

8 Bilingualism for Equity and Excellence in Minority Education

The United States¹

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INTRODUCTION

The use of the home language in educating language minority students throughout the world is often fraught with controversy. But, as this chapter will show, educating students bilingually is the most effective way to provide these students with an equitable education that is at the same time highly challenging intellectually and academically.

The lack of understandings surrounding the bilingual practices of language minority students has led to the schooling of these students in ways that (re)produce socioeducational inequities. This chapter examines inequities in four areas of education and the resulting miseducation of language minority students: (1) curricula and programs, (2) assessment, (3) resources, and (4) parental involvement. The chapter makes clear that language minority students, whose bilingual practices are ignored in schools, experience more remedial instruction and assignment to lower curriculum tracks, higher dropout rates, poorer graduation rates, and erroneous referrals to special education classes. Different ways of using the students' home language practices in education are thus crucial to address equity and excellence in the education of *all* language minority students, but especially in the education of those who are in the process of developing the majority language and becoming bilingual.

We start by discussing the prevalence of bilingualism among students in the world and distinguishing between those who are already bilingual and those who are in the process of becoming bilingual. We call this latter group of students *emergent bilinguals*, and we include in this group all who are acquiring an additional language through school—whether a majority or minority language. We also discuss theoretical foundations that can inform the education of these students. Equity and excellence for all students in the 21st century will increasingly depend on whether they are receiving appropriate bilingual instruction, which would enable them not only to be linguistically versatile, but also to show linguistic tolerance toward others (García, 2009).

In this chapter, we focus on emergent bilinguals who are acquiring a majority language in school. And we argue that for those emergent bilinguals—whether immigrants, refugees, indigenous peoples, or autochthonous minorities—the use of their home language practices is the key to providing them with educational excellence and equity. We use the case of the United States, and the monolingual educational policies and practices in the education of these emergent bilinguals, to show how it is precisely the reluctance to use the students' home language practices that brings about their educational failure.

BILINGUAL STUDENTS AROUND THE WORLD

Few countries have ever had populations that are monolingual in their makeup, and even today there are very few countries in the world that can be considered linguistically homogenous (see Lewis, 1981). In 2000, Grimes and Grimes listed 6,809 languages in over 200 countries, making it very obvious that most states in the world are multilingual. And yet, less than 25% of the world's 200 or so countries recognize two or more official languages (Tucker, 1998). This has important consequences for education, because it turns out that, although there are more bilingual and multilingual individuals in the world than monolinguals and more languages than states, education most often takes place in the *de jure* or *de facto* official language of the state. Thus, most students in the world are educated in a language other than that of the home. The consequence of this policy for minority language communities is great. Monolingual education, as carried out by the dominant language group in the state, plays an important role in ensuring that language minority communities do not receive a fair share of educational opportunities and that their bilingual resources and their multiple voices are diminished.

Monolingual education is being ever more challenged today in the 21st century. New communication technologies and globalization resulting in the increased flow of people, goods, services, and information across borders have greatly impacted language practices. In brief, the bilingualism that had always characterized school populations has intensified with increased influx of students who do not yet know the language of the school system and who are emergent bilinguals.

Emergent bilinguals are not a separate category of students inferior to those who are monolingual speakers of a language of power. Indeed, emergent bilinguals are in sociolinguistic continua with other bilinguals. But too many schools continue to be constituted as monolingual realms where bilingualism is ignored and all students are forced to speak, read, and write the language of schooling. In this context, emergent bilinguals are seen as problematic, as having absences instead of possibilities. We argue that it

is precisely the lack of understanding about bilingualism that creates the inequities in the education of these emergent bilinguals and occasions their educational failure.

THEORIZING BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Over the past four decades, researchers have developed frameworks for understanding the relationship between bilingualism and academic achievement. We describe here some of the theoretical frameworks that are useful in considering the equitable education of emergent bilinguals.

Bilingualism and Education

Lambert (1974), working in the context of Canadian immersion education for Anglophone majorities, proposed that bilingualism could be either *subtractive* or *additive*. According to Lambert (1974), language minorities usually experience subtractive bilingualism as a result of schooling in another language. Their home language is subtracted as the school language is learned. On the other hand, language majorities usually experience additive bilingualism, as the school language is added to their home language. These models of bilingualism can be rendered as in Figure 8.1.

Subsequent research by Cummins (1981a, 1981b) and Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) has explained why being immersed in a different language at school works for language majority, but not for language minority, students.

