

Bilingual Education: Beyond Linguistic Instrumentalization

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Abstract

This paper assesses the current state and potential future of bilingual education. It presents an overview of the emergence of bilingual education in various national contexts. Although bilingual education was initially implemented to address political, social, economic, and educational injustices, it instead remains a powerful instrument of mainstreaming minority-language students. It is futile to expect that bilingual education will ever lead to a multicultural society unless a restructuring of the historical, hegemonic relationship between language and culture takes place. In conclusion, the author calls attention to the need to apply the theoretical framework of critical pedagogy in order to improve bilingual education programs. The first section of this paper summarizes the global, historical context of bilingual education, followed by a brief discussion of the principles of different models of formal bilingual education. The article then focuses on the meaning of bilingual education programs for minority children. Finally, the fourth section discusses bilingual education as an opportunity to practice critical pedagogy.

Historical Context of Bilingual Education

Any discussion on bilingual education must begin with a clarification of the meaning of bilingual education. The term 'bilingual' in this paper is broadly interpreted to include not only the ability to use more than one language but also the ability to use more than one dialect (bidialectism). Additionally, we argue that bilingual education exists beyond settings of formal schooling, including other socialization agents such as family, community, mass media, peers, and neighborhoods.

In reality, however, many definitions of bilingual education are still exclusively centered on the school context. Paulston (1978) has suggested that:

Bilingual education is the use of two languages, one of which is English, as a medium of instruction for the same pupil population in a well-organized program which encompasses part or all of the curriculum and includes the study of the history and culture associated with the mother tongue. A complete program develops and maintains the children's self-esteem and a legitimate pride in both cultures. (p. 8)

A more extensive definition was proposed by Saunders (1982), who considers that “bilingualism implies the ability to use more than one language, but this conceals a variety of possibilities regarding the forms of language that are used and the contexts in which they are brought into play” (p. 30).

National Identities and the Success of Monolingualism

Historically, the debate around language diversity has been approached by examining two fundamental features: the development of national identity and the generalization of public schooling. In Europe in particular, the principal linguistic shift since the second half 18th century was related to an increasing sense of national identity and thus a process of language homogenization. While the Ottoman and Austrian empires were declining, new players in the European geopolitical scene emerged. Even if old empires used official languages (*lingua franca*), the State did not have a systematic policy of language assimilation. However, we are not arguing that all languages had an equal status during human history. Religious languages, such as Hebrew, Arabic, or Latin, have maintained a special status. These empires were indeed multinational and multilingual, while the new European powers were based on both a strong national identity and a policy of linguistic homogenization.

As suggested by Thiesse (1999), the national languages currently spoken in Europe, hastily termed “natural” by linguists, are essentially the creations of political will. Starting in the eighteenth century, well-intentioned scholars gathered together disparate dialects, “purified” them of terminology deemed foreign, supplied what vocabulary was lacking, and established a grammatical structure. Thus, a national language was born. From then on, each “nation” had a corresponding “language” (and vice versa), of which virtually all of its speakers are unaware that this language owes its existence to a process not unlike the one that produced Esperanto.

Countries including Germany, Italy, France, and England became increasingly national-centered entities as well as colonial powers. One’s nationality came to be defined by a language. Language was identified as the main criterion in defining nationality and citizenship. Within France, in particular, this policy had instigated a progressive decline of minority languages such as Provençal, Breton, and Basque. When the French revolution began in 1789, half of the population of southern France spoke Provençal (King, 1997). Two centuries later, regional language speakers count for a small percentage of France’s population. In 1999, the French government signed articles for the European Charter for Regional or Minority Language. It is a first step in challenging French as the sole official language.

In the late 1950s, the language debate played a key role in the process of decolonization in both Africa and Asia. Languages imposed by colonization were used almost exclusively for an extended period of time. In Algeria, for example, French was imposed under colonial rule from 1830 until 1961. The act of repossessing public use of native languages was a leitmotiv in many national liberation movements. More recently, popular protests against the hegemony

of Afrikaans in 1976 have pointed out the continual struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa. During the period in which South Africa liberated itself from apartheid in 1994, language policy instantly became an issue of interest. The question of removal of those languages inherited from the colonial period, English and Afrikaans, and their replacement with African languages, was discussed (Kamwangamalu, 1997).

Indeed, in many cases of political instability, civil wars, or liberation movements, there exists a strong linguistic component. In the Balkan region, the disintegration of former Yugoslavia was accompanied by some processes of "linguistic cleansing." One of the first things the newly autonomous Republic of Serbia did, in 1991, was to pass a law decreeing Serbian in the Cyrillic alphabet the official language of the country. With Croatia divorced from Serbia, the Croatian and Serbian languages began to diverge more and more. Serbo-Croatian has become obsolete, a language 'relic' from the brief period when Serbs and Croats called themselves Yugoslavs and pretended to like each other (King, 1997). Since the termination of their political autonomy 10 years ago, Albanians in Kosovo were fighting for the survival of their native tongue by boycotting schools that had banned Albanian as the language of instruction.

The institutionalization of public schooling in the late 18th century also played a determining role in the nation-state policy that promoted linguistic homogenization. Formal schooling in general was initially implemented exclusively in monolingual settings. As central governments succeeded in constructing schools in more remote and rural areas, regional languages and dialects subsequently became endangered. Consequently, an alternative written culture came to replace the tradition of orality within local and rural communities.

