetted/varied teaching techniques	Responsive to individual differences in language proficiency and learning style
Student-centred teaching and learning	Transmission versus constructivism
Learner interactions	Co-operative learning
Common task orientation	

Source: Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary & Rogers, 2007

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Trends in Early Childhood foreign language pedagogy

General trends in Early Childhood pedagogy

- o Contrasting trends in Asia and the West
- o Emphasis on learning standards and accountability
- o Increase in digital media in school and home
- o Evidence-based curriculum with literacy and mathematics focus (in western contexts; in eastern contexts more emphasis on play-based learning)
- o Higher teacher qualifications → pedagogy

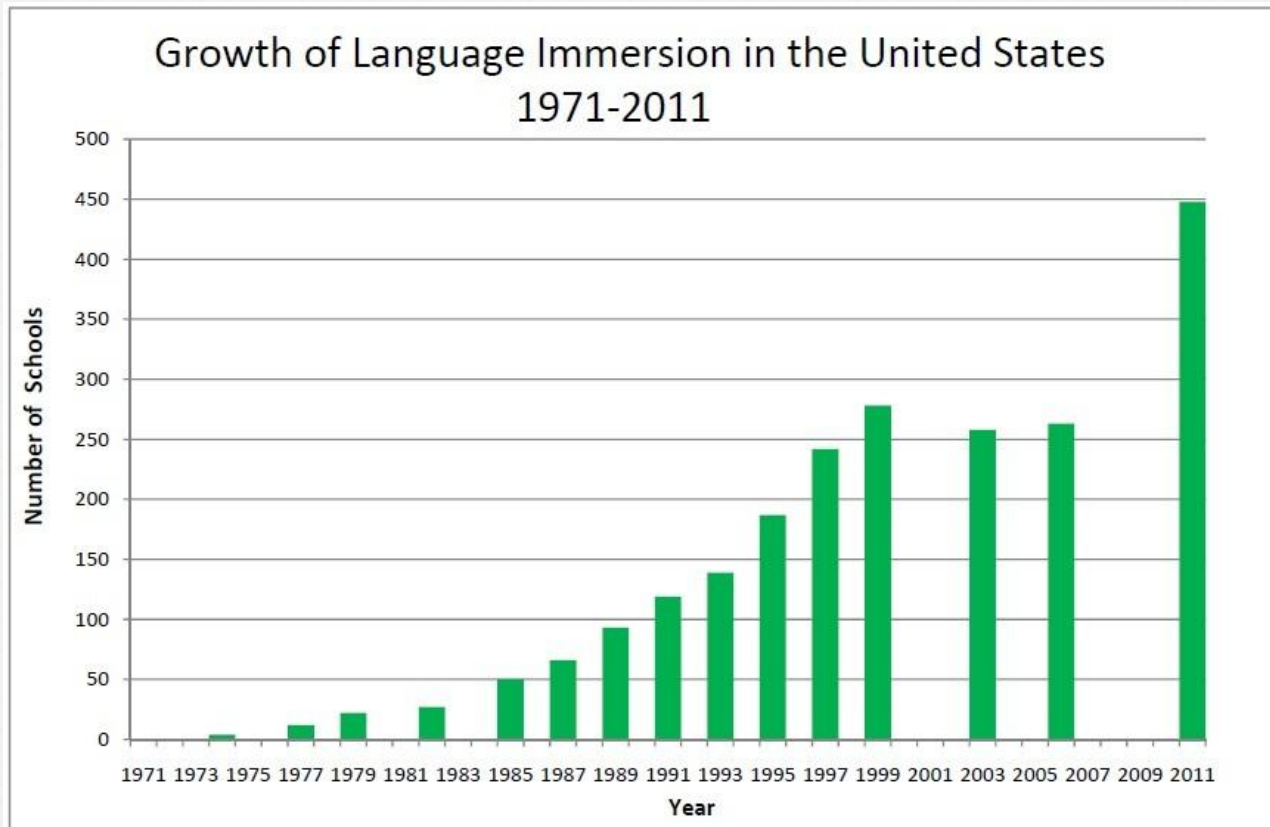
Trends in Early Childhood foreign language pedagogy

General trends in Early Childhood pedagogy

In the Past ECE Tended to Emphasize:	Today ECE Emphasizes:
Processes of how children develop and learn	Both the processes of how children develop and learn and the content—what they are learning
Inputs—standards (such as licensing or accreditation) that mandate what programs should do	Both program standards (inputs) and outcomes (early learning standards for what children should know and be able to do)
Quality	Both quality and accountability
Activities	Both coherent curriculum plans links to learning goals
Free play	Both child-initiated, developmentally valuable play and playful, teacher-guided learning
Developmental appropriateness	Both effectiveness and developmental appropriateness (Are children making learning and developmental progress from the experiences we deem appropriate?)
Observation of children	Both observation for many purposes and assessment of children's outcomes
Facilitating learning	Both intentional teaching and positive, supportive relationships
Development, not academics (viewing early childhood education as separate and distinct from what follows in the primary grades)	Both viewing learning and development as a continuum from birth to age 8, and working toward alignment from pre-K to grade 3
Typical, normative development	Both adapting for the individual variation of every child and intervention and adaptation for children with disabilities and special needs, as well as children who are advanced

Trends in Early Childhood foreign language pedagogy

Growth in Bilingual programmes



Trends in Early Childhood foreign language pedagogy

- Digital support
- Native speaking teachers
- Age and context appropriate methods

