

The Bilingual Education of Cuban-American Children in Dade County's Ethnic Schools

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Introduction

Children who speak languages other than English in the United States come mostly from working-class homes or from the homes of the poor, and they almost always attend public schools. It is therefore in public schools where one usually finds programmes addressing the educational needs of these children, and also in public schools where one finds most discussion of the precise forms those programmes should take. The most salient characteristic of these public school programmes is, of course, the use of the child's home language. Consequently, the most intense aspect of the discussion centres on the manner and the extent of use to which this language should be put.

A much less familiar context for discussion of the role of languages other than English is the private school. In the United States, private schools that make extensive use of another language are frequently high-tuition, elite schools for children who may speak languages other than English but who usually are not either working class or poor. New York's Lycée Français, which makes extensive use of French, and Miami's Loyola School, which makes extensive use of Spanish, are examples that come readily to mind.

But private, low-tuition schools for the children of working-class linguistic minorities do exist in the United States (Fishman, 1980a, b, 1982, 1985; García, 1987). The approach these schools take to the use of languages other than English is very different from that of public schools or of elite private schools. It is an approach that holds important lessons for anyone interested in language learning, or in the education of American language-minority children in any setting.

This paper presents the results of an ethno-

graphic study of such private but low-tuition, non-elite schools in Dade County, Florida.¹ (Dade County comprises the adjoining cities of Miami and Hialeah, as well as surrounding areas, all of which contain large Hispanic populations, mostly from Cuba or of Cuban background, but from other parts of the Spanish-speaking world too.) These schools make extensive use of Spanish and are run mostly by and for Cubans.

We report on the basis of field-work conducted in seven ethnic schools.² Our methodology was not defined a priori. We knew that these schools would be suspicious of North American researchers, but we were confident that our Cuban identity and our knowledge of the Spanish language would gain us access to the schools. We initially contacted administrators of all the Cuban non-elite schools in Dade County. The administrators of ten schools granted us intensive interviews. In seven of the ten schools we were most welcomed. In these we were able to extend our study to include intensive interviews with teachers and shorter, informal interviews with other staff, parents and children. We were also invited to observe classrooms, lunchrooms, playgrounds and administrative offices. Our observations included not only structured classroom situations, but also recess, lunch and dismissal. In order to supplement the information given to us by administrators and teachers, school documents were also studied.

The schools in our study are attended in a very few cases by the children of the Cuban poor of Dade County, but mostly by the children of Cuban factory workers, office clerks, store salesmen, warehouse employees, hospital workers, banktellers, small shopkeepers, mechanics, construction workers, secretaries, and bus drivers,

with only a handful of children of doctors, lawyers, and other professionals — in short, Hispanic children from the same socio-economic background as those who attend public schools in Dade County itself or in other urban centres throughout the United States. Dade County also has two high-tuition, elite private schools that make extensive use of Spanish and are attended by the children of the Cuban and other Hispanic professional and upper-middle-classes and the wealthy, but they are not the subject of this study. For the convenience of the reader, we will distinguish between these two types of schools by reserving the term 'ethnic schools' for the low-tuition, non-elite schools of our study.

In approaching these ethnic schools it is useful to keep in mind the questions that guide discussion of the education of language-minority children from these same socio-economic backgrounds in public schools. These questions frame the discourse of bilingual education policy in the United States and provide the intellectual baseline from which we started our study, although, significantly, not that at which we ended it. The questions are the same for all linguistic minorities, but since our study is about Hispanics we will refer them only to this group. They are the following:

- Should schools maintain and develop Spanish? Should all Hispanic children receive instruction in two languages or should Spanish be used only with those not proficient in English?
- How does one determine language dominance and is there a difference in the curriculum for Spanish dominant children and English dominant children?
- How much instruction in English as a second language should children receive and when should it stop?
- Which language should initial reading be in? When should reading in the second language start?