Responding to the greater bilingual complexity of the 21st century, as well as the increased understanding of the multilingualism of the “developing” world, García (2009) has proposed that bilingualism could also be seen as being *recursive* or *dynamic*. These two models of bilingualism go beyond the conception of two separate autonomous languages of additive or subtractive bilingualism, suggesting instead that the language practices of bilinguals are complex and interrelated, and are not simply linear. Language minority communities who have experienced language loss and attend bilingual schools undergo a process of recursive bilingualism. They

Subtractive Bilingualism

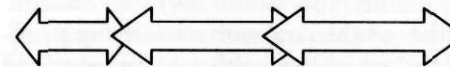
$$L1 \rightarrow + L2 - L1 \rightarrow L2$$

Additive Bilingualism

$$L1 + L2 = L1 + L2$$

Figure 8.1 Subtractive versus additive bilingualism.

Recursive Bilingualism



Dynamic Bilingualism

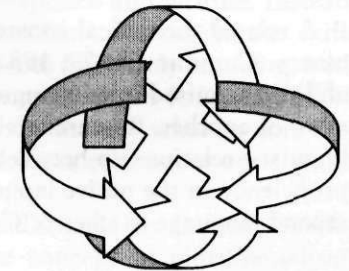


Figure 8.2 Recursive bilingualism versus dynamic bilingualism.

do not start as simple monolinguals (as in the subtractive or additive models). Instead, they recover bits and pieces of their existing ancestral language practices, as they develop a bilingualism that continuously reaches back in order to move forward. Dynamic bilingualism, on the other hand, refers to the development of different language practices to varying degrees in order to interact with increasingly multilingual communities. In some ways, dynamic bilingualism is related to the concept of *plurilingualism* proposed by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe. The difference is that within a dynamic bilingual perspective, languages are not seen as autonomous systems. Thus, educating for dynamic bilingualism builds on the complex and multiple language practices of students to develop new and different language practices as they interact in multilingual classrooms. These models can be rendered as in Figure 8.2.

Educators meaningfully educate when they draw upon the entire linguistic repertoire of all students, including language practices that are multiple and hybrid. Any language-in-education approach, be it monolingual or bilingual, that does not acknowledge and build upon the hybrid language practices in bilingual communities is more concerned with controlling language behavior than in educating (Cummins, 2007; García, 2009).

Linguistic Interdependence

The use of bilingualism in education in order to help language minority students do better in English is explained by the concept of *linguistic interdependence*, which means that both languages bolster each other (Cummins, 1979, 1981a, 1981b). Cummins (2000) explains linguistic interdependence by saying:

To the extent that instruction in Lx [one language] is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx [that language], transfer of this proficiency

to Ly [the additional language] will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly. (p. 38)

A related theoretical construct is that of the *common underlying proficiency* (Cummins, 1979, 1981a, 1981b), which posits that knowledge and abilities acquired in one language are potentially available for the development of another. Researchers have consistently found that there is a cross-linguistic relationship between the student's first and second language, and proficiency in the native language is related to academic achievement in a second language (Riches & Genesee, 2006).

Academic Language

Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976) proposed that there is a difference between the way in which language is used in academic tasks as opposed to conversation and intimacy. Face-to-face communication is most often accompanied by gestural and other cues. Cummins (1981a, 1981b) has called this *contextualized language*, which is what one uses for *basic interpersonal communication* (BICS) (Cummins, 1981a, 1981b). To complete school tasks, more abstract language² is needed in order to participate in most classroom discourse. In speaking about the need for these abstract language skills, Cummins used the term *cognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP). Cummins (1979, 1981a, 1981b, 2000) proposes that it takes 5 to 7 years to develop these abstract skills in a second language, whereas the language of everyday communication is usually acquired in 1 to 3 years. Many programs currently provided to emergent bilinguals do not afford sufficient time to gain these language skills.

Literacy Skills and Literacy Practices: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis

Cummins's framework has been tested, revised, and, like any groundbreaking proposal, subjected to criticism. Without rejecting the notion that the metalinguistic capacities available to learners through their first language can support the learning of spoken language and literacy skills in the second or third language, an alternative framework rejects a binary view of language and suggests that BICS and CALP are oversimplified terms. Rather, the linguistic repertoire is a complex phenomenon comprising multiple codes and modes or channels of expression (Zamel & Spack, 1998).