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Trends in advice about pedagogy for dual language learning

Recommended Best Practices for Dual Language Immersion Programmes

- o Curriculum (philosophy and intentionality)
- o Professional development of teachers
 - o Additional coursework on language and literacy development theory and strategies for working with young children who are learning a second language
 - o Language courses designed for early educators to enhance their own proficiency
 - o Certification of teaching the other language
- o Work with families

Trends in advice about pedagogy for dual language learning

- Oral language is the foundation for literacy skills

 - Listening, speaking, reading and writing

- Reading and Writing

 - Support the development of phonological awareness

 - Encourage emergent literacy

 - Talking dictation

 - Choice of books – literature as curriculum

Overview

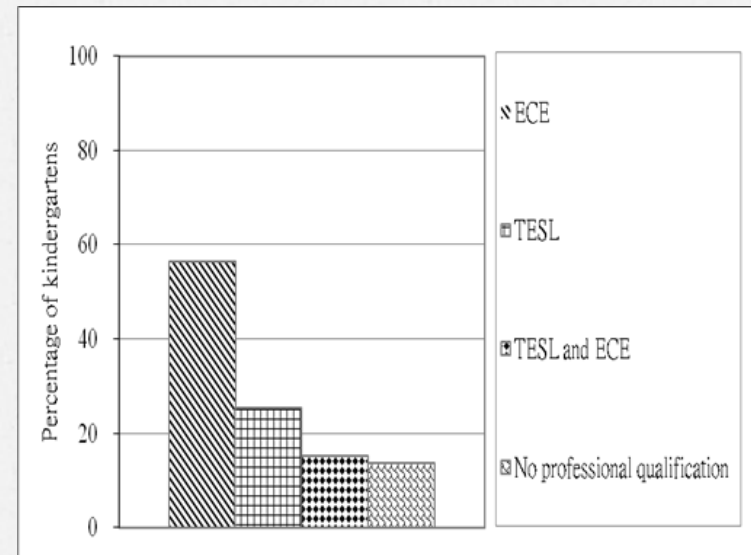
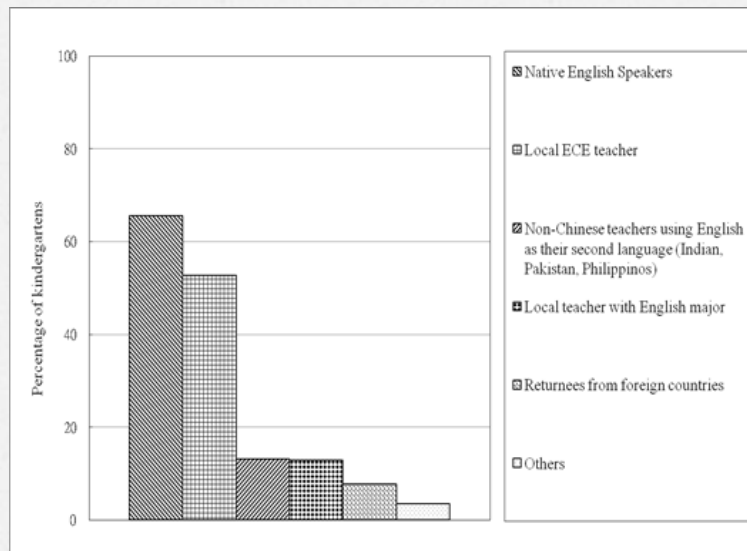
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The situation in Hong Kong

- Teaching of English in Hong Kong kindergartens is pervasive
- Bilingual environments
- Wide variations in teacher qualifications
- English is taught as a “subject”
- English homework

(Ng, 2011)

The situation in Hong Kong



Ng, 2011

The situation in Hong Kong

- Lee (2012) Looked at Cantonese, Putonghua and English teaching in 5 kindergartens in Hong Kong.
- Lau (2012) Teaching of English Vocabulary in three kindergartens.

The situation in Hong Kong

- o English as a subject
- o Bilingual models
- o Trilingual models
- o Chan & McBride-Chang (2005). Compared the Cantonese and English language vocabulary knowledge of K3 children looked after by Filipina domestic helpers
- o Siegel (2012). The influence of the first language (L1) on the learning of English

The situation in Hong Kong

o Recommendations for Instruction for Second Language Acquisition (Ellis, 2008)

1. Ensure learners learn important phrases and rules
2. Focus on meaning/form
3. Provide opportunities to talk
4. Cater to individual differences
5. Frequent assessment

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Unanswered questions

1. What is the best age to introduce English as a foreign language to young learners? – It depends on...
2. What are the most important teacher characteristics and qualifications?
3. What is the best pedagogical approach?

Unanswered questions

3. How much time per week should we allocate to English instruction? What should we focus on?
4. What about reading and writing?

Unanswered questions

So what should we do?

◦ Evidence based decision- making

1. Introduce language early and introduce it well.
2. Use immersion models
3. Have a high quality “intentional” curriculum
4. Have qualified teachers
5. Assess children’s competence
6. Garner family and community support

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Conclusions

- o “Children enter preschool rich in their own language and the important teaching builds on that strength rather than immersing children in a new language and ignoring the language and literacy development they have experienced so far.”
- o “When young children are learning more than one language, both languages follow the typical development process and this does not cause language disorders or substantiative language delays.”

(Youngquist & Martinez-Griego, 2009)

- o Sometimes factors other than “evidence” will influence policy but all educators are guided by the best interest of the child



Thank you!

謝謝
谢谢