The first of these questions has been argued vehemently by educators, sociologists and politicians (For an analysis of the public debate in the US press, see Cummins, 1982). The US federal government only supports temporary programmes of bilingual instruction for children who do not speak English. In fact, recent federal guidelines state that bilingual education programmes that 'mainstream' children into English-only classes 'as quickly as possible' are more likely than others to receive federal funding

(Crawford, 1986). Some critics oppose the 'maintenance approach' in bilingual education on the grounds that it leads to social and political divisiveness (Glazer, 1981). Others argue that 'maintenance programmes' hinder the development of English (Rodriguez, 1982). Yet, many educators and researchers claim that language minority children would benefit from an education that develops their native languages even after they have acquired English (Cummins, 1979; Fishman, 1976; MacDonald *et al.*, 1982; Otheguy, 1982). The language minority community, specifically the Hispanic community, has also vehemently supported programmes of instruction in which Spanish is developed (Attinasi, 1979, 1985; Cole, 1983).

Likewise, determining the language dominance of children has been a very important question in bilingual programmes in public schools. Educational officials worry about the right test to determine which is a bilingual Hispanic child's primary language, since only Spanish dominant children participate in bilingual programmes. Whereas Lado (1961) favours discreet point testing, Brière (1972) and Oller (1979) prefer general communication tests. Recently, more ethnographic approaches to testing language dominance have become popular (Bennett & Slaughter, 1983; Philips, 1983; Saville-Troike, 1983).

In keeping with the spirit of these temporary and transitional bilingual programmes, the public school approach to teaching English as a Second Language is also most often compensatory and remedial. Although most bilingual programmes in the United States include pull-out ESL classes, researchers argue for more integrated English language instruction (Krashen, 1981; Terrell, 1981). Moreover, English instruction in these programmes often ends quickly and abruptly as children are 'mainstreamed'. Yet Cummins (1981) has argued that it takes children five to seven years to develop appropriate decontextualised language skills in a second language.

Finally, in most transitional bilingual programmes in the United States initial reading is taught in the native language. This view follows the UNESCO principle (1953) and is supported by Modiano (1973) and Rosier (1977), among others. Recently, however, many educators have argued that first-language and second-language reading can be developed simultaneously (Barrera, 1983; Goodman, Goodman & Flores, 1979).

A most important characteristic of the ethnic

schools we studied is their widespread reputation as successful schools where Cuban-American children do well academically, while at the same time becoming fully bilingual and biliterate. This reputation is all the more remarkable when compared with the reputation of public schools attended by the same type of children. (With some justification, though with a fair measure of exaggeration too, most public schools in the United States are held to provide Hispanic and other language-minority children with little opportunity for academic success.) We found no standardised test scores to document the greater success of the ethnic schools, as none were available. Yet, administrators, teachers, parents, and the surrounding Cuban-American community all agreed that Cuban-American children did better academically, and that they learned better Spanish, better manners, and better values in these than in the public schools.

Typical comments we recorded were the following. 'La preparación que da X es muy superior a la de la escuela pública, ya que es enseñanza tipo Cuba' ('X school prepares children far better than the public school since it is a Cuban type of education'), said one mother we interviewed. 'Aquí nuestros niños progresan porque es como si estuvieran en un sistema educativo latinoamericano' ('Here, our children make it because it is just as if they were in a Latin American educational system'), told us another mother.

There was widespread conviction that the curricula in these ethnic schools was more academically rigorous than that of the public school. Our informants also unanimously claimed that the public schools did not enforce discipline standards. 'En las escuelas públicas los niños no están fiscalizados. Aquí sí.' ('In public schools children are not supervised. But here, yes'), told us an administrator using the Spanish 'fiscalizados' for the more common US Spanish 'supervisados'. Concerning the teaching of Spanish, one principal shared with us: 'No hay comparación. Aquí se enseña español de verdad. En la escuela pública nada mas que se enseña a leer palabras, mientras que aquí se les enseña a los niños la gramática y las conjugaciones' ('There is no comparison. Here we teach real Spanish. In public schools they teach you only to read words, whereas here we teach children grammar and conjugations'). The sense that the education, both in English and Spanish, that these schools provide is superior to that of public schools was

gathered from all the interviews with administrators, teachers, and parents.