Brian Street, a key figure in New Literacy Studies, challenges scholars and educators to examine the uses of academic language as a series of social practices. Rather than thinking of literacy as a monolithic construct made up of a discrete set of skills, he recommends that we consider first, that literacies are multiple, and second, that they are embedded in a web of social

relations that maintain asymmetries of power (Street, 1985, 1996, 2005). In other words, learning academic language is not a neutral activity, easily divided into two modes of communication—spoken and written. Instead, as recent scholarship has shown, learning academic literacy entails skills that are multimodal—spoken and written modes intricately bound up with other visual, audio, and spatial semiotic systems (Kleifgen & Kinzer, 2009; Kress, 2003; New London Group, 1996). These literacy scholars note that the acquisition of such complex technical skills is contingent upon wider societal factors beyond the school.

Taking the notion of language variation and complexity further, García, Bartlett, and Kleifgen (2007) build on the concept of plurilingualism, which accounts for the complex language practices and values of speakers in multilingual contexts, where people hold and value varying degrees of proficiency in a variety of languages, dialects, registers, and modes of communication. García et al. propose the concept of *pluriliteracy practices*, which are grounded in an understanding that equity for emergent bilinguals must take into account the benefits of having strong native language and literacy skills for attaining academic achievement in another language. Equity must also account for the power and value relations that exist around the various languages, language varieties, and literacy practices in the school setting and in society. It is thus important for schools to value emergent bilinguals' pluriliteracy practices—home, school, and community—in other contexts or countries, in other languages and scripts (Kleifgen, 2009). An equitable education for emergent bilinguals builds on all these practices and enables them to develop a powerful repertoire of multiple literacies. For a case in point, we now turn to the bilingual education situation in the United States.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The United States, a nation of immigrants, has seldom had a policy of promoting languages other than English in education or the wider society. Only for a brief period, during the late 1960s, the 1970s, and the early 1980s, following the Civil Rights era, bilingual education was conscientiously used as an alternative in the education of emergent bilinguals who were failing in the nation's schools. The rate of educational failure among these students then was alarming. Reports on the education of Mexican Americans noted that Spanish-surnamed students were, on average, 3 years below their Anglophone counterparts academically, and in the 1960s the dropout rate among Puerto Ricans in New York City schools was 60% (Castellanos, 1983). Bilingualism in education during those years was seen as a way of promoting educational equity for these students and providing them with an intellectually challenging

education. Funding for academic programs that used languages other than English became available in 1968 when the U.S. Congress passed legislation known as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also known as the Bilingual Education Act). Although bilingual education was not mandatory, funds were appropriated to spend on bilingual programs. There was clearly a consensus among legislators that something different had to be done to educate language minority students, and that the students' home languages were important to consider. Parents also had a hand in influencing the equitable education of their children who did not speak the language of the school. One case was taken to the Supreme Court, where, writing the majority opinion in the case of *Lau v. Nichols* brought by Chinese parents in San Francisco, Justice William O. Douglas said:

[T]here is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education. . . . We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful. (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974)

Although the U.S. Supreme Court did not mandate specific pedagogical approaches, it did mention bilingual education as one of a number of possible ways to provide an equitable education for these students. A year later, the government issued the "Lau Remedies," specific pedagogical directives, including the requirement that children's home language be used for instruction in primary schools with a large number of these students.

Since the 1990s, however, bilingual education in the United States has come increasingly under attack. In 2002, the Bilingual Education Act was substituted by Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Significantly, although Title III also provided funding for bilingual education, the legislation was now called "Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students," silencing the word "bilingual." Under NCLB, "limited English proficient students" were those "whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments" (sec. 9101 [37]). No longer was bilingualism considered important in an equitable and meaningful education, as reflected in the U.S. Supreme Court statement of 1974. Now equity was described as being able to meet English proficiency levels on assessment. The difference is telling, and it points to the growing anti-immigration sentiment and resistance to U.S. bilingualism. We turn now to describing the emergent bilingual population in U.S. schools, after which we address the educational inequities

for these students in the four areas of curriculum, assessment, resources, and parental involvement.

Who are the Emergent Bilingual Students?

Between 1989–1990 and 2004–2005, the number of students classified as "limited English proficient" by the U.S. Department of Education in grades pre-K through 12 more than doubled, from 1,927,828 to 4,459,603 (National Clearinghouse of English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2006; U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Secretary, 1991, p. 10). According to NCELA, this represents approximately 11% of the total U.S. public school student enrollment in 2005. The population of emergent bilinguals is increasing at nearly seven times the rate of total student enrollment (NCELA 2006). In 2001–2002, an estimated 45,283 of the approximately 91,000 regular K–12 public schools nationwide—approximately one half of all schools—had students who were emergent bilinguals (Zehler et al., 2003).

