

# Style sheet - ENG

**Symposium title:** Emerging research findings in immersion research: A forum to explore yet uncharted and underexplored issues and questions

**Coordinator 1** (Pádraig, Ó Duibhir, DCU Institute of Education, Dublin City University, Ireland):

**Coordinator 2** (Laurent, Cammarata, Education, University of Alberta, Campus Saint-Jean, Canada):

**Symposium format (one choice - delete the others):**

- Symposium Multimodal

**Symposium mode (one choice - delete the others):**

- Hybrid

**Sub-themes (multiple choices - delete the others):**

- ☐ LANGUAGES IN INSTRUCTION: languages as Medium of Instruction, in Higher Education, in CLIL and languages for Internationalization
- ☐ (MINORITY) LANGUAGES IN THE WORLD: Lingua Franca, Global language, Academic Language, dialects
- ☐ LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING: teacher education, curricula and education, classrooms, instruction, task-based learning, EAP, study abroad, (virtual) exchanges, materials and methods

**Short abstract in English:**

We invite researchers to present research findings in emerging areas of immersion research. As immersion programmes have grown in popularity and success, so too have the challenges of orienting programmes to meet the needs of all learners. Past research has confirmed that immersion students achieve high levels of target language competence, but concerns remain about the grammatical and syntactical accuracy of students spoken and written target language output. The integration of language and content has been identified as a key element of effective immersion pedagogy together with varying degrees of form focussed instruction. The emergence of diverse populations accessing immersion education has led to research on students with special educational needs, low socio economic and multicultural backgrounds. Retaining students in immersion programmes has been a long-standing challenge that is under-researched. We look forward to receiving submissions on these and other emerging topics.

**Argument:**

Learning curriculum content through a second or additional language has been a feature of education for many centuries. Dual language education was practiced in many jurisdictions since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The success of the language immersion programmes in Montreal,

Canada in the mid-1960's brought immersion education to a wider audience and is seen as a pivotal point in its development for second language acquisition. Early research studies on the Canadian immersion programmes focused on language learning outcomes and achievement in curriculum content areas (Genesee, 1987; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Swain & Lapkin, 1982). Many of these studies were prompted by a concern that learning content through an additional language might have a detrimental effect on students' achievement.

These earlier studies largely confirmed that immersion students achieved high levels of target language competence with no deficits in their first language or content learning. Nevertheless, while these outcomes have been very positive, there continues to be concerns about the grammatical and syntactical accuracy as well as lexical specificity of students spoken and written target language output (e.g., Lyster, 2007; Ó Duibhir, 2018). To address these concerns, studies have investigated the learning processes within immersion programmes, e.g., form focussed instruction, corrective feedback, the integration of language and content objectives, immersion teacher education and professional development.

Given the success of immersion programmes, their popularity has increased and spread throughout the world. In addition to playing an important role in supporting the development of multilingualism, they also serve an important function in the preservation and revitalisation of minority languages. Furthermore, immersion programmes attract students from a wider diversity of backgrounds and learning needs. This has led to research on the suitability of immersion education for students from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities which has been an important development in the democratisation of immersion education. Finally, the translanguaging debate has impacted the conceptualisation of the separation of languages within immersion programmes and is an issue which has been debated for many years.

The proposed symposium provides an opportunity for researchers to present state-of-the-art research on immersion education which has the potential to propel the research agenda to explore yet uncharted and underexplored issues and questions. While not an exhaustive list, we invite presentations on the following areas:

- form focussed instruction
- corrective feedback
- language and content integration
- attrition and non-completion in immersion education
- minority and heritage language immersion education
- immersion teacher education and professional development
- immersion education for students for diverse backgrounds
- immersion education for students with special education needs
- translanguaging in immersion education

While research on some of the above themes is more advanced than others, there is a great deal of exploratory research in areas such as attrition and special education needs which has not been shared publicly. The benefit of the proposed symposium is that it would provide a forum for scholars to share emerging research findings and to consider their implications for the related immersion research. For example, what are the implications of attrition on pedagogy, teacher education and professional development?

## References

- Genesee, F. (1987). *Learning through two languages: Studies of immersion and bilingual education*. Cambridge, Mass: Newbury House Publishers.
- Lambert, W. E., & Tucker, G. R. (1972). *Bilingual education of children: The St. Lambert experiment*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Lyster, R. (2007). *Learning and teaching languages through content: A counterbalanced approach* (Vol. 28). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ó Duibhir, P. (2018). *Immersion education: Lessons from a minority language context*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1982). *Evaluating bilingual education: A Canadian case study*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.