Diaz-Couder (1997) provides an example of a shift in Mexico in which indigenous languages became historically ostracized. He argued that during the colonization in the 19th century, although indigenous languages were not assigned any official function, Spanish was rarely utilized by indigenous populations. Indigenous languages were used for their communication needs. However, the situation changed between 1930 and 1970 in the sense that Spanish was increasingly needed by indigenous populations because of their progressive integration in national Mexican "development." Diaz-Couder (1997) suggests that Spanish is currently a kind of passport to modernity for the entire Mexican population, including non-Spanish speakers.

Resurgence of Linguistic Diversity: A Decolonization Process

Until the middle of this century, language homogenization was not discussed at length. Research on the cognitive advantages of bilingualism, an increase in international economic immigration, and internal political change throughout the world all contributed to revive the debate on linguistic diversity. The situation in the United States is typical of many other situations. Since the early 1960s, the issue of bilingualism has been linked to the debate on cultural diversity, immigration policy, and the democratization of American

society. Over time, an awareness of the interdependence of civil rights, women's rights, environmental concerns, and peace issues converged to introduce bilingual education into the political arena.

In addition, the number of minority language children rapidly grew as a result of both economic and political immigration. For example, immigrants moved to the United States from Puerto Rico and Mexico looking for work, while other individuals who were exiled from Cuba found refuge in the United States.

At the same time, initially unrelated to immigrants themselves, the civil rights movement gained momentum and was a determining force in legislating equal opportunities for African-American citizens. This movement resulted in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination by color, race, religion, or national origin in the use of public facilities and schools (Akkari & Loomis, 1998).

Using the Civil Rights Act as a platform, other minority groups, particularly Latinos and Native Americans, pushed for the use of their native language in public schools as a method of allowing their children equal opportunity to public education (Donato, 1997). This movement was extremely strong in Texas, where Chicano students and parents protested against the discriminatory policies practiced by the Anglo school staff and administration. Trujillo (1996) suggested that the emergent Chicano worldview was shaped by a long history of political subordination, economic exploitation, and the struggle for civil rights. Leaders within the movement sought to decolonize those institutions that contributed to the continuation of subordination and exploitation of the Chicanos by Anglo-Americans.

During the 1990s, Maori activists in New Zealand also experimented with a similar process to that of the Chicano people in the United States. They withdrew their children from the Anglo education system and worked toward establishing a separate Maori education system. Many Maori people argued that Maori rights to cultural autonomy, as well as to political sovereignty and economic self-sufficiency, were guaranteed by the treaty that was signed by Maori leaders and the colonial army during the 19th century.

Many Maori people have succeeded in establishing their own educational institutions. These are seen as a means of resuscitating the Maori language, of protecting cultural autonomy, and of developing curricula that teach tribal knowledge and approach the academic disciplines from Maori perspectives (Middleton, 1992).

In Latin America, the decolonization process for indigenous people has been centered on three issues: preservation of ancestral territories, amelioration of economic conditions, and local control over educational institutions. In Peru, indigenous organizations have played a key role in implementing bilingual intercultural programs as an alternative to the hegemonic model of schooling promoted by the evangelic North-American missionaries with the complicity of the Peruvian state (Gashe, 1998).

In Europe, the debate around linguistic diversity branched into two different directions. On the one hand, central governments allowed minimal

inclusion of regional indigenous languages in the educational system and in the areas of regional, cultural, and artistic expression. For example, Catalan has been officially introduced in schools in Spain after the end of the Franco dictatorship.

On the other hand, both host and native countries of immigrants agreed to increase the use of native languages in extracurricular activities (outside of school) intended for second generation immigrants. In others words, Europe did not treat local and “imported” linguistic diversity similarly. While legislation on bilingual public education for European regional minorities was progressively implemented, there was no significant public funding available to immigrant students, particularly those who came from Africa and Asia.

As mentioned earlier, when Third World countries have become decolonized, local languages have regained their use in the public sphere. However, language policies have varied greatly and have depended on several factors such as the existence of one dominant language, the nature of the decolonization process (liberation war or political negotiation), and the existence of native languages in a written form. In addition, the continual economic dependency on western countries has contributed to cultural dependency that included an overvaluation of European languages.

To resume, the resurgence of linguistic diversity in the socio-political and educational arenas within these different contexts can be explained by the struggle of three concurrent processes of decolonization. First, minorities and immigrants alike struggled with converting civil rights laws into equal economic, social, and educational opportunities. Second, Third World countries have experienced the challenging, from political to economic and cultural liberation. Lastly, public schools have failed to play a central role in the “conscientization” for a large proportion of citizens. School culture is not neutral but rather a particular culture that serves the interest of those who occupy dominant positions in the society (Bourdieu, 1970). Consequently, regardless of good intentions, most supporters of bilingual education continue to work in a mainstream setting without seriously considering or encouraging input from families and communities, and by excluding “bidialectism” in the bilingual debate.