Emergent bilinguals are heavily concentrated in six U.S. states: California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, and Arizona. But the greatest growth in the number of emergent bilinguals has been outside of these states, particularly in a new set of Southeastern states and one Midwestern state: South Carolina, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Indiana. It is estimated that between 75% and 80% of emergent bilinguals speak Spanish. In fact, close to half of all Spanish-speaking students going to school have been classified as emergent bilinguals (Lazarín, 2006). After Spanish, a significant number speak Vietnamese, Hmong, Korean, Arabic, Haitian Creole, and Cantonese (Kindler, 2002; Zehler et al., 2003). After Latinos, most emergent bilinguals are Asians (13%) (Hopstock & Stephenson, 2003a). Not all emergent bilinguals are immigrants. In fact, approximately half of emergent bilingual students have been born in the United States (Zehler et al., 2003). And many of these are Native Americans and Alaskan Natives.

About 75% of emergent bilinguals are poor, if we take the number of free- or reduced-price school lunch among emergent bilinguals as a proxy for poverty (Zehler et al., 2003). August, Hakuta, and Pompa (1994) have reported that the majority of emergent bilinguals live in high-poverty school districts. Emergent bilinguals frequently attend poor urban schools, which are often crowded and segregated, and where teachers lack adequate credentials (De Cohen, Deterding, & Chu Clewell, 2005).

The Education of Emergent Bilinguals in the United States

It is clear that if assessment scores in English are an indication of how these emergent bilinguals are doing, their educational situation is dire. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress data, only a very small

percentage of emergent bilinguals in the eighth grade are proficient in reading (4%) and in math (6%). They are also not graduating in proportionally the same numbers as those who are English proficient. A survey by Hopstock and Stephenson (2003b) revealed that 50% of emergent bilinguals fail their graduation tests, compared with 24% of those who are proficient in English.

Most emergent bilinguals in the United States are educated using English-only approaches. Sometimes, they are given special support in the form of so-called pull-out programs for classes in *English as a Second Language* (ESL). Usually students are pulled out daily from mainstream classrooms for 30 to 45 minutes of special ESL instruction. Other times, special English-only programs known as *Structured Immersion*, *Sheltered English*, or *Content-Based ESL* are developed specifically for emergent bilinguals. In these programs, subject matter is taught at the students' level of English, but the students' home language is not used.

There exist, however, several bilingual education alternatives for these students. Most students in bilingual education are in *transitional bilingual education*, meaning that students stay for only 1 to 3 years (early exit) until they become proficient in English. The home language is used to teach initial literacy and some subject instruction, and there is a strong ESL component and some subject matter instruction at the students' level of English. Very few emergent bilinguals are educated in what are called *one-way developmental bilingual education* programs. In these programs, emergent bilinguals of one language group are educated initially in the home language and eventually with a 50/50 distribution of English and the language other than English for over 5 years. Finally, there is a growing trend to develop what are called *two-way bilingual education programs* (also called *two-way dual language*, *two-way immersion*, and *dual immersion* programs). In these programs, emergent bilinguals are educated alongside bilingual children and monolingual children for over 5 years. These two-way bilingual education programs are of two types: 50/50 programs, in which the two languages have parity from the beginning, and 90/10 programs, in which the minority language is initially used 90% of the time until 50/50 language parity is gradually achieved. Although teachers in these programs separate the two languages strictly, in practice the complex linguistic heterogeneity of the students results in much more flexible language use than is recognized (García, 2006, in press).

EQUITY ISSUES IN THE EDUCATION OF EMERGENT BILINGUALS

The way in which most emergent bilinguals are educated in the United States today—solely through the medium of English or in bilingual education programs that mistakenly treat each of the two languages as if they

were autonomous—runs contrary to what research tells us about how best to educate and assess emergent bilingual students. Drawing on research from different fields, including sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics, psychometrics and assessment, education and curriculum, sociology, and economics, we address four critical equity issues for emergent bilingual students:

1. Appropriate educational curricula and programs
2. Fair assessment
3. Adequate pedagogy and resources
4. Involvement of parents and communities

Toward Appropriate Educational Curricula and Programs

There is near consensus among researchers around the world that the use of students' home language practices and academic development are "positively related to higher long-term academic attainment" (Ferguson, 2006, p. 48). In the United States, several large-scale evaluations (Ramírez, 1992; Thomas & Collier, 1997) have demonstrated that using the home language in instruction benefits language minority students. The Ramírez study (1992) was a longitudinal study of 554 kindergarten to sixth-grade Latino students in five states (New York, New Jersey, Florida, Texas, and California) who were either in English-only structured immersion programs, transitional early-exit programs, or late-exit developmental bilingual programs. The results of the Ramírez study showed that the programs most favorable for student achievement were late-exit developmental bilingual programs, that is, programs that use bilingual students' home languages for at least 5 years. Although the data showed no differences among programs for students in the third grade, by sixth grade, students in late-exit developmental programs were performing better in mathematics, English language arts, and English reading than students in the other programs.

