

CONVERSATIONS UNLIMITED - Monday, March 10, 1986

INTRO UP AND UNDER

Hi, everybody. Every day in this country, several million youngsters sit in their school classrooms and listen to teachers speaking in a language they have not learned. Many of them are the children of newly arrived immigrants who do not speak English. Their native language is French, or Spanish, or another language. How can they be helped to learn English, the language of the land?

Bilingual education is being discussed widely in the United States today. Often at issue is the role of public schools in helping youngsters, and their parents, learn to use a second language.

With me today is Dr. Konrad Bieber, professor in the Department of French and Italian at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Dr. Bieber has learned the languages of Germany, France and the United States by living in those countries. He and Mrs. Bieber raised their son, Thomas, to speak in both English and French, and now Thomas and his wife are bringing up their daughter to speak in her mother's native Dutch. Dr. Bieber, I wish I could speak in foreign languages but at least let me welcome you and ask, how are you? Wie goetz? Comme en sa va?

INTERVIEW DR. BIEBER:

- America as melting pot: different from other lands?
- Monolingual education as a policy in public schools
- Parents who will not learn the language of the land
- English as language of the land - hard to learn?
- Advantages of learning a foreign language?
- His experiences with Thomas; with granddaughter Nyima

14:00

We'll take a short break now, then return to talk with Konrad Bieber about the experiences of some public schools in America in bilingual education. Please stay with us.

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BRIDGE MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Hi. I'm Al Oickle. I'm at the State University of New York at Stony Brook with Dr. Konrad Bieber and we're talking about bilingual education. If we had to identify one language today as an international language, Dr. Bieber, which would we name?

INTERVIEW DR. BIEBER

- International politics and language: What if Russian were taught widely in the U.S.?
- The Richford experience in Vermont:
 - * Franco-American children with lower self-esteem
 - * Between 3rd and 8th grades, grades dropped; less verbal, more retiring in classes
- St. John Valley model from Maine
 - * Used in Vermont, all get bilingual education
 - * Pre-school/home training 3x/week
 - * UVM and BU teams train teachers, aides
 - * All courses taught in both languages
- Exam gap between French and English speaking students virtually disappeared
- Nancy Senior's report: picture dictionaries-word books
 - * Cultural updating (male authority figures etc)
- How far should bilingual education go? Dialects, Black English, radio-TV, newspapers
- How can one start, at any age?

29:00

OUTRO

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