As pointed out by Baldwin (1997) in his analysis of the debate on Ebonics (Black English), discussing linguistic diversity often leads us to gauge power relationships in a given society. He explained that this discussion has nothing to do with the language itself but instead with the role of language: “Language, incontestably, reveals the speaker. Language, also, far more dubiously, is meant to define the other—and in this case the other is refusing to be defined by a language that has never been able to recognize him” (p. 5).

Thus, across many contexts, bilingual education historically emerged as an answer to address profound educational, cultural, and political injustices, and has never been exclusively a linguistic issue. From the end of the 18th century to the 1950s, there was almost a complete dominance of a limited number of national languages. These languages were considered as the basis

for national unity and cohesion, shown by the fact that most constitutions contained statements concerning the adoption of a national language.

When there is a mismatch between the language used by the state (schooling, public administration, political discourses) and the mother tongue of a cultural group, it is usually expressed by a struggle about language status and power. In fact, power relationships among languages are quite contextually and historically situated. A language that is dominant in one context may be dominated in another. For example, Arabic is the dominant language in the Berber regions of North Africa while it is a dominated language in the context of North African immigration in Europe. Similarly, Spanish is a dominant language in the indigenous regions of Mexico while it is dominated by English in the southwestern United States.

Models of Bilingual Formal Education

This section briefly summarizes some bilingual education programs by providing a critical evaluation of both the particular contexts as well as the processes of implementation.

Bilingualism (and/or the use of several languages) has become a primary concern in public education and learning, especially in contexts with multiple cultural groups. Determining the distinguishing characteristics of bilingual education programs is an effective way to understand their dynamics and to identify the varying rationale among each program. We have identified six models of managing linguistic diversity in formal education: (a) segregated language remediation, (b) transitional bilingual education, (c) language developmental bilingual education, (d) integrated-enrichment bilingual education, (e) two-way bilingual education, and (f) "neo-colonial" bilingual education.

Segregated Language Remediation

Although this model is not commonly considered as a bilingual education program, it is the most commonly used method in addressing language diversity in schools and therefore warrants discussion.

The goal of segregated language remediation is to rapidly mainstream children into the dominant language. Typically, children identified as having "limited English proficiency" (LEP) are separated from regular classrooms and spend a variable amount of time with specialists who teach the dominant language. This separation ranges from minor, as in the case of English second language pullout programs, to more extensive separation. The same negative labeling can be found in the Francophone context, where minority language students are classified as non-French speakers [élèves non-Francophones].

ESL pullout programs provide supplemental instruction (typically for 30 to 45 minutes each day) for minority language students who have been removed from submersion classrooms. This instruction is usually provided in small groups by teachers who do not speak the native language of minority students. However, in cases in which the minority-student language is more

widespread (i.e., European languages, such as Spanish in the United States), ESL teachers are likely to have some linguistic proficiency in the language. In addition, interactions with peers from the same language background provide a useful opportunity to practice the first language and to gain some translation expertise.

In Switzerland, “accommodation classrooms” [classes d’accueil] are organized to quickly equip minority language students with dominant language skills that allow their integration in the mainstream classrooms. This experience facilitates the integration of students into their grade-age class regardless of their previous school experiences. It is also an opportunity for students to share their life and language experiences with students in the same or similar situations from all over the world. Unfortunately, the lack of teacher proficiency in languages other than the national language, and the pressure to successfully integrate immigrant children within the regular classroom, convert the “accommodation classrooms” from a potential medium of integration to a powerful instrument of monolingual mainstreaming.

Transitional Bilingual Education

Transitional bilingual education is also known as early-exit bilingual education, a model whose primary goal is to “mainstream” students to all dominant-language classrooms. This model uses native-language instruction to help students initially keep up in other subjects, but it eventually shifts to dominant-language instruction. Thus, the native language possesses only transitional or temporary value. In the end, proficiency in the dominant language is that which is the most important.

Following the increase in public funds made available through the Bilingual Education Act, schools in the United States began to frequently implement this model. However, it has received strong criticism not only from authors such as Porter (1996) and Rodriguez (1983), but also from the general public, including some minority parents, as in California (Prop 227 against bilingual education).

Language Developmental Bilingual Education

Developmental bilingual education, also known as language maintenance bilingual education, strives to achieve fluent bilingualism and biliteracy as well as academic excellence. It typically phases in the dominant language through a more gradual manner than transitional bilingual programs and continues to develop students’ skills in the native language (through language arts or content-area instruction) after they have become fully proficient in the dominant language.

A little known version of this model can be found in immigrant-children education in many European countries (such as France, Germany, and Switzerland). Typically, the immigrants’ country of origin organizes classes in the native language in schools or community centers. These courses, also known as language and cultural heritage courses [cours de langue et de culture d’origine], emphasize the cultural heritage of the parents’ country and have minimal pedagogical links with the host country school system. Originally,

these courses were implemented in order to facilitate the reintegration of second generation immigrant children who have chosen to return to their parents' home country. However, the rate of departure has remained very low with children of immigrants often deciding to reside in the host country.

More controversial is the issue of which language the embassies promote to citizens abroad. Often there is a mismatch between the national and native languages of immigrant children, for example the Spanish government organizing Spanish classes for Catalan speakers, or the Moroccan government offering Arabic courses for children whose native language is Berber.