Collier (1995) stressed that four factors are important for the equitable and successful education of emergent bilinguals: (1) a socioculturally supportive environment, (2) the development of the students' first language to a high cognitive level, (3) uninterrupted cognitive development, which best occurs through education in the first language, and (4) teaching the second language with cognitively complex tasks. Thomas and Collier (1997) provided evidence that development of first-language skills provides a sound foundation for subsequent academic success in and through English as a second language. They stated:

The first predictor of long-term school success is cognitively complex on-grade level academic instruction through students' first language for as long as possible (at least through grade 5 or 6) and cognitively

complex on-grade level academic instruction through the second language (English) for part of the day. (p. 15)

In 2002, Thomas and Collier released a study of the effectiveness of different kinds of educational programs for language minority student achievement. They compared the achievement on nationally standardized tests³ of students in different kinds of programs who entered a U.S. school in kindergarten or first grade with little or no proficiency in English, following them to the highest grade level reached. They concluded that the use of the students' home languages in bilingual education produces better results in students' English reading scores than do programs that use English only.

In their recent synthesis of the research evidence in the education of emergent bilinguals, Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, and Christian (2006) concluded that students who are in educational programs that provide extended instruction in their native language through developmental and two-way bilingual education programs outperform students who only receive short-term instruction through their native language (early-exit transitional bilingual education). They also found that students' bilingual biliteracy proficiencies were positively related to academic achievement in both languages. Finally, these researchers found that emergent bilinguals who participated in primary school programs that provided first language support acquired the same or superior levels of reading and writing skills as students in English-only programs by the end of elementary school. The National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth, made up of individuals selected by the Bush administration, also concluded that bilingual education approaches in which the child's home language is used are more effective in teaching children to read than are English-only approaches (see August & Shanahan, 2006).⁴

Despite significant evidence supporting the use of students' home language practices in their schooling, emergent bilinguals are increasingly in classrooms where their home languages are disregarded. In fact, many more of these students are now in classrooms where nothing is being done differently to help them. Crawford (1999) estimates that in 1994–1995, 23% of all emergent bilinguals were in submersion classrooms where their home language was not used, and they were receiving the same instruction as native speakers of the school language, with no accommodation or support. Furthermore, a survey by Zehler et al. (2003) found that in the 2001–2002 academic year, 59% of emergent bilinguals were receiving all instruction in English. They also found that only 20% of these students were being educated with significant use of the home language, as in bilingual education.

The pull-out ESL approach continues to be the program of choice in the United States (Crawford, 1999). Although it has been found that ESL taught via content-area instruction (social studies, math, science, etc.) is

associated with higher long-term educational attainment than ESL pull-out (which usually focuses on the development of English language and skills) (Thomas & Collier, 1997), there are more pull-out ESL programs than programs that teach English via content-area instruction.

U.S. schools also continue to emphasize bilingual education programs that cater to only one language minority group, ignoring the growing linguistic heterogeneity in classrooms. Bilingual education programs generally include emergent bilingual students of one language background (transitional or developmental bilingual education) or, in some cases, emergent bilingual students of the same language minority background alongside those of English-speaking background (two-way bilingual education). Although residential segregation as well as the large population of Spanish-speaking students have made these bilingual education programs possible (see, e.g., García & Bartlett, 2007), there is a growing need to develop educational models that take into account the chorus of multilingual voices in today's classrooms. We have personally witnessed evidence of how, even in two-way bilingual education classrooms, the home language practices of students from different language backgrounds have been ignored.

But even in bilingual classrooms that have emergent bilinguals from the same language group, educators tend to ignore bilingual language practices that go beyond monolingual language use of two languages. García (2009) refers to these bilingual education programs that treat each of the child's languages as separate and that ignore bilingual practices as *monoglossic*. By strictly separating the two languages, bilingual educators in these programs often fail to build on the students' home language practices in bilingual communities. Furthermore, these programs do not allow for cross-linguistic comparisons and other bilingual practices that are most important in the 21st century.