Although Cuban-American children fare better in Dade County's public schools than other Hispanics in public schools in the United States, they do indeed experience greater failure than Anglo students. This is often the result of the impatience of the educational system with their English language development. For example, after the 1980 Mariel influx of Cubans into Dade schools, the percentage of Hispanic students not promoted significantly exceeded the statistically probable failure rate (Bilingual/Foreign Language Education, p. 5). In contrast to the public schools, the ethnic schools never confuse children's academic ability with linguistic proficiency. Often children who speak English poorly are the best students. Cuban parents intuitively know that their children will be given a better chance in these schools, at the same time that they will be provided with strict discipline and academic rigour.

Public schools are also regarded (and here with no exaggeration) as operating in most cases within a widely publicised and well developed plan to insure that language-minority children do not become biliterate, or even bilingual (Fishman, 1980a; Gaarder, 1977; Otheguy & Otto, 1980; Otheguy, 1982). This amounts to recognising that, with some exceptions, in most public school settings the four questions outlined above receive a straightforward answer by those in actual authority, such as principals and programme supervisors. They are debated only by people outside the public schools, and by people in public schools who hold less authority and control, such as classroom teachers.

Actual practice in public schools results from the resolution of tensions between groups with competing answers to these four questions, yielding considerable variation from school to school. Still, it is an accurate generalisation that most public school bilingual programmes in the United States are fiercely transitional, having as their only goal the quick mainstreaming of children into regular, English-monolingual classes. Use of Spanish or other minority languages in most public school bilingual programmes is only for children who speak no English, and only for as long as this condition lasts. Rarely are Hispanics who speak English included. Most of these programmes aim to produce English-monolingual children and use the native language only as a temporary expedi-

ent until it can be set aside and forgotten by children who, in the best of cases, learn to read and write only in English.

Since these public school bilingual programmes for Hispanic children are often staffed by Hispanics, the approaches just described and the contrast we are about to establish with the approach taken in the ethnic schools of Dade County cannot be solely attributed to differences in the ethnic backgrounds of the educators involved. It is true that many Hispanics in public schools are considerably more interested in developing Spanish than are the authorities, but even among Hispanics educators in public schools one finds beliefs and practices that fit the description we have sketched.

As we shall see, our description of public schools could not be applied to the ethnic schools of Dade County. In taking a totally different tack with children of the same background, these ethnic schools give us a useful context in which to ponder questions of educational language policy.

The Schools

Although we observed much variation among the different ethnic schools with regard to teaching style and curricular practices, the socio-educational climate was remarkably similar from school to school. There are three factors that characterise the seven schools we studied: (a) their working class nature; (b) the Cuban character of the staff, the children and the ambiance; and (c) the presence of Spanish as the social, though not necessarily the instructional, language of the schools.

Working class schools

These are schools with modest tuition fees ranging from \$60 to \$90 a month for ten months. (As a basis of comparison for readers for whom these figures may not be meaningful, this is identical to the range of tuition charged by the other large non-public but also non-elite school system in the United States, namely the Roman Catholic parochial school system.) All ten schools were located either in the Little Havana section of Miami, or in Hialeah, both predominantly Cuban working-class neighbourhoods. The schools opened as early as 6:30 a.m. and closed as late as 6:00 p.m. The optional extended school hours are meant to attract, and indeed do attract, many children of working mothers.

Cuban schools

The ethnic character of these schools was also

without question. The principals, the teachers, the students, and the socio-cultural ambiance of the schools were strikingly Cuban. The principals and the owners were all Cuban born. With one exception, none of the principals had ever had any experience in US public schools. They had been owners or teachers of a school in Cuba, usually one that had the same name as the one now in Dade County. Twenty-five years ago, the schools in Cuba also served mostly the children of working class families (in some cases the parents of current students!) and was located far from the affluent neighbourhoods, in most cases in the provinces and not in Havana.