Integrated-Enrichment Bilingual Education

Integrated-enrichment programs, first introduced in Canada, were developed from the concept of immersion. We differentiate two types of integrated-enrichment programs: foreign-language immersion and native-language immersion.

Foreign language immersion

Foreign language immersion is a model in which language-majority students are instructed primarily or exclusively through sheltered instruction in a second language, later combined with native language classes. This model follows an additive approach, the overriding goal being functional bilingualism with no cost to academic achievement. French language immersion in Canada is a typical example of this model.

The instrumental value of "foreign language" as an economic tool is a central key in the success of these programs. There are various possibilities of using communication and a content-based approach to teach second languages, with little or no use of students' first language.

Native language immersion

Native language immersion is a model in which indigenous minority students are taught in an endangered minority language through sheltered instruction. This model promotes revitalization of a community's vernacular and strengthens students' cultural identity while at the same time fostering academic achievement.

In an evaluation of indigenous bilingual education programs in six Latin American countries, Cummings and Tamayo (1994) emphasize that education for indigenous children ends much earlier than for non-indigenous children. An early dropout may be dissuasive for bilingual education since most programs make the shift to Spanish just as the indigenous children drop out. Evidence of economic incentives for bilingual education remains weak for indigenous communities. Parents' negative responses to this type of program are common and warrant further investigation, especially since the demand for schooling is shaped partially by expectations of long-term gains in income and enhanced employment opportunities.

Two-Way Bilingual Education

Two-way bilingual education, also known as dual-language education, is a model that combines language-maintenance bilingual education (for language minority students) and foreign-language immersion (for language majority students), with an added benefit of peer tutoring. By bringing children from two different language groups together, this model seeks to enable all groups to learn a vernacular other than their own while achieving high academic standards. Christian (1996) has suggested two major patterns of language allocation in such programs: 90/10 programs, in which 90% of the instruction is carried out in the non-dominant language, and 50/50 programs, in which the percentage of each language is roughly equal.

The possibility of implementing two-way bilingual education programs depends on several factors, including the size of the linguistically diverse population in a particular school or region, the local availability of financial resources, and the “prestige” of the foreign language.

Two-way bilingual programs, though relatively new, provide important improvements over previous programs by including the entire student population and aiming to achieve literacy in both minority and majority languages. “This holds true for students of low-economic status, as well as African-American students, and language minority students” (Thomas and Collier, 1997, p. 25).

Nevertheless, Valdes (1997) pointed out that supporters of the two-way Spanish-English education programs in the United States belong to two very different groups. One group, comprising foreign language teachers, attempts to appeal to parents largely by emphasizing the instrumental value of Spanish in the world of business, politics, law, etc. The other group, consisting of former bilingual teachers, intends to bring about educational success for linguistic minority students by providing them with an excellent education in their first language and within a school context in which Spanish is more valued than it is in the global society.

Another aspect of this model is the failure of school desegregation. Those objectives initially put forth by the civil rights movement to provide minority students access to the educational system and build bridges between minority and white institutions, are still unmet in U.S. society. Upward of two-thirds of all black youngsters still attend segregated schools (Hacker, 1993). A two-tiered school system appears to be structurally established in the country: inner city schools for minority students and well-organized suburban schools for European-American students.

“Neo-Colonial” Bilingual Education

“Neo-colonial” bilingual education is not very well documented in the pedagogical literature. This model can be found in former European colonies that existed in Africa and Asia. After achieving their independence, many of these countries continued to use English, French, or Portuguese as the language medium of instruction.

This maintenance of the colonial legacy can be explained by political, economic, and historical factors. First, these countries were colonies during the time in which public schooling was implemented. They lacked any “local memory” of massive schooling in the native languages. Second, language composition in many countries, such as in Sub-saharian Africa, was made up of multitudinous rather than one dominant language. Thus, the use of the “colonial language” was a pragmatic solution during a period in which building national identity was the priority. Progressively, reforms were implemented to reduce the hegemony of the colonial language in schools.

In North Africa, for example, an official policy of “Arabization” was implemented. Tunisia created a pragmatic policy that incorporated Arabic in education but without the elimination of French in primary schooling. Algeria implemented a more radical shift from French to exclusively Arabic instruction. As pointed out by Saada (1983), the results in Algeria were ambiguous. While French language is still identified by Algerians as the language of modernity, technology, and the future, Arabic is considered to be the language of cultural heritage, family, and tradition. In other words, the indigenous language (Arabic) is seen as a symbol of the past, while the “colonial” language (French) is considered to be a path to the modernity. On the other hand, the use of language is a main topic in the fundamentalist Islamic discourse which identify secular and democratic activists as not being true Algerian citizens [labeled as “France party”].

Similar findings were reported by Haeri (1997) in Egypt. He reported that the state as an institution reproduces different values regarding the official language (Classical Arabic). The State relation to the official language is multidimensional and ambivalent: “One cannot get a mid-level or low-level job as a government clerk without a certain proficiency in the official language, but one can get a diplomatic post, since it comes with a secretary who knows the official language” (p. 804). Haeri (1997) also reported that for upper- and upper-middle class people, foreign oriented education and bi- or multilingualism are more important than their knowledge of the official local language.