Unfortunately, most bilingual education programs in the United States hold a monoglossic ideology and treat each language as if each were being used in a monolingual context. Bilingual communities, however, use multiple and complex discursive practices in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds. García (2009) has referred to these discursive practices as *translanguaging*, extending Cen Williams's term, which he uses to refer to a specific pedagogic practice in bilingual Welsh classrooms (Baker, 2006). For García, translanguaging is an approach to bilingualism that is centered not on languages, but on the observable communicative practices of bilinguals. Although translanguaging may include code-switching, it also comprises other hybrid language use that is systematic and sense-making.

Until very recently, translanguaging was not seen as appropriate in bilingual classrooms. But there is now emerging evidence that keeping the two languages separate at all times and following only monolingual instructional strategies is not always appropriate (Cummins, 2007; García, 2006, 2009). Duverger (2005) has pointed out that both macro-alternation (in the sense of allocating languages to periods of the day,

teacher, or subject matter) and micro-alternation (or the use of hybrid language and instructional practices by both teachers and students) are important in bilingual schools:

Macro-alternation is programmed, institutionalized, demanding; micro-alternation adds suppleness, flexibility, and efficiency. The combination of the two is subtle. (p. 93)

Although all bilingual education programs need to have a language allocation policy, as well as a curricular arrangement for macro-alternation of languages, it is the micro-alternation, the translanguaging, which bilingual educators must learn to use.

In recent years, we have seen evidence that translanguaging, if properly understood and suitably applied in schools, can in fact enhance cognitive, language, and literacy abilities (Gajo, 2007; Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001; Lewis, 2008; Martin-Jones & Saxena, 1996; Serra, 2007; Wei, 2009). Thus far, however, most bilingual education programs in the United States, whether of the transitional, developmental, or two-way type, regard translanguaging with suspicion. Unfortunately, although the intent is to include the minority language in the classroom, many of these programs in effect exclude and stigmatize students' home language practices.

One of the key equity issues in the education of emergent bilinguals concerns the ways in which these students are assessed. Although teachers have developed instructionally embedded assessment that may measure emergent bilinguals' academic progress in more equitable ways, as we show next, large-scale fair assessments have yet to be developed for this population.

Toward Fair Assessment

The devastating effect of high-stakes testing in English for language minority students in the United States has been well documented. It has been widely demonstrated that as a result of these tests, emergent bilinguals experience more remedial instruction, greater probability of assignment to lower curriculum tracks, higher dropout rates, poorer graduation rates, and disproportionate referrals to special education classes (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002; Cummins, 1984; MacMillan & Reschly, 1998; Menken, 2008). There are important equity concerns in assessing emergent bilingual students having to do with two main issues: (1) disentangling academic language proficiency from content proficiency and (2) the validity of the tests themselves for emergent bilinguals.

Every assessment is an assessment of language skills (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 1985), and, thus, assessment for emergent bilinguals who are still learning the language of the test

is not valid unless language is disentangled from content. Shepard (1996) has argued that a fair assessment framework for emergent bilinguals should integrate the two dimensions: *academic language proficiency* and *content proficiency*. Academic performance of bilinguals should be seen as a continuum that is related to language acquisition, so that the language of the assessment is adapted according to the place along the continuum on which the student is situated.

Given the intermingling of language and content effect, there are concerns over the validity of standardized assessments for emergent bilinguals, as the test may not measure what it intends to evaluate. Furthermore, these tests have little content validity for these students because the performance of emergent bilinguals does not reveal much about their learning (Lachat, 1999). Worse still is the consequential validity of these tests for emergent bilinguals, that is, the consequences with regard to the teaching and learning process for these students (Cronbach, 1989; Messick, 1989). Because tests are constructed for monolingual populations, they always contain a built-in content bias. These monolingual tests reflect neither the language nor the language structures that the emergent bilingual students know. Furthermore, monolingual tests do not include activities, words, or concepts from both of the worlds of bilingual students (Mercer, 1989). Nor do monolingual assessments take into account the cultural norms of the bilingual students being assessed.

Formative approaches to assessment are a promising alternative to summative measures. Garcia and Pearson (1994) support the notion that emergent bilinguals be given performance-based assessment that is dynamic, in the sense that it should find out what the student can do with or without the help of the teacher. In this way, teachers are able to evaluate the kind of support that bilinguals need to complete tasks. The authors explain kinds of assessments for culturally diverse learners across a wide range of subject matters and test types. For example, teachers may assess students in English, the home language, or in both languages. They may assess their students' interpretations of material and vocabulary from diverse cultural and linguistic perspectives based on their backgrounds or build on that knowledge to assess them on their understandings of mainstream perspectives. Also, bilingual students can demonstrate their knowledge of native-language reading to assist them in their second-language reading. (See also Cummins, 2000, for alternative approaches to monitoring student progress.)