In contrast to the two elite Hispanic schools of Dade County that we are familiar with (Belén Jesuit School and Loyola School, only the first of which is a Roman Catholic school, despite the names), these working class Cuban schools are staffed mostly by Cuban teachers who in most cases were born, raised and educated in pre-Castro Cuba. Most of these teachers we met were highly professional and skilled in their academic areas, although they spoke accented English. There was also a small, but growing number of younger Cuban-American teachers, raised and educated in Dade County. There were very few native-born American Anglophone teachers, and they were usually the instructors of non-academic subjects such as Gym, Music and Art. We found that even these few Anglo teachers were deeply familiar with Cuban culture and values, and had some knowledge of Spanish.

Again in contrast to the elite Belén and Loyola (whose student body includes many Hispanics from other than Cuban background, and Anglo Americans), the students in these schools were mostly Cuban-American children. All of the ten schools reported that between 80 and 90 % of their children were of Cuban parents, with a small number of other Hispanic children and an even smaller number of Anglophone (usually Black) children. The Cuban-American children came to school speaking Spanish only. We observed that the younger children spoke Spanish exclusively to each other in hallways and playgrounds. But beginning with third-graders we observed English as the language of socialisation both in the classroom and in the playground.

The sociocultural ambiance of the schools was most strikingly Cuban. Cuban flags, emblems, and busts of Jose Martí, the famous Cuban patriot and writer, were proudly portrayed in the schools. The Cuban national anthem was sung,

along with the Star-Spangled Banner, in every school assembly. Although eight of these 10 schools claimed to be non-denominational, voluntary Roman Catholic religious instruction was offered, including a voluntary, but in fact school-wide, First Holy Communion programme in the month of May for first-graders, all in line with traditional Cuban religious customs.

It is also clear that the schools go to great lengths to conform to the sociopolitical values of the exiled Cuban community. Cuba in these schools does not mean today's Cuba but 'la Cuba de ayer,' and signs of a pre-Castro Cuba, now outdated by about a quarter century, are prevalent everywhere. An aged and yellowed photograph of the school that bore the same name back in Cuba usually hangs in the school's entrance. Cuban History and Geography are taught from a pre-Castro perspective. The Cuban map found in many classrooms shows administrative divisions into Cuban provinces that ceased to exist 25 years ago. While one may question the pedagogical soundness of this anachronistic approach to the social studies, it is nevertheless striking the respect these schools have for the values of the community they serve, as well as the continuity they provide for the community's social and behavioural norms. The schools reinforce and continue the ways, styles, values, and mores that prevail in the homes of the barrios of Little Havana and Hialeah.

Spanish in the schools

The transmission of Cuban traditions and values took place in Spanish, the language of power and prestige within these ethnic schools. It was clear to us from the very beginning that Spanish was the *social language* of the school. It belonged naturally there: it was the language of the janitor, the secretary, the teachers; it was the language in which children were spoken to by employees in the hallways and by the Principal in the office; it was clearly the language of authority.

Oddly enough, however, Spanish in these schools seems to be more absent from the curriculum than in public school bilingual programmes. In fact, we were told by all the administrators, except one, that *these are not bilingual schools!* Whereas bilingual programmes in public schools teach some subjects in Spanish, most subjects in these schools are taught in English by a Cuban teacher. Only Cuban History and Geography, and Roman Catholic religion, are taught in Spanish. Full literacy in English according to familiar

American standards is expected and, as we could see, obtained.

In this climate of instructional use of English by Cuban teachers, development of Spanish was nevertheless central. Spanish was taught, we were told, as a 'first language' by a specialised and different teacher. Everyone stressed that there was no such thing as Spanish as a second language. Literacy in Spanish according to monolingual Cuban standards was expected of all children, and indeed obtained. The texts used to develop Spanish literacy are most often those that were used in Cuba 25 years ago for Spanish monolingual children, and no concessions or adaptations are made to children who, after all, use English as their intragenerational language after the third grade.