Serpell & Hatano (1997) have suggested that in sub-saharan Africa, many governments have advanced a justification for allowing the language of a former colonial power to be the sole or principal medium of schooling and literacy, challenging the earlier consensus view endorsed by UNESCO that children should first be introduced to literacy in their home language. This shift in language focus took place because of several factors such as the pragmatic, economic, and administrative convenience of using only a single language and the value of early familiarizations with an international language (Serpell & Hatano, 1997).

The economic justification of linguistic homogeneity is not shared by all scholars. For instance, Fishman, Solano, and McConnell (1991) argued that the degree of linguistic heterogeneity of a political entity has little to do with the level of economic development.

To further show the inconsistency of this “pragmatic argument” supporting the idea that there should exist an international language as the linguistic medium of formal schooling in sub-saharan Africa, it is curious to note that this argument is not used to encourage small central or Northern European countries to do the same. Even if we consider the importance of being integrated within a global economy, this argument no longer works. Many Asian nations have been successful in approaching western levels of economic development without abandoning the preeminence of their native language in primary and secondary education. Consequently, the debate around language choice for schooling often points to more general debate about tradition and modernization:

To the extent that the language of basic schooling is regarded as alien to, or oppressive of, the language of everyday discourse, students are liable to find themselves confronted with difficult choices between loyalty to the moral and aesthetic standards of indigenous culture and the economic advantages of mastery of exogenous linguistic and culture forms. (Serpell & Hatano, 1997, p. 363)

The present evolution in language policy in South Africa suggests a level of sensitivity to the linguistic issue in Africa. As pointed out by Kamwangamalu (1997), the blacks’ hatred toward Afrikaans and the poor image of African languages allowed for English to be identified by blacks as the language of advancement and democracy. Indeed, the option of schooling in nine different African languages, included in the post-apartheid constitution, is hardly implemented. Nomvete (1994), cited by Kamwangamalu (1997), indicated that “some speakers of African languages are resistant to mother tongue-education because of the economic empowerment of English, locally and internationally, and the dis-empowerment of African languages locally.” In other words, people would not want to be educated in their indigenous language if that language had no power in the broader social, political, and economic contexts.

Language debate in Third World countries reveals a profound divorce between a minority elite holding a western worldview and a silenced majority suffering from cultural dis-empowering. Although many African countries use local languages such as Arabic or Swahili in primary and secondary schools, most higher education programs in Africa are taught in European languages.

Different models of managing linguistic diversity in formal education are summarized in the following table:

Educational program	Social intention	Models of society	First language status	School structure	Long term effect
Remedial-segregated	Absorption	"National" and unitary	"Illegitimate" presence	Reinforcement of traditional school structure	Cultural alienation
Transitional bilingual education	Assimilation	Melting pot	Tolerate presence	Compatibility with traditional school structure	Cultural negotiation
Language developmental bilingual education	Integration	Pluralistic	Legitimate presence	Compatibility with traditional school structure	Cultural resistance
Integrated-enrichment bilingual education	Integration	Multiculturalism	Valued presence	Conflict with traditional school structure	Cultural hybridation
Two-way bilingual education	Integration	Multiculturalism	Valued presence Symmetry between languages	Conflict with traditional school structure	Cultural hybridation
"Neo-colonial" bilingual education	Modernization, Integration in the "global economy"	Dependent society	Ambiguous presence	Compatibility with traditional school structure	Cultural dualism

The status of native languages is important, especially in the long-term scheme, as it directs what type of education is needed. Thus, a clear distinction must be made between the instrumental and transitional value of a native language, and native language as a tool for cultural empowerment. For example, for Spanish immigrant children, there are two separate options for addressing their educational needs. Spanish may be viewed as only an instrument to a fast mainstreaming to English, or it might be seen as a tool for bilingual literacy, and economic and political empowerment.

When minority language students are emerged in an adequate bilingual learning environment, they reap the continual benefits of being able to communicate in more than one language or dialect. Krashen (1996) points out several components of successful bilingual education: (1) comprehensible input in English (ESL, sheltered subject matter teaching); (2) subject matter knowledge from classes taught in the first language, and literacy development in the primary language; (3) continued development of the first language, for economic, job-related, and cognitive advantages; and (4) reading, especially free voluntary reading, in both languages.

The Power of Languages, Colonialism, and Bilingual Education

The debate on language diversity goes beyond a strictly linguistic perspective to include a political level associated with inequality among social groups. It is therefore necessary to understand why it is that language used in school may either empower or disable students and how various programs may demonstrate meaningful sociocultural productivity.

Beyond Linguistic Instrumentalization

Language is a political instrument in that it provides a means and proof of power. It is the most salient and crucial key to identity. Language reveals the private identity and connects one with, or divorces one from, the larger public or communal identity (Baldwin, 1997).

One can question the real intentions behind the increasing number of bilingual education programs. Could it truly be the case that dominant groups are interested in promoting the educational success of minority children even though it introduces a challenge to their power?