We argue that the best way to assess emergent bilingual students is for teachers to observe and listen to their students in both languages and record these observations systematically over extended periods. These ongoing descriptive reviews of students can establish a multidimensional portrait of bilingual learners. Rather than labeling emergent bilinguals as "limited," "at risk," or "deficient," these assessment approaches provide avenues for finding out what bilinguals do know. Authentic, formative

assessments are much better ways of obtaining valid, reliable information that can inform teaching. But schools continue to assess language minority students exclusively in English with invalid tests. The result is the inadequate instruction and resources that we describe next.

Toward Adequate Instruction and Resources

When emergent bilinguals enter kindergarten, they already face a disadvantage. According to data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS), about half of kindergartners who speak English at home perform above the 50th percentile in California, whereas no more than 17% of kindergartners who speak a language other than English at home perform at this level (Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003). This disparity has to do with the fact that emergent bilingual kindergartners cannot understand English well enough to be assessed in English only. As a result, the (mis)placement of these children into remedial education starts the moment they enter school for the first time.

Kindergartners and others who score low on tests are likely to be placed in remedial education (Gottlieb, Alter, Gottlieb, & Wishner, 1994). Because emergent bilinguals are only seen as English language learners from whom little is expected, they often go to schools that offer more remedial programs, where the emphasis is on rote instruction and remediation (De Cohen et al., 2005). The programs focus on compensating for the learners' limited English language skills (Harklau, 1994; Olsen, 1997) and offering them multiple periods of ESL instruction instead of meaningful content (García, 1999), thus creating further inequities (Anstrom, 1997; Fleishman & Hopstock, 1993). Furthermore, although it is widely accepted that a balanced approach to literacy incorporating more time to discuss, create, read, and write, as well as to learn phonics (instruction in sound-symbol correspondence) is central to literacy development (Birch, 2002; Honig, 1996), most emergent bilinguals are taught to read exclusively through heavily phonics-based approaches.

Emergent bilinguals are also regularly tracked into courses that do not provide them with challenging content (Callahan, 2003, 2005; Oakes, 1990). Sometimes they are given shortened day schedules and excused from courses that are not considered relevant to them (Olsen, 1997). Or they are given physical education or art classes rather than core subject content classes (García, 1999). In fact, often their learning of content-area academics is delayed until English has been acquired (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992). Alternatively, when newcomers are taught subject matter through English alone, instruction often takes on a slower pace, and less content is covered (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992). When the home language is used to teach academic subjects, thereby affirming these students' emergent bilingualism, challenging academic content is taught and excellent learning takes place (García & Bartlett, 2007).

English language learners are also overrepresented in some categories of special education, particularly in specific learning disabilities and language and speech impairment classes, and most especially at the secondary level (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higuera, 2002). This overrepresentation suggests the difficulty that schools have in distinguishing students with disabilities from those who are still learning English (Yates & Ortiz, 1998). Emergent bilinguals who are in bilingual programs are less likely to be in special education than those students who are in English-only programs (Artiles et al., 2002).

The other side of the coin for emergent bilinguals, when it comes to access to the most challenging educational programs, is their underrepresentation in "gifted and talented" programs. Only 1.4% of emergent bilinguals nationwide are in gifted and talented programs, in contrast to 6.4% of the English proficient population (Hopstock & Stephenson, 2003b). Although 3.2% of all high school students are enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) mathematics and science, only 0.8% of emergent bilinguals are enrolled in AP science and 1.0% in AP math (Hopstock & Stephenson, 2003b).

Oakes and Saunders (2002) have argued that there is a clear link between appropriate materials and curriculum and student academic outcome. Emergent bilinguals need developmentally appropriate materials to learn English, but they also need appropriate content materials in their home languages. More often than not, emergent bilinguals do not have these materials. In a survey of teachers by the American Institute for Research, only 25% reported that they used a different textbook for emergent bilinguals than for their English proficient students (Parrish et al., 2002).

Research also demonstrates that teacher and principal quality are two of the most important factors in determining school effectiveness and, ultimately, student achievement (Clewell & Campbell, 2004). But few school leaders and not enough teachers are well versed in issues surrounding bilingualism. Teachers in schools with high numbers of emergent bilinguals have fewer credentials on average than teachers at schools with few or no emergent bilinguals (De Cohen et al., 2005). Although slightly more than 50% of teachers in schools with high levels of emergent bilinguals have full certification, almost 80% of teachers in other schools do. In short, in the United States, emergent bilinguals do not have the same opportunity to be in schools with highly prepared teachers and administrators and updated material resources, including new technologies, as do English-speaking students. With regard to equity in both human and material resources, there is a wide gap to close.

