It is clear that bilingual education, particularly dual-language education, also known as two-way immersion (TWI), offers unique integrative potential by putting both languages spoken in children’s homes on an equal footing in the service of full bilingualism and social cohesion (Alanís and Rodriguez, 2008; de Jong and Howard, 2009; Ortiz and Fránquiz, 2016). But we still know very little about how certain groups and communities come to propose it, adopt it, promote it, organize it, and what inspires families from both communities to choose it. These questions around the early program development and unfolding of TWI are particularly relevant for the start of bilingual education in the United States. Maria R. Coady, Associate Professor of ESOL/Bilingual Education at the University of Florida (US), explores and extends these crucial points in her historic dive into the development and early years (1961–1966) of what she identifies as the ‘abuelita’ or grandmother, of TWI bilingual education programs in the US – the Coral Way School – in her 2019 book *The Coral Way Bilingual Program*.

Attention to the Coral Way – the first Spanish–English bicultural and bilingual program in the United States – is long overdue and paints a remarkable story involving revolution, secret airlifts of Cuban children to Miami, the redirecting of funds from a major US philanthropy, and tenacious, creative linguists and...
educators. Given this engaging and dramatic early history of publicly funded, two-way immersion education in the US, I was surprised to find only a handful of periodic journal articles and National Public Radio exploring its development. The book’s Prologue suggests that it was a chance email from Bess de Farber, a then University of Arizona (UA) library grants manager and alumnus of the Coral Way (1967), to UA’s bilingual education scholar, Dr. Richard Ruiz, wondering if he might be interested in her school experiences, that launched this now decades’ long research project. Thankfully, as a result of layers of research, cooperation, and initiative beginning in the late 2000s by Ruiz and de Farber, and then continued by Dr. Maria R. Coady, as well as institutional agreements between the University of Arizona and the University of Florida, the story of Coral Way’s development, particularly from the administrator, teacher, and alumni perspective, can begin to be appreciated and understood.

For The Coral Way Bilingual Program, Coady draws on interviews with the program’s first students and teachers, extensive archival research at the Ford Foundation, analysis of local newspapers at the time, school photographs, and examination of other official documents from the School District and area. The author incorporates these materials in engaging ways with everything from daily schedules for the ‘Cuban Aides’ to copies of original report cards that show the shifts in the assessment of both English and Spanish skills. An agreement between the University of Arizona and the Smathers Libraries at the University of Florida to digitize, expand and make accessible much of this longitudinal research through a dedicated webpage (https://ufdc.ufl.edu/coralway) holds the thrilling promise that more studies and analyses will come in future years.

Coady’s text, while brief, introduces readers across six chapters to the program’s key origins, early development, local context, and initial academic results. The book’s prologue and epilogue provide useful historic and contemporary context for both a US and international readership. Chapter 1, as the title indicates, dives into the ‘Origin of the Experiment’ and serves as a powerful springboard for the global stage-setting and context of Miami’s bilingual education program. The author highlights the remarkable role of international politics framing the Program; these involve Cuba’s education system helping to produce and nurture academics who would migrate to the US after the Cuban revolution and the US government’s Operation Pedro Pan program (1960–1962) that opened the possibility for Cuban parents to send their children ages 3–16 to the US to avoid communist, or Castroism, indoctrination. This Operation resulted in more than 20,000 children being sent to Miami, which radically transformed, among other things, the school-age community. Teachers and administrators in Miami knew that the Cuban children needed instruction both in
their home language, Spanish, and English, and that home English speakers could also benefit from Spanish-language learning. With inspiration from bilingual programs in Ecuador, a supportive local, bilingual community of Yiddish speakers, and fiercely determined visionary leaders, the experimental Coral Way Program opened in 1963.

Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4 look under the hood of the Coral Way Program. Richard Ruiz noted that scholars understood Coral Way ‘worked’ in terms of the successful immediate (and long-term) cultivation of biliteracy and bicultural understanding, but, it was not clear before the research project began, how the program’s design, development, and implementation led to this success. In these three chapters, Coady traces the development and initial challenges of evenly carrying out the 50:50 dual-language model across its different phases. She likewise highlights the key, early decisions, like working in adequate planning time for teachers, that led to successful collaboration and planning. Chapter 3 explores the development and role of the Cuban teaching corps and its role in the Program. The author highlights the ways the migration of Cuban teachers and university professors after the Revolution enabled the realization of the TWI program. As Coady argues, ‘these educators became a pillar of the experimental bilingual program’ (p. 67). In tracing the role of these ‘Cuban Aides’, the label for teachers from Cuba who could speak some degree of English, and the University of Miami retraining program for these Aides to gain a Florida teaching credential, readers appreciate the complex ways these educators’ professional and language skills were translated and adapted in the US context. Chapter 4 focuses on curriculum and material development for the Coral Way Program. Coady shares the Program’s embrace of the audiolingual method especially for the Spanish-speaking students’ learning of English as a second language. The Program further embraced innovation in its creation of leveled readers, titled *The Miami Linguistic Readers*, for teaching English. While the Program was committed to bicultural education, Coady notes that Cuba was largely absent in the readers’ cultural references.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 invite the reader to make sense of the Program’s achievements and influence. Coady reflects on the Program’s seven goals to explore its outcomes. Data including analyses done in the 1960s tests revealed that students in the Coral Way Program would not ‘hinder’ students’ academic achievement (p. 93). On an additional positive note, researchers at that time commended the Program for giving both language communities the opportunity to learn and advance their understanding of both their home language and a second language. Interview data helps to illustrate that the positive culture of the school affirmed the identity and culture of the Cuban children while fostering
social integration. A swift Chapter 6 provides an overview of the landscape of dissent and affirmation for the Program and the expansion of TWI into surrounding communities.

To summarize, *The Coral Way Bilingual Program* is tightly organized, well-written, and crafted with care. Throughout the text Coady shares both her deep respect for those involved in the experiment as well as her profound commitment to advancing bicultural and bilingual education. The book poignantly captures the dedication, creativity, and financial resources needed to embrace and work to advance a ‘language as a resource’ paradigm in the United States in the 1960s and perhaps even more so now. Undergraduate and graduate students in sociolinguistics, the history of education, and Latinx/Hispanic Studies will particularly find *The Coral Way Bilingual Program* useful as they fill in their understanding of the development of TWI and as a model of cooperative, longitudinal research with inviting threads to still take up.

**References**


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