As suggested by Baldwin (1997), the linguistic debate is always related to the structure of power relationships in the society:

The brutal truth is that the bulk of white people in America never had any interest in educating black people, except as this could serve white purposes. It is not the black child's language that is in question, it is not his language that is despised: it is his experience. A child cannot be taught by anyone who despises him, and a child cannot afford to be fooled. A child cannot afford to be taught by anyone whose demand, essentially, is that the child repudiate his experience, and all that gives him sustenance, and enter a limbo in which he will no longer be black, and which he knows that he can never become a white. Black people have lost too many black children that way. (p. 6)

It is important to distinguish between "instrumental bilingualism" and "liberatory bilingualism." The former is the continuance of the foreign language learning tradition without challenging the power relations in society, and the latter includes using the power of mastering several languages and/or dialects to seek cultural, social, economic, and political equality with the dominant group.

If we look at the case of Spanish in the United States from the instrumental perspective, it is accepted as a foreign language to be taught at school. However, when looked at from the liberatory perspective, Spanish is a more political and controversial issue that is linked to minority linguistic and educational rights. Even though the Spanish language already existed in many areas of the United States before English appeared, it is only through the economic instrumental bias that it has been "rediscovered" following the NAFTA agreement.

Bilingual programs have met with both strong support and vehement opposition. Cummins (1993) suggested that the debate regarding policy has

revolved around two intuitively appealing assumptions. Supporters of bilingual education consider that children cannot learn in a language they do not understand. The first language (L1) is necessary to counteract the negative effects of home-school language mismatch. Those in opposition to this approach contest that bilingual education is illogical in its assertion that less English instruction will lead to greater English achievement. It makes more sense, opponents argue, to provide language minority students with maximum exposure to English. Despite the apparent plausibility of each side, Cummins (1993) believes that these two conventional perceptions (“linguistic mismatch” and “insufficient exposure” hypotheses) are each clearly inadequate. For Cummins, interdependence theory constitutes a solution to the two assumptions. The argument that language minority students fail primarily as a result of the home-school language switch is refuted by the success of many minority students who have received instruction exclusively through a second language (i.e., French immersion programs in Canada, or Asian-Americans in the United States). Likewise, the “insufficient exposure” hypothesis fares no better with respect to research evidence. In fact, the results of virtually every bilingual program that has been evaluated during the past fifty years show either no relationship or a negative relationship between the amount of school exposure to the majority language and academic achievement in that language. Hence, promotion of minority languages does not result in inferior development of English academic skills (Cummins, 1993).

While addressing linguistic issues in schools is useful, we feel that it is important to focus on the dialectical relationship between language and culture. As suggested by Fishman (1996),

The most important relationship between language and culture that gets to the heart of what is lost when you lose a language is that most of the culture is in the language and is expressed in the language. Take it away from the culture, and you take away its greetings, its curses, its praises, its laws, its literature, its songs, its riddles, its proverbs, its cures, its wisdom, its prayers. The culture could not be expressed and handed on in any other way. What would be left? When you are talking about the language, most of what you are talking about is the culture. That is, you are losing all those things that essentially are the way of life, the way of thought, the way of valuing, and the human reality that you are talking about.

Values put on a particular culture automatically involve assessing language that guarantee the transmission of a worldview linked to this culture.

Empowerment or Disability?

Cummins (1993) states that students from “dominated” societal groups are either “empowered” or “disabled” as a direct result of their interactions with educators in schools. These interactions are mediated by the implicit or explicit role definitions that educators assume in relation to four institutional

characteristics of schools. These characteristics reflect the extent to which (1) minority students' language and culture are incorporated into the school program; (2) minority community participation is encouraged as an integral component of children's education; (3) the pedagogy promotes intrinsic motivation on the part of students to use language actively in order to generate their own knowledge; and (4) professionals involved in assessment become advocates for minority students rather than legitimizing the "problem" as being located in the students. For each of these dimensions of school organization the role definitions of educators can best be described in terms of a continuum, with one end promoting the empowerment of students and the other contributing to the disabling of students.

Theoretically, enrolling minority children in segregated-remedial structures is a possible way to mainstream them into regular classrooms. However, labeling them as "Limited English Proficient" students works against their true integration. This initial intention to give minority language students extra help and attention in learning English is a good one, but the unintended results invariably work against the student. Also, minority language students are often enrolled in inner-city schools that lack minimal conditions for learning so the cumulative effect makes minority language student achievement low.

Bergman et al. (1992) shed light on this lack of equal access to the full academic curriculum for minority language students. Education for these students continues to focus excessively on English acquisition, which, in turn, has a negative effect on academic achievement. Often, school districts do not have bilingual programs or teachers who can afford the range of courses available to English speakers. Although "sheltered" or content English as a second language (ESL) methodologies are sometimes employed in lieu of academic instruction with bilingual teachers, the net result can be a slimmed down version of that which mainstream students receive. A recent study by Minucucci and Olsen (1992) in California found that high school minority language students have frequently been tracked into courses that not only do not yield credit for university admittance but do not even count for graduation.

Viewing language diversity as a problem is also related to the myth of a unique national Anglo identity. Hurtado and Rodriguez (1989), in a qualitative analysis of students' open-ended responses to the question of how the school they attended prior to college reacted to their use of Spanish, found that schools tend to view Spanish-speaking students as disabled. This perspective of Spanish as a "problem" was based on the assumption that continuing to speak their native language was the same as continuing to be foreigners, or eternal outsiders.

Most of bilingual education programs tended to focus more on disabling than empowering minority students. Indeed, empowerment must include, in addition to the school sphere, communities, neighborhoods, and families.