It seems to us that the success of these ethnic schools in developing biliteracy stems from the more prestigious status accorded to Spanish in comparison to what happens in public schools. However, successful biliteracy is also a product of a compartmentalised curriculum that protects the minority language (Fishman, 1980a; García, 1983; Legarreta, 1979; Wong-Fillmore, 1982). These Cuban schools do not see Spanish in competition with English; in fact they are more likely to see English in competition with Spanish. Principals and teachers know that English, as the majority language, is acquired naturally by children living in the United States. It is Spanish, they believe, that has to be nurtured, developed, and protected.

Our Findings

The most significant finding of our study is that the four questions outlined above as basic to the study of public bilingual education were completely useless and inapplicable to the ethnic schools we were investigating. The very heart of public bilingual education discourse made no sense to those to whom we spoke. Philosophical and curricular questions which provoke heated arguments in public bilingual education circles were non-questions in these ethnic community schools. We think that the irrelevance of these core bilingual education questions to these archetypical bilingual schools holds important lessons that are worth spelling out. (For a similar observation about a bilingual programme in a community-controlled public school, see MacDonald *et al.*, 1982: 220.)

As has been pointed out, most public schools offer bilingual instruction only until children are

proficient in English. Then children are 'mainstreamed' into 'regular monolingual' classrooms. Naturally then, there is considerable debate about when this exit decision should be made and on what basis to make it. The question of whether bilingual programmes should be transitional or should maintain the native language is also a natural one to debate in a public school setting where the transitional approach holds sway and proponents of maintenance are viewed with at best amused indulgence and at worst suspicion.

But these issues are not relevant at all to the people we interviewed. These community educators were only concerned about the best possible way of educating their own children. None of the ethnic schools focused solely on bilingualism or monolingualism as a goal. In fact, *there was remarkably little interest in language questions*. 'El melting pot es irrevocable' ('The melting pot is irrevocable') told us one administrator who became impatient with our questions dealing with the effects of non-English language maintenance on social cohesiveness. Yet, this same administrator felt that the only conceivable way of educating language minority children in a language majority environment was to use both languages. 'El español se enseña aquí como un first language' ('Spanish is taught as a first language'), he told us with the English code-switching that is characteristic of most United States Spanish. For these Cuban teachers this *was* mainstream education, and there was nothing remarkable or 'irregular' about it.

Bilingualism and biliteracy are important resources of the language minority community. 'El español sólo debe ser para el Latino' ('Spanish should be only for Latinos') claimed one teacher who considered bilingualism to be the Cuban's biggest asset. Thus it is with a naturalness that, if anything, is disturbed only by fierce ethnic pride that literacy in the minority language is expected, just as proficiency in, say, Mathematics is expected.

The curricular questions that take up so much of our time in public bilingual education were likewise dismissed. Most Hispanic children in public bilingual education programmes have been classified as 'Spanish Dominant' or 'Limited English Proficient' (LEP). Such children are perceived by public school educators to be deficient and in need of remediation. In the transitional bilingual classrooms of most public schools, in fact, the native language is used mostly to teach English. In addition, these LEP children receive supplementary English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instruction in pull-out programmes.

The concept of whether children were Spanish or English dominant did not prove to be useful in our discussions in Dade County. None of the professionals that we interviewed made any use of that categorisation of children, and in many cases had not even heard of it. Even after we explained to them the concept of language dominance and its importance in public bilingual education, they still dismissed it. They were only able to report that children entering first grade usually spoke only Spanish and that three or four years later they were completely bilingual. When pressed to tell us whether those bilingual children were Spanish-dominant or English-dominant, they unanimously repeated the answer that the first administrator had given us: 'Pues, hablan los dos idiomas' ('Well, they speak both languages').

Although all teachers and administrators we interviewed were unable to answer our question on dominance directly, they frequently referred to the children's language use. One teacher told us: 'Ellos hablan español pero se pelean en inglés' ('They speak in Spanish but they fight in English'). A Spanish monolingual secretary told us: 'Ellos hablan español con nosotros y hablan inglés cuando no quieren que los mayores entiendan. Entre ellos a veces mezclan' ('They speak Spanish with us and English when they don't want the adults to understand. They sometimes switch languages when speaking to each other'). In schools where Spanish literacy is taught and expected, educators seem to have a more natural attitude toward children's use of two languages. The teachers expect them to speak, read and write Spanish well. They do not expect them, however, to use Spanish as if they lived in a monolingual context where only one language was available to them.