Toward Greater Parental Involvement

Both folk wisdom and research over the years have supported the notion of parental involvement in their children's schooling, the premise being that several caring adults (school personnel and family members), working

together, can accelerate their learning. It is “the mantra of every educational reform program” (González, 2005, p. 42), including the current NCLB legislation, which requires schools to reach out to parents and involve them in their children’s education. Research has shown the benefits of such collaboration: Parent involvement leads to better attendance, higher achievement, improved attitudes about learning, and higher graduation rates. In addition, children from minority and low-income families gain the most from parent involvement (Epstein, 1990; Henderson, 1987; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hidalgo, Siu, & Epstein, 2004; Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001). Despite these findings, the parents of emergent bilinguals, who in many cases have limited formal schooling themselves and may not communicate proficiently in English, continue to be stigmatized and considered incapable educational partners (Ramirez, 2003).

Many educators still consider family practices to be barriers to student achievement. For example, parents are often exhorted to “speak English at home,” in the mistaken belief that this will improve their children’s English at school. This advice, although well intentioned, devalues the home language practices and at the same time encourages inconsistent, often poor, linguistic input from nonnative-speaking parents (see Ross & Newport, 1996). In a major effort to counteract the stigmatization of families of emergent bilingual children, a group of anthropologists from the University of Arizona have developed a program of research, spanning nearly two decades, on “funds of knowledge” for schooling (e.g., Greenberg, 1989, 1990; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992; Moll & Greenberg, 1990). The concept of “funds of knowledge” refers to different strategies and ways of knowing needed for a household to function effectively. It is based on the notion that everyday practices, including linguistic practices, are sites of knowledge construction and that these resources can be brought into the classroom. This research shows that parents of emergent bilinguals have a great deal to teach school personnel about knowledge and skills that originate in their households that can be translated into academic success in schools. Other research shows that parents want to learn how to help their children at home (Epstein, 1990), yet they have in some cases felt disregarded and left powerless in their attempts to be involved in the school (Pérez Carreón, Drake, & Calabrese Barton, 2005). Sadly, too many schools continue to ignore this research, and little effort is made to build on the strengths of the families and communities from which emergent bilinguals come.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the inequities that surround the education of language minority students in the United States have to do with the policy makers’ myopic view of education that is both monolingual and monocultural, even in a country with rapidly changing demographics and in a world that has

become increasingly interdependent. The importance of bilingualism as a resource to provide an excellent education to these students is misunderstood. There is little commitment to deepen understanding of the nature of bilingualism among educators and to provide adequate instructional resources to emergent bilinguals. And the role of the linguistic and cultural practices of the home is largely ignored.

If we are going to seriously and equitably educate language minority students in the 21st century, we have to point out the inequities of the present, while forging a path for a different future. In a country that has just elected its first African American president, it is clear that the future is now. To educate for excellence means to build on strengths; to develop self-confidence and an imaginative, creative, and inquisitive intellectual spirit; and to believe in one’s potential to lead and help construct a better and more just future. It is clear that this cannot be accomplished by ignoring the students’ home language practices and by insisting that they give up who they are in order to receive an education. The future must include all of us, and a clear path to practices of tolerance, justice, and intellectual curiosity is through educating both language minorities and language majorities in the use of each other’s multiple languages and diverse ways of knowing. Bilingual education holds the possibility of providing all students with that possibility: the opportunity of intellectual engagement and deep and rigorous academic challenge, as well as the possibility of mutual understanding and collaboration.

NOTES

1. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Campaign for Educational Equity at Teachers College for the research that resulted in a report authored by García, Kleifgen, and Falchi (2008) and that is here summarized. The contents of the report on which this chapter is based has since been expanded into a full length book by García and Kleifgen, *Educating Emergent Bilinguals: Policies, Programs, and Practices for English Language Learners*. New York: Teachers College Press. Copyright © 2010 by Teachers College Press, Columbia University. All rights reserved.
2. Cummins called this *decontextualized language*, a term that has been controversial, as no language, however abstract, can truly be called decontextualized.
3. These included the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), Stanford 9, and Terra Nova.
4. Notably, the Panel’s report was not released by the government. The authors were given the copyright, and the report was published by Erlbaum.

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