Challenging the “Transmission-Banking Model”

In his linguistic interdependence theory, Cummins (1979) distinguished between two types of language proficiency: the basic interpersonal communication skills and a more abstract cognitive academic language proficiency. Furthermore, he rightly pointed out that positive research findings can be seen to make sense only if one postulates that proficiency and skills in both the first language and school language are “interdependent systems.” For language minority students, the development of high levels of CLAPs in the primary language forms the basis of similar proficiency in the second language.

Our general approach to bilingual education posits the necessity of stronger links between the use of language in school and other contexts. We argue that this distance between “encapsulated classroom” skills and “real life” settings is in fact the problem for all students. Vygotsky (1962) pointed out the existence of two types of knowledge: (1) spontaneous knowledge, which refers to familiar, everyday concepts, and (2) scientific concepts, which encompasses formal, school-learned concepts. However, Vygotsky (1962) also added that these two types of knowledge are strongly and structurally linked. When students are able to speak about their own lives in a given language, they gain mastery in the language.

Two specific research findings illustrate this. Wong-Fillmore (1983) has reported that Hispanic students learn more English in classrooms that provide opportunities for reciprocal interaction between teachers and peers.

A similar analysis advanced by Boyd-Batstone (1997) reveals how bilingual students become active learners when they are encouraged to use their cultural heritage and personal experience(s) as a central ingredient in the classroom. These students are not involved in the classroom activity when the teacher focuses exclusively on passive transmission.

While the mainstream classroom is based on a “transmission-banking” model, with the main goal of domestication and perpetuation of the social status-quo (Freire, 1970, 1973), an effective bilingual education program should challenge this model and drive the classroom pedagogy toward a liberatory, more “reciprocal-interactive pedagogy.”

As suggested by Cummins (1993), the social organization and bureaucratic constraints within the school reflect broader policy and societal factors, as well as the extent to which individual educators accept or challenge the social organization of school in relation to minority students and communities.

Toward Critical Bilingual Education

There are limitations of bilingual education programs within the formal educational system. Schools are not producing significant “sociocultural productivity.” The knowledge that students receive in school is rarely related or transferable to other settings outside of school. One possible solution to this crisis is to shift the focus from exclusively within the school to other domains.

Historically, most forms of schooling have been conceptually constructed as mechanisms of repression, as a way to screen, discipline, and regulate the instruction of others. Social justice has never been a point of discussion in formal schooling. As suggested by Freire (1985), formal schooling has little power on social injustice. Each society fashions the school system to serve the interests of dominant groups.

In order to reverse the traditional thinking about bilingual education, it is necessary to rid it of the exclusive focus on school settings. We need to pay attention to language abilities in a total of four spheres: before school, in school, out of school, and after school. In three of these four spheres communities and families play a key position. In extending the focus beyond school boundaries, we have found that the theoretical frameworks grounded in socio-cultural theory and critical pedagogy are useful strategies to think about new paradigms in bilingual education.

Socio-historical theory provides a good tenet for understanding the interdependence of the individual and society and how each creates and is created by each other. For Vygotsky (1962, 1978), language and speech are considered a medium through which thought is constructed. Looking at the interdependence of learning and development, all aspects must be taken into consideration. Thinking and cognitive development is not a characteristic of only the child, but of the child-in-social activities with significant others. Limiting our vision to the school setting causes us to miss out on many educational opportunities.

As for critical pedagogy, McLaren (1989) offered a clear overview of the theoretical and social tenets that frame it:

Critical pedagogy is founded on the conviction that schooling for self and social empowerment is ethically prior to a mastery of technical skills, which are primarily tied to the logic of marketplace . . . In their attempt to explode the popular belief that schools are fundamentally democratic institutions, critical scholars have begun to unravel the ways in which school, curricula, knowledge and policy depend on the corporate marketplace and the fortunes of the economy. They suggest that schooling must always be analyzed as a cultural and historical process, in which select groups are positioned within asymmetrical relations of power on the basis of specific race, class, and gender grouping. In short, educators within the critical tradition argue that mainstream schooling supports an inherently unjust bias resulting in the transmission and reproduction of the dominant status quo culture. (pp. 162-163)

By including those settings outside of the school domain and bringing them inside, critical pedagogy is a way of thinking about negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation state (McLaren, 1997). Critical pedagogy permits us to go beyond the linguistic instrumentalization of bilingual education.

Influenced by the powerful legacy of Freire (1970), we view bilingualism not as an instrumental skill but rather as a cultural tool that can be used for learning and living together, for writing our own histories, and for sharing solidarity. In Freire's view of education, learning is not an individual objective for dispossessed people, but empowering through social change and accomplished with unity and shared power.

One of the most important tenets of Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed is the "culture of silence." The oppressors overwhelm the oppressed with their values and norms, which effectively silence people. By pressure from those in power, the oppressed have internalized that they have no value, culture, language or art. These "lies" have been purposefully and knowingly imposed upon the people without taking into consideration their reality.

Oppressed people feel ignorant and they become dependent on the culture of the oppressors, the so-called "experts," specialists in society. The needs of the oppressed and the knowledge gained from their own "experience" are not regarded as important; they are ignored, devalued, and considered inferior.