The concept of language dominance is not useful in these schools because no curricular decisions are based on it. There is no remediation or special programme when children arrive not speaking the majority language. This condition is regarded as normal and known to change naturally in the course of the next four years. Bilingualism and biliteracy are expected of all. Furthermore, both the minority and the majority language are equally valued. This stands in sharp contrast to most public bilingual school programmes where Spanish-dominant tends to be synonymous with inferior, whereas English dominant means superior. Bilingualism and biliteracy is again the ideal expectation of all students in these ethnic schools.

The role of the ESL specialist is also controversial in public bilingual education circles. As we have mentioned, most public school bilingual programmes have an ESL pull-out class for children who have just arrived in the United States. English classes fall under the rubric of remediation for students who are behind in certain areas, in this case in the area of English proficiency. We wanted to know what special remedial classes existed in the Dade County ethnic schools for those children that are Spanish monolingual (a group comprised of all their five-year-olds, and, to different degrees, of most of their six- and seven-year-olds). It soon became obvious to us that these ethnic educators' philosophy about language made these remedial classes irrelevant.

In sharp contrast to most public school authorities, these educators were not suspicious about the use of Spanish in the classroom. Furthermore, they did not doubt that children living in the United States would learn English, the majority language. They took a relaxed, natural approach to teach and develop the English language. They focused not on the structure of English, as most traditional ESL classes at the elementary level do, but instead used English as an instrument of communication. For this reason, English was used to teach most content. At the same time, the bilingualism of the teacher and the children was used as an instructional resource. Spanish was often used to help a child gather meaning from something said in English that he didn't understand. English was developed precisely by using Spanish as a meaning-giving resource.

We observed the same disregard for curricular issues that are central to public bilingual education on the question of the language of initial reading. Most public bilingual programmes introduce reading in the child's native language (Goodman, Goodman & Flores, 1979), as the rather dubious proposition is accepted as dogma that the child cannot be taught to read in a language that he 'does not understand', nor can be taught to read in two languages simultaneously. Therefore initial reading instruction for Hispanics in public school bilingual programmes must be in Spanish. However, in most of these programmes the native language is used, even at these early stages, only as a tool to teach English and only as an insignificant and soon to be discarded stopping point on the way to the real prize, which is reading in English. Hispanic children rarely become literate in Spanish in

public schools, and seldom read much of anything in Spanish after the early grades (Barrera, 1983).

In the ethnic schools we studied in Dade County, monolingual Spanish speaking children in the first grade were most often taught to read in both languages at the same time. Reading was seen as *one* process of learning to gather meaning from print, a notion, by the way, that is as familiar to researchers on bilingualism as it is foreign to public school bilingual programmes. This practice — born of the natural and common sense approach taken, not from familiarity with the conceptualisation of bilingual reading that would support it — is possible only because of the sustained, unsuspecting and resourceful use of Spanish on the part of the teacher in order to give meaning to the students' reading. English literacy is, as is English language proficiency, a result of the creative and effective use of Spanish in the classroom. Spanish literacy is also expected and developed in its own right.

Ethnic Schools for Language Minority Children

As we thought about why our four initial questions for this study had failed, we realised that we too had framed our original conception of the education of Hispanic children in the United States within what one might call the majority context, that is, the intellectual and pedagogical context within which most US-born, white, English-speaking educators frame their thinking about the education of linguistic minorities.

When majority educators look at the education of Hispanic children in the United States, they focus on their linguistic deficits. The fact that some Hispanic children don't speak English tends to obscure all other educational matters. Discussions about the education of these children begin and end with the issue of the English language, of how they lack it, and how best to give it to them. Making these children proficient in English is often presented as the most important question faced by the public schools they attend; sadly, it is often the only educational question regarding these children that these schools tend to face, and one for which they provide in most cases a patently unsatisfactory answer.