One powerful myth in bilingual education is the label of "Limited English Proficient" placed on minority language students. By focusing on their limitations in English, some educators dismiss their many abilities. They often master more than one language (or dialect) in a general context marked by racism and discriminatory practices.

As a cultural tool, bilingualism plays a central position in promoting critical literacy among the "oppressed." Indeed, even though contextualized language presents a step against domestication, we still need to go one step further and question the power relationships within the global society.

Bilingual education is not only a linguistic debate; it inherently implies a position of colonialism and cultural pluralism. Critical pedagogy provides a possibility to go beyond this. In contrast to many contemporary pedagogical frameworks that ignore the persistence of imperialism in international and national relations, critical pedagogy addresses more than just the learning process and denounces the structural inequality between countries and between different social and cultural groups in each country:

Both critical pedagogy and multicultural education need to address themselves to the adaptive persistence of capitalism and to issues of capitalist imperialism and its specific manifestations of accumulative capacities through conquest (which we know as colonialism). In other words, critical pedagogy needs to establish a project of emancipation centered on the transformation of property relations and the creation of a just system of appropriation and distribution of social wealth. (McLaren, 1997)

With its emphasis on constructs such as hegemony, power struggles, sociopolitical differentials, and empowerment, critical pedagogy might be a valuable standpoint to discuss linguistic pluralism.

One example of this capitalist imperialism is the situation of African immigrants in Europe. After their elimination from wealth distribution in their home countries, an increasing number of immigrants attempt to seek better economic opportunities in western societies. However, they face the same fight for economic and cultural recognition as outsiders.

When an outsider is oppressed, she or he is oppressed not only in the traditional capitalistic settings (by seizing her/his human work), but also by depreciating her/his cultural tenets, including language. Dupuis (1990), cited by Calvet (1994), discovered that French merchants had a total ignorance of the languages spoken in the Belleville neighborhood in Paris. They listed "African, Black African, Jewish, Asian" as languages. Such perceptions revealed racism and stereotyping on the level of global society. The prevailing sentiment included the following: "Arabic language is spoken from a sidewalk to another, it is shouted, screamed; Chinese is mystic, it is not screamed, it is not aggressive, it is melodious; 'African' is strange, glaring; irritating and aggressive." The low socioeconomic status of African immigrants is directly projected on their languages. Thus, symmetry between languages is not possible in such a non-egalitarian environment. Silenced voices will not be able to recover while existing within an implicit or explicit hegemonic structure.

Just as mainstream educators show little consideration for the presence of Ebonics in school, for example, many do not acknowledge the fact that Swiss German people speak various dialects and receive formal schooling in "standard German" without any public polemic. In exploring a justification for such differential treatment of two dialects, it is evident that the socioeconomic situations of these two groups play a key role.

We have noted in an earlier paper the existence of three very distinct paradigms used in multicultural education: humanist, psychotherapeutic, and socio-anthropological. While the first two include instrumental and pragmatic goals (mainstreaming), the third paradigm challenges the whole school structure by insisting on the reproduction of economic, social and political inequalities (Akkari, 1994).

As multicultural education was embraced by mainstream scholars, only the first two paradigms were of interest, as the third was seen as too radical (political). For critical pedagogy to be productive, we can not allow it to be used simply as a pragmatic tool. Already, we have seen critical pedagogy denounced as polemical excess and a radical political trajectory. We have already seen a new generation of critical educators who have emerged and have largely adopted a pluralist approach to social antagonisms. Their work celebrates the "end of ideology." The critique of global capitalism is rarely brought into the debate (McLaren, 1997). This will take away any real impact critical pedagogy could have. Similarly, we believe that the depoliticization of bilingual education is the best way to embed it in an instrumentalization perspective rather than in a liberatory one.

Summary

This paper has discussed potential ways to view bilingual education in a more liberatory perspective. In order to do this we need to go beyond the traditional philosophy of mainstreaming that predominates most bilingual education programs. We have discussed various topics related to the area of bilingual education. One sensitive issue centers on the fact that bilingual programs working toward a liberatory perspective cannot do so without successfully deconstructing the hegemonic relationship among languages.

As a movement, critical bilingual education affects students, school leaders, parents, community members, and society as a whole. It challenges the vertical view of cultural development as the refined production of an elite (mostly European) and recognizes, from an anthropological perspective, that all cultures have resources and value. Paulo Freire worked to develop critical pedagogy in marginalized people by initiating dialogue with them to help them recognize that the languages, ideas, actions, values, and objects of everyday existence are cultural and worth building on educational programs. In addition, we suggest that bilingual education will be more successful if its implementation (through programs) involves changing the entire school structure, particularly through including families, and allowing them shared responsibility in bilingual education. Furthermore, the responsibility of education not only lies in formal schooling, it also extends to the community and larger sociocultural context.

Future research on bilingual education must first work to deconstruct the current “transmission-banking” pedagogy, and then substantially increase family-community input in bilingual programs. Future research must also strive to assess the interdependency of bilingual ability in and outside school to determine how schools can foster cultural dialogue and intellectual, social, political and economical gains for all. Bilingual education must benefit from critical pedagogy to meet these challenges and devise strategies in which students’ multicultural potentialities can be deployed to create a more egalitarian society.

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