However, when Hispanic parents and educators in control of the education of their own children think about the educational process, they ask different kinds of questions. They ask

questions about the best way to educate their children, about pedagogy, instructional strategies and teaching methods, about curriculum and materials. We asked them about language, they told us about education. They were interested in telling us about their use of a given textbook or of a given method in Math and Reading instruction. Some shared with us their new Science or Social Studies curricula. Administrators pulled out charts of school organisation, and teachers showed us lesson plans and units. Hispanic educators question the educational process itself, and not the role of the minority language or the minority child in the majority school. Spanish naturally belongs in ethnic schools that are controlled, staffed and run by the Hispanic community, so there is no need to question its role in the educational process. The Hispanic children attending these schools are not in any way unusual. They do not walk into the school to discover that they already need remediation. They are not inferior to majority children or deficient. They are not even different from other children in the school or from the educators. They *are* the children. They most often match the look, speech, behaviour, and values of the educators and the authorities of the school.

The ethnic schools of Dade County should force us to take a new look at bilingual education programmes in public schools, which we continue to be committed to developing and strengthening. But there is a need to look at the education of Hispanic children in public school bilingual programmes from the perspective gained by studying schools where the community itself is in control of the education of their own children.

Those of us in the public schools need to learn from these educators that substantive high expect-

tations do matter; that bilingualism and biliteracy are obtainable if one holds both children and teachers unequivocally responsible for obtaining it; that initial literacy in two languages is possible and doesn't have to be limited to Spanish; that advanced literacy in two languages is possible and doesn't have to be limited to English; that in US society all children acquire English naturally and that therefore English acquisition should not be the main focus of education; that parents and community do matter for education; that when they are in control, even if some of their ideas may at times be foolish or unsophisticated, the results are ultimately superior; that the context of a child's home culture is essential, even if it should occasionally seem silly or anachronistic; and that continuity with the intellectual and social climate of the home is of paramount importance if the school is to help children develop and foster their intellectual and social growth.

Notes

1. A much shorter version of this paper was read before the 14th Annual Meeting of the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation, sponsored by the Johnson Foundation at the Foundation's Wingspread house in Racine, Wisconsin. A much larger study on Dade County, encompassing both private and public schools as well as a detailed discussion of sociocultural factors that affect the education of Hispanics is available in García & Otheguy (1986).
2. Our sample included the following schools: Edison, Inter-American, Jose Martí, Lavernia, La Luz, Pan American, and La Progresiva. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of those in these schools who gave us so much of their time.

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Questions

- (1) Explain why each of the four initial research questions were not relevant in the ethnic schools in this study. What is the lesson learned? What is the difference in the approach taken in the education of Latino children in public schools and their education in ethnic schools?
- (2) Give examples of how (a) Cuban culture (as it exists in the United States) and (b) the Spanish language is present in the Cuban schools visited.

Activities

- (1) Visit an all-day school or supplementary school in which an ethnic language is taught and which is controlled by the ethnic community. Then visit a public school in which the same ethnic language is taught. Report on the differences found in school structure, teaching approach, use of the ethnic language, administrators, educators, students and community.
- (2) Select a specific ethnolinguistic group. Through interviews with ethnic leaders and others, make a Resource List of places that teach the language. Telephone or visit these places and obtain information on when classes meet, age group, admission requirements, tuition, etc. Complete the resource list with this information. Create an overall copy of the resource list by pooling findings from the class. Make copies and disseminate the overall resource lists drawn up for different ethnolinguistic groups by your classmates.
- (3) In a school with which you are familiar, interview the principal and at least five teachers with the four questions posed by García and Otheguy. Record their answers. Then write an essay explaining how their answers differ from the ones given to García and Otheguy, and the reasons for the differences.

Further Reading

For more on the role of the ethnic mother tongue school in the United States, see especially: Fishman, Joshua A. (1980) Minority language maintenance and the ethnic mother tongue school. *Modern Language Journal* 64